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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

VOLUME XVI

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Message of the East

January, 1927

MYSTIC HEART

Issued by

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

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MESSAGE OF THE EAST

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

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

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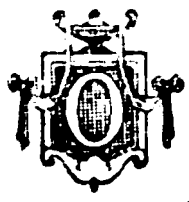
PRAYER



Thou Infinite Spirit!
Flash forth Thy Light upon our hearts
that it may destroy all ignorance and darkness
and awaken within us a bigger vision
and a desire to do Thy will.

O Thou All-Seeing One!
When Thy vision dawns in our hearts
it removes all bondage of ignorance.
All our doubts are banished.
Do Thou give us this blessing of Thy vision.

O Thou Mighty Spirit!
Make our feeble hearts strong;
make our wavering will steadfast
and make our resolution strong and unchanging.
Thou art the Embodiment of Love.
Fill our hearts with true love, removing
all that is alien, and keep us ever
and ever in peace.

—*Swami Paramananda*

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

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

What we are, what we would be, we must learn to recognize in the mirror of all other lives. By the effort of each, and the recognition of all, the Divine man is revealed in humanity.—*Friederich Froebel.*

Look thou within: within thee is the fountain of good, and it will ever spring if thou wilt ever delve.

—*Marcus Aurelius*

By not speaking nor desiring, and not thinking, one arrives at the true and perfect mystical silence, wherein God speaks with the soul, communicates Himself to it, and in the abyss of its own depth teaches it the most perfect and exalted wisdom. He calls and guides it to this inward solitude and mystical silence, when He says that He will speak to it alone, in the most secret and hidden part of the heart. Thou art to keep thyself in this mystical silence if thou wouldst hear the sweet and divine voice. . . Rest in this mystical silence and open the door, that so God may communicate Himself unto thee, and then form thee into Himself.—*Michael de Molinos*

God wants you. Just see all that He has done to secure you, and all that you are doing to escape Him! Do not wear out His patience. Throw yourself into His arms in spite of yourself. Do not be afraid that you cannot persevere; God will lighten your difficulties.—*Fenelon*

MYSTIC HEART

By Swami Paramananda

"Purify the heart that He may enlighten, and He whom thou callest on may enter in. Be His house and He will be thy house; let Him dwell in thee, and thou shalt dwell in Him. . . He alone is truly pure who waiteth on God and keepeth himself to Him alone. . . Whoso seeks from God any other reward but God and for it would serve God, esteems what he wishes to receive more than Him from whom he would receive it. What then? Hath God no reward? None, save Himself. The reward of God is God Himself."

This precept from St. Augustine you may perhaps have already read, and yet it is a point of view which is not current. That is, we do not feel this way; even when people pray they have always a desire for some return. There is, however, no greater return than the companionship, the association, the nearness, that the Divine Presence brings to the mystic soul. Nothing can be greater. Of course, it is difficult for the average person to realize this, because religion with the majority is something very indefinite. It is not real enough for them to feel that by worshipping God or the Infinite Spirit, they can be assured of such reward.

Kabir says: "The lock of error shuts the gate, open it with the key of love." These utterances of mystic souls are full of riddles for the ordinary man. "The lock of error shuts the gate, open it with the key of love." What does it mean? We are not sure. Yet when these same words reach another heart, are heard by one whose inner ears are open, they contain a whole volume of vital aspiration. That which is our own natural heritage is somehow or other hidden from us as if by an impene-

trable wall. The mystic says, open it—open that door which hides; open it with the key of love; touch it with the hand of sanctity and it will yield a passage to the secret chamber of revelation.

Let me read you two other selections from more modern sources: Emerson and Ruskin. "Within every man's thought is a higher thought, within the character he exhibits to-day; a higher character." Emerson gives here a very good picture of the mystic heart, and Ruskin says:

"That man is always happy who is in the presence of something which he cannot know to the full, which he is always going on to know. This is the necessary condition of a finite creature with divinely rooted and divinely directed intelligence; this, therefore, its happy state—but observe, a state, not of triumph or joy in what it knows, but of joy rather in the continual discovery of new ignorance, continual self-abasement, continual astonishment. The whole difference between a man of genius and other men is that the first remains in great part a child, not conscious of much knowledge—conscious rather of infinite ignorance and yet infinite power."

For a moment reflect on this, especially upon the last sentence. Ruskin's portrayal of a man of genius, you and I may call a mystic heart and another, a divine Incarnation. It matters not what terms we use, the difference is that in all truly great spiritual personages there is an underlying symmetry which endows them with the child spirit. They never think they have done anything, they do not put themselves forward; but always they have that consciousness that they are only instruments in the hands of a higher power. That is the way mystic souls are constituted. From the worldly point of view they

are often regarded as fools because they are not looking after their worldly interests, and yet you find that the greatest intellectual lights, the most powerful men, with all their assets, are awed by them. They do not know what to make of them. Man knows how to meet his enemies, his rivals, or his equals, with gun and sword and all the means and measures which are usual, but when he finds some one who is out of the ordinary, who returns forgiveness for hatred, love in place of treachery, he is at a loss to know what to do with him, as in the case of Socrates and other mystic souls,—Christ, Buddha and St. Francis.

Try to get a picture of it. See it, not as something mystifying and curious, something out of the way and eccentric, but as that which gives the glorified and sanctified expression of life. We are all aspiring for this—every one of us. We all want freedom. Even insects show the instinct or innate desire for freedom. For instance, if you take one, no matter how low, how minute, as soon as you try to confine him, he struggles for his liberty. In the human soul this desire is tremendously potent. We want our freedom, but often in our misguided zeal we get ourselves into a greater tangle. It is the sting of self. The greatest power comes out of a man when he is not aggressive. Can you imagine this,—a man who has grown powerful, but whose power is not taking the usual avenues of expression such as aggressive haughtiness? Rather he is gentle, and his gentleness becomes his greatest strength; yet this strength is not of muscle or of brain; he draws it through his helplessness.

There cannot be any pure mysticism where there is egotism, self-love, pride, vanity and greed. How very

far are we to-day from this idea of spiritual mysticism. Who wants it? If I should talk this way before a multitude, the majority of the people would say that it was something not for them. We have formed the habit of thinking that we have to buy our spiritual truths as we do patent medicine. We must get over this idea, this vulgar idea, of the market value. As we read from St. Augustine,—man is always looking for something to come to him as a return. It is not that we should work for nothing, but it is a tremendous drawback,—this bartering and bargaining, and as we find man rising higher and higher, he gets away from it. We talk of charity. What is charity? What is the best definition of charity? Giving when there is no thought of self left. And who can do it? Not a bargainer.

There is an interesting parable that I am going to tell you, an incident that actually happened. You know in India, the ascetics, the monks and mendicants, follow the Christ ideal, not thinking of the morrow. There are some who do not touch any coin, who recoil from it. Very different from our modern life, and I do not ask you to try to copy anything like that because you would be stranded. You have, however, to get the spirit of it—what it means. The idea is that when they consecrate themselves to something higher they want to be constantly related to that. The burden of material life proves to be so distracting that it often prevents this, therefore, they discard it. There have been many in history, born to wealth, who gave it away to some good cause, or to the poor, in order to be free to dedicate themselves to the consecrated life.

Now in India there was once a king who saw one of these mendicants and was so impressed by his spirituality

that he invited him to his palace. He wanted to bestow gifts upon him so that in return he might receive his blessing. Before he offered his gifts, however, the king went to his private sanctuary to worship and the mendicant overheard him praying: O Lord, give me this and give me that; give me long life; give me health,—and so on. The mendicant got up and started to leave. The king said: "Why are you going away? You have not accepted my gifts." The mendicant replied: "I do not want to receive from a beggar anything. I find that you are a worse beggar than myself. I have few needs, but your mind is full of them."

If our mind is so filled it is useless for us to pretend anything. And it is not that we can remove our needs merely by having wealth. It is like a fever. In certain forms of fever, when the patient is thirsty, the more water you give him to drink, the more he wants; it seems to feed his thirst. Same way with us. When we are under these feverish conditions we cannot understand the life of mysticism, the life of spiritual realities; and yet it is so simple. We must get away from this idea of a mystifying element,—that we have to be different, that we have to be peculiar. In the mystic life we become normal; we become more balanced; we gain a sense of proportion, and it is possible for us to have that sense of proportion only when our life is harmonized with spiritual truths.

Mystics are the idealists of the world. They live; they inspire; they give something real. What we give to the world with material pomp and glory fades away. It fades away quickly. To-day it seems like something very glamouring, abiding; to-morrow we hardly find any trace of it. But the flavor of the mystic life remains to

inspire and stimulate other lives. It infuses courage and hope and new faith. All the things that we have read, even those which may appear like impossible miracles, are true in another light. That which seems like dark night to the man of the world, there the mystic souls are wide awake,—they know, they feel. "The lock of error shuts the gate," keeps us out—outside that great spiritual kingdom. There is, however, always a remedy for every evil,—a key. Find it,—the key of love. The key of love will open that lock of error, and then what will happen? We shall find the very Source of our life, the Source of all existence, power and might. So Kabir, the mystic says: "My friend, do not pass by such good fortune as this."

You may think, "Oh, it is all a riddle; there is no reality in it. I see reality only in something material,—in a tree, a stone or a house." We base all our faith, hope and expectations on these material things, but they are more passing than we realize; they cannot meet our need; they cannot fill our heart. There is something in us which is always hungry,—that desire for freedom, that desire for happiness, that desire for fullness from within; and always the mystic teachers are telling us that we may find that fulfillment by following their footsteps. Christ said: "Be ye perfect as your Father which is in Heaven." There are some people who believe it is foolish even to think of this, that what Christ taught was not meant for us to follow. He meant it very definitely. He said that it was not just those who called him Lord and Master who would enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but those who did the will of His Father. We may not be a St. Francis to-morrow; we may not be able at once to follow what Christ said in its fullness, but we can begin, and in order

to find any contact with it, we must evolve a life apart, even in our every-day existence. Thoughts, words and actions,—there should not be any conflict between them. If we have the courage, if we have the intensity of will, if we have the resolution, then it will be possible for us to realize this ideal of perfection.

An ideal is to be lived. There is none among us who does not believe in an ideal. Even the most materialistic man pays tribute to a spiritual personage. He feels an impelling power, a recognition from within. Yet what is it merely to give lip praise, or a passing recognition? If it is a real recognition it must mean that we are willing to abide by those principles which we have recognized, that we are willing to unfold those principles. The world has greater need for simple, childlike hearts, pure channels, than for the most powerful statesmen that have ever been produced, or are going to be produced. Statesmen, political leaders, kings and emperors, they have their province, they seem to play a part in our human destiny; but their influence is always passing, and sometimes we find that what they do is more detrimental in its reaction than the good they have been able to accomplish. But the mystic heart! Here is something unpretentious, no desire for self-gain, yet always pouring benediction upon the lives of men. If we have light we cannot hide it. If we have light in our soul, it will shine forth even through our eyes. Through our mind, through our heart, through our hands, it will go out into the world.

Heart is the greatest asset in man's life. A man cannot live always with just brain. Swami Vivekananda used to say something very significant, very to the point. He said he would rather have all heart and no brain, than all brain and no heart. A man who has only brain dies

of dryness. I am not saying this to belittle intellectual gifts. Brain power is a great factor, but what we need is balance. Suppose you acquire a great deal of wealth through keenness, through shrewdness; suppose you make a success from the worldly point of view, and then find that there is war in your inner life, what are you going to do? Often this is the case. People living in luxury, lying on soft beds, toss and suffer because they are worried over what is going to happen with the money they have invested and whether it is going to bring a right return. But we cannot buy light with wealth, and what avails man's life if he has neither peace nor light?

"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?" To-day we must examine our standard to see whether it is at all in accordance with our high ideals, with our spiritual conceptions. If not, it is better for us to reorganize than to find ourselves wrecked and other lives wrecked with us. There are people who say: "We do not care anything about spirituality." Perhaps they have a little health, or wealth, but those things are not enduring. Such people by their misguided zeal find themselves on a pile of wreckage, and then there is weeping and wailing. "Life is gone; it is ruined!" There are many who come to this, and they will always come to it unless they have something within.

Balance! That is to my mind the sum and substance of all spiritual philosophy. Do not make life one-sided; do not let it be divided. It is a very difficult problem for many minds. Can spiritual life and worldly life coincide? Can a man go and do his business and at the same time be true to a spiritual principle? Of course he can! There is a beautiful saying from a Sufi poet: God

has not made man with two different hearts. That great, Supreme Being, that Majesty has created man with one heart that he may love and serve and exhibit the highest ideals through that heart. If man forgets this, if he divides himself into many fractions, then he must take the consequences. When we divide ourselves into thousands of parts, we weaken ourselves and we cannot do what we might do if we were whole.

Mystic heart is wholeness of heart. The mystic has found one objective and has fastened all his interest, all his ardour, all his devotion, all his intellect, everything to that one point. From there he goes out to do his work. Mystic souls are so childlike, so dependent. I can give you many examples and illustrations from their lives. Sri Ramakrishna, one who lived in India not very long ago, used to regard his Deity as Mother. He would never even speak to any one unless the Mother inspired him to speak to that person. To the world of men it may seem insanity. They think it is interfering with his freedom to turn to some unseen power for guidance. To the world of light, the men of light, however, it seems to be the only hypothesis for safety and security,—this going to the Source.

We are failing and faltering. Wise men know that they are failing and faltering and therefore they never wish to live without the protection of God. Ignorant men, like to disregard that, they want to place the idea of self and self-interest where man should place the image of Divinity, and worship it. And this is what makes all the difference. One who radiates happiness, peace, wisdom and all the beautiful attributes, by looking at him you feel exalted and inspired, but those others make you doubt the sanctity of life.

The mystic heart may be silent. Often the soul does not care to speak. When we try to push the mystic forward, we find he is indifferent, because he has found the greatest boon in life,—the blessing of God. When our hearts are filled with inspiration, we do not feel the lack of the world. You may not believe this, but we all sooner or later find it out. In fact, we willingly give away things that overburden our life, in order to increase that inspiration which is the highest asset of the soul. We cannot have both world and Spirit; we cannot serve God and mammon together. In our modern life with all its dazzling brilliancy that is something we are trying to do,—compromise, compromise, serving two masters at once. And we serve none.

ORDER*

By St. Francis of Assisi

Our Lord speaks—

And though I fill thy heart with hottest love,
  Yet in true order must thy heart love me,
  For without order can no virtue be;
By thine own virtue, then, I from above
Stand in thy soul; and so, most earnestly,
Must love from turmoil be kept wholly free:
  The life of fruitful trees, the seasons of
  The circling year move gently as a dove:
I measured all the things upon the earth;
  Love ordered them and order kept them fair,
    And love to order must be truly wed.
O soul, why all this heat of little worth?
  Why cast out order with no thought of care?
    For by love's heat must love be governed?

* Translation of Maurice Francis Egan.

THE WAY OF WISDOM

Spiritual Maxims of St. John of the Cross

Wisdom enters by love, silence, and mortification. It is great wisdom to know when to be silent, when to suffer, and never to regard the sayings, doings, or lives of others.

See that you do not intermeddle in the affairs of other people, nor discuss them in your own thoughts; for perhaps you will not be able to fulfill your own task.

Suspect no evil of your brother, for that takes away purity of heart.

Never listen to accounts of the frailties of others; and if any one should complain to you of another, humbly ask him not to speak about him at all.

Do not shrink from trouble, though it may seem to you more than you can bear. Let all men find you compassionate.

No one merits love except for the virtue that he has, and when love is so ordered, it is according to God and in great freedom.

When the love and affection we give to the creature is purely spiritual and founded on God, the love of God grows with it; and the more we remember the earthly love, the more we also remember God and desire Him: the one grows apace with the other.

When the love of the creature springs from sensual vice, or from a purely natural inclination, in proportion to its growth is the diminution of the love of God and forgetfulness of Him; and from the recollection of the creature, remorse of conscience comes.

That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit, said our Saviour in His Gospel. So the love which grows out of sensuality ends in sensuality; that which is of the Spirit ends in the

Spirit of God, and makes it grow. This is the difference between these two loves, that man may distinguish between them.

HEAVEN AND EARTH

A Maori Legend

From Rangi, the Heaven, and Papa, the Earth, it is said, sprang all men and things; but sky and earth came together, and darkness rested upon them and the beings they had begotten, till at last their children took counsel whether they should rend apart their parents or slay them. Then Tane-mahuta, father of forests, said to his five great brethren, "It is better to rend them apart, and let the heaven stand far above us, and the earth lie under our feet. Let the sky become as a stranger to us, but the earth remain close to us as our nursing mother." So Rongo-ma-tane, god and father of the cultivated food of man, rose and strove to separate the heaven and the earth; he struggled, but in vain; and vain, too, were the efforts of Tangaroa, father of fish and reptiles, and of Haumia-tikitiki, father of wild-growing food, and of Tu-ma-tauenga, god and father of fierce men.

Then slow uprises Tane-mahuta, god and father of forests, and wrestles with his parents, striving to part them with his hands and arms. "Lo, he pauses; his head is now firmly planted on his mother the earth, his feet he raises up and rests against his father the skies, he strains his back and limbs with mighty effort. Now are rent apart Rangi and Papa, and with cries and groans of woe they shriek aloud. . . But Tane-mahuta pauses not; far, far beneath him he presses down the earth; far, far above him he thrusts up the sky."

But Tawhiri-ma-tea, father of winds and storms, had

never consented that his mother should be torn from her lord, and now there arose in his breast a fierce desire to war against his brethren. So the Storm-god rose and followed his father to the realms above, hurrying to the sheltered hollows of the boundless skies, to hide and cling and nestle there. Then came forth his progeny, the mighty winds, the fierce squalls, the clouds dense, dark, fiery, wildly drifting, wildly bursting; and in the midst their father rushed upon his foe. Tane-mahuta and his giant forests stood unconscious and unsuspecting when the raging hurricane burst on them, snapping the mighty trees across, leaving trunks and branches rent and torn upon the ground for the insect and grub to prey on.

Then the father of storms swooped down to lash the waters into billows whose summits rose like cliffs, till Tangaroa, god of ocean and father of all that dwell therein, fled affrighted through his seas. His children, Ikatere, the father of fish, and Tu-te-wehiwehi, the father of reptiles, sought where they might escape for safety; the father of fish cried, "Ho, ho let us all escape to the sea!" but the father of reptiles shouted in answer, "Nay, nay, let us rather fly inland," and so these creatures separated, for while the fish fled into the sea, the reptiles sought safety in the forests and scrubs. But the Sea-god Tangaroa, furious that his children the reptiles should have deserted him, has ever since waged war on his brother Tane, who gave them shelter in his woods. Tane attacks him in return supplying the offspring of his brother Tu-matauenga, father of fierce men, with canoes and spears and fish-hooks made from his trees, and with nets woven from his fibrous plants, that they may destroy withal the fish, the Sea-god's children; and the Sea-god turns in wrath upon the Forest-god, overwhelms his

canoes with the surges of the sea, sweeps with floods his trees and houses into the boundless ocean.

Next the god of storms pushed on to attack his brothers, the gods and progenitors of the tilled field and the wild; but Papa, the Earth, caught them up and hid them, and so safely were these her children concealed by their mother that the Storm-god sought for them in vain. So he fell upon the last of his brothers, the father of fierce men, but him he could not even shake, though he put forth all his strength. What cared Tu-matauenga for his brother's wrath? He it was who had planned the destruction of their parents, and had shown himself brave and fierce in war; his brethren had yielded before the tremendous onset of the Storm-god and his progeny; the Forest-god and his offspring had been broken and torn in pieces; the Sea-god and his children had fled to the depths of the ocean or the recesses of the shore; the gods of food had been in safe hiding; but man still stood erect and unshaken upon the bosom of his mother Earth, and at last the hearts of the Heaven and the Storm became tranquil and their passion was assuaged.

But now Tu-matauenga, father of fierce men, took thought how he might be avenged upon his brethren who had left him unaided to stand against the god of storms. He twisted nooses of the leaves of the whanake tree, and the birds and beasts, children of Tane the Forest-god fell before him; he netted nets from the flax-plant, and dragged ashore the fish, the children of Tangaroa the Sea-god; he found in their hiding-place underground the children of Rongo-ma-tane, the sweet potato and all cultivated food, and the children of Haumia-tikitiki, the fern-root and all wild-growing food; he dug them up and let them wither in the sun. Yet, though he overcame his four

brothers, and they became his food, over the fifth he could not prevail, and Tawhiri-ma-tea, the Storm-god, still ever attacks him in tempest and hurricane, striving to destroy him both by sea and land. It was the bursting forth of the Storm-god's wrath against his brethren that caused the dry land to disappear beneath the waters; the beings of ancient days who thus submerged the land were Terrible-rain, Fierce-hailstorms, and their progeny were Mist, and Heavy-dew, and Light-dew; and thus but little of the dry land was left standing above the sea. Then clear light increased in the world, and the beings who had been hidden between Rangi and Papa before they were parted now multiplied upon the earth.

"Up to this time the vast Heaven has still ever remained separated from his spouse the Earth. Yet their mutual love still continues; the soft warm sighs of her loving bosom still ever rise up to him, ascending from the woody mountains and valleys and men call these mists; and the vast Heaven, as he mourns through the long nights his separation from his beloved, drops frequent tears upon her bosom, and men seeing these term them dewdrops."

Where the soul hath the full measure and complement of happiness, where the boundless appetite of that spirit remains completely satisfied, that it can neither desire addition or alteration; that, I think, is truly Heaven, and this can only be in the enjoyment of the essence whose infinite goodness is able to terminate the desires of itself and the insatiable wishes of ours. Wherever God will thus manifest Himself, there is Heaven, though within the circle of the sensible world. Thus the soul of man may be in Heaven any where, even within the limits of his own proper body.—*Sir Thomas Browne.*

THE FUTURE OF INDIA

By Swami Akhilananda

In the December number of the "Atlantic Monthly" Mr. Charles Johnston concludes his article "A Perspective of India" with the following passage:

"So our concern with India goes deeper than our interest in the extension of self-government to two or three hundred millions, the inclusion of a sixth of mankind in the net of democracy. There is the larger question: India still holds her ancient inheritance; can she become in the future what she was in the past—a great intellectual and spiritual power?"

It is indeed gratifying that the people of Mr. Johnston's type are trying to study the Indian problem deeply and are finding out the foundation of Indian culture and civilization. It is an undeniable fact of history that India stands apart from other nations in her activities. She has her peculiarity. We are not going to discuss now whether it is right or not, whether it is correct or not, whether it is beneficial or not in the long run to have her vitality in spirituality. But for good or bad, it is there; she cannot get away from it. She is bound by it. It is the life of the Hindu race. Therefore it is a source of great pleasure that some of the Western thinkers want to see India a mighty spiritual power that will spread her spiritual ideas and ideals throughout the length and breadth of the world. She must give her quota for the progress of civilization.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century a great discontent has been filling the minds of the modern leaders in India. Sincere people are seriously thinking of Indian problems and are trying to mould the destiny of India. They have been struggling for a better order of

things, but many of them failed to grasp the real situation and consequently could not handle the problem properly. The situation is no doubt very grave. Unless they understand the keynote of Indian culture and accordingly of Indian work a great set-back is inevitable, but it is also a historical fact that whenever there has been any occasion to revive Hindu culture, India has never been in want of great personalities to guide and direct her people. It is the same India whose soil was trodden by the feet of the greatest saints and sages. It is the same India that has withstood the shock of so many centuries, of so many invasions and onslaughts—thousands of upheavals of manners and customs—so there is no doubt that again she will regain her strength and spread her spirituality abroad.

The problem in India is very complex and momentous. Race religion, language, government, all these combined make a nation. But here we find a conglomeration of all languages, races and religions, for all the nations of the world have poured into the land of India. From the Buddhistic time to the present day different types of people have made India their home. Since the advent of Buddha incoming races have brought with them their customs and manners. Hinduism, however, has assimilated all these foreign elements and has taken them within its fold. There was a chaotic condition just after the tremendous missionary movement of the early Buddhists, when a great onrush of foreign elements occurred that was organized and met by religious teachers such as Sankara and others.

Thus in spite of different customs and manners there is a fundamental unity among the Hindus. This unity is in religion, and by religion we do not mean rituals and ceremonies. These are always given a secondary place

by the Hindus. The primary or essential parts of a religion are the knowledge of the higher Self and the control over the lower self. The rituals and observances may vary according to the temperaments of the individuals, but the fundamental principle is accepted by all. All equally follow the lofty ideals of the Vedas. The only meeting-place they have is India's holy traditions—her religion upon which she will have to build her future. This religion has certain grounds that are common to all sects, however varying the conclusions which they may draw from them. The Hindu faith admits of a measureless variation and an infinite amount of liberty permitting the people to think and live in their own way. This doctrine of harmony of religions can alone be the cementing element and unifying material of Indian national life. The Indian reformers must look back. Mere looking into the past glories is no doubt degrading, but out of the past is to be built the future. India has a glorious record of her past activities in different spheres of life, especially in the spiritual. This is the ancient land where wisdom made its home before it went into any other country. As Max Muller puts it:

"Whatever sphere of the human mind you may select for your special study, whether it be language, or religion, or mythology, or philosophy, whether it be laws or customs, primitive art or primitive science, everywhere you have to go to India, whether you like it or not, because some of the most valuable and most instructive materials in the history of man are treasured up in India, and in India only."

She had no mushroom growth. She unfolded herself in various ways. The real thinker has only to go back to understand the nature of her national life and the

methods adopted by her great saints in the past. Thinking of past glory will not give her salvation, but it will be the guiding force to rejuvenate her people. They are to know the elements of their makeup and the blood which courses in their veins.

Apparently nowadays it seems that the future of India is uncertain. There have been periods of decay and degeneration, but there are signs of real revival. It may be hard for an outsider to understand her future activities and there may be some difficulties owing to her different elements. Also it is true that there have been some internal troubles of late, but in India social, racial and linguistic difficulties melt away before the unifying power of religion. The principle of harmony of religions heralded recently by the modern saint, Sri Ramakrishna, will not only unite the different sects of Hindus but will also make them one with other religionists by a better understanding of each other. "Truth is one, men call it by different names" is the real ideal of the Hindus. This glorious thought of the Vedic sages will certainly remove all the present troubles and difficulties as it unified all the foreign internal elements in the past. It may sound too visionary, but this is the key-note of Indian life. This is the only possible means of work. If other lines of action are adopted it will but prove disastrous. We cannot take the River Ganges back to its source and change its course. Some of the modern reformers wanted to follow other nations in their progressive march and to adopt their methods of national activity. It is yet to be seen if the experiments of other nations are successful and stand the test of time. The recent war and its aftermath make us afraid to follow any people, however prosperous they may appear to be. Although the modern politicians

are forming many associations and leagues for unity and peace, we do not see any real move towards that goal. The Lord alone knows if that will ever be realized under the present circumstances. The thinking mind will certainly not hope much from all the talk concerning toleration and the rights and principles of others so long as the high religious ideal is absent. It will have to pause and find out its own way.

India has already discovered her life-giving principle. The great Swami Vivekananda proclaimed the real medicine. The medical principle is that when the body is weak then the germs of disease can take possession of it. When once the germs make their home in the body, different symptoms gradually develop and the patient suffers much. Then the good physician instead of trying to remove one symptom after another tries to kill the germs. He wants to root out the source of the disease. After studying history, we find that the life-blood of Indian nationalism is spirituality. If it is strong and pure, everything is right—political, social, economical and other material defects will be cured.

Thus the thinking minds of India are striving to root out the disease, to cleanse the blood of all impurities. This will not only solve the present problem of India, but it will help other nations in solving their problems. India is still alive to fulfill her great mission—to give to the world her message of harmony and toleration.

Man if thou wilt surely know,
What 'tis indeed to pray.
Go deep within thy soul, and
Ask of God the way.

Angelus Silesius.

THE BEAUTIFUL AND GOOD

From Hermes Trismegistus

(Egyptian Teaching. Date Unknown)

The excellencies of the Beautiful are round the very essence of the Good; nay, they do seem too pure, too unalloyed; perchance 'tis they that are themselves Its essences.

For one may dare to say, Asclepius,—if essence, sooth, He have—God's essence is the Beautiful; the Beautiful is further also Good.

There is no Good (i. e., absolute Good) that can be got from objects in the world. For all the things that fall beneath the eye are image-things and pictures as it were; while those that do not meet the eye are the realities, especially the essence of the Beautiful and Good.

Just as the eye cannot see God, so can it not behold the Beautiful and Good. For that they are integral parts of God, wedded to Him alone, inseparate familiars, most beloved,with whom God is Himself in love,or they with God.

If thou canst God conceive, thou shalt conceive the Beautiful and Good, transcending Light, made lighter than the Light by God. That Beauty is beyond compare, inimitate that Good, e'en as God is Himself.

As then, thou dost conceive of God, conceive the Beautiful and Good. For they cannot be joined with aught of other things that live since they can never be divorced from God.

Seek'st thou for God, thou seek'st for the Beautiful. One is the path that leadeth unto It—Devotion joined with Gnosis.

So to conduct one's life as to realize oneself—this seems to me the highest attainment possible to a human being.—*Ibsen*

DAYS IN AN INDIAN MONASTERY

By Sister Devamata

(Chapters III and IV, "Arrival at Madras" and "Daily Life at the Monastery," will not appear in the "Message.")

V

TEMPLE FESTIVALS

The city of Madras consists of a chain of villages twelve miles or more long, bound together by a common municipal government. Wide gaps of rice fields and cocoanut-palm groves divide one village from another, giving the appearance of open country at unexpected places. Banks and department stores and offices stand in large walled gardens and there is little to suggest town life until one plunges into a densely populated nucleus near the middle of the chain. Each village has its own Temple and special festivals. Like the household sanctuary, the Temple is built for God, not for man. It is not for congregational worship. That is an Occidental institution, the natural outgrowth of a seventh day religious custom. In India religious practice is a daily habit, and religion an individual matter.

"In the West they preach to masses of people and that is known as religion there," Swami Ramakrishnananda explained to me one day; "but here in India one man whispers one or two holy words in the ear of another in a solitary place and this is religion according to the Hindus. Man's religious consciousness is awakened by the *Upadesham* (holy word) and this must be made known to none. Wife must not tell it to the husband or the husband to the wife. It is the person's individual property. Religion here is altogether an individual thing. For that reason there must be as many forms of religion as there are people. This is literally true.

As one coat cannot fit both you and me, so one aspect of God cannot suit all. In the West they give one aspect of God and expect him to suit every one, but in India every man has a form of God fitted to his peculiar need—that is why we seem to have so many Gods."

A missionary once asked a merchant in Madras why he carried a daily offering to a Temple in the Bazar dedicated to the God of Success; why did he not make his offering to the one true God. "That would not be honest," was the merchant's answer. "If I have a shop, that means I want to prosper; so by my action I am worshipping the God of Prosperity. To worship the highest form of Deity I would have to cease to care for money. I would have to give up shop-keeping and devote my whole life to Him. That is why here in the Bazar our Temple is dedicated to Ganapati, the Success God." This was told me by one who overheard the conversation.

In the ancient system of Indian Government every village has its headman. God is the Supreme Headman of the village and the Temple is His dwelling-place where He receives His children and blesses them by His Presence, protection and loving care. They go to the Temple singly to salute and commune with that One Who is Mother and Father or Friend. They carry to Him the first fruits of their labor, they bring to Him the child who has been saved from death or the young daughter who is about to become a wife. Their life mingles freely with the Temple life and gathers strength and sweetness from it.

I knew gentlemen in Madras who each year celebrated the birthday of their eldest son at the Temple, feeding hundreds and hundreds of hungry poor. The ladies of the family were busy for a week before, preparing the many dishes with their own hands. One gentleman of

Mylapore sent the son himself from the Temple to my house with a tray bearing such a feast. I counted thirty different leaf-cups each containing a different kind of food.

The Temple Porch is the age-hallowed seat of education and the Temple itself stands as a lofty lesson in carven wood or stone. The carvings are archaic, grotesque even, but they tell the whole story of human life, its struggles and its triumphs, its pains and its pleasures, its high lights and its shadows. The Indian philosopher is not afraid to look Nature squarely in the face and to take account of all her aspects. He knows that each has its use and place in the created universe, that beneath the endless variety there lies an unchanging Unity, behind even the darkest aspect there shines the radiant light of Soul. The mindfulness of this buoys him up and carries him on.

The matron of the Bangalore Hospital, an ardent Roman Catholic, once said to me: "In all the fourteen years I have been here I have noticed that the average Christian shrinks from death while the Hindu meets it cheerfully and fearlessly, and I am forced to admit that for the Christian the soul's immortality is a theory and for the Hindu it is a fact." Many Temples, especially in South India, are built with the Holy of Holies within five enclosures to symbolize the sheaths of the human constitution and teach men that they must go deep within—beyond body, senses, mind, intellect and ego—if they would reach the innermost sanctuary of soul-consciousness or God-union,—the state Christ defines in the words, "I and my Father are one."

In the chain of sanctuaries which form the pivotal centres of the village districts of Madras one of the most

holy and revered is at Triplicane, three miles from Mylapore. It is a large imposing Temple with a large tank before it, and I never approached it without the vivid consciousness of great power emanating from it. It is the only Temple in South India dedicated to Parth-Sarati, that is to Sri Krishna as Arjuna's charioteer. It is as Parth-Sarati that he spoke the sacred words of the Bhagavad-Gita.

I had not been at Mylapore very long when a gentleman of Triplicane came to tell us that the main festival of the year was just beginning and he hoped Swami Ramakrishnananda and I would take part in it as his guests. His house stood across from the Temple. That evening was to be the floating festival, so we made a special effort to go. A friend took us in his carriage. When we reached Triplicane at dusk we found it a surging mass of human beings. The steps on three sides round the tank were packed with people, the steps on the fourth side had rows of countless flickering votive lights. The streets were seething with more people, there were thousands upon thousands.

The crowd fell back for us and when we reached the side of the tank in front of the Temple gate, we found a wide clear space on the steps. As we took our places here, the float turned and poled its way to the foot of the steps where we stood and remained there for ten or fifteen minutes. This gave us a wonderful view of it. It was broad and long. On the outer edge on either side was a line of men holding flaming torches, next to these were a number of Brahmans chanting Vedic texts in Sanskrit. High up on a throne at the back was the Sacred Image covered with votive garlands. Before it stood the priest waving burning camphor and fragrant

incense. It was profoundly impressive and as we paid our homage to it there rose in my mind the saying of Sri Ramakrishna:

"Bow down and worship where others kneel, for where so many have been paying the tribute of adoration the kind Lord must manifest Himself, for He is all mercy."

As we moved away I said to Swami Ramakrishnananda: "How fortunate we were to find such a splendid place and to have the float come across the tank just as we got there." He replied in a quiet, matter of fact tone: "It was all done specially for you." I was bewildered and amazed. I had not dreamed of such a thing.

We went several times again to the Festival that year and the next. One evening we mingled with the throng and caught the kindling ardor of its pious enthusiasm. There was one festival, however, to which we did not go and which I regretted missing. It came in the rainy season and lasted only one day. What marked it specially was the opening of a certain holy gate to the Temple, not open at any other time. Those who passed through it, particularly the first ones, were supposed to reap a rare blessing. It reminded me of the stirring of the waters in the Bible.

I heard of this festival in an unexpected way. One late afternoon a drenching storm broke over Mylapore. A young Brahman widow with three little ones fled for shelter to my front verandah. Despite their evident weariness there was a glow of fervor on their faces that told me they were returning from no ordinary errand. Although shy, the mother seemed glad to talk with me. She was twenty-six, she said, and the children were eight, six and five. They were on their way home from the

Temple festival at Triplicane and had been among the earliest to pass through the gate. As she spoke of it the light in her eyes grew brighter.

They had risen before four that morning. After bathing herself and the children and putting on fresh cloths, they had set out without touching food or water and had walked the six miles from her village to the Temple. When the smallest child grew tired she had carried it on her hip. The little ones had had a modest meal at noon in the home of a friend, but she was still keeping a rigid fast—no food or drink—and they were walking the six miles back again. She spoke of it simply without thought of merit.

When the rain abated I asked to get a bullock cart for her. These carts are very small, two-wheeled, hooded and springless. They jolt along behind a tiny bullock and for a few cents will carry a passenger long distances. With the same frank simplicity she told me they were very poor and she had no money. There was a modest dignity and fineness about her which made the offering of charity impossible, but I pointed to the children leaning against her sound asleep and begged the mother privilege of saving them from further fatigue. She looked at them and consented.

My last visit to the Temple at Triplicane lingers in my memory like the perfume of incense in a Shrine. I had expressed a desire to see it once more. The day before my leaving a trustee of the Temple and a friend of Swami Ramakrishnananda, a delightful, highly cultured Brahman gentleman, came to the Monastery to tell us that he had arranged to have the Temple kept open beyond the habitual hour and that he would call for us in his carriage at half past eight. It was the bright fort-

night of the moon and the lights and shadows seemed as sharply defined as under the noontide sun, but without the garishness of noonday.

When we reached the Temple, the usually crowded porch was empty. Every one had gone home for the evening meal. We threw off our slippers at the gate and passed into the court. Swami Ramakrishnananda went on into the Temple. When I reached a certain point beyond which I knew I was not expected to go I stopped, but the Brahman priest who had come to welcome us and the gentleman who had brought us motioned me to come on and they led me to the threshold of the inner Shrine. There I stood in silent awe. The voices of the mighty Vedic Sages who had spoken the words of wisdom reiterated by Krishna the Charioteer in the Bhagavad-Gita seemed to resound in my ears, mingled with the voices of countless devotees who had prostrated there down the centuries in supplication and worship. Differences in race and creed, time itself seemed to melt. Only infinite and eternal Oneness was left.

As I stood there in silent awe, out of the darkness at the end of a faint vista of ornate pillars suddenly there shot up a flame. It was the priest waving lighted camphor before the ancient image that I might see it. I bowed in prayer. As I raised myself a garland was dropped around my head. I looked up and found it had come from the hand of the Brahman priest. Swami Ramakrishnananda told me later that he had taken it from the sacred image to give to me. The other Brahmans in the Temple, catching the spirit of the priest, gathered up the flowers that had been used in the day's worship and brought them to me by handfuls. I held out a small silk shawl I was carrying and they filled it. It

still bears the stain of sandalwood paste and pollen from that night.

Incidents such as this and that of the floating festival are too intimate and personal to set down for many eyes to read. I tell of them only to make plain how quick is the Indian heart to give response to the heart from another nation, when it comes with understanding sympathy and fellow-feeling. A Brahman gentleman, trustee of a large Temple in South India, once declared to me: "We would be glad to open our Temples to foreigners, but they themselves close the doors. We bathe, put on a fresh cloth, take off our slippers and enter reverently. The average foreigner stalks in with dusty shoes, unwashed hands, and opera glasses. To him our Temples are objects of curiosity, to us they are holy places of worship. Do you wonder we bar the gates?"

(Chapter concluded in next number)

REPORT

Christmastide was celebrated at Ananda-Ashrama, California, and at the Vedanta Centre of Boston with deep reverence and great gladness of heart. Garlands, wreaths, ruby red vigil lights and a Christ-child altar bright with flowers and flaming candles, made both places into true Christmas shrines, while carols provided the musical background. In Boston, Swami Akhilananda, who recently accompanied Swami Paramananda from India as his assistant, spoke with deep feeling to the Boston members upon the "Significance and Necessity of Incarnations," at a Christmas-eve Service, his first in the West.

At almost the same hour on December 24th, Swami Paramananda conducted a special Service in the Assembly Room of the Ashrama, giving utterance to the spirit of

this great Festival through his tender words touching upon the Christ-child and the significance of the Christ life. Following the Service, the Swami entertained the members of the Ashrama and a few friends at an informal dinner which he himself cooked.

On December 30th, the Swami prepared a real feast for his friends, sixty-five being present. After the dinner there were songs and other forms of entertainment by the Ashrama members, and at the close the Swami wished to all a blessed New Year and renewed consecration to their ideal.

* * * * * *

Word has come that in San Francisco also, at the Hindu Temple, Christmas was observed. The auditorium at the Temple was transformed into a bower of green with wreaths and choice flowers, while "the Indian incense permeating the peaceful and solemn atmosphere of the hall, and the sweet melodies of the Christmas hymns, inspired those present with a sense of reverential worship." Swami Prakashananda, honored head of the San Francisco work, spoke with fervor on the "Incarnation of the Christ-spirit," urging that "the individual, communal and racial lives should reflect more and more the radiant light of the Star of Bethlehem."

* * * * * *

Swami Rhagavananda who has been conducting the work of the New York Vedanta Society, is gradually winning his way in that great city through his earnest efforts and unflagging zeal, while in Portland, Oregon, Swami Prabhavananda is building up his newly formed Centre upon the firm foundation of devoted and consecrated work.

MAR 1 1927

VOL. XVI. NUMBER 2

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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

February, 1927

PEACE AND POISE

Issued by

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ASHRAMA ARTS AND CRAFTS

Hand-weaving is the newest addition to the Arts and Crafts Department at Ananda-Ashrama, the gift of a loom by a friend, making it possible for members trained in the art to weave dress goods by the yard, scarfs, bags, linen towels,, runners, etc. The Department also has on sale bronzed reproductions of the Vedanta symbol—the lotus with the Sacred Word—hand-illuminated book-marks with quotations from the Swami's poems, many of the poems themselves illumined and framed, artistic lamp-shades, book-covers, incense made from California native shrubs and Eastern spices, etc. Information concerning prices will be given on request.

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Cincinnati, Ohio: Mr. W. H. Starick, 2360 Rohs St.; Dr. Peter Boike, 6121 Madison Ave., Madisonville.

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MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."
—Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East."
—Tyndall.

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A MAN AMONG MEN

By Swami Paramananda

ONCE I saw Thee walking among men,
a man;
Yet wert Thou apart.
Not in Thy dazzling splendour,
But through Thy humble being
And mark of heaven's compassion:
Thus did I find Thee and reach Thee.
If Thou wert a king I could not
have reached Thee;
If Thou wert in great splendour I
could not have gazed upon Thee;
If thou wert in Thy holy might I
would not have dared approach Thee
O Thou heavenly Being!
Thou hast cleansed, sanctified and
redeemed
This abandoned spark of life.

(Read by the Swami at the Christmas Eve Service, Ananda-Ashrama, 1926)

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

The best soldiers are not warlike; the best fighters do not lose their temper; the greatest conquerors are those who overcome their enemies without strife; the greatest directors of men are those who yield place to others. This is called the virtue of not striving, the capacity for directing mankind; this is being the compeer of Heaven. It was the highest goal of the ancients.—*Lao-Tze*

A man's inability to moderate and control his passions I call servitude.—*Spinoza*

Great minds have purposes, others have wishes. Little minds are tamed and subdued by misfortunes; but great minds rise above them.—*Washington Irving*

The real treasure is that laid up by man or woman through charity and piety, temperance and self-control. The treasure thus hid is secure and passes not away. Though he leave the fleeting riches of this world, this a man takes with him. A treasure that no wrong of others and no thief can steal. Let the wise man do good deeds. The treasure follows of itself.—*Nidhikanda Sutta*

He whose conscience is clean, he will soon be content and pleased. Thou art not the holier though thou be praised nor the more vile though thou be blamed or dispraised. What thou art, that thou art; that God knoweth thee to be and thou canst be said to be no greater.

—*Thomas a Kempis*

If thou desirest that thy conduct should be good and preserved from all evil, keep thyself from every attack of bad humour. It is a fatal malady which leads to discord and there is no longer any existence for him who gives

way to it. . . . When a man has established his just equilibrium and walks in this path, there where he makes his dwelling there is no room for bad humour.
—*Precepts of Pta Hotep (Oldest Book in the World)*

Blest are those
Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled
That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger
To sound what stop she pleases. Give me that man
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart
As I do thee.—*Shakespeare*

If some one delivered your body into the power of any one you might meet on the way, you would certainly be angry. And do you feel no shame in delivering up your own mind to be disconcerted and confounded by any one who happens to revile you?—*Epictetus*

He who hath earnestly striven after learning and true wisdom, and hath been fully trained and exercised therein, he, if he lay hold on truth, must one would think of necessity acquire an immortal and heavenly temper; nay—so far I say again as human nature is capable of it—he will in no wise fall short of immortality: and since he is ever serving the Divine, and hath the genius which dwelleth in him ordered aright, he must needs be blessed exceedingly.—*Plato*

Be generous of your temporal as of your spiritual possessions, remembering that always it is too little to give what one has if one is not disposed to give what one is.
—*Cardinal Mercier*

PEACE AND POISE

By Swami Paramananda

(Class Talk given at the Vedanta Centre of Boston)

Let us gather our thoughts and make our body and mind tranquil and harmonious. Let us free our hearts from all anxious thoughts, all dissonant feelings, that we may have a sense of freedom and relaxation within and without us. May the Supreme Spirit of the universe Who is the Mother and Father of all living beings, grant unto us His loving protection. May He guard us from all evil thoughts and actions; may His blessings ever abide with us and may we all acquire strength and wisdom through our study. May we learn to work, worship and aspire without ever striking a discordant note. Peace, peace, peace be unto us and unto all living beings.

This simple invocation from the Indo-Aryan Classic, although very ancient holds a lesson for every one of us for every hour of our life. If we can only be mindful of the Great Cause, if we can only connect ourselves with the Source of all strength and blessings, it is not likely that we shall fail or falter or blunder. And if we can only learn to maintain that harmonious spirit of rhythm—rhythm which is the basis of all life and action—then life cannot defeat us. Man, no matter how calculating he may be, how careful, can never safeguard himself from evil or misfortune if he depends solely on his own strength. Therefore wise men, their wisdom leads them to depend on the Source of all things and not merely try to find some small security through mental calculation. Prayer to the Supreme always implies realizing our smallness and His greatness. Blessed are those who are humble. We find that emphasized in such a benediction.

The idea of peace is never old, and it can never grow old; but only through our aspiration for it do we realize its import. Every time I repeat this Peace Chant I am reminded of a very humorous thing that was once said about me by a friend in Boston. It was during the war. I was in Europe, and this gentleman, a lawyer, having a legal trend of mind, said to his wife: "I suppose our dear Swami is over there using his 'Peace! Peace! Peace!' among those people who are fighting against each other." It was told to me in a casual way, but it made a deep impression on my mind. I want to share that impression with you. We have to repeat many times what is worth while before it makes any real impress upon us. That repetition, if sincere and deep, will gradually penetrate our consciousness. It is like a man trying to pierce a granite hill. He must work at it steadily. I saw a natural example of this once when some men were digging a tunnel for water hundreds of feet above sea level. The rock was so hard that they had to use a larger drill and employ more power than usual. Sometimes they even had to use dynamite. Because a problem seems impenetrable, it is not impossible. If we give up at the outset we never attain anything, and more than that, we lose a tremendous opportunity. It is not only from beautiful books that we learn; when our heart is open, everything at every turn of life, even inanimate objects, give us their lesson.

I am gradually leading up to the subject, "Peace and Poise." It is a practical subject and yet a most perfectly spiritual one. Can you imagine a person who has any great grasp of love, lacking in dignity, lacking in calmness and serenity of heart? Profound love does not

go, cannot go, with feverish spirit. When we find a person who is turbulent, restless and nervous, there is a reason for it, just as when we find these qualities in ourselves; and it is not outside conditions that are disturbing him, but elements in his own thoughts, in his own attitude of mind and in his aspirations. You cannot go near such a person without feeling a sense of restlessness, as if it were a soul lacking all order and control. It is a most unhappy state. He becomes his own worst enemy. The opportunities he has, he disrupts. Standing directly in his own light, he says: "I cannot see," and is blinded by his own shadow.

This is a practical lesson and this is a practical age. Science, and all the agencies of science are teaching us the outer measure of life, but science is not teaching us enough how to beautify our own inner life. The yearning we have for success, to make ourselves efficient, often leads us outside ourselves. One who is constantly going outside of himself, running a race, in his haste runs away from the centre of his being, and thus he is bound to defeat his own purpose. Some people have achieved a certain amount of business success and yet they are tremendously depleted physically, nervously, morally, because their aim has not been right. When that is not right it is sure to bring its reaction upon our life.

There are some thoughts that as soon as they enter our mind make us very restless. If we continue to hold them it is almost as if we were set on fire,—even our body reacts to them. Then there are other thoughts which are just like cool water thrown on a land which is parched. These are not some one else's thoughts; they are our own and often we admit them unconsciously. If we could only learn consciously to control them what a

tremendous asset it would be in our life and aspiration. There are many occasions when we cannot help but be vexed. The average man says: "It is natural to yield to annoyance. If I feel irritable, let me be irritable." We seek to justify ourselves by saying: "It is my nature to do this." We do not need scientific methods to prove that when a person is emotionally disturbed it is injurious to him. If anger were the natural thing, it would not tear us to pieces as it does.

Our study should begin with our own life. We must learn how we can minimize these detriments, how we can reduce them. Often people remark, "What can I do? I have a quick temper. I do not mean what I say." Any one can correct such impulses if some one will give him the impetus and teach him the secret, but he can learn it only in the quiet hour and not when the emergency arises. He must prepare beforehand. This is the meaning of living the life—not waiting for the emergency. If we wait, it is too late. Even, however, if we have been defeated it does not mean that we should accept defeat. Let us prepare for the next time. There may not be a next time. We may become stable. I know of nothing so practical and eternally true as the text in the Bhagavad-Gita: "All those feelings that come upon us of pleasure and pain, elation and depression, hate and love,—all the dual conditions that we constantly experience,—the man who is not affected by these is fit to attain the highest." This is exactly what poise means. It is not something made to order from a pattern; it is something you evolve in your own soul. You remain unmoved no matter what the outside occasion is. You will be full of feeling, but you will not be affected by your feelings. You will not lose your sensibility, but you will

no longer be overwhelmed by pleasure and pain. When our life and all our faculties are harmoniously held together, they give us so much strength that outer things cannot overthrow us.

There is the example of the turtle. A turtle when you hit it on the shell withdraws all its limbs. It is a symbol of one who is self-contained. The outside world—enemies—may try to hinder him; but he will not strike back because he has a controlled, a superior state of mind. With the ordinary type of man, sometimes your look is enough to anger him. He magnifies; he creates a mountain out of a little sand-hill and crushes himself under it. These are not imaginations; they are facts and we are facing them every day. Poise in body and mind, especially in our nervous system, will enhance our power of action. I have said this many times. People are not stricken so much by overwork as by lack of peace and harmony. I do not, however, advise anybody to overwork. Moderation is the only thing that will give us peace. When we come to the place where we no longer think of ourselves, we shall be preserved no matter what we do; but in our infancy we need to learn a sense of value, a sense of proportion.

It is easy to be swept by a wave of elation. People grow excited by it. What follows? The same people will be equally affected by depression. They will have reaction and fall into the depths of despair, because they have no balance. We must find the practical value of life. It is not that any one can write a prescription for us; it is something we evolve. Our mind is primarily responsible for it. Why is it that when we hold a profound thought our body benefits through it? If we go to sleep in that state of mental equilibrium, we wake re-

freshed. Unfortunately we do not know how to use the hours that are given to us for rest and renewal of body and nervous system. At night we are supposed to be resting, but often we do not utilize our opportunity. We are full of anxiety, full of cares and worries. How can we relieve this? What can we do to prevent it? Here is where we cannot help but turn to spiritual resources. There is one part of us which is not affected by these elements. We have to turn towards that inmost, the spiritual centre of our being. In the Upanishads there is given this parable. Life is compared with a tree upon which are two birds. One hops from branch to branch, tasting the fruit; sometimes it is sweet, sometimes bitter. The other is always calm and majestic. Unaffected by either experience, he sits unmoved and serene. When the first bird comes upon another like himself, yet so different—freed from the element of grief—he is quickened, a new consciousness dawns in his heart. That is what happens to us. We accept these dual conditions of life, heat and cold, pleasure and pain, and they go hard with us because they seem so real. As soon as we strike the balancing point, however, they cease to have their domination over us. They exist but they do not affect us. This is the practical philosophy of life.

We cannot expect to find a place where there will be no more troubles. There will be troubles even in heaven if we carry them in our own mind. This is true. A person may seek peace in seclusion and alone, and yet not find it because he carries elements of disturbance with him. Even in a mountain cave a man may be harrassed by his own thoughts. It is not that we cannot find a true setting for peace and happiness, but that we should carry with us such consciousness of peace and such an

abiding feeling of harmony that no matter where we go we shall change the atmosphere by our very presence. A person who is spiritually awake is calm and contented; his peace cannot be easily broken. He walks into a room where people are quarrelling and his presence is so overpowering that all discord vanishes as darkness before the light. We may talk for hours; we may lecture a child or a friend who is nervous and tell him what not to do; but that does no good. The only way we can give definite help is by our own unshakable peace. We shall all come to that point of view, that it is not what we say we are, but what we really are, that counts.

Anger is dispelled by love. The only definite impression we can make is when we have love within. In India, meditation is not something on which one gives a lecture. It is practised. On many occasions I have told you this, and to-night I feel like sitting here and giving you an example of it instead of talking about it. Silence with inner dignity! One who retires within his own Self, within his own existence, the centre of his being, he finds these qualities. If we form the habit of practising meditation when we are tired, it will eliminate a great deal of our physical and mental disturbance. It is the only thing that will bring a truly healthful condition in our life. A superficial observer may say that we should do for others, for humanity, before we do for ourselves; but this is an erroneous thought. No man can help humanity till he has helped himself. The only way to give our share is by first establishing our bounty. A man unshakable in pleasure and pain, in praise and blame, who stands firm because he is armed with spiritual strength, that man, even unconsciously, gives a tremendous impetus to the world. That is what I want you to do. You say: "When

I practise I like to see what I am gaining." Constantly bargaining about what you are going to receive is a disturbing element of thought. You must rid your system of that wrong element before you can experience a state of poise. This is practical wisdom. If I gave you some unfamiliar teaching you might say: "That sounds interesting. I do not understand it, therefore there must be something in it." I have, however, no desire to mystify. The path is very simple; but till we enter into that greater consciousness we must go round and round ourselves, every time turning the wrong way.

"Covet not pleasure; shrink not from pain. Stand firm on the balancing-rod of life." Do not go away with the thought that I am asking you to be indifferent. That is not the idea. I do not ask you to be indifferent, but to acquire balance. It is balance that is going to free you from all these onslaughts. At the present time we are tossed up and down like a little boat, helpless and rudderless. We cannot be tossed without tossing others because our lives are so inter-related. We all feel the shock. This is what keeps the world in a chaotic condition. One person who gets his balance, what a force he becomes in the world! When our heart is so clear that it is like a body of still water, then there will not be any more distortion of vision. To gain this state,—quietude of body, mind and spirit—is most essential. Try to practise it even for a little time every day. When you are alone instead of feeling desolate, instead of complaining of your fate, realize that you have an opportunity to reflect, to go within and get hold of your real Self. There is so much in us that is undiscovered. Let us try to discover it. It will bring revelation within the soul of man.

We are restless, going hither and thither looking for

our peace when it is hidden within us. We seek nothing further when we find that. There is tremendous abundance within. That is what we sense in great souls. They have no need to take from others; they give unconsciously from their bounty. They have such exuberance of spirit. No more pettiness; no more saying: "If I give I shall lose." Such thoughts never occur to them.

As our understanding deepens, we realize more and more that the whole secret of life consists in learning to go within. Way within the very depth of our inner being where no storm of emotion or stress of depression can find access, this inner kingdom of man, the goal of religion, free from all dual conflicts, holds for every world-weary soul unbroken harmony and abounding peace.

FACE THE LIGHT

By Amy G. Taylor

Look up and face the light—
be not afraid.
The storm-tossed dream is passed—
be undismayed.
Look up! Be in the stream
that makes men free.
The gale so strong and wild
would break the tree;
Roots firmly held, it stood the test;
and so must we.
Look up! Love holds this universe
for thee and me.
We must be of this love
or cease to be.

He that formed the mind, made it as it were a temple for himself to dwell in; for God liveth in the mind and nothing but God.—*Dadu*

INNERMOST HEART

Sermon by John Tauler.

(A Dominican Monk of Strasburg and a pupil of Meister Eckhart)

Verily, if anything else is clearer to thee than God alone, or of which He is not the true Source, it must find no place in thee. . . Thy mind must be empty of all else, pure and seeking God only, filled only with Him, and with nothing else, as though thou wert ready to say: "Dear Lord, could I but only show Thee some measure of love in all places, and in the sight of all men, I would set myself to do it in all humility." But if man is inclined to choose that which is next to God, let him strive to gain love, choose flight from all distractions, and diligently and with all his might turn his thoughts within.

Man must serve God in all things, both outwardly and inwardly, and in all his actions, not according to his own will, but according to God's dear Will. For if a man has not God in his heart, he walks uncertainly and insecurely; as the Holy Scriptures say: "Woe to him that is alone, for when he falleth he hath none to lift him up." That man is indeed alone who has not God always within him, in his heart and in all his ways. But if he were first of all to take refuge with our Lord, then his castle, that is, his heart and soul, will be well garrisoned and protected, and his enemies will be unable to prevail against him. The man who lays hold on God and desires Him only, will find that He is all-sufficient. All things will be but the road to God for him, and, content with whatever may come, he will attain to peace with himself and all mankind. . .

If thou desirest to be safe, turn at once in thy emptiness to God. If thou hast been inconsistent how canst thou better become consistent again than in God only?

How canst thou better escape death than by the true, real life which is God Himself? Where can a man warm himself better than by the fire? So it is in God. Man must bring all that concerns him to God, and leave all with Him. God will provide for him in the best of ways. He must trust all things to God; and in that trust he must be ready to accept all things as for the best, and rest in peace. But if man will not fully cast himself on God, and trust in Him, but wants to busy himself about everything and is full of care, God often lets him fall into misery and distress that he may see how far he can get in his own strength. But if he trusts himself to God in all things in full confidence, then most certainly God will provide for him both outwardly and inwardly, far better than any creature could. For God is full of grace and truth, and whatever we ask of Him in full confidence we shall assuredly receive. For just as it is impossible to love God too well, so also it is impossible to trust Him too much, if otherwise our intentions are right and good.

This true peace is found by man in the depths of his own heart which is the true Dwelling-place of God. When he first turns to God he must needs be empty, he must have leisure, time and place for Him. There in the innermost heart of man this tree will grow up with all its branches and fruits. For within, emptied of all else, ways and means of coming to God will be revealed to man, and he will also learn to understand God's dealings with him. The more he yields himself to this knowledge, the more clearly will God's ways be made known to him.

Within the body is a place for food, and reflection on God, and breath; thou thinkest it is for bread only.—*Sadi*

ZARATHUSHTRA

An Explanatory Sketch

Zarathushtra or Zoroaster, the Founder of Zoroastrianism, the religion of the ancient Persians, lived, according to scholars, anywhere from 2000 to 600 B. C., making him, if the earlier date is correct, very nearly contemporary with the Vedic Rishis, the Fathers of Indo-Aryan philosophy. Up to a few years ago but few facts were known concerning this prophet of an earlier age, all traces of his life and his teachings having vanished from Persia centuries before. The meagre information we had was largely legendary, consisting of various fables handed down to us from classic sources. The Greek philosophers, inspired with admiration for Zarathushtra, called him "The Ancient Sage," and many curious tales were recounted of his birth, life and death. He was said to have entered the world with a laugh of triumph instead of with a cry and finally to have been destroyed by a flash of fire from heaven.

This was all we knew. Zarathushtra was to us only a legendary figure standing out against an almost obliterated past. To-day, however, owing to the indefatigable zeal of a young Frenchman, we are in possession of more accurate information. Little did we dream, till he revealed it to us, that in a corner of India still existed the ancient Zoroastrian tradition; that certain facts as to the real Zarathushtra, some of his sacred writings, as well as remnants of his original worship were being preserved and jealously guarded by a sect whose very name revealed their racial origin. It is a story worth the telling and worth the hearing. I shall give it in the words of an eminent modern authority.

"Our recovery of some real knowledge of Zoroaster,"

he writes, "of his books, his teachings, and even of his personal life, forms one of the true romances of modern science. His faith has long disappeared from Persia. Even the knowledge of it had been long forgotten; for when the land was conquered by the Mohammedan Arabs in the seventh century of our era, the Mohammedan religion was forced upon the Persian people, their ancient faith was obliterated, and their ancient literature destroyed. How then, have these been preserved for us? A few earnest Zoroastrians fled from Persia into India, carrying with them their religion and even some of its Sacred Books. In that strange land of a thousand faiths they were but little molested. For over a thousand years they dwelt there as a sect apart, until in the eighteenth century Europe heard of this Indian sect as the 'Parsis,' a name presumably corrupted from 'Persians'.

"European scholars sought curiously to study this new-found and unknown Parsi faith; but centuries of suffering had made its priesthood fearful, and suspicious of intruders. They would reveal nothing to the European strangers. At length an enthusiastic and resolute young Frenchman, Anquetil Duperron, determined to solve the mystery. He had neither money nor influence, so he enlisted as a private soldier in the British Indian forces. After years of toil and effort he managed at length not only to reach the Parsis, but to dwell among them until he had overcome their distrust, and they revealed to him their ancient books. The eager young savant studied these and after much patient labor succeeded in translating them into his own tongue.

"Even then, however, the battle was but begun. European scholars, judging too quickly and carelessly, declared his work a forgery. It was too wonderful! Schol-

ars could not believe that the whole Aryan past, the long-lost and long-forgotten religion of our ancestors, could have been thus suddenly discovered by a wandering soldier. Not until after Duperron's death was the real and remarkable value of his discovery admitted. Since then the study of the Parsi or old Persian books has, by scholars, been ranked side by side in importance with the study of India's ancient Aryan literary treasures, the Vedas.

"We have, therefore, in the Vedas and in the Parsi books, two separate survivals from old Aryan days. As to which of these literatures is the older there has been much discussion. The present verdict seems to be that while the Vedic writings may be older in time, they do not picture the original Aryan religion in such a primeval state as do the Parsis' books. In other words, the Parsi or Zoroastrian thought changed its form less rapidly; and whatever may have been the actual date of Zoroaster's teaching, his religion sprang from an earlier stage of Aryan civilization than we find in India."

Concerning the life of Zarathushtra our same authority tells us that "Zarathushtra was a member of the aristocracy of his community, in which an invading Aryan folk ruled over a peasantry of Asiatic, perhaps ancient Indian stock. In this already complex realm, Zarathushtra became the champion of peace as against war. He urged his people to take up the toil of husbandry, the peaceful raising of cattle, instead of seeking the excitement of rapine, the plundering of the herds of others. He taught the nobles that their God, the long-established Aryan God, Ahura Mazda, or the Lord Mazda, demanded of them that they should thus help and guide their subject-people, instead of destroying them. Indeed Zarathushtra

looked far beyond that immediate item of dispute. He preached that all existence was a mighty struggle against the forces of evil, the enemies of Mazda, chief among whom was the *Druj*, which seems to mean the Lie, or falsity in general. In this eternal battle of good and evil, all men took part whether they would or not. Whoever was not openly fighting on the side of Mazda was thereby aiding the *Druj*.

"Chiefly, though, the new teacher's religion centered about the cattle. He spoke to herdsmen. . . He pictures earth itself under the figure of a cow giving bounteous supplies. The force which we call Nature, Zarathushtra names the 'Ox-soul.' Simple as his teaching is, it is amazingly modern in its clear concepts and high thought. The prophet sees but one God, though speaking often of what he calls the '*Amshaspand* or attributes of Mazda. These are six: '*Vohu Manah*,' Good Thought; '*Asha*,' Right; '*Spenta Armaiti*,' Piety or Harmony; '*Haurvatat*,' Salvation; '*Ameretat*,' Wisdom, or perhaps Immortality; and '*Xsathra*,' Sovereignty. There is also a spirit or messenger angel.'*Sraosha*' or Obedience. These spirits will be met with constantly in the *Gathas* (Sacred Songs); yet they are scarcely separate beings. The prophet sees them only as abstractions, voices of the Lord Mazda in one attitude or another. . .

"(In later ages) the evil principle, the Lie, was given what it hardly receives in the *Gathas*, a name of its own. It became '*Ahriman*,' or the enemy; and the later Zoroastrian books speak constantly of a dual creation, the war of Ahura Mazda against *Ahriman*."

Even as to-day, this prophet of a new gospel had to fight his way against intolerance, prejudice, suspicion and all the evils which he called the "*Druj*." He wan-

dered Asia, as far as China, driven here and there by endless persecution, till the friendship of a great Persian noble who gave to him his daughter in marriage, followed by the conversion of Vishtaspa, the king, placed him in full power over the religion of his race.

The name Zarathushtra, just as in the case of Christ and Buddha, is really a symbolic title, translated by some as "Righteous," and by others as "Holy Singer." Of the Holy Songs which this Singer sang we have left to us only the *Gathas*, the sole portion of that great mass of Zoroastrian Scripture, loosely called the Zend-Avesta, which is thought to comprise the actual utterances of Zarathushtra. One of these *Gathas* is given in part below.

AHURA MAZDA THE HOLY

From the Gathas or Sacred Hymns of Zarathushtra

As the Holy One I recognized Thee, Mazda Ahura, when I saw Thee in the beginning at the birth of life, when Thou madest actions and words to have their meed—evil for the evil, a good destiny for the good—through Thy wisdom, when creation shall reach its goal.

At which goal Thou wilt come with Thy holy Spirit, O Mazda, with Dominion, at the same with Good Thought, by whose actions the settlements will prosper through Right. Their judgments shall Piety proclaim, even those of Thy wisdom which none can deceive.

As the Holy One I recognized Thee, Mazda Ahura, when Good Thought came to me and asked me, "Who art thou? To whom dost thou belong? By what sign wilt thou appoint the days for questioning about thy possessions and thyself?"

Then I said to him: "To the first question, Zarathushtra am I, a true foe to the Liar, to the utmost of my

power, but a powerful support would I be to the Righteous, that I may attain the future things of the infinite Dominion, according as I praise and sing Thee, Mazda."

As the Holy One I recognized Thee, Mazda Ahura, when Good Thought came to me. To his question, "For which wilt thou decide?" I made reply, "At the gift of adoration to Thy Fire, I will bethink me of Right so long as I have power. Then show me Right upon whom I call."

Mazda:—"Associating him with Piety, I have come hither. Ask us now what things we are here for thee to ask. For thine asking is as that of a mighty one, since He that is able should make thee as a mighty one possessed of thy desire."

As the Holy One I recognized Thee, Mazda Ahura, when Good Thought came to me, when first by your words I was instructed. Shall it bring me sorrow among men, my devotion in doing that which ye tell me is the best?

And when Thou saidst to me, "To the Right shalt thou go for teaching," then Thou didst not command what I did not obey: "Speed thee ere My Obedience (an Angel of judgment) come, followed by treasure-laden Destiny, who shall render to men severally the destinies of the two-fold award."

As the Holy One I recognized Thee, Mazda Ahura, when Good Thought came to me to learn the state of my desire. Grant it me, that which none may compel Thee to allow, the wish for long continuance of blessed existence that they say is in Thy Dominion.

If Thy provident aid, such as an understanding man who has the power would give to his friend, comes to me

through Thy Dominion, through Right, then to set myself in opposition against the foes of Thy Law, together with all those who are mindful of Thy words!

As the Holy One I recognized Thee, Mazda Ahura, when Good Thought came to me, when the still mind taught me to declare what is best: "Let not a man seek again and again to please the Liars, for they make all the righteous enemies."

And thus Zarathushtra himself, O Ahura, chooses that Spirit of Thine that is holiest, Mazda. May Right be embodied, full of life and strength! May Piety abide in the Dominion where the sun shines! May Good Thought give destiny to men according to their works!

AIM OF MANKIND

From the Diary of Count Leo Tolstoy

If I meditate as I contemplate nature, I perceive everything in nature to be in constant process of development, and each of nature's constituent portions to be unconsciously contributing towards the development of others. But man, though a like portion of nature, a portion gifted with consciousness, and therefore bound, like the other portions, to make conscious use of his spiritual faculties is striving for the development of everything existent.

If I meditate as I contemplate history, I perceive the whole human race to be forever aspiring towards the same end.

If I meditate on reason, if I pass in review man's spiritual faculties, I find the soul of every man to have in it the same unconscious aspirations, the same imperative demand of the spirit.

If I meditate with an eye upon the history of philosophy, I find everywhere, and always, men to have ar-

rived at the conclusion that the aim of human life is the universal development of humanity.

If I meditate with an eye upon theology, I find almost every nation to be cognizant of a perfect existence towards which it is the aim of mankind to aspire.

THE GUERDON OF HUMILITY

From Leonardo da Vinci's Note Book

A certain patch of snow finding itself clinging to the top of a rock which was perched on the extreme summit of a very high mountain, being left to its own imagination began to reflect and say within itself:—"Shall I not be thought haughty and proud for having placed myself in so exalted a spot,—being indeed a mere morsel of snow? And for allowing that such a vast quantity of snow as I see all around me should take a lower place than mine? Truly my small dimensions do not deserve this eminence; and in proof of my insignificance I may readily acquaint myself with the fate which but yesterday befel my companions who in a few hours were destroyed by the sun: and this came about from their having placed themselves in a loftier station than was required of them. I will flee from the wrath of the sun, and abase myself, and find a place that befits my modest size."

Then throwing itself down it began to descend, rolling down the lofty crags on to the other snow; and the more it sought a lowly place, the more it increased in bulk, until at last ending its course upon a hill it found itself almost the equal in size of the hill on which it rested, and it was the last of the snow which was melted that summer by the sun.

This is said for those who by humbling themselves are exalted.

THE PLACE OF PEACE

From the Teachings of Gautama Buddha

This must be done by him. . . who hath grasped the meaning of the Place of Peace.

He must be able and upright and truly straight: gentle of speech and mild, not having vain conceit of self.

And he should be content, soon satisfied, with but few wants, of frugal appetites: with faculties of sense composed, discreet, not insolent, nor greedy after gifts.

He should do no mean thing for which other men who are wise may censure him.

Now may every living thing, feeble or strong, omitting none, or tall or middle-sized or short, subtle or gross of form, seen or unseen, those dwelling near or far away,—whether they be born or yet unborn—may every living thing be full of bliss.

Let none deceive another, nor think scorn of him in any way whatever. Let him not in anger or ill-will desire another's ill-fare.

Even as a mother, as long as she doth live, watches over her only child—even so should one practise an all-embracing mind unto all beings.

And let a man practise a boundless good-will for all the world, above, below, across, in every way, good-will unhampered, without ill-feeling or enmity.

Standing or moving,sitting or lying down howe'er he be, provided he be free from sloth, let a man establish this mindfulness of good-will. For this is what men call "the highest state."

Thus shall a man by passing over wrongful view, by walking righteously, be gifted with insight and conquer greed for sense-desires. Of a truth such an one shall come no more to birth in any womb.

DAYS IN AN INDIAN MONASTERY

By Sister Devamata

V

TEMPLE FESTIVALS (Concluded)

The great Temple Festival of Mylapore occurs in April. It lasts twelve days and on some of them fifty thousand people are present. It is the hottest season of the year, and to temper the heat for coming and going devotees, the rich build large Pandals or sheds of bamboo poles and palm leaves at their gates. Here they serve a cooling drink of sweet curds, lime juice, rock candy and water. It is given freely to all who come. My door-court and lower front verandah during these days were transformed into a hostelry and compact rows of weary pilgrims slept there every night. All the verandahs of the neighborhood had their quota of uninvited guests. Some families gave up a room or two to them. They bathed and washed their cloth in the Temple tank, got food or fasted as it came. Those who slept on my verandah asked me for their drinking water.

The Temple at Mylapore is dedicated to the third person of the Indo-Aryan Trinity. The Indo-Aryan Trinity consists of the Creative Principle or Brahma, the Preserving Principle or Vishnu, and the Transforming Principle or Siva. Each Deity in turn has his special *Vahanam* or vehicle on which he rides. Siva rides the bull; Vishnu, the eagle; Brahma, the coiled serpent. The significance of this symbolism is that in our march to Divinity, we must not destroy any part of our nature. Even our lowest forces must be tamed and made to carry us to the Highest.

On each day of the Festival there was a procession depicting some event or legend connected with the "Great

Transformer." The vivid reality of His living Presence for every person in this vast throng none could doubt. The question was never "What time is the procession?" but "When does the Lord come out of His Temple?" The hour varied; sometimes it was during the day, sometimes in the evening, sometimes at night. I remember being roused at one o'clock one night by the beat of the big Temple drum and the plaintive note of wood-wind instruments. I ran to my verandah and saw at the end of the street facing it a glare of many flaming torches, the tall figures of chanting Brahmans, the rising smoke of burning incense, and the flower-adorned image of the Great God. As I watched the swaying concourse approach I could easily imagine that the Lord had come out of his Temple at dead of night to see that all was well with His children.

Another evening we were standing near the Temple gate seeing the preparation for the day's procession. The crowd was dense and nearly all were simple people of modest station, full of piety and devotion. A young girl with shining eyes, glowing smile and the gentle composure that characterizes Indian women looked at me with friendly interest for some time. Then coming nearer she said, her voice full of genuine yearning: "Is your God in America as beautiful as ours?" It was evident that her blessings could not be sweet to her so long as all did not share in them.

I was glad to share in her joy and in her worship; for as I assisted at this Feast of another clime and another religious heritage, I felt more than ever the living truth of Sri Ramakrishna's words: "Different creeds are but different paths to reach the Almighty. As one can ascend to the top of a house by means of a ladder or a

bamboo pole, a staircase or a rope, so divers are the ways and means to approach God and every religion in the world shows one of these ways."

I sought to follow all the religious customs of the Festival—not with condescending sympathy which is so often mistaken for catholicity—but with genuine kinship of ardor and devotion. It was no effort. Such fervor of spirit called forth an inevitable response and created a feeling of oneness of faith. Thus it was that on a special evening when the procession passed before my house, I too made my offering. All my neighbors were making theirs, there should be no blankness of worship at my door.

A Brahman boy offered to carry it for me. He brought a large brass tray. On this we placed a snowy pile of grated cocoanut, some choice fruits, sandalwood paste, some sticks of incense and a small coin. The day's story called for the Lord on a galloping horse. The bearers of the Sacred Image came running down the road at such speed, I was afraid the young Brahman boy would fear to venture, but he ran out boldly in their path and they came to a stop just beneath the Banyan tree. The priest lighted the incense and waved it, lifted up the votive tray; then with hands clasped in salutation and a friendly smile he sent back the blessed offering to be given to friends or to the poor.

The most stirring day of all the twelve for me was that of the Car Festival. No Indo-Aryan religious observance is more often missunderstood or misrepresented than this. It typifies God riding in His universe. The car is the universe and like the carving on the Temple it sets forth the dual aspect of creation. Ugliness and beauty, light and dark are given equal place, as in Nature wave and hollow,

action and reaction are equal. The pendulum of created things must swing evenly to mark the beat of time.

On the four corners of the car are colossal figures of the elements, terrifying as air, fire, earth and water are terrifying when they come in the form of wind or consuming flame, avalanche or flood. The body of the car is like a tower carved and colored and in it rides the Lord of creation receiving the loving homage of His children. Many of the cars in the different Temples are very ancient and crudely built, but all have the same symbolism. The wheels are heavy, solid wooden disks cut out by hand and are guided by placing a stout plank at different angles under them. The one who does this walks bent beneath the car and must exercise great courage, yet he is jealous of his privilege.

The car is carried forward by a long rope with room for many hands. Five hundred could draw the car at Mylapore, and in all its course round the four streets never once was there a single hand-space. Shy women, aged men, little children, ran out from their houses to seize the rope. Those who could not lay hold on it ran beside those who held it and fanned them. They were content to be servants of the servants of the Lord. Now and then, pushed too rudely by the crowd, one fell. No one was injured while I was there, but I saw the origin of the oft-repeated story that devotees in madness of worship throw themselves beneath the car. Swami Ramakrishnananda dragged the rope at more than one Festival. Once he was thrown down, but he rose with smiling unconcern and continued to fan or pull as opportunity offered. It was impossible to withstand the exalted spirit of self-forgetting devotion which swept the throng.

The story was told me of an ardent devotee who every year for forty years walked one hundred miles to a certain Temple Festival. Each year the way grew longer for him and his feet less enduring until at last they could not carry him to the end. Sitting down on a stone by the wayside he cried aloud: "Lord I can no longer come to you. Now you will have to come to me." It is said that at that moment the Deity appeared to him in the form of the image of the Temple to which he was going and talked with him for some time. The devotee returned home blessed and happy. At the same hour the bearers were carrying the image from the Temple. Suddenly it grew so heavy they could not hold it and they were obliged to set it down. For half an hour they waited. Then a voice was heard declaring: "I have been with my devotee." The image grew light again, they lifted it and the Temple procession proceeded.

I saw little of life on the west coast of India, but I assisted at one important Temple Festival in Bombay. The Temple stood on a high hill and the steep road to it was lined on either side with the blind, the deformed, the hungry and the sick. It reminded me of Holy Week at Seville in Spain. Each beggar was crying out his needs or attracting attention by gong or bell. The crowd was dense and the whole atmosphere was more garish and worldly. I went with some Bengalee friends. They spoke to one of the priests, who cleared a way through the compact mass of people and led us to the innermost Shrine to lay our offering before the Deity.

At another time I visited a very ancient and holy Cave Temple at Bangalore. Its grounds and picturesque lake adjoin the property where our own Monastery stands at present. At that time however it was not built and we

lived in temporary quarters more than a mile away. Swami Ramakrishnananda took me and we walked out with the gentleman whose guests we were. It was the evening hour. The Temple was still and wrapped in shadow. A few worshippers waited in the garden before the Temple. *Arati*, the Vesper Service, was late and the door was locked.

We sat down in the darkness of the Temple porch. It was not the priest who came to conduct the Service but the priest's son. When he saw me he demurred, but Swami Ramakrishnananda swept aside his anxiety by a commanding sweep of the arm and the words, "God's child must go to God. Come, Sister," so we entered. We assisted at the waving of the lights; made *Pradakshinam*, going three times around the Shrine, bending down at times to avoid the low roof of the cave; watched a wedding party that came for blessing; then we walked home in silence under a wonderful star-lit deep blue sky.

GOD AND THE WORLD

Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna

Everything resteth upon Time. For all religious awakening we must wait. At the same time the precepts of a religious teacher should be listened to. One may be put in mind of these precepts on a future occasion and then one will probably cry out, saying: "Oh, I heard this from such and such a person at such and such a time. Another reason is,—our worldliness might gradually wear off as the result of our listening to these precepts from day to day. Our worldliness is like the intoxication caused by wine which goeth off gradually if doses of rice

water are taken by the drunkard. The more is a person's attachment to the world the less is he likely to attain Divine Wisdom. The less is his attachment the more is the probability of his attaining such wisdom. The man immersed in worldliness cannot gain Wisdom Divine. He cannot see God. Doth the muddy water ever reflect the sun or any surrounding object?

Is there no remedy for this state of things? Is there no hope for the worldly man? Yes, there certainly is. If ye drop a purifying agent, say a piece of alum, into muddy water, the impurities all settle down to the bottom of the vessel. Discrimination of the real from the unreal, and non-attachment to the world are the two purifying agents. Thus it is that the worldly man ceases to be worldly and becometh pure.

Disciple: I understand by non-attachment not simply the want of attachment to things of this world. It is non-attachment plus something. That something is the love of God. Sir, what is God-Vision?

Sri Ramakrishna: God-Vision cannot be made intelligible to others. The state of things that cometh about may, however, be described to a certain extent. Thou hast no doubt been to the theatre to witness a dramatic performance. Before the performance hath commenced thou must have noticed that the people are very busy talking to one another on a variety of subjects—politics, household affairs, business. But the drop-scene goeth up and behold, mountains, cottages, rivers, men, are suddenly presented to view! Instantaneously all noise, all conversation is at an end and each individual spectator is all attention to the novel scene that is being enacted before him. Very much the same is the state of him who is blessed with God-vision. . . Yearning is the next step leading to realization.

REPORT

Sunday, January 30th, was dedicated by Ananda-Ashrama, to the celebration of Swami Vivekananda's birthday. In India, such an anniversary is a time of great rejoicing, for to the Hindus it is the holy men who are the national heroes rather than the military and political leaders. Indian Feast-days, however, are calculated according to the phazes of the moon and thus do not fall on any set date. Therefore it is difficult to time our Western observance of the day with the Indian Festival. On this occasion, Swami Paramananda decided not to make any formal announcements through the newspapers, but to invite as guests for the dinner and the evening entertainment only those who were led to attend the regular Sunday Services. There were good congregations both morning and afternoon and very many decided to remain although for some it meant staying throughout the entire day. At the close of the afternoon Service the guests formed in groups at the Community House waiting for the summoning word, while the Swami went up to the Cloister to cook savoury Indian dishes. Only those who have attended the Swami's entertainment at the Boston Vedanta Centre or at Ananda-Ashrama can have any idea of their rare quality. There is no set program; everything flows spontaneously and there is always the culminating spiritual touch; in this case, a beautiful tribute to the Swami Vivekananda given by Swami Paramananda when the evening's lighter entertainment had concluded. Speaking quite extemporaneously, the Swami said in part:

"I know of no living exponent of the great Truth that underlies all religions, of the brotherhood of man, the unity of all, more potent, more wholly dedicated than

Swami Vivekananda. I speak in the present, because I feel his spirit is living. Such spirits never die. People who give themselves so wholly to the Great Spirit, they become a part of it, and we partake of the blessing of their being. Let me just say these few words. Yet I cannot begin to convey merely through words what my experience was with him. We imagine a great man as something we cannot approach. Swami Vivekananda, however, was the simplest of people. It would have amazed you! His interior was like a child, gentle and mellow, and that was the real Swami Vivekananda. Great, loving heart! Sometimes reading from his books you do not get quite the picture. I have seen him weeping. I have seen this great soul weeping, when he thought no one saw him, for the suffering poor of India. His heart was heavy with sadness because there was so much suffering in humanity. It is this, not intellectuality that makes people great, and it was this which left an indelible impression on my mind that cannot be wiped out. People talk of love, of tolerance, of spirituality, of all kinds of things but once you see a living demonstration, it remains with you. That is the motto, the life, the pulsation, the mission of this work, that we make things living, so that others may learn the secret of life. I wish you all great spiritual ardour, refreshed,renewed spirit, the blessings that are abiding. You have given me great pleasure. I believe in service, and that also I owe in large measure to the blessed Swami Vivekananda."

On his journey west just before Christmas, Swami Paramananda visited Cincinnati and Louisville. As always there was warm welcome for him at both cities,—numerous lectures and classes giving opportunity for his friends to greet him after his six months' absence.

APR 9 1927

VOL. XVI. NUMBER 3

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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

March, 1927

Spiritual Healthfulness

Issued by

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MESSAGE OF THE EAST

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

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

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SPIRITUAL HEALTHFULNESS

By Swami Paramananda

"I give my peace unto thee but thou must give up self." Boisterous assertion and serene peace cannot go together. Where there is self, the arrogant aspect of man, there is no peace, there is no happiness, because the life of self is not the real life. "Be not affrighted, my child, there is no loss in giving up self." These are comforting words. It is like a great relief. Do not think that you are going to lose everything, that to give up is going to bring you crushing defeat. There is perfect compensation in this world, and in the world we call unseen. There is a law which is not arbitrary, not unbending, but eternally just and abiding. When our life is in rhythm with that law, we enjoy all the blessings that are in accordance with it.

For man to be God-abiding, to be more dependent on that divine Source than on his own limited strength, is wisdom. In fact our strength increases, it becomes magnified, when it is backed and sustained by a higher power. Therefore, the voice of wisdom always teaches us to give up this little self which acts as a barrier. Yet it is a most difficult thing for us to do, because we are afraid and fear stands in our way. When, however, we have learned to give up, to hand ourselves over to the One we

call our Maker, the Source of our being, the Truth, or whatever name we may give, our power will be enhanced and increased. "Fear brings thee anguish, and it brings thee doubt,"—that false feeling that you are going to lose, are going to die, that all kinds of terrible things are going to happen to you; "But doubt, anguish and fear will all leave thee, when thou hast given up self." Self is like a blockade at the door of our sanctuary. We place this obstruction there, and the Light of God cannot enter in.

When we have that sense of self-abnegation, however, when we place our trust in the Divine, how it lightens our heart! What a feeling of security it gives us! It brings a sense of cheerfulness which is very essential in spiritual life. Without it we strive and struggle and have great difficulty in keeping our balance. Doubt, anguish and fear are disturbing elements. When they vanish, how light-hearted we become! The antidote for doubt is faith; the antidote for anguish is a cheerful spirit; the antidote for fear is courage. Thus we find that these conceptions of the mystics give us the practical solutions for our spiritual unfoldment.

You may say, "Self-abnegation is not easy; there is the self in others." It is true that sometimes we have great difficulties in our personal relationships. We become offended with people, are disappointed in them, but that is because we see only one part of their life and not the whole. In that part are many elements which are not pleasing, which are not in accord with us. Could we but see the whole we would find other qualities to maintain the balance, to counteract the wrong impression. That is why Christ said, "Judge not." People who walk in the light of wisdom are so slow to condemn any one. It is only those who have no depth, those who live in the con-

sciousness of the little self,—the shallow people without any great experience in life, who are unforgiving, critical and denunciatory. We cannot have these alien qualities in our mind and heart and yet be true to our Ideal, or worship God. We do not worship God merely because we follow some formulas prescribed by the Christian Church, or the Hindu Church, or any other faith. Man is his own agent for approaching the altar of Truth. If he has the qualities of soul, there is nothing that can bar him from that altar and if he has not these qualities there is no way by which he can attain to it. That is the sum total of all spiritual philosophy and religion. There are certain fundamental qualities which give us access to the Highest; when we lack them no amount of dogma, or creed, or rules can ever uplift us to that height.

No one can inherit religion. You may say,"That is not true; we all inherit our religion." We may think that we do, but it is not possible for us to inherit it. We may belong to some form handed down to us in the way of a creed, a cult, or a dogma; but true religion can come only through self-expression, through inner unfoldment,—there is no other way. Nobody can drive us into the heart of the spiritual kingdom. Even if he could, we would feel ourselves entirely out of place; we would want to come away, because everything there would be utterly different from our thoughts and from our taste. For instance, we have such a vague idea of heaven. We are all going to heaven,—many people have that notion. What is heaven? What would be your heaven? If their understanding of heaven is entirely out of your line, out of your conception, out of your reach and out of your contact, it would not give you a sense of peace or rest. We must face these things in a direct way.

Religion is not a vague and visionary abstract principle. It is something we put into our life and we enjoy its fruition.

People go to church, they pray, and they think that they do so much. Often they say: "I have done all this and yet there is no return." There cannot be any return. We waste our life working without rhythm, without perfect combination. How many work and how few have their life brought to fruition!

In order to make our life fruitful we must remedy all unhealthy elements. A man, when sickness has left his body and normal health returns, begins to be hungry, so that you no longer have to coax him to eat; same way it is with us in our spiritual life. The ascendancy of the Spirit, its exaltation, can take place only when we have minimized all the spiritual disorders which hold us down, which bind us, and rob us of our divine heritage. The three elements I have already mentioned,—doubt, anguish and fear—are spiritual disorders. They create tremendous chaos in our life. When these possess us, whatever little faith we have is lost, and whatever little love we feel like giving to others we are hesitant to give for fear we may lose. Why do we have anguish? Because we have not enough faith in the divine Principle; we are always doubting, always fearful. Until we can get rid of these detrimental conditions, we cannot have true healthfulness in life.

"The communications which come really from God have this property, that they humble and exalt the soul at the same time, for in the way of the Spirit to descend is to ascend and to ascend is to descend." This is from one of the great mystic souls. The mystic souls! Sometimes we feel that we are their kindred, and then again we feel

that they are foreign to us. This is a fact. There are people who read the reflections of the mystics and say: "What are they talking about?" It was exactly that way when Christ gave His message. Even learned men said: "I do not understand Him." One would ask: "What is His motive, and why is He expressing in this manner?" and another would exclaim: "He speaks just my thoughts." I, myself, have heard these expressions from people. What does it signify? That we find ourselves sometimes in absolute kinship with a certain exalted type of mentality, in a closer bond than with people born of the same blood, and then again, we find ourselves entirely alien. "In the way of the Spirit to descend is to ascend, and to ascend is to descend." You can see how confusing this might seem to a person whose ear was not open to the language of the spiritual world. And yet how simple it is! A child can understand who has an open heart.

Exaltation and humility, these two qualities you find present in great souls. At one turn they overwhelm you with their humbleness, and at another turn, with their grandeur. Not the grandeur of the flesh, of the mind, or even of the intellect. It is as if there were a mighty power behind them. You cannot explain it, you are simply awe-stricken before it, and the next moment you find they are so humble that they make you feel they are humbler than yourself. Wonderful combination! Just think if we could be like that! When we have the consciousness that God is behind us, all our strength, all our power to do and to think comes from Him. We have nothing to fear. That power is not going to be exhausted, but at the same time we feel so humble when we realize that this apparent man is nothing but an instrument in

His hand, and as such is not going to be egotistic, is not going to regard himself as the doer.

You have read in the Bible as a very great injunction: Love your God, your Lord, your Master, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your might, with every part of your being. That is the command. But love is never manufactured; it is never forced. It cannot be forced; it cannot be analyzed. It is too ethereal. We are conscious sometimes of a tremendous drawing, an outpouring towards a person, a family, or perhaps some ideal. It redeems us, revives us and exalts us; yet it will not stand critical analysis, because analysis has not found means subtle enough to define it. It is an abstract principle, and at the same time the most concrete thing in life. When this abstract principle,—love of God—descends on us, we know the fullness of life. It is. That is the only thing we can say of it. It is. I see it, I feel it, I hear it; I have its touch upon me, and because of this I can convey it to some one else. When man comes to that recognition he is redeemed.

Love is God and God is love. There is nothing in spiritual philosophy so exacting, so lofty as this expression. God is love and love is God. Man becomes God-like when this great force of love radiates through him. He becomes a magnet. You feel drawn to him; you are healed and restored. Is it an abstract thing? It is the most concrete factor in our life, and it is our unfortunate conception when we think of it as something abstract. There are some who say that it was only possible for Christ to know such love, because He was pre-ordained; He was from God; He was the Incarnate Spirit. Are we not all incarnate spirits? Are we not all children of Divinity, and is it not the mission of Christ and of Christ-like per-

sonages to come here and remind us of that? We have forgotten and drifted away from our Source, lest our hold on the real, the vital factor of life. So they come that we may remember. They come only for that. That is their supreme task, their first and foremost consideration, so much so that they even forget their bodily concerns. In fearless voice they tell us: "First seek the Kingdom of God." We would not be interested in first seeking the Kingdom if they did not illustrate it. They create an example by their life and conduct. If a man says: "First seek ye the Kingdom of God," and is absorbed in the material kingdom, you think he is trying to fool you. He desires everything for himself and he does not want any one to rob him of his opportunity. With great souls, however, there is that absolute harmony between the teaching and the teacher. Life brings fruition only when we have nurtured the seed of life which falls on the field of our human existence. When we water it and care for it, then comes wonderful fruit. This is the way we find fulfillment.

You can see now why so much emphasis is laid by great souls upon taking the time for spiritual practice. Neglect it, if you think you must; but never can you avoid the consequence. Look at the man who neglects it. He says: "I do not care anything about this ethereal, invisible phenomena," and he gives himself heart and soul, body and mind to making money, to building up what he thinks is going to create his happiness; and at the end of this struggle and self-denial,—for there is self-denial—he finds that he has been misdirected. He wants to buy happiness, but he obtains misery; he wants to buy power, but he finds that power is grinding him to death. Sometimes he may desire to turn his life into a new channel, but he thinks

it is too late. It is never too late; only, naturally, if we have formed strong mental habits we shall find it difficult to overcome them, just as the man who has the habit of drinking or smoking in excess finds it hard to stop. The only way is to turn our mind to the Source of our being.

What is the Source of our being? Ask yourself and keep on asking. Ask again and over again until you receive a direct answer—not from any outside personality who may be biassed and give you his preconceived idea; but an answer direct from the Source itself. If you find that you are deep-rooted, God-rooted, what sustaining power it will give you! Though you may be failing and faltering, you will have at once a working hypothesis. You will then learn to stand on bedrock, on that FirstPrinciple, that First Cause of all philosophers. Do not turn away from it and run after things which are passing and fleeting, which are just like a mirage, having no real existence. Cling to that Divine Principle, hold to it with all the ardour, with all the strength of your soul, so that you may not be deprived of your greatest blessing. This is the greatest blessing, never to lose sight of the Source. This is true devotion. We exalt ourselves only when we forget ourselves. Divine and human must blend. Human is always safe in the arms of the Divine.

Within thine own heart, by means of internal recollection, and with His heavenly grace, thou mayest look for silence in tumult, solitude in company, light in darkness, forgetfulness in pressure, vigor in despondency, courage in fear, resistance in temptation, peace in war, and quiet in tribulation.—*Michael de Molinos.*

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Let us cast off whatsoever hindereth, entangleth, or burdeneth our flight, until we attain that which satisfieth, beyond which nothing is, beneath which all things are, of which all things are.—*St. Augustine*

O Thou that sittest above the sound of prayer,
O Thou lovely One, with Thy beautiful face,
with Thy beautiful eyes!
Thou knowest not crime; Thou sayest of the
evil-doer,
"His brow is fevered," and Thou layest Thine
hand
On his hot brow, and coolest it to peace.

—*From the Japanese*

Khwaja Bayazid was asked, "What is the way to God?" He replied: "When thou hast vanished on the Way, then hast thou come to God." . . Thou-ness and I-ness pertain to our world. They do not exist in the region of the Beloved. He is the one Reality: futile is the assertion of any existence but His.

—*Makhdum-ul-Mulk*

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power and of love, and of a sound mind..—*St. Paul*

Every thought about one's self fastens one's bondage in this world; but release from selfish thoughts leads one to liberation. Cease from thy selfish cares, and thou shalt cease to toil and moil for naught.

—*Yoga Vasishtha Maharama*

To grow sadder from day to day, while enclosed in a prison of one's own—that is the life history of a selfish man and of a snail.—*Arnault.*

CHRIST AND OURSELVES

By Francis Quarles

(English Sacred Poet and Moralist of the 17th century)

I wish a greater knowledge than t'attain
The knowledge of my self: a greater gain
Than to augment my self; a greater treasure
Than to enjoy my self: a greater pleasure
Than to content my self. How slight and vain
Is all self-knowledge, pleasure, treasure, gain;
Unless my better knowledge could retrieve
My Christ; unless my better gain could thrive
In Christ; unless my better wealth grow rich
In Christ; unless my better pleasure pitch
On Christ; or else my knowledge will proclaim
To my own heart how ignorant I am:
Or else my gain, so ill improved, will shame
My trade, and show how much declined I am;
Or else my treasure will but blur my name
With bankrupt, and divulge how poor I am;
Or else my pleasures that so much inflame
My thoughts, will blab how full of sores I am.
Lord, keep me from my self; 'tis best for me
Never to own my self, if not in Thee.

God! There is no God but He; the living, the self-sustaining: neither slumber nor sleep seizeth Him; to Him belongeth whatsoever is in heaven and on earth. Who is he that can intercede with Him, but through His good pleasure? He knoweth that which is past, and that which is to come unto them, and they shall not comprehend anything of His knowledge, but so far as He pleaseth. His throne is extended over heaven and earth, and the preservation of both is no burden unto Him. He is the high, the mighty!—*The Koran.*

PERFECT JOY

From "The Little Flowers of St. Francis."

Once when St. Francis was coming from Perugia to Santa Maria degli Angeli with Friar Leo in winter, and the very great cold vexed him sore, he called Friar Leo, who was going before, and spake after this manner: "Friar Leo, albeit the minor friars in every land set a great example of holiness and of good edification, nevertheless write and note diligently that herein is not perfect joy." And when St. Francis had gone farther, he called unto him the second time: "O Friar Leo, although the minor friars should give sight to the blind, make straight the crooked, cast out devils, make the deaf to hear, the lame to walk, and the dumb to speak, and, what is a greater thing, should raise those who have been dead four days; write that therein is not perfect joy." Going a little farther, he shouted loudly: "O Friar Leo, if the minor friar knew all tongues and all sciences, and all the Scriptures, so that he was able to prophesy and to reveal not only things to come but also the secrets of consciences and of souls; write that therein is not perfect joy." Going a little farther, St. Francis yet again shouted loudly: "O Friar Leo, little sheep of God, albeit the minor friar should speak with the tongue of angels, and knew the courses of the stars and the virtues of herbs, and albeit all the treasures of the earth were revealed to him and he knew the virtues of birds and of fishes and of all animals and of men, of trees, of stones, and of roots and of waters; write that therein is not perfect joy. . . ."

And this manner of speech continuing for full two miles, Friar Leo, with great wonder, asked and said: "Father, I pray thee in the name of God to tell me wherein is perfect joy." And St. Francis answered him: "When we

shall be at Santa Maria degli Angeli, thus soaked by the rain, and frozen by the cold, and befouled with mud, and afflicted with hunger, and shall knock at the door of the Place, and the doorkeeper shall come in anger and shall say: 'Who are ye?' and we shall say: 'We are two of your friars,' and he shall say: 'Ye speak not truth; rather are ye two lewd fellows who go about deceiving the world and robbing the alms of the poor, get you hence;' and shall not open unto us, but shall make us stay outside in the snow and rain, cold and hungry even until night; then, if we shall bear such great wrong and such cruelty and such rebuffs patiently without disquieting ourselves and without murmuring against him; and shall think humbly and charitably that that door-keeper really believes us to be that which he has called us, and that God makes him speak against us; O Friar Leo, write that here is perfect joy.

"And if we persevere in knocking, and he shall come forth enraged and shall drive us away with insults and with buffetings. . . if we shall bear all these things patiently and with cheerfulness, thinking on the sufferings of Christ the blessed, which we ought to bear patiently for His love; O Friar Leo, write that here and in this is perfect joy; and therefore hear the conclusion, Friar Leo, above all the graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit, which Christ grants to His friends, is that of self-conquest and of willingly bearing sufferings, injuries and reproaches and discomforts for the love of Christ."

The Mind, O Tat, is of God's very essence. · . . The great ill of the soul is godlessness; then followeth fancy for all evil things and nothing good. So then, Mind, counteracting it, doth work good on the soul, as the physician, health upon the body.—*Hermes Trismegistus.*

COUNSEL OF PERFECTION

By Keshab Chunder Sen

Note: Keshab Chunder Sen, religious teacher, social reformer and brilliant orator, lived in Bengal, India, towards the latter part of the 19th century. He was a friend and contemporary of Sri Ramakrishna, and a noted leader in the Brahmo-Samaj—a modern religious reform among the Hindus, somewhat similar to the Unitarian movement in the West.

Remember your creed: one God, one Scripture, and one family of prophets. Love the one true God and worship Him every day. By daily worship make your lives holy. Attain communion with the saints of heaven inwardly in your minds. . · In your lives show the reconciliation of perfect wisdom, perfect asceticism, perfect love, perfect devotion, perfect conscience, perfect joy and perfect holiness. Be not satisfied with the fraction of any one virtue. Do not covet the property and pleasure of the world. . . . Be happy in others' happiness and sorry in others' sorrow. Regard all mankind as one family. Hate not, nor regard as aliens men of other castes and other religions. Be ascetics, but live in the world in the midst of other men, and let them live in you. And let both them and yourself live conjointly in God. There is salvation in unity and peace in unity.

Go in all directions, east and west, north and south, and preach the new Dispensation. . . . If any men meet you as enemies, let the peace of your prayers descend on their heads. Be poor and patient in spirit. Conquer contention with peace. Let peace and purity flow into the place where you go.

They make a solitude and call it peace.—*Tacitus.*

POET-PREACHERS OF PERSIA

By Sister Daya

III.

JALAL-AD-DIN RUMI

(Former articles in this series appeared in the March, May and June numbers of the "Message of the East" for 1926)

Eighteen years after the death of Omar Khayyam, the poet Nizami was born. Although he was a deeply religious man with a certain "halo of sanctity about his person," his dreamy, imaginative nature led him to write along the lines of human rather than of divine love. He became the chief teller of love-tales to his people, and his poetic romances are, even to-day, the delight of his country-men. We mention him because there was an undertone of Sufism in some of his poems, and also because in the sequence of Persian poets, he is the connecting link between Omar and the greatest figure, perhaps, in Persian literature, Maulana Jalal-ad-Din Rumi, or as he is generally known, Jalal-ad-Din, "Splendour of the Faith;" Maulana being a title of honor meaning, "Our Lord," and Rumi signifying the name of his country of residence—Asia Minor, which owing to its former connection with the Roman Empire, was then called Rum.

If there is any doubt as to the mystic quality of Omar, there can be none as to this God-enraptured soul. He stands forth like a spiritual flame, every word of his burning with an impassioned self-forgetfulness and love for the Divine. Some critics, while acclaiming him as the most eminent of the poet-preachers, have felt that this was due more to his exposition of the Sufi doctrine than to his poetic gift. The consensus of opinion, however, is that, no matter how we may analyse, among Sufi poets Jalal is without rival. Philosophers have expressed their concepts in rhythm, saints have poured forth their rhapsodies

in meter, but the result has not always been poetry. It is, however, neither philosophy nor religion that is responsible for the beauty in such lines as these to the "Everlasting God:"

"Thou art like the water, and we like the millstone.
Thou art like the wind, and we like the dust;
The wind is unseen, but the dust is seen by all.
Thou art the spring, and we the sweet green garden;
Spring is not seen, though its gifts are seen. . .
Thou art as Reason, we like the tongue;
'Tis reason that teaches the tongue to speak.
Thou art as joy, and we are laughter;
The laughter is the consequence of the joy."

Here is pure poetry, the words of one who gave himself to the gods to play upon. How lovely it must be in the original Persian we can only imagine. And we must remember that there was no calculation with these Sufi singers. Their songs came from the depths of vision rather than from any calculation, were the overflowing from the cup of divine madness and not a mere aesthetic or intellectual endeavour. Realization was the note that they sounded again and again in order that men might be raised "from words to states." Thus Jalal-ad-Din cries with intense fervour, perhaps in reaction to what he may have felt were his own futile efforts:

"How long wilt thou dwell on words and empty shows?
A burning heart I seek; I yearn with burning!
Kindle in thy dry heart the flame of love,
And burn up wholly thoughts and fine expressions."

Omar, whatever his inner life may have been, and however unjust men's opinion of him, was looked upon askance both in religion and out of it, whereas Jalal-ad-Din received the deepest veneration from all, and at his death was regarded universally as a saint. Both men were equally sincere, but their attention was differently directed; one sought to clear the ground, while the other sowed the seed. Jalal was by nature an ecstatic, having come

into this world with the signature of God upon his heart, as it were. He was born in the year of our Lord 1207, in the city of Balkh, Khorasan, where his family had lived from time immemorial, high in honor and influence. His father, Baha-ad-Din, a man of noble nature and great scholarly attainments, bequeathed to his son treasures of learning as well as direct descent from the Sultan Ala-ad-Din. His mother also was of kingly line; but from the long past of his own soul, Jalal inherited what was greater than all this, and knew himself to be of the line of the Immortals. Though learning, wealth, social position and royal blood were his heritage, communion with God was his birthright. Thus he was an aristocrat not only of the flesh but of the Spirit.

Even as a little child strange powers manifested through him. When he was only six years old he was said to have experienced states of ecstasy and to have seen visions. Likewise he taught philosophy to his small companions and performed extraordinary feats of fasting. There is also a tradition that once he flew up to heaven; but as Arab science was experimenting just then with air ships, it is quite possible that there was an actual basis for this story and that his flight may have been a material one. We see him at this period a tiny wistful-eyed boy, wandering forth with his parents into exile. For ill-fortune had fallen upon the house of Baha-ad-Din whose prestige and increasing popularity had invited the jealousy of the Sultan. This coupled with political intrigue forced Jalal's father, in the year 1212, to leave his native state and with his family seek relief from persecution, in the land of Rum.

It was at Nishapur that our young poet made his first vital spiritual contact. There the party met with the

famous Sufi, Faridu'ddin Attar who no doubt sensed the boy's rare quality, for he gave him his *Asrar-nama* Book of Mysteries, at the same time prophesying that he would attain to the loftiest heights of divine vision. The years that followed must have been years of uncertainty for the little family, of hardship and sorrow. Friends, security, wealth, all had been left behind in Balkh. No, not all, for Baha-ad-Din carried with him his mental and moral equipment, and thus was able to give to his son splendid ethical and intellectual training during this long period of wandering. Thrice they halted their march for varying intervals before they reached a permanent place of residence, the last sojourn being at Larmadh in Asia Minor whither Baha-ad-Din had been summoned to act as principal of the local college. There Jalal reached his maturity and married Janhar Khatun, daughter of Lala Sharaf-uddin of Samarkand. This was in 1226. Later his wife died and he married again.

It was not long after the first marriage. that the wanderers once more "folded their tents" and went upon their way, this time to Iconium, at the invitation of the Sultan of Rum. Iconium was at that time a great educational centre and no doubt gave warm welcome to the erudite exile, who was forthwith installed as head of the Rumi Collegiate Institution, under royal patronage. In 1231 however, he died, and Jalal, who in the meantime had been completing his education at Aleppo and Damascus, succeeded to his post. It was not long before he was acting as professor in four different colleges. He became the rising star at Iconium. His eloquence, his rare mental gifts, his poetic genius drew to him countless followers, his classes often numbering as many as four hundred, and yet within his heart was an emptiness which he felt

no dry facts of scholarship could ever fill, an urge which led him finally to the feet of one of his father's disciples, Sayyad Burhan-ad-Din, with whom for nine years he studied pantheistic philosophy. This, however, also failed to satisfy him, for in Jalal-ad-Din a great mind was balanced by a great heart, a heart that had to love and yet could not be satisfied with loving anything short of the Divine Beloved.

In spite of his early mystic trend, perhaps because of it, his training had been chiefly intellectual, stress being laid upon the positive sciences. Even devout parents often grow troubled when they see religious fervour manifesting in their children. They endeavour to dam the stream, to divert the current; but ultimately it overflows and sweeps everything before it. So it was with Jalal-ad-Din. His life became a passionate seeking, and the burning in his heart no mere philosophy could assuage. There are lines in his later poems which might well have been written at this time.

"My back is broken by the conflict of my thoughts;
O Beloved One, come and stroke my head in mercy!
The palm of Thy hand on my head gives me rest,
Thy hand is a sign of Thy bounteous providence.
Remove not Thy shadow from my head,
I am afflicted, afflicted, afflicted!

. . . . . .

O take my life, Thou art the Source of life!
For apart from Thee I am wearied of my life.
I am a lover well versed in lovers' madness,
I am weary of learning and sense."

Thus step by step he groped his way till his hand suddenly closed on that of his true master, a wandering Sufi, Shams-ad-Din of Tabriz, who came into his life when he was sixty-two years old. Such a strange figure it was, this Shamsi Tabriz, mad prophet of God, wrapped in coarse black felt, and smitten with the belief that he was the Divine mouthpiece! He came at the command of

his spiritual teacher, who bade him go and find Jalal in the land of Rum. And Jalal? His response was instantaneous. There seemed to be that in the heart of this Sufi which possessed him utterly. Flame leaped towards flame and the world was forgotten. Renouncing his position as teacher, without consideration for name or fame, he retired with Shams to some lonely desert place, where, aloof from men, they could set their souls free, delving, to the extent of their powers, into the mystery of life. What passed between these two, who can tell? Surely not those who measure all actions by their own narrow concepts and superficial emotions.

When Jalal-ad-Din, famous philosopher and teacher, took to his heart, nay more, bowed down before this vagrant fanatic, we can imagine the consternation which reigned in his world. Men called him insane, thinking, no doubt, that it was the kindest thing that they could say. But insanity does not bloom forth into marvelous poetry, into increased beauty and wisdom. However we may regard the strange relationship of Shams and Jalal, there can be no question as to its ultimate fruitage; although the tragedy with which it terminated, threw a shadow over the poet's life. Naturally the feeling against Shams ran high, the bitterness with which he was regarded being in proportion to the love for his illustrious pupil. We can sense the gossip and the antagonism which the whole matter aroused. Rumi was a dreamer, a poet, of trusting disposition; Shams had cast an evil spell upon him, he was utterly under Sham's influence,—so the talk must have run. If Shams had been of different nature he might have conquered this inimical attitude; but unfortunately he was aggressive, violent and outspoken. Also he had to fight against jealousy on the part of Jalal's

disciples, and jealousy of all qualities is the most difficult to overcome, even with love.

This jealousy drove Shams to Tabriz. Jalal followed him and brought him back to Iconium. Again forced to flee he went to Damascus where he stayed for two years. Jalal mourned him deeply, but his sorrow gave birth to some of his loveliest poetry. Finally he sent his son to Damascus to seek for the lost master, and once more Shams was seen in Iconium. Where there are students there is always apt to be rioting, and this is exactly what occurred. Words passed, then blows, so we can picture it, and in the fight which ensued Jalal-ad-Din Rumi's son was killed. As for Shams, he was said to have been executed, but no authority seems sure of this. All we know is that he vanished from the picture and was not seen again.

Big souls, sensitized to the finer vibrations of life, feel both joy and sorrow more intensely than does the ordinary mortal; yet, unlike the ordinary mortal, they have the power of transmutation and transcendence. All experience is made to serve their spiritual need, pain equally with pleasure. As a result, they rise above both. Swami Vivekananda, I believe, once said that until one can accept pain as the kiss of the Infinite Mother, one has not yet touched the bliss of the Divine. That Jalal-ad-Din knew how to extract the blessing from pain is revealed in these lines:

> "Pain is a treasure, for it contains mercies;
> The kernel is soft when the rind is scraped off.
> O brother, the place of darkness and cold
> Is the fountain of Life and the cup of ecstasy."

Although the death of son and of soul's guide was a loss to Jalal not to be measured, it marked the beginning of a period of great creative activity. His love for Shams

took form in a Divan or collection of short poems, which he named in his honor, the Divan of Shams-ad-Din, and as a memorial to both his son and his friend, he founded the Order of the Maulawi, or "whirling dervishes," the leadership of which has remained in his family at Iconium to the present day. For it still exists, with branches or cloisters scattered throughout the Turkish Empire. Its members are distinguished by a peculiar garb of mourning, and for hundreds of years have been noted for their austerity, their fervour, and for their mystical whirling dance which is said to symbolize both the circling movement of the spheres and the circling movement of the soul when set vibrating by intense love for God.

The idea of the dance as a spiritual expression may be repellent to Western minds. Of course it can be perverted, and of course psychologists will see in it a means for self-hypnotization, which no doubt it is; but in its highest form it is a self-hypnotization induced by divine ecstasy, seeking to eliminate self in an all-absorbing love for God. Thus when practised in conjunction with purity of mind and purpose and with a life of perfect self-control and God-consecration as its background it has seemed to serve as a focussing point for vision. With the average Occidental, however, spiritual ecstasy is a state so outside of his experience, that he is in no position to judge its manifestations, and surely no one with wisdom would ever advise him to whirl.

Jalal-ad-Din himself had within his house a central column, and we are told that when he was "drowned in the ocean of Love" he would "take hold of this column and set himself turning about it," this action seeming to release in words that surging consciousness which was already in his heart as realization. "O Love, sweet mad-

ness!" he would cry, "Did my Beloved only touch me with His lips, I too, like a flute, would burst into melody!" Bliss inexpressible! Ecstasy overflowing in music! How humbled is that one who strives to give it utterance! how he falls dumb before it, as did Jalal in such lines as these:

> "The heart of the harper was emancipated.
> Like a soul he was freed from weeping and rejoicing.
> His old life died, and he was regenerated.
> Amazement fell upon him at that moment,
> For he was exalted above earth and heaven.
> An uplifting of the heart surpassing all uplifting.
> I cannot describe it; if you can, say on!
> Ecstasy and words beyond all ecstatic words—
> Immersion in the glory of the Lord of glory!
> Immersion wherefrom was no extrication—
> As it were identification with the very ocean!"

In face of such glory what mattered the criticism of his conventional orthodox neighbours, to whose complaint he replied: "When the human spirit, after years of imprisonment in the cave and dungeon of the body, is at length set free, and wings its flight to the Source whence it came, is this not an occasion for rejoicings, thanks and dancing?"

It was not criticism, however, that was to be this soul's meed. Ever more and more, men delighted to do him honor. Around his simple holy existence gathered numerous legends. He was said to have raised the dead, and like St. Francis, to have preached to the little wild brethren, in this case, to frogs and fishes. The story runs that once when he was addressing a gathering of people at the edge of a pond, his voice was drowned by the croaking of frogs. No whit disturbed, he quietly walked to the water's edge and bade those noisy members of his congregation be still. They instantly obeyed and not one more sound was heard from them until Jalal, at the end of his sermon, gave them permission to pipe up again. Ever

since, the croaking of the frogs in that hallowed spot has been sweet music to the faithful.

He had a very tender love for children as is revealed in many little anecdotes. One day as he was walking along the street some children, deep in play, paused and gave him a profound salute. Jalal solemnly bowed in return and was about to pass on when a very small boy some distance away, not wishing to miss the great occasion, called out to him to wait. So he waited while the child ran up, made his diminutive salaam and received from the prophet a salaam in return.

Jalal's master-work, the Masnavi, a stupendous production comprising from thirty to forty thousand rhymed couplets, was produced during the latter portion of his life. This immense collection of ethical and moral precepts, stories, and comments on verses in the Koran was first suggested to him in the year 1258 by his favorite disciple, Hasan, to whom he dedicated the whole of it, bringing it to a conclusion just before his death in 1273. In this, as in almost all of his later works, his new religious Order was his source of inspiration. "Most of his matchless odes," writes one commentator, "on which he soars on the wings of genuine enthusiasm high over earth and heaven up to the throne of Almighty God, were composed in honor of the Maulawi dervishes." We have called him a Sufi, but he was above all things a lover, and love casts down the barriers of name and form. As he himself said:

> "The sect of lovers is distinct from all others
> Lovers have a religion and faith of their own.
> Though the ruby has no stamp, what matters it?
> Love is fearless in the midst of the sea of fear."

It was in this spirit of love that he went forth into the

unknown,—perhaps not unknown to him— joyfully answering to Allah's Call:

"O angels, bring him back to me.
Since the eyes of his heart were set on Hope
Without care for consequence I set him free
And draw the pen through the record of his sins."

THE REAL SADHU*

Song by Kabir

He is the real Sadhu, who can reveal the form of the Formless to the vision of these eyes:
Who teaches the simple way of attaining Him, that is other than rites or ceremonies;
Who does not make you close the doors, and hold the breath, and renounce the world:
Who makes you perceive the Supreme Spirit wherever the mind attaches itself:
Who teaches you to be still in the midst of all your activities.
Ever immersed in bliss, having no fear in his mind, he keeps the spirit of union in the midst of all enjoyments.
The infinite dwelling of the Infinite Being is everywhere: in earth, water, sky and air:
Firm as the thunderbolt, the seat of the seeker is established above the void.
He who is within is without: I see Him and none else.

*Holy man.

THE GREAT GIFT

Compiled from the Writings of Dostoevsky

Love will teach us all things: but we must learn how to win love; it is got with difficulty: it is a possession dearly bought with much labour and in long time; for one must love not sometimes only, for a passing moment, but always. There is no man who doth not sometimes love; even the wicked can do that.

And let not men's sin dishearten thee: love a man even in his sin, for that love is a likeness of the divine love, and is the summit of love on earth. Love all God's creation, both the whole and every grain of sand. Love every leaf, every ray of light. Love the animals, love the plants, love each separate thing. If thou love each thing thou wilt perceive the mystery of God in all; and when once thou perceive this, thou wilt thenceforward grow every day to a fuller understanding of it; until thou come at last to love the whole world with a love that will then be all-embracing and universal. . .

If the wrong-doings of men fill thee with indignation and irresistible pain, so that thou desire even to take vengeance on the wrong-doers, then above all things resist that feeling. Go at once and seek suffering for thyself, as though thou thyself wert guilty of the wrong-doing. Accept that suffering and endure it to the end, and so shall thine heart be comforted, and thou wilt understand how thou thyself art also guilty: for unto those evil-doers thou mightest have let shine thy light, even like the one sinless man; and thou didst not. If thy light had shone forth, it would have made clear the path for others, and the man who sinned would perchance have been saved by thy light. Or if it be that thou didst show thy light, and yet seest not that any are saved thereby; nevertheless

stand thou firm, and doubt not the virtue of the heavenly light . . . for thy light will not die even when thou art dead. The just man passeth away, but his light remaineth: and it is after the saviour's death that men are mostly saved. Mankind will reject and kill their prophets, but men love their martyrs and honour those whom they have done to death. Thou, moreover, art working for the whole, and for the future thou labourest. And look not for any outward reward, since, without that, thy reward on earth is already great: thine is the spiritual joy which only the righteous man findeth . . . Love all men and all things: seek this rapture and ecstasy. Wet the earth with the tears of thy joy, and love those tears. Neither be ashamed of that ecstasy; cherish it highly, for it is the gift of God, a great gift: nor is it granted to many, but only to the elect.

ATHEISM AND ATHEISM

By Max Muller

There is an atheism which is utter death, there is another atheism which is the very life-blood of all true faith. It is the power of giving up what in our best, our most honest moments, we know to be no longer true; it is the readiness to replace the less perfect, however dear, however sacred it may have been to us, by the more perfect, however much it may be detested as yet by the world. It is the true self-surrender, the true self-sacrifice, the truest trust in truth, the truest faith. Without that atheism religion would long ago have become a petrified hypocrisy; without that atheism no new religion, no reform, no reformation, no resuscitation would ever have been possible; without that atheism no new life is possible for any one of us.

THE UNVEILING

Throughout the twenty years that Swami Paramananda has been in America he has met a goodly number of artists, and very often the request has come, "May I paint you? Will you sit for a portrait?" Sometimes the Swami has acceded to the request when it has come from a devoted heart, and sometimes he has refused when the interest was merely professional, as in the case of one or two well-known portrait painters. But unfortunately, up to a very short time ago, nothing had been produced which was satisfactory to the Swami's friends and students. Last autumn, however, when the Swami was in Boston, there came to him a young man, Mr. Kenneth Clark Pillsbury, who had been attending his Classes at the Vedanta Centre, and asked if he might be permitted to paint him. Although the Swami's time was overcrowded, there was something in this young artist that drew from him an assent. He did not then know that Mr. Pillsbury had already won distinction in his chosen line. The sittings, which were only four in number, had to be fitted in between Services, Classes, important interviews and packing, for the last two were upon the day that the Swami departed for California.

The result is a beautiful portrait, conveying in line and color the delicacy, the dignity, the poise, the very self— insofar as human hand can convey it— of Swami Paramananda and the sublimity of that great Truth which is his life. He is shown as standing. in simple attitude, in his white robe and orange sash, while the great symbol, the thousand petaled lotus with the sacred Word AUM, forms the background for his head. No portrait is ever a perfect likeness, but it often suggests certain inner qualities which a photograph fails to portray, and that is true of

this portrait. It was first shown at the Boston Art Club's winter exhibition where it roused much favourable comment, being reproduced in the Boston Transcript and the Boston Herald. The impression that it made is reflected in a letter received by a member of the Ashrama from a friend in Boston: "First I will tell you," she writes, "that I went twice to the Boston Art Gallery to see your Swami's portrait, as it is the most wonderful portrait (in the proper lighting) I have ever seen. I left each time my appreciation of the artist's work. I have thought all the time that he must be a man of wonderful spiritual insight to have painted such a picture, radiating light from every cell. It is just alive and speaks to us all." The portrait was unveiled on the tenth of February at the Vedanta Centre where it now hangs. A member of the Centre sends us the following report of the occasion.

"After the opening musical numbers, Swami Akhilananda said a few words of welcome and then spoke of the desire Mr. Pillsbury had long felt to paint a portrait of Swami, and of the great difficulties under which he had worked. Swami Akhilananda then continued and said in substance: 'Swami Paramananda's work is well known to you all. Since he came here, almost twenty years ago, he has been working unceasingly for the good of many and the happiness of many. He has had the ideals of the Sannyasin, to realize that Infinite and to share with others. His platform and literary activity has been a source of solace, comfort and spiritual fervour to all. Spiritual work depends on the life. We love him for his life and loving expression. Suffice it to say that he has been carrying on the glorious work of uniting the East and the West, the work of spiritualization started by his illustrious

master, Swami Vivekananda. In painting this portrait of the founder and organizer of this work, and presenting it to the Boston Vedanta Centre, Mr. Pillsbury has removed a real want. We are happy to receive the gift in behalf of the Centre and all its friends' The portrait was then unveiled. After all had had the opportunity of viewing it, the Swami called upon Mrs. Porter who gave two of Swami Paramananda's poems, weaving them into such a beautifully expressed and deeply felt appreciation of the portrait and its subject that I can no more retell it than I can reproduce Mr. Pillsbury's portrait. Mrs. Milliken, Mrs. Jones and Mr. Bigelow, all old friends of the Swami, spoke words of deep appreciation. Mrs. Jones said she had always been impressed by Swami Paramananda's indomitable strength and courage. She rejoiced that in his interpretation the young artist had caught these same outstanding qualities.

"Delightful violin music was furnished by Mrs. Connor, and vocal numbers by Miss Allen and Mr. Boecker. A devoted member, Mr. Fisher, brought beautiful flowers from his green-houses. The portrait is hung low over the mantle in the library. Below it on the hearth stood spotless white calla lillies, while on either side of the mantlepiece were placed exquisite pale pink roses. The artist had taken a seat far back and when calls for him arose and he saw Swami Akhilananda's eye fixed upon him, he made distracting motions of negation. He was persuaded to rise, however, that all might see him, and many people crowded around to congratulate him."

The Boston Centre is blessed in having such a portrait. Unfortunately it cannot be in two places at once, so California will have to provide a portrait painter of her own to supply the need of the Ashrama. —*D.-E.*

REPORT

The most significant event that Ananda-Ashrama has to report for the month of February is Swami Paramananda's participation in the opening of the new Broadcasting Station at La Crescenta. Ever since radio became a household institution friends have urged the Swami to use its instrumentality for spreading the message of Vedanta over a wider area. Many stood ready to make the necessary arrangements, but the Swami never encouraged them, and even when a warm invitation came from the great Broadcasting Station of the Hotel Drake in Chicago, he made no effort to follow it up. Radio, however, followed him up—up even into his own mountain retreat. Within a stone's throw of the Ashrama lives a public-spirited gentleman, Mr. Frederick Robinson, who having received much from La Crescenta, desired to do something in return; so he erected a radio station in order that the charms of the valley might be known more widely than heretofore. The Swami might refuse the Hotel Drake, but when this gentleman, this friend and neighbour, came to the Ashrama one morning to ask him to be one of those who would open the new station, he could not refuse. Also it seemed so extraordinary, this opportunity coming to his very door in this quiet little valley.

The opening was a great occasion; many distinguished people took part,—writers, lawyers, judges and men of affairs. First came a banquet where the Swami was asked to pronounce the benediction and later was called upon to make an address. After the banquet the guests were driven to the studio where the chosen speakers broadcasted their greetings. In a few words, necessarily formal, the Swami somehow managed to give the sweep

of that great Spirit for which he stands. Something vital, something real and eternally simple, ideal yet practical, passed from him through the microphone to his unseen hearers. Indeed these few minutes marked the opening of a new phase in the Vedanta activities in this country. So warm was the response that Mr. Robinson urged the Swami to give an address once a week through his station, and this the Swami has done each Wednesday evening, speaking along such lines as "Rhythm of Life," "Man the Maker of His Destiny," etc. On the program he has been assisted by talented members of the Ashrama who through music and poetry, song and anecdote gave pleasure to the listeners in. In this way many hearts have been reached.

After the close of the program one night, at a late hour, a young man came through pouring rain to Mr. Robinson's door, with difficulty finding his way to this remote studio, and asked if that Swami was still there; he felt that he must see him—there was something in his voice, in what he said, that made him feel that he must come at once and seek him out. He said that he had been engaged on an important task, that he hadn't the time to listen, but that when the Swami had started to speak he could not help but hear him to the end. Then an invalid in a far away town sent a letter of such deep appreciation that the Swami felt that the radio could indeed become a blessing when used in the service of the Supreme.

Mr. Robinson has suggested that a line be run from his broadcasting Station to the Ananda-Ashrama, enabling the Swami to broadcast his message every Sunday. Thus friends in distant places might, if atmospheric conditions were favorable, listen in at the Ashrama Services.

SWAMI PRAKASHANANDA—A TRIBUTE

It is with a sense of very deep loss that we announce the passing on February thirteenth, of Swami Prakashananda, honored and beloved head of the Hindu Temple in San Francisco. His selfless spirit, his consecrated life, his great loving heart, his happy nature, endeared him to very many, and those who were privileged to draw close to him are comforted in their loss only by the thought that death for a God-given soul is blessed. All this love and devotion were poured forth at the Service which was held for the Swami at the Temple, on February sixteenth. Radiant flowers gave their mute testimony, while song and chant expressed the deep feeling beyond words in every heart.

Swami Bhodananda of New York, Swami Prabhavananda of Portland and Swami Dayananda, Swami Prakashananda's assistant, conducted the Service, each speaking heart-felt words of tribute and comfort. A San Francisco member writes: "One by one hundreds of students and friends came to pay a last sad tribute of gratitude to Swami's memory. Every nook and corner of the Altar was banked high with flowers, masses of flowers breathing perfume and love—and more love." After describing the Service in detail she says, in speaking of Swami Dayananda's Address: "Swami Dayananda touched all hearts to the core when he told us of the time Swami Vivekananda put his arms about Swami Prakashananda's neck and told him that he had sacrificed his own life in the West and now he, Swami Prakashananda, was to sacrifice his life also (which he did for twenty years) and because of these sacrifices, Great Ones would come out of the West."

At the same hour as the San Francisco Service, Swami Paramananda conducted a special memorial Service at Ananda-Ashrama. Simply and tenderly he spoke of the one who had gone, of his love for him and of the sanctity of such a life and such a death. There was music, and at the close a member sang to a sacred melody those lines of Swami Vivekananda, written on hearing of the death of a disciple:

> **"Speed forth, O soul! upon thy star-strewn path;**
> **Speed, blissful one! where thought is ever free,**
> **Where time and space no longer mist the view;**
> **Eternal peace and blessings be with thee!"**

VOL. XVI NUMBER 4

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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

April, 1927

Life Before and After

Issued by

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

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ASHRAMA ARTS AND CRAFTS

Hand-weaving is the newest addition to the Arts and Crafts Department at Ananda-Ashrama, the gift of a loom by a friend, making it possible for members trained in the art to weave dress goods by the yard, scarfs, bags, linen towels,, runners, etc. The Department also has on sale bronzed reproductions of the Vedanta symbol—the lotus with the Sacred Word—hand-illuminated book-marks with quotations from the Swami's poems, many of the poems themselves illumined and framed, artistic lamp-shades, book-covers, incense made from California native shrubs and Eastern spices, etc. Information concerning prices will be given on request.

PURE HONEY

The Ananda-Ashrama has for sale the purest quality of black or white sage honey from the Ashrama hives. Sold in glass jars or sealed in tins for shipment. Prices on request.

All of Swami Paramananda's works and other Vedanta literature, as well as the monthly publication, "Message of the East", may be obtained directly from Ananda-Ashrama, La Crescenta, Los Angeles County, Calif., and from Vedanta Centre, 176 Marlboro St., Boston, Mass. They are obtainable also from the following addresses:

Cincinnati, Ohio: Mr. W. H. Starick, 2360 Rohs St.; Dr. Peter Boike, 6121 Madison Ave., Madisonville.

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MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."
—Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East."
—Tyndall.

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MAN OF GOD

By Swami Paramananda

man of God, move forward on thy path;
Let not thy heart be distressed,
nor lose thy courage.
Walk alone, walk on, and weep if thy
heart is heavy;
But let not thy spirit sink in grief,
nor give up thy march.
O man of God, thou art a stranger here
amidst this world's crowd,
Yet thy lonely tread sheds light upon
this dark and desolate world:
O thou brave, bleeding heart!
Giver of sweet peace to world-weary souls.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Before Abraham was, I am.—*Jesus the Christ.*

The great Soul (that dwells) in this body is called the Witness or Looker-on, the Sanctioner, the Sustainer, the Experiencer, the Mighty Lord and also the Supreme Self.
—*Bhagavad-Gita.*

We feel that we are greater than we know.
—*Wordsworth.*

Strange that men should blame the gods, laying all their woes on us, while it is they themselves that bring, by their own senseless acts, pangs which fate had never decreed.—*Homer.*

We have come to look upon the present as the child of the past and the parent of the future; and as we have excluded chance from a place in the universe, so we ignore, even as a possibility, the notion of any interference with the order of nature.—*Huxley.*

It is the soul which creates to itself a body.—*Mazzini*

Yet ye say, "The way of the Lord is not equal." Hear now, O house of Israel: Is not my way equal? Are not your ways unequal?—*Old Testament.*

The free man thinks of nothing so little as of death, and his wisdom is a meditation, not of death, but of life.
—*Spinoza.*

It was not chance that sent us on this pilgrimage through time.—*Edward Noyes.*

O thou that sleepest, what is sleep? Sleep is an image of death. Oh, why not let your work be such that after death you become an image of immortality; as in life you become when sleeping like unto the hapless dead.
—*Leonardo da Vinci.*

LIFE BEFORE AND AFTER

By Swami Paramananda

(An address delivered out of doors, in the patio of Ashrama Cloister)

We often ask why and wherefore there are certain conditions in life which we are not able to explain, such, for instance, as a child deformed from birth. If we go to a minister, or a priest, or some orthodox teacher, he invariably tells us it is God's Will, but that is a tremendous responsibility we lay upon the Divine Providence, Whom at the same time we call all-loving and all-merciful. Therefore, there must be some way of finding an explanation that is not merely more logical, but more true.

Greek philosophers, and further back, the ancient Hindu sages, did not try to throw upon Divinity the blame for all the miseries and unpleasant experiences in this world of life; they worked out their problems in a definite, systematic way, always finding a cause for every effect, and as a result they have given man a most scientific explanation for the solution of life's difficulties. We find the reflection of their wisdom in the words of many Western philosophers. Lessing writes: "Why should I not come back every time I am capable of acquiring fresh knowledge, fresh experience," and Carlyle gives us this very interesting reflection: "The curtains of yesterday drop down, the curtains of to-morrow roll up; but yesterday and to-morrow both *are*. Pierce through the time element, glance into the Eternal. Believe what thou findest written in the sanctuaries of man's soul, even as all thinkers, in all ages have devoutly read it there."

With the ancient Indo-Aryans it was their mode of life to be thinkers,—dreamers of the soul's existence,

and we know that a person cannot even dream continuously of a thing without bringing upon him a certain reality. These mystic souls did not try merely to cover unpleasant facts with little bouquets of flowers; they faced their problems. Now it is facing and knowing these great questions of life that destroys for us the grewsome horror which we have had in regard to what we call "the veil of death;" because as we know life, death loses its power over us. So the Indo-Aryans went so far as to say: "As a goldsmith, taking a piece of gold turns it into another newer and more beautiful shape, so does this soul, after having thrown off this body, and dispelled all ignorance, make unto itself another newer and more beautiful shape. And as the slough of a snake lies on an ant-hill, dead and cast away, thus lies this body; but that disembodied immortal Spirit is Self-effulgent and one with the Absolute." This may sound a little unfamiliar to you,—that there is an Absolute Being Who is indestructible and that we are one with That. We are more familiar with what is destructible, with what is changeable; the theme of the Absolute is not always current in our mind. They conceived, however, that by the old age of the body that Eternal Spirit does not age, and by the death of the body that Spirit is not killed. We may think that this is only beautiful idealism, a poetic fancy; but if there were some real truth behind it, would it not give us a great hypothesis, a tremendous back-ground for our life and action?

We do not come into existence suddenly from non-entity, and we do not go out of it and absolutely finish with life. I cannot think that any one innately believes in that. It is a very wrong and false conception. When people do not have the fundamental ideal of the immor-

tality of the soul, when they think that they were born accidentally, in good circumstance or bad, and that they must get all the pleasure they can out of life, because when they die everything is going to end, it leads to all kinds of ignorance, selfishness and crime. These great problems are not so easily solved. Birth and death are the obverse and reverse of the same coin, the coin of existence. Our happiness depends not merely on one side, it depends on both sides of the coin.

As we are now, we represent the sum total of all the things we have thought, and of all the things we have done to ourselves and to others. There is no way of evading it. When a genius is born in our midst, when we see a boy who can play the violin supremely, or who manifests some other talent, we say: "Is it not wonderful; he did not have to work for it!" Did he not work for it? Of course he worked for it; that is the way he earned it. It was no accident. The thing is, we look only from the surface, and on the surface we do not always find an explanation. You may say that he inherited it. But we find his father is not a musician, nor his mother, nor even his grand-parents. In fact we do not find any real type of genius in his family; yet he has blossomed forth into a beautiful flower, and the whole world enjoys him and his talent. Now the eye of wisdom, in the light of true knowledge, sees every possible ground for his growth and for his unfoldment. It sees that, as the natural outcome of cosmic system and of cosmic law, there is no chance, no accident.

In order to understand life in its entirety we have to connect up two loose ends, the past and the future. This present life of ours, if it is to become complete and comprehensive, must be joined with these two ends,—the one

which lies before us, and the other which we have left behind. You do not have to become an Orientalist, or embrace any peculiar religion or dogma to understand this. It is a logical thing. Our destiny, we know, is in great measure influenced by what we have thought in our childhood. Therefore, if we are able to extend our vision a little further, beyond the veil which falls upon our memory, we shall find at once why and wherefore we are as we are, and wherefrom we bring certain instincts. Children especially are able to remember. A little child will say the most astounding things. Sometimes parents are puzzled. There was a time when they tried to ignore such remarks. They would say: "Oh, what do children know!" But often they know a great deal more than we do. Through our assumed superiority, because we are older than they are, we may take an aggressive attitude and try to silence them; but we merely impair their growth. They simply close up. They do not open their hearts to us if we are not able to open ourselves to them and give them food for thought. It is a great problem.

Dogma, creed, tradition, rationalism,—these do not give us satisfaction. What we want is light, real light by which we can read the book of life without any question. Do not think I have chosen this theme merely to mystify your understanding, or in order to acclaim that I remember twenty births which I have had, or twenty thousand births. Even if I did it would not be of any very great import. Do not let us be led away by idle curiosity. Sometimes people exclaim: "Oh, if I could only remember my past!" They might be horrified if they did remember some of it. Divine Providence gives us a great boon in causing us to forget, so that each life

we can make a fresh start. There are individuals, however, who do not forget. Many remember their childhood, and I know that the memory can go beyond that. Again there are those who cannot remember what they did yesterday; they have no co-ordination. People sometimes use this fact of lack of memory as an argument against the infinite nature of the soul. It has, however, nothing at all to do with it. If we believed only in those things we are able to remember, we would have to discredit everything that did not fall within our own personal remembrance. Therefore, it is not a logical argument, and it is not my point in considering this theme, "Life Before and After."

The idea is, that we must not make life so limited. An ignorant man who takes the stand that nothing makes any difference, that he is going to die anyhow, and therefore he must get all he can out of life, does he ever acquire happiness? People who assume this attitude, people who are short-sighted, who take the selfish, narrow point of view, do they ever accomplish anything that is of merit? Do you admire them? Do you think they set the real standard? Can they be regarded as model characters? Never. But men who have bigger vision, their limited conceptions melt away the little thoughts of time, space and circumstance—because their ideals are so lofty, so stupendous that these small things do not exist for them. It is such men who come into the larger expression of life. The great Manu, the spiritual law-giver, whom some call "father of man," gives this idea in a very simple text: "Thou canst not gather what thou dost not sow. As thou dost plant the tree, so will it grow." You cannot plant an apple seed and expect a mango tree. An apple seed will produce an apple tree,

and if we put a noxious seed in the ground it will produce only noxious fruit.

The man, then, who has a grudge against the world and his fellow-beings, who feels that his life is all-miserable, let him make a survey of what has gone before, of what lies in the past. Life itself is not to be condemned. If, however, when we find that we are surrounded by difficulties and adverse circumstances, we merely recognize the fact that these conditions are due to our own past and that somehow or other we must go through with them, it is not going to help us to get rid of them. That is a morbid attitude. On the contrary, we must face them with all the bravery of spirit, heroism and understanding that we possess, and very quickly we shall unmake them. Remember that. We can unmake what we have made. What a consolation it is! There is no time limit. It all depends on our own attitude, our wisdom. Wisdom is the greatest gift that a man can have in any province of life. Whether he is a layman or a preacher, whether he is commanding a very high station in life, or a very low one, makes no difference. Wisdom is his only guide, his only solace, the only potent factor in his hand to work with.

"Thou canst not gather what thou dost not sow. . ." This idea of ancient India, if understood, would take away all sense of bitterness from the minds of men. Often we resent it when someone is happy and prosperous and we are unhappy. We ask: "Why is this person rich and I poor?" When these thoughts come to us we should look for an explanation nowhere except within ourselves. Also we should have the constructive thought that the condition is only temporary. Through force of circumstance a cloud is hanging over us, but it cannot

be permanent. The trouble is that we take the most immediate things for the most vital. If only we could learn to treat the destiny of life as we treat the weather! Only last week the whole horizon was black with clouds and it seemed that all the country would be destroyed by rain; but again the sun is shining. What a blessing! The same way it is when we believe in the Divine Providence. To-day the sky of our heart is clouded with sorrow and sordidness, holding no hope even for our future. We can easily sink down with the thought that we are never going to be rid of our despondency; but to what avail? What happens when a man takes a pessimistic view? He has blundered and he is unhappy because of that blunder. If, however, he begins to brood over it, going round and round his mistake, he is liable to make another one, because brooding breeds mistakes. He who is full of fear, keeps on acting with a fearful attitude, and that always defeats him.

It is not by dwelling on our past, not by thinking of our sadness and sorrow and of our unfortunate happenings that we are going to have good fortune and a glorious future. Through wise consideration of our past, however, we may learn certain lessons by means of what we call our mistakes. Children do that when they are learning to walk. They get up on their feet, and then they fall down. It is very discouraging, but they persist, and if you are an observer you will find that every time they fall, they think; they seem to try to remember something that they can depend on. Gradually their intelligence begins to unfold, and their bodily strength co-operates, until finally they stand firm. So it is with us. We make mistakes, and we learn to bless our mistakes. But there are people who frown at their blunders; they

cry themselves down. Self-depreciation and denunciation are two great evils. When you depreciate yourself, when you say: "I am nothing," and keep on thinking you are nothing, you begin to be nothing. To have that attitude of condemnation towards ourselves or towards others is not wholesome. Even in the name of religion it does not aid us.

Let us understand the basis of life. To me life is the most sacred thing there is; even that life which seems to be discarded. Do not let us ever look down on such a life for it is part of the great Infinite. When man can feel there is a sacred current within him and without him, that realization is going to be the great binding influence in humanity. This cry of brotherhood, of fellowship among men, and among religious thoughts and cults, rises from the soul of man, because this world is the abiding place of God's children. If we have narrowness, denunciation and fanaticism in our hearts, no matter what religion we practise, we only go further and further away from the centre of things.

Life is an opportunity. Let our past bring us to a place where we can view our present with a better understanding, and let our present be so stimulated by our experience in the past and by our aspiration for the future, that we may walk right into the light and into greater light. We cannot pass into greater light without taking others with us. We cannot go up without taking others with us. We cannot go down without taking others with us. We cannot smile a real, genuine, happy smile from within, without casting its radiance upon others, and we cannot sigh or grieve, even though we may shut ourselves in a closet, without casting the gloom of our mood on other souls.

Life, therefore, is the most intelligent avenue through which we progress. We go onward and forward on the path of life. That is one of my happy themes—"Onward ever forward in the march of life!" To-day the sky of our heart may be clouded, but to-morrow it will all clear, it will make us forget that a cloud ever existed. Hope, courage, aspiration will lead us ever onward and ever forward. And know this, that we cannot be better and happier without making others better and happier; also, no matter where we may confine ourselves, even in a remote corner, we cannot have heaviness of heart, despondency of spirit, or gloominess of soul without making others unhappy; because we are inter-related, you and I,—the whole world is one family. If you do not care to believe in that big lofty idea, if you are interested only in your own happiness, work for that. But in spare moments when you are tired of thinking of yourself, you will want to think of something bigger than yourself, of God, or Spirit, or Infinitude, call Him what you will—and you cannot think of Him without thinking of your brother.

Here we live; here we walk; here we act. Our action affects our brother, and our utterance sometimes inflicts wounds upon him. Therefore, should we not learn the true order of things? Do not, however, carry the thought of charity. When you are able to do good to any one, never think that you are doing it out of charity. It is you, yourself, who benefit. When you have a chance to do something for some one, even though he may be the poorest of the poor, bless your fate that you have the opportunity to take a step onward and upward on the ladder of life. The privilege is ours; for it is only as we look upon our good deeds, upon

our beautiful, unselfish, fragrant thoughts, that we find peace in our soul, and that light which illumines the path leading into the future.

There are people who go out of life smiling, because death has lost its sting. They go out smiling, radiant and conscious, because light is always with them,—before them and behind them; they are never without light. That is why it is dangerous to neglect our spiritual instinct, for it is the light which reveals our path here and hereafter.

THE CHRIST-CHILD'S GARDEN

By Nathan Haskell Dole

Christ, when a child, a garden made,
And many roses flourished there.
He watered them three times a day
To make a garland for his hair.
And when in time the roses bloomed,
He called the children in to share:
They tore the flowers from ev'ry stem,
And left the garden stript and bare.
"How wilt thou weave thyself a crown
Now that thy roses are all dead?"
"Ye have forgotten that the thorns
Are left for me," the Christ-child said.
They plaited then a crown of thorns
And laid it rudely on his head.
A garland for his forehead made,
For roses, drops of blood instead.

Love is the river of life in this world. Think not that ye know it who stand at the little tinkling rill, the first small fountain.—*Henry Ward Beecher.*

IN HIS PRESENCE

By John Ruysbroeck

The soul that has stood in the presence of Christ experiences a great sweetness which, deepening, passes into that holy joy that is the yielding of the soul to the divine Love. If every earthly pleasure were melted into a single experience and bestowed upon one man it would be as nothing when measured by the joy of which I write; for here it is God who passes into the depths of us in all His purity, and the soul is not only filled but overflowing. This experience is that light that makes manifest to the soul the terrible desolation of such as live divorced from love; it melts the man utterly; he is no longer master of his joy.

Such possession produces intoxication, the state of the Spirit in which its bliss transcends the uttermost bounds of anticipation or desire. Sometimes the ecstasy pours forth in song, sometimes in tears: at one moment it finds expression in movement, at others, in the intense stillness of burning, voiceless feeling.

Some men knowing this bliss, wonder if others feel God as they do; some are assured that no living creature has ever had such experiences as theirs. There are those who wonder that the world is not set aflame by this joy; and there are others who marvel at its nature, asking whence it comes and what it is. The body itself can know no greater pleasure upon earth than to participate in it; there are moments that the soul feels that it must shiver to fragments in the poignancy of this experience. Then from out this intensity of feeling springs action, an act of grace . . . "Father, I am not worthy . . . but I have need of this measureless goodness. . . ." And through the gateway of humility the man passes to a higher state.

FLOWER LEGENDS

By Mildred Phillips

PART I.

The "legend" or lectionary of the early church, meaning "the thing to read" from *legere*, "to read," was a brief, concise statement, embodying a teaching from the Scriptures—or more particularly, a spiritual example as set forth in the life of some saint, which was to be read regularly at divine Service. Such a document has quite recently been discovered at Pisa in Italy, a most interesting "legend" of St. Francis, written soon after his passing in 1226. These biographical accounts became enriched with significant symbolism so that they shone with the light which rendered them the ideal for the struggling soul. Thus gradually the "legend" passed from an historical narrative to a non-historical tradition which retained the power to move the hearts of men and possessed the grace of showing forth idealities for universal aspiration.

Now idealization is a necessity of the human heart and as we reach up to attain higher levels of understanding we consciously and unconsciously make use of the every day things of our life to that end by investing them with qualities and with powers which transform commonplaceness into beauty and lend to the beautiful an added charm. From the earliest times of which we have any written record, flowers have been used in divine worship, and as they have yielded their offering of beauty and fragrance they have helped man to build around them legends and traditions for the expression of his own faith and devotion.

Perhaps no flower is so beautifully and so intimately interwoven with religious tradition as the lily which is

the symbol of purity and truth. The angel of the Annunciation is conceived by the artist as bearing lilies when he stood before Mary with his tidings from the Highest. In the Sermon on the Mount, the Christ referred to the glory of the "lilies of the field," although this flower most probably was not the white lily of the Annunciation, but the gorgeous red lily common in Galilee. A touching legend gives us a reason for its deep colour. It is said that when Jesus walked in the Garden of Gethsemane, all the flowers of the garden, intuitively divining the tragedy of the coming day, bent their heads to earth in sympathy and distress, except the lily which said: "I will stand upright and comfort Him by my beauty and fragrance." But when He stopped and gazed lovingly upon the perfect blossom, she was so overwhelmed by the sense of her self-assurance in thinking she could assuage a sorrow so profound, that she blushed a burning crimson and hung her head in shame. Since then all the red lilies grow with drooping flowers.

Another legend tells us that when Mary the Mother of Jesus as a young girl was serving in the Temple her hand was sought in marriage by many. The high priest, whose duty it was to choose her husband, told each of the aspirants to leave his staff at the Temple overnight. He then prayed earnestly that he be given a sign in order that he might select the most worthy, and in the morning Joseph's staff was found to be covered with white lilies. It was one of the favorite flowers of the Hebrews of olden time. King Solomon had it wrought into the ornamentation of his palace and it formed a part of the design of the royal crown. Judith of Bethuliah wore lilies when she went to the tent of Holofernes. A writer of the eleventh century says of the lily: "It has six

petals, six stamens and one pistil representing the thirteen attributes of God. The heart of the blossom is always turned upward and it is often found growing among thorns symbolizing the trust in Jehovah which His children should feel even amid afflictions." Probably its closest association is with the festival of Easter. Easter is another rendering of the ancient Saxon word *Eastre* meaning a festival in honor of Spring. It was formerly a pagan celebration later incorporated into the worship of the Church with the new significance of the Resurrection.

In ecclesiastical symbology, the rose like the lily was dedicated to the Holy Virgin and often the flower is represented in paintings of the Blessed Mother. A sacred emblem called the Golden Rose, typifying the Christ, is blessed by the Pope each year on the fourth Sunday of Lent with considerable ceremonial and subsequently bestowed upon some church, or government, or individual rendering conspicuous service to the church. No other flower has so many legends both religious and secular connected with it as the rose. The significance of "rosary" was a garland of roses to crown the image of the Virgin, hence a chaplet. The rose is closely associated with the Cross and the traditions surrounding the "mystic rose," form a literature in themselves. It is invested with the glamour and romance of the warm twilights of the far East, Byron and Thomas Moore especially referring to the connection between the rose and the bulbul's song. The origin of the expression "sub rosa" has been given many different interpretations. Perhaps the most significant is the derivation from the ancient Roman custom of strewing rose petals over the graves of those who had passed into the silence.

Flower legends are found among the tribes of the North American Indians and one of them tells us the origin of the arbutus: Manitou, the Mighty, in the form of an old man, dwelt alone far in the frozen north. One night when the streams were covered with ice and the winds blew bitterly cold and flung the snow against the bearskin door of his tepee, he cried out that all must perish. As he spoke the words, the bearskin was pushed aside and a maiden entered bringing with her gentle warmth and brightness. The old man said "Welcome, my daughter. I am Manitou the Great. It is I who make the lakes and the rivers change to ice and who send the snow abroad." The maiden replied, "Manitou is great but my smile undoes his work, for when I smile the grass grows green and the flowers appear." Manitou then said, "When I nod my grey head the cold winds blow, the leaves drop from the trees and the birds fly away." The maiden replied, "Manitou is great, but when I smile, the birds return and sing, the leaves burst forth from the trees and the cold winds are changed to warm breezes." As she spoke, Manitou fell asleep. Streams of water ran from his hair and beard, green branches and leaves appeared and covered him, and birds flew into the tepee singing their gladdest songs. Then the maiden took from her bosom a spray of sweet smelling pink blossoms and kissed them and said: "To you I give my beauty and my sweetness and hereafter men shall gather you with bowed heads and on bended knee."

A flower whose beauty is interwoven in an unusual way with the symbolism of the church, since it possesses in its form an analogy to the emblems of the Christian faith, is the passion flower, found by the Spaniards in

the forests of South America. In it are supposed to be represented the Cross, the crown of thorns, the scourge and the sponge which was filled with vinegar, while the five wounds of the Lord are represented by five red spots on its leaves.

The buttercup has many pretty legends concerning its origin, one of them being the story of Ranunculus (which is the botanical name of the flower), a mythical youth who dressed always in green and yellow silk and who had the power of charming all who listened to his sweet singing. One day he so charmed himself by his own melodious voice that in a passion of ecstasy he became transformed into the yellow flower which adorns our springtime fields and meadows.

Although such a common flower, or possibly for that very reason, the field daisy plays a prominent part in historical and legendary lore. St. Augustine, when he came to England, fell upon his knees at the unaccustomed sight of a field covered with the white and yellow flowers, exclaiming: "So will the spirits of the blest shine in heaven." He was much impressed by the white blossoms and on one occasion took a chain of them from a boy who made one of a large audience which St. Augustine was addressing, and as he took the flower chain apart he gave utterance to the thoughts of brotherhood which the blossoms suggested. He said: "The sun has imaged himself in the centre of each of these flowers as the Sun of Righteousness will image Himself in each of your hearts. From this sun in the daisy white rays spread around. So may the rays of purity and goodness spread around you, reflected from the light of heaven within you. As these flowers are strung together in a chain so may you be united to each other and to the holy

churches of the world by a chain that shall never be broken."

(To be Concluded)

SPINNERS OF DESTINY

By William James

We are spinning our own fates, good or evil, never to be undone. Every smallest stroke of virtue or vice leaves its never-so-little scar. The drunken Rip Van Winkle, in Jefferson's play, excuses himself for every fresh dereliction by saying, "I won't count this time!" Well, he may not count it, and a kind heaven may not count it; but it is being counted none the less. Down among his nerve-cells and fibres the molecules are counting it, registering it and storing it up to be used against him when the next temptation comes. Nothing we ever do is, in strict scientific literalness, wiped out. Of course this has its good side as well as its bad one. As we become permanent drunkards by so many separate drinks, so we become saints in the moral, and authorities and experts in the practical and scientific spheres, by so many separate acts and hours of work.

Let no youth have any anxiety about the upshot of his education, whatever the line of it may be. If he keep faithfully busy each hour of the working day, he may safely leave the final result to itself. He can with perfect certainty count on waking up some fine morning to find himself one of the competent ones of his generation in whatever pursuit he may have singled out. Silently, between all the details of business, the power of judging in all that class of matter will have built itself up within him as a possession that will never pass away.

DEATH IS BEFORE ME TO-DAY

An Egyptian Song of the Middle Empire

Death is before me to-day
Like the recovery of a sick man,
Like going forth into a garden after sickness.

Death is before me to-day
Like the odor of myrrh,
Like sitting under the sail on a windy day.

Death is before me to-day
Like the odor of lotus-flowers,
Like sitting on the shore of drunkenness.

Death is before me to-day
Like the course of the freshet,
Like the return of a man from the war-galley to his house.

Death is before me to-day
Like the clearing of the sky,
Like a man fowling therein toward that which he knew not.

Death is before me to-day
As a man longs to see his house
When he has spent years in captivity.

The renewal of the world begets new joys; all things arise with the resurrection of the Lord. The elements obey Him and feel how great are the feasts of their Creator. . . .The heaven becomes more serene, the sea more quiet; one breathes gentle air; our valley is clothed in flowers; what was dry becomes green again, what was cold grows warm again: after which the spring gains color . . . Life conquers death.—*Adam de Saint Victor*

A CANTICLE OF LOVE

By Saint Therese of Lisieux

(Saint Therese known as "The Little Flower of Jesus" died in 1897 and was recently beatified at Rome. This Canticle is taken from her "Autobiography.")

O Jesus, my Love, at last I have found my vocation. My vocation is love! Yes, I have found my place and this place, O my God, Thou hast Thyself given to me: in the heart of the Church, my Mother, I will be Love! . . . Thus I shall be all things: thus will my dream be realized.... Why do I say I am beside myself with joy? This does not convey my thought. Rather is it peace which has become my portion—the calm peace of the sailor when he catches sight of the beacon which lights him to port. O luminous beacon of Love! I know how to come even unto Thee, I have found the means of borrowing Thy Fires. I am but a weak and helpless child, yet it is my very weakness which makes me dare to offer myself, O Jesus, as victim to Thy Love.

In olden days pure and spotless holocausts alone were acceptable to the Omnipotent God. Nor could His justice be appeased, save by the most perfect sacrifices. But the law of fear has given place to the law of love, and Love has chosen me, a weak and imperfect creature, as its victim. Is not such a choice worthy of God's Love? Yea, for in order that Love may be fully satisfied, it must stoop even unto nothingness, and must transform that nothingness into fire. O my God, I know it—"Love is repaid by love alone." Therefore I have sought, I have found, how to ease my heart, by rendering Thee love for love....

But how shall I show my love, since love proves itself by deeds? Well! the little child will strew flowers.... she will embalm the Divine Throne with their fragrance, she will sing Love's Canticle in silvery tones.

Yea, my Beloved, it is thus my short life shall be spent in thy sight. The only way I have of proving my love is to strew flowers before Thee—that is to say, I will let no tiny sacrifice pass, no look, no word. I wish to profit by the smallest actions, and to do them for Love. I wish to suffer for Love's sake; for Love's sake even to rejoice: thus shall I strew flowers. Not one shall I find without scattering its petals before Thee..... and I will sing.... I will sing always, even if my roses must be gathered from amidst thorns, and the longer and sharper the thorns, the sweeter shall be my song. But of what avail to Thee, my Jesus, are my flowers and my songs? I know it well: this fragrant shower, these delicate petals of little price, these songs of love from a poor little heart like mine, will nevertheless be pleasing unto Thee. Trifles they are, but Thou wilt smile on them. But is this pure love really in my heart? Are not my boundless desires but dreams—but foolishness? If this be so, I beseech Thee to enlighten me.... and yet I confess, if I reach not these heights to which my soul aspires, this very martyrdom, this foolishness, will have been sweeter to me than eternal bliss will be.....

How can a soul so imperfect as mine aspire to the plenitude of Love? What is the key of this mystery? O my only Friend, why dost Thou not reserve these infinite longings to lofty souls, to the eagles that soar in the heights? Alas! I am but a poor little unfledged bird. I am not an eagle, I have but the eagle's eyes and heart. Yet, notwithstanding my exceeding littleness, I dare to gaze upon the Divine Sun of Love, and I burn to dart upwards unto Him. I would fly, I would imitate the eagles; but all that I can do is to lift up my little wings—it is beyond my feeble power to soar. What is to become of

me? Must I die of sorrow because of my helplessness? Oh, no! I will not even grieve. With daring self-abandonment there will I remain until death, my gaze fixed upon that Divine Sun. Nothing shall affright me, nor wind, nor rain. And should impenetrable clouds conceal the Orb of Love, and should I seem to believe that beyond this life there is darkness only, that would be the hour of perfect joy, the hour in which to push my confidence to its uttermost bounds. I should not dare to detach my gaze, well knowing that beyond the dark clouds the sweet Sun still shines.

So far, O my God, I understand Thy Love for me. But Thou knowest how often I forget this, my only care. I stray from Thy side, and my scarcely fledged wings become draggled in the muddy pools of earth: then I lament "Like a young swallow," and my lament tells Thee all, and I remember, O Infinite Mercy! that "Thou didst not come to call the just, but sinners." Yet shouldst Thou still be deaf to the plaintive cries of Thy feeble creature, shouldst Thou still be veiled, then I am content to remain benumbed with cold, my wings bedraggled and once more I rejoice in well-deserved suffering. O Sun, my only Love, I am happy to feel myself, so small, so frail in Thy sunshine, and I am in peace.

PSYCHE

By Sister Daya

My soul it is a butterfly,
And Thou,—the flower, the sun, the sky:
Ah, happy, happy butterfly,
Within Thy light to live and die!
Or, as it learns its life to give,
Within Thy light to die—and live.

DAYS IN AN INDIAN MONASTERY

By Sister Devamata

VI.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE AND RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

"The great man works silently, he is never fussy," Swami Ramakrishnananda exclaimed one day. This is preeminently true of the great men in India's religious life. The Indian truth-seeker or truth-seer is never boisterous in his spiritual practice. He never parades his spiritual attainments. If he does, he is looked upon as a hypocrite or a religious charlatan. When he wishes to carry on certain higher researches, to practise any form of spiritual exercise, he goes to a mountain cave or a solitary woodland glade or to some place in his own domain where he will be unseen and unheard. To display his inner aspirations would be to break confidence with his God. Yet there is no element of mystery in his practice. He is not trying to conceal anything esoteric.

"According to Hindu teaching there is no mystery," Swami Ramakrishnananda once said to me. "Whenever there is mystery there is a flaw. Mystery is weakness. It is blindness. There is nothing in this world that cannot be explained rationally. There should not be anything mysterious connected with religion. God is in no way a mysterious Being. He is clearer than day—than light, than the sun. People say that these Yoga practices are mysterious, but they are never mysterious. Mystery means something that cannot be explained. When a man is physically weak he takes to cunning, when he is spiritually weak he takes to mystery."

At another time the Swami asked: "In the West why do they talk so much about the psychic and the occult? What do they mean by these terms?" One rarely hears

them in India. That they should be so closely associated with India's teaching is perplexing. It may be because there are so many people among the Indians who gain phenomenal mastery over their body and over Nature; but these powers are never regarded as evidence of spirituality. A young man who has spent fourteen years learning to walk on water is told by his brother that his long practice had accomplished what could be done in a ferry-boat for a penny. I myself knew a young girl who had the power to swallow her tongue and pass into another state of consciousness; I saw her do it, but she was a modest little person free from any pretence to spiritual development.

There was a man in a neighboring town who possessed this power to such a degree that he could remain in the other state of consciousness for days together; but some mischievous boys thought he was "making believe" and to test him threw him into the river, expecting him to begin to swim. When he did not, they were frightened and confessed what they had done. People found the man after several hours and by a special process brought him back to normal consciousness. He was surprised to hear what had happened. He had known nothing of it.

I heard from responsible sources of men who could live for many hours under water, or who could consume an abnormal quantity of food and then not eat for a week or more; but all these exhibitions of extraordinary control are merely branches of the physical science of Hatha Yoga, which is based on the governing of certain perfectly natural laws. There is nothing occult about them, and they have no more nor less to do with religion than has the re-rooting of the banyan tree or the delicate shrinking of the sensitive plant.

Sometimes these subtle powers of Nature come as the consequence of spiritual unfoldment; then they acquire new grace and value. The story is told of a disciple of the great monistic reformer Sankara that one day he was going to see his Master and in the eagerness and fervor of his devotion as he went he sang a song of love in Sanskrit—a language unknown to him but profoundly familiar to his Master to whom the song was addressed. So absorbed was he in his soul's outpouring that he did not perceive, when he reached the river, that he stepped from earth on water. He walked across the river singing his song of adoration; and it is said that wherever his foot touched there sprang a lotus, until behind him from bank to bank stretched a path of fragrant blossoms. The song is still preserved.

The spiritual practices given in India are countless. There is one for every phase of human nature, for every temperament and constitution. They can be gathered up, however, into certain general classes. The first step in spiritual preparation is the elimination from our constitution of all that clogs or hinders its free action. This process is called the practice of austerity or *Tapas*, a Sanskrit word signifying "burning"—that is, the practice of *Tapas*, burns up all alien, impeding elements in the system and makes it ready for further growth.

Austerity does not mean that a man must lie on spikes or hold his hand up until it withers. Such exhibitions are but the excesses of fervor possible and inevitable in a nation like India which has had a passion for religion down the ages. The Indians themselves, although they may respect the sincerity and strength of endurance manifested, regard such immoderate practices as unwholesome and without real value.

Very different are the austerities enumerated in the Bhagavad-Gita:—Service of God, of spiritual teachers and wise men; the practice of cleanliness, simplicity, continence and non-injury—these are austerities of the body. Speech that causes no pain to others, but which is true and beneficial, regular study of the Scriptures, kindliness, silence, self-control, purity of heart—these are austerities of the mind. Such exercises may seem primary, but to imbed in the nature the apparently simple qualities they induce, one must teach the body not to whimper or complain in changes of heat or cold. The ardent aspirant after higher attainment therefore practises the austerity of the five fires—that is, he sits under a flaming sun with four fires burning about him; or he floats in a Himalayan stream amid cakes of ice. I give extreme examples; there are many lesser ones.

Again he must bring body and mind into perfect rhythm. He does this by the continuous repetition of a holy word until the whole being vibrates in unison with the exalting thought behind the word. Still again he must form a habit of lofty living and thinking. To do this he associates with those who possess that habit. He must become a spiritual apprentice. So association with the holy becomes another practice.

The aim of every practice is to gain command of the entire consciousness. Control of the body means conquest of the sub-conscious, control of the mind means conquest of the conscious, control of the intellect or higher realm of thought brings conquest of the super-conscious. There is nothing dismal or forced in any of these disciplines or exercises in self-mastery; they are carried on with cheerful ardor.

"Do not think that religion does not give enjoyment.

It gives a hundred times more enjoyment—of the mind, of the senses even, than any pleasure-seeking householder can ever know. When we renounce anything for the sake of religion, we merely give up a thing of small value for something of infinite value," Swami Ramakrishnananda said to me once when we were talking together.

Fasting is a universal practice in India. On the Indian religious calendar there are two regular fast days in every month. They fall on the eleventh day of each lunar fortnight. I knew many houses where at that time no cooking was done and the family did not taste food or water from sunset to sunset. Only the children were exempt from total fasting. Yet the routine of life was not modified in any way. The gentlemen went to their offices as usual and the ladies attended to their customary duties at home. On feast days also, like our Christmas, they prefer to abstain from food and water, believing it a greater privilege to be able to forget the needs of the body and devote themselves to the needs of their higher nature.

There is no sanctimonious sense of merit in this fasting. The Indian devotee takes it very casually. He knows it is only a means to the end of bodily control and bodily purity. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, if fasting makes one think more of the body, one had better eat some light food. That a little food more or less does not determine man's salvation is shown in this incident related to me by Swami Ramakrishnananda:

"Swami Vivekananda was once passing through Bengal when a forestry officer and his wife were so much impressed with his appearance that they insisted on his stopping in their house. 'The rains have just set in, Swamiji,' they said, 'this is the time when no *Sannyasin*

tries to wander. Why do you not come and live with us for a while? We have no children and we can give you a place where you will be altogether undisturbed.' Swamiji consented.

"Both became his disciples and the wife took initiation from him. On the morning when he was leaving she said with some compunction: 'Swamiji, I am in the habit of drinking a cup of tea in the early morning. Will that interfere with my spiritual progress?' Swamiji replied, 'I would not care much for a religion which could be washed off by a cup of tea.' "

Japam, repetition of a holy name or text, is another practice that is universal. There are numberless devotees who repeat the thousand names of God every day. A close friend of the Monastery was learning them when I was there and each morning at five o'clock a well-versed Brahman scholar came to teach them to him.

No means of spiritual development is more prized in India than serving an enlightened soul, that is, the practice of discipleship. Daily contact with one who knows is the most effective way of gaining culture, whether of the soul or of the intellect. One imbibes what one lives with. One's habit of thought is determined by the trend of one's conversation. There was a deaf boy who spent his days at the Monastery while I was in Madras. He would come early, take his seat on a mat in the hall and watch. When he saw anything to do, he would get up and do it, then sit down again and wait. He could not hear a word that was spoken, but he was content to be near an illumined soul like Swami Ramakrishnananda and feel the uplifting power of his personality.

It is not possible to speak even cursorily of the various Indian practices, but they all have one end in view,—the

conquering of the mind and the attainment of God-vision. Swami Ramakrishnananda once said to me: "Mind is like a big mirror which gives a perfect reflection but which has been so thickly covered with dirt that nothing can be seen in it. The more you can rub off that dirt the more you will be able to see yourself in it. The more you can remove the least speck of dust the more you can get a perfect image of your true Self. What is that dirt that hides the image? Selfish desires.

"There was once a great *Tyagi* (one who has renounced). He cared for nothing in the world, only he had a little love for his *Koupinam* (loin cloth). He kept it hanging on a tree and sometimes the rats used to come and gnaw it. This annoyed him very much. 'What,' he would say, 'I have nothing in the world but this *Koupinam* and the rats want to take it from me.' So he got a cat to keep off the rats. A cat, however, requires milk, so he asked one of his disciples to bring him a cow. The cow again requires fodder, so he asked for a pair of bullocks that he might till the ground. Thus he added one possession to another until finally, unable to care for them all, he married a wife to look after them.

"Our Master, Sri Ramakrishna, used to say that as when you catch hold of one end of the creeper that grows on the surface of still water, the whole tank will come; so if you have one selfish desire that connects you with the entire universe. Be free from every selfish desire. That is purity. Purity means singleness. Desire is a very dangerous thing. Sometimes we think we have killed all selfish desire; but somewhere in our mind there lingers some remnant; and as from a spark left in the corner of the hearth may come again a big fire, so out of that small remnant may spring a huge fire of desire."

(This chapter to be concluded in the May Number)

REPORT

Sunday, March 6th, 1927, will be a day forever memorable in the annals of Swami Paramananda's work in this country, for upon that date the Swami celebrated at Ananda-Ashrama the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna, celebrated it, not as heretofore, merely with special Services, but after the manner of the Hindus, who upon the Feast Day of a great Saint assemble by tens of thousands for spiritual and physical refreshment. Thus the Swami not only fed the souls of those who came, at two beautiful Services held in the patio of Ashrama Cloister under the bluest of blue skies, but later on satisfied their material hunger with delicious Indian dishes, cooked by his own hand and served by him at the Community House where the guests assembled, sitting outside on steps and benches and at small tables, with the misty, lilac-tinted La Crescenta Valley at their feet.

The weather god surely smiled, for it was a day of perfect sunshine slipping in between days of gloom, and many availed themselves of the occasion, between three and four hundred attending the morning and afternoon Services. There was a real feeling of joy abroad; the deep joy of the Spirit, commingled with the peace of the hills,—a fitting day on which to honor one who exemplified in his simple, God-illumined life, the oneness of God, the unity of man and the brotherhood of faiths. So universal was his spirit that the followers of each religion claimed him as their own. All this the Swami brought forth at the morning and afternoon Services, speaking with great depth of feeling of Sri Ramakrishna, although he said that a holy life can no more be described than one can describe the perfume of a flower. He drew East and West together in deep sympathy when he pictured

this consecrated character who, wanting nothing for himself, is honored to-day by countless thousands, his very memory uniting all creeds and castes in the common bond of love.

"With him there was no bargaining nor bartering," said the Swami, "People in India do not buy religion by going to the market—that is something in which we can still bend the knee to great India. She has preserved her dignity there. In India when we celebrate the birth of our great spiritual heroes, it is done not so much through public meetings. Feeding the poor plays a very great part. Thousands of them gather together in exchange of feeling and fellowship. They have music. It is really a day of peace. To-day we open our door and our hearts with that spirit of fellowship. I bring you the spirit of India, the world heart pulsating not superficially, but for the East and West."

The following day, Monday, March 7th, the Swami left California for his Boston Centre, where, upon the Sunday after his arrival, he again conducted a special public celebration in honor of Sri Ramakrishna, this time for the benefit of his Boston students. There was warm response and a very large attendance at all three Services. The Swami expects to remain in the East about four weeks, returning in time for Easter.

* * * *

On March 5th, the Vedanta Society of Portland, of which Swami Prabhavananda is the Founder and Head, likewise celebrated Sri Ramakrishna's Birthday. At the Swami's request the morning Service was conducted by the students, while in the evening the Swami paid his tribute in a simple heart-touching address. Music and lovely flowers transformed the little hall into a temple of worship.

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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

May, 1927

Unfoldment From Within

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ASHRAMA ARTS AND CRAFTS

Hand-weaving is the newest addition to the Arts and Crafts Department at Ananda-Ashrama, the gift of a loom by a friend, making it possible for members trained in the art to weave dress goods by the yard, scarfs, bags, linen towels,, runners, etc. The Department also has on sale bronzed reproductions of the Vedanta symbol—the lotus with the Sacred Word—hand-illuminated book-marks with quotations from the Swami's poems, many of the poems themselves illumined and framed, artistic lamp-shades, book-covers, incense made from California native shrubs and Eastern spices, etc. Information concerning prices will be given on request.

PURE HONEY

The Ananda-Ashrama has for sale the purest quality of black or white sage honey from the Ashrama hives. Sold in glass jars or sealed in tins for shipment. Prices on request.

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MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."
—Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East."
—Tyndall.

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UNFOLDMENT FROM WITHIN

By Swami Paramananda

WHAT a wonderful thing it would be for a man to know the inner secret of his being and wherefrom come all his blossoming, his fruition and his gifts. Such knowledge would give him at once a greater sense of magnitude, a deeper root of being, and would make him constant in the face of every difficulty. When we find some one remaining calm and unmoved amid all circumstances, we may know that it is because of this consciousness of his Source.

"In Him we live and move and have our being." There is nothing new in the way these words are combined, nor in the intellectual concept; but there is a tremendous newness which wells forth from the soul of one who feels, who knows, who sees as a definite fact that we live, move, and have our being in that great Cause. This realization is what the mystic souls call revelation. We may look upon it as a process of spiritual unfoldment; but do not think from this that we are without a soul in the beginning and gradually become possessed of one. It is that the qualities of soul which are hidden in the inmost recess of our being,—those qualities which make us one with the divine Principle—suddenly become clear

to us, as if some one had torn away a veil from our consciousness, or as if by some means we ourselves had done it.

In spiritual philosophy there is no word, I think, which gives a more graphic description of the process of knowledge than unfoldment. In science, also, this is true. For instance, the law of gravity was discovered by Newton, but that does not mean that it did not exist before he discovered it. Of course it did. The law existed before; the law exists now, and the law will exist always, because it is based on an eternal and abiding Principle. Knowledge is power and knowledge means removing the veil from our mind, just as in the case of Newton's discovery. In the spiritual world we also discover, or rather uncover, certain hidden truths, hidden facts,—hidden not by some arbitrary power—we hide them; in fact we seem sometimes to turn our backs on the treasure-house of life, and then cry out in agony, feeling our impoverishment. We cannot help but feel impoverished so long as there is a blockade between us and our Source. I am not speaking merely from the spiritual point of view; we can experience this anywhere: in the strictly physical life, in the life of art, science, education,—anywhere. As soon as we are cut off from that Source, there is a lack of strength, a lack of expression. When we see one man manifesting greater power of attraction, or magnetism, or intellectual achievement than another, it means that he has kept himself, even unconsciously, a little more connected with the Source of things. There is no other way of gaining knowledge. That is why wise men always come to the conclusion that without this inner connection they have nothing.

In those great sacred Indo-Aryan Classics, the Upan-

ishads, given orally thousands of years ago by the ancient Rishis of India to their disciples, the idea is expressed that spiritual wisdom must be a matter of inner unfoldment. The teacher gives the teaching to the pupil; the pupil works it out and verifies it. Thus is he convinced. There is no other way; for Truth is self-evident, and man can be convinced of the truth only when he has found his own proof. Now to find our proof of anything pertaining to the spiritual kingdom means working it out individually through meditation, prayer, deep thinking, rationalism, or discrimination. There are many methods for seeking truth; but whether we follow one method or another, or combine several methods, there must be this working out in the individual soul. We cannot accept any one else's words of revelation until we have verified them by our own unfoldment from within, any more than we can trust some one else to eat for us when we are hungry.

In this day and age there is much that we doubt. Sometimes it is a good thing to doubt; it shows man's rational instinct. We cannot help but doubt until we have found the truth for ourselves, but if we begin and end with doubting, it reveals a very definite lack in our constitution. To doubt and yet make no effort to investigate is not the way of the rational mind. The rational mind may be slow in accepting a thing, but it always gives a fair chance, and that is all that is required of us. There is no house so dark that light cannot penetrate it and destroy the darkness. There is no human heart so ignorant, so neglected, so uneducated, that the light of Truth cannot shine into it. Here is where the ancient Indo-Aryan wisdom excels. It does not discard anything from the human mind. There is a religion for every one;

there is a revelation for every one, only there must be for each individual some process of self-quickening.

If you are giving a child a lesson in music, you have to begin with the rudimentary points, teaching first the finger exercises, and gradually, very gradually, conveying the sense of rhythm, until you arrive at the finished product. Same way it is with religion. An ordinary person wants something which is concrete, something which may seem to us almost like child's play; yet it is the only thing that person can take, the only thing that will benefit him, and through these simple means his nature will unfold, and his consciousness will be enlarged and expanded. Thus in India we find every form of religious observance, from the most crude form of idol worship to the highest realization of the Absolute where forms melt away and the whole mind blends with infinitude: no forms, no boundary lines, no limitations,—and this also becomes a revelation through unfoldment. It cannot, however, be brought about by force. For instance, we may read in a mystic book that man's knowledge is within himself, or we may take a sentence from the Bible, such as, "The Kingdom of Heaven is within;" but this does not give us that Kingdom. It is not something which a surgeon can investigate by cutting one open with his knife. It is the subtlest of the subtle, and the only avenue of approach that we have to it is our mind, our keenness of perception, our clarity of thought.

Thought that is unified and concentrated can travel. Modern psychology has taught us the value of concentration. It is a tremendous gift, and it does not come through artificial means. There are some who are born with the power of penetration, and it is concentration which gives that power. If we could learn the art of

concentrating ourselves in a direct line, there would be no problem that we could not solve. The gift of spiritual unfoldment implies concentration,—going into the inmost recesses of our being; but as we go,we have to take off layer after layer of obstructing thought. Our mind is crowded with non-essentials. We find that we have not a moment's rest or peace, that we are being constantly distracted. We say that we are nervous, are worried, are fearful; in fact we give all kinds of reasons for our peaceless state, but they are very superficial reasons. We can, however, be released from all these detrimental conditions, but that means turning inward.

Man is not born solely with the out-going tendency. All of us have a certain amount of reserve, of inner poise and tranquillity; but when we scatter our forces indiscriminately and keep on scattering them we become slaves of habit; then everything binds us. We find that we have created a bondage of flesh, a bondage of hand, a bondage of feet, a bondage of eyes and ears. If some one tells us that which is noxious or unpleasant, we create bondage by brooding over it and letting it go round and round in our minds, making us unhappy. Now all this must be changed. The same mind which has been polluted by constant contact with the outside world must be purified; it must be clarified. The first step is to withhold and withdraw,and this is what is meant by introspection. We cannot learn a lesson in concentration, whether we study it from the spiritual or from the ordinary point of view, without going through this process, and as soon as we learn this, as soon as we start to withdraw and indraw, we find that a tremendous new world has opened to us, an undiscovered country. We begin to feel relaxation within; we find a sense of re-creation

within, a Source of supply from which we can draw and through which we can enlarge our outer life.

Of course we do not realize this until we investigate. That is the reason we cannot take somebody else's word on a matter of religion, such as a creed or a dogma. We may try to believe in these. There are many who think that they do believe; but their belief is fickle because it is not based on direct experience. Any one with strong will or aggressive mind can come and destroy it; but if it is well established on faith gained through direct revelation, then no one can shake it. It is a question of gradual unfoldment. We see a little more and a little more, and that which to-day seems unpractical or unattainable, seems less so to-morrow. It is just like mountain climbing. As we come up from the lower levels, we look first over the city, then as we go higher, we command even a greater expanse, and we say: "I never thought that I could see so far." Same way it is with us in our spiritual venture. The trouble is, so many of us are faint-hearted. We give up before we start, or else we form the habit of believing merely in dry dogma.

This is an age of rationalism. We boast of our education, of our schools, of our universities; but in a way we are really impoverished along another line, for though this age is producing machinery, and is giving us many conveniences, it is at the same time making our life so dependent upon artificial means that we think less for ourselves and do less for ourselves. As a result we seem no longer to have the power of spiritual unfoldment; because in that it is required of us that we use our own mind in a co-ordinated way. God has given us many gifts; at first we do not realize how many. Through this mind alone we can exhibit endless capacity; we do

not know this, however; we think we are very limited and when we see a man of genius who has unfolded his inner faculties, we say he is unique. We think genius is an accident, but it is not so at all; it is the gradual working out of those capabilities which we already possess,—combination and recombination! When the whole nature is in blending harmony, then a tremendous unfoldment takes place in the soul of man.

We are all children of a great Divine Parent. Our heritage is unbounded. It is useless for us to say God is almighty, unless we are willing to believe that we have a share in that Almighty Power. It is useless for us to say He is all-loving, unless we can manifest that all-loving nature in our own life. The mystic souls work quietly. They may not do so much with their hands and feet, they may not be as nervous and excitable, as arrogant and aggressive as the ordinary type of person, but through their concentrated, spiritual effort, they become gradually great centres of power. Their minds are clarified, and they can truly say, "thoughts are things." Thus they do not waste their life in alien thoughts and ordinary feelings. They have really eliminated all non-essentials and have brought their entire being to a focussing point. Do you suppose that this can be done from the outside? Never. Though we may go to this school or to that school, we shall not find fulfillment; it is something we have to work out from within. We can receive stimulation from without, but it is in the depths of our soul that we must focus our interest and our energy. When our energy is focussed, when our resolution is spiritualized, then we come forth as great dynamos, charged with mighty power for good.

Spiritualizing is a tremendous work, and it cannot be

for any ordinary end. Our whole being must become spiritualized: the human in us must be spiritualized and the animal in us must be spiritualized; for we possess a certain amount of crude uncontrolled animal instinct, and our human intelligence must govern over that, must give us balance and control, so that through it we shall come to believe that the human is not so far removed from the Divine as man imagines it to be. It is like going forward step by step, like climbing a ladder, and there is no one who can do it for us.

Wisdom can never be a question of borrowing, otherwise the whole world would be wise. It is a question of inner unfoldment. Let us give ourselves a chance, every one of us. We shall be better for the attempt; our body will feel more rested, our mind will be refreshed, and if even in a small measure we can unfold our spiritual energy, we shall find that it will give us all the power we need to perform our deeds. Do not think for a moment that our despondencies, our doubts, our times of dullness come through accident. They come because we do not replenish the energy we expend. When we learn to go to the inmost recess of our being, we are restored. "I am renewed! I am quickened!" This is the utterance of the mystic soul, and it is called revelation. One who says, "I cannot do this; I am weak; I am miserable; I am defeated;" that same person by following the path of introspection and ingoing, discovers hidden strength within him and refuses any longer to say, "I cannot do it." His whole bearing changes and he lifts up his head, not with arrogance, but with faith, because he is conscious of this inward strength, and therefore, though his body may be weak, he does not feel defeated.

If you believe in miracle, you may believe in this.

It is to me the greatest proof of God and Divinity. We shall, however, never find scientific proof, as we call it. Science, in order to prove things spiritual, must invent instruments subtle enough; but the subtlest of all instruments is the mind of man. It is in the mind, in the purified, clarified, sanctified mind, that we find the proof of the existence of God, and when we find such proof, there comes upon us a hush of silence. Have you ever seen an aggressor, a noisy, turbulent person, who is esteemed for his virtue, for his kindliness, or for his nobility? Never. These qualities do not go together. Only he is esteemed who is magnanimous, ever peace-loving and peace-giving.

Let us bring it down to this focussing point: a man to give peace must have it within himself. But how are we to gain peace? It is not man-made, and even in a secluded spot we cannot find it if we bring with us noise, confusion and disorder. Peace is to be found only within; and in order that we may find it there and bring it into the world of life to destroy disorder and chaos, we must work for it. We may not be able to establish it on a large scale; but if one man lives the life of peace, of nobility, if a single person in a community exalts that idea and makes it concrete—not dwelling on it in theory, but bringing it into his whole life and action—then he will become an example, a very definite example, and that will inspire others.

This is exactly what I want to say in regard to spiritual unfoldment. We see and therefore we believe. When we meet a holy character it is not that he is able to convince us of his holiness with high-sounding words and theories; he represents his ideal. He has become part of that great consciousness. He does not merely talk of

love, he lives the life of love. He does not talk of forgiveness, he is forgiving. So it is a question of being and becoming. We become the thing that we aspire for. There is no more questioning, no more despondency. When that unfoldment takes place, when that veil is torn away from the mind, all doubts are cut asunder. It is like a blazing sun revealing all things and removing all darkness. The soul is exalted, and because it is exalted, it exalts life in general; it exalts God; it exalts man. In fact the world is blessed because of that revelation.

EVEN THESE

From the "Lotus of the True Law"

If men build stupas in brick or clay—even if they
pile up heaps of dust in mountain or forest
with devotion:
If little children as they play, make mounds of
sand in honour of the Holy Ones . . all these
enter into Enlightenment.
If on painted walls they set out figures of the
Blessed Ones well and truly painted or
cause painters to portray them—such too
become partakers of Enlightenment.
All, even boys who in sport have made images
of iron or wood—or sounded cymbals and
drums, or sung melodies to the Blessed Ones
—all these become Buddhas in this world. . .
Even they who offer a single flower . . . or join
the palms in worship but once, or make but
one bow before a stupa, or cry once, "Glory
to the Buddha" with wandering mind—even
such enter into Enlightenment.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

The intoxication of life with its pleasures and occupations veils the truth from men's eyes. They ought to pass on to the spiritual intoxication which makes men beside themselves and lifts them to the beatific vision of eternal truth.—*Jalal-ad-Din Rumi.*

Only the conviction that it is the darkness within us which makes the darkness without, can restore the lost peace of our souls.—*Friedrich Froebel.*

Man may, like the spider, spin from his own inwards his own airy citadel. The points of leaves and twigs on which the spider begins her work are few, and she fills the air with a beautiful circuiting. Man should be content with as few points to tip with the fine web of his soul, and weave a tapestry empyrean, full of symbols for his spiritual eye, of softness for his spiritual touch, of space for his wandering, of distinctness for his luxury.
—*John Keats*

What an unhappy wretch is the man who doubts! His troubled mind is, so to speak, tossed about on a ship, rolling and pitching in the sea. . . There is only one remedy for this condition of doubt: we must defeat these insidious attacks that proceed from the imagination, by turning our thoughts to the realities of life.—*Paul Bourget.*

Spiritual life is the emancipation of consciousness. Through it we find immediate response of soul everywhere. Before we attain this life, we see men through the medium of self-interest, prejudice or classification, because of the perpetual remoteness around us which we cannot cross over. When the veil is removed, we not only see the fleeting forms of the world, but come close to its eternal being, which is ineffable beauty.—*Tagore.*

Since the roots of our nature are established in Divinity, from which also we are produced, we should tenaciously adhere to our root; for streams also of water, and other offspring of the earth, when their roots are cut off, become rotten and dry.—*Demophilus.*

The Lord is the Ruler of the soul within, and will grant thy prayer if thy cry goeth forth unto Him out of the inmost recesses of thy heart.—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

TRUTH THE COUNSELLOR

From the Confessions of St. Augustine

Everywhere, O Truth, dost Thou give audience to all who ask counsel of Thee, and at once answerest all, though on manifold matters they ask Thy counsel. Clearly dost Thou answer, though all do not clearly hear. All consult Thee on what they will, though they hear not always what they will. He is Thy best servant who looks not so much to hear that from Thee which himself willeth, as rather to will that which from Thee he heareth.

Too late loved I Thee, O Thou Beauty of ancient days yet ever new; too late I loved Thee! And behold, Thou wert within, and I abroad, and there I searched for Thee; deformed I, plunging amid those fair forms which Thou hadst made. Thou wert with me, but I was not with Thee. Things held me far from Thee, which, unless they were in Thee, were not at all. Thou calledst and shoutedst, and burstedst my deafness. Thou flashedst, shonest, and scatteredst my blindness. Thou breathedst odours and I *drew in breath* and *pant for Thee.* I tasted, and *hunger and thirst.* Thou touchedst me, and I burned for Thy peace. When I shall with my whole self cleave to Thee, I shall nowhere have sorrow or labour; and my life shall wholly live, as wholly full of Thee.

DIVINE MORALITY

From the Teachings of Confucius

Tzu-lu asked what constituted force of character. Confucius said:

"Do you mean force of character of the people of the southern countries or force of character of the people of the northern countries; or do you mean force of character in an absolute sense? To be patient and gentle, ready to teach, returning not evil for evil; that is the force of character of the people of the southern countries. It is the ideal of the moral man.

"To lie under arms and meet death without regret: that is the force of character of the people of the northern countries. It is the ideal of a brave man.

"But force of character in an absolute sense is another thing. Wherefore the man with the true force of moral character is one who is easy and accommodating and yet without weakness or indiscrimination. How unflinchingly firm he is in his strength! He is independent without any bias. How unflinchingly firm he is in his strength! When there is moral social order in the country, if he enters public life he does not change from what he was in retirement. When there is no moral social order in the country he holds on his way without changing, even unto death. How unflinchingly firm he is in his strength!"

It is only the man with the most perfect divine moral nature who is able to combine in himself quickness of apprehension, intelligence, insight, and understanding: qualities necessary for the exercise of command; magnanimity, generosity, benignity and gentleness: qualities necessary for the exercise of patience; originality, energy, strength of character and determination: quali-

ties necessary for the exercise of endurance; dignity,noble seriousness, order and regularity: qualities necessary for the exercise of self-respect; grace, method, delicacy and lucidity: qualities necessary for the exercise of critical judgment. Thus all-embracing and vast in the nature of such a man. Profound it is and inexhaustible, like a living spring of water, ever running out with life and vitality. All-embracing and vast, it is like Heaven. Profound and inexhaustible, it is like the abyss.

As soon as such a man shall make his appearance in the world, all people will reverence him. Whatever he says, all people will believe it. Whatever he does, all people will be pleased with it. Thus his fame and name will spread and fill all the civilized world, extending even to the savage countries; wherever ships and carriages reach; wherever the labour and enterprise of man penetrates; wherever the heavens overshadow and the earth sustains; wherever sun and moon shine; wherever frost and dew fall: all who have life and breath will honor and love him. Therefore we may say: "He is the equal of God."

A SECRET

By Swami Paramananda

A secret have I learned to-day,
And this will I tell thee in deep humbleness,
and only in a whisper:
It is not our merit that earns us His grace,
Nay, nor is it our strength that gives us power
to hold His hand;
He helps us in our helplessness.
The Saints call Him all-loving,
But I find Him all love.

DAYS IN AN INDIAN MONASTERY

By Sister Devamata

VI.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE AND RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

One evening some one asked Swami Ramakrishnananda how one should practise meditation. His answer was: "Meditation means complete self-abandonment. Meditation requires annihilation of self-consciousness. You know before a great light, lesser lights disappear; so before the effulgent glory of God, the little glory of the ego will completely vanish, as stars vanish when the sun rises. You must therefore practise the presence of God inside you.

"You may say, 'I cannot see Him with these eyes of mine. I cannot hear Him with these ears. How then am I to perceive Him?' You can never perceive Him in this way. To go to the Creator you must throw aside these instruments which take you directly to the creation. You must go beyond your mind and senses, then meditation will come of itself. This is the only way to get inner vision. These senses are made for the creation, not for the Creator."

"God is always supposed to be perceived more clearly at the point of meeting between the two opposite poles. He is neither light nor darkness, but He is beyond both. He is to be found just where they meet. Hence the twilight hour, morning and evening—the meeting place of day and night—is considered the best time for meditation. Also at the noontide, just when the sun reaches its highest point and begins to drop down towards night. The voice rises to its highest pitch at that hour and even the cries of the street-venders grow shriller. As sound and mind are inseparably connected, sound being the primary expres-

sion of mind, so the mind also reaches its greatest height at noontide."

The question was asked: "Could not God free us from ignorance at once if He wished to?" Swami Ramakrishnananda answered: "Surely; but He is so infinitely loving that He does not wish to molest us. So long as He sees that we really cling to our ignorance and our desires He does not come to free us. Only when we turn all our desires to Him, then He comes and selfishness and ignorance go away. But we must not bribe the mind, we must not pretend to be free from desire. The feeling must be absolutely sincere; no fraud or bribery.

"If you wish to see God, the only way is to make the mind single and one-pointed. If we pray to God in right earnest with our whole heart He is sure to come to us. The trouble is we pray to so many others besides God. We pray to the doctor to give us health, to the shop-keeper to give us food, to another for something else and in among the rest, we pray to God to give us spiritual light and knowledge. When we look to Him and pray to Him and to no one else, He is sure to answer our prayers if we make them really intense.

"We must not cease to strive for the highest even though it seems unattainable. We must keep God as our ideal and aim, that will pull us on. If a man aims at the sky, at least he may strike the top of a tree. If he aims at the top of the tree, he may not get above the ground."

Music holds an important place in all Indian religious observances. Every shade of religious aspiration and supplication has a song to voice it. One of the most general forms of celebration on a Feast day is what is known as *Harikatha*. The life of a saint or a Saviour is

written in rhythmic lines and intoned with a low running accompaniment of the tamboura. At unexpected intervals the narrator bursts into some appropriate song and a group of assisting players and singers join with him. The story usually lasts two hours. I heard several such musical narratives and without understanding the letter I felt stirred by the spirit of the performance.

There are also many song cycles descriptive of the life of Rama or Krishna or of some other Divine Incarnation, which are not only sung, but acted out, especially where it calls for dancing. Dancing still forms a part of religious worship in India. As a rule it is very restrained and ingenuous. To certain anniversaries at the Monastery a large band of cobblers invariably came. When it was their turn to sing the praises of the Lord, they would form in a long line across the Monastery hall, with their arms out and their hands resting on one another's shoulders. The leader stood in front. As the song began, the line of worshippers would start to sway and move slowly towards the Altar set up for the day at the opposite end of the hall. The leader clapped his hands in rhythm and the musicians danced like the others, playing all the while on violin or tamboura, tuned drum or a small cymbal which has the sound of a triangle. Their earnestness and sincerity, added to the strongly-marked rhythm, made it deeply impressive.

When the swaying line reached the Altar it broke into single swaying figures and the contagion of devout feeling spread until nearly every one in the large hall was dancing. There was one boy of twelve who danced with special grace and ardor. On more than one occasion Swami Ramakrishnananda joined the dancers. I remember one Festival when, swept by his devotion, he

took his place at the far end of the hall with his face turned across his shoulder towards the Altar, his arm and hand outstretched and pointing to it. The other arm was curved as in fencing.

In beat with the song he swung round in a half turn extending the other arm and curving the one that had been extended. Thus in slow stately turns he approached the Altar, and not once did his eyes leave it or an arm cease to point toward it. The fixity of his concentration could not fail to stir the deeper emotions. Every one fell back and watched him. He had said to me in the morning: "Sister, if you see me begin to dance, stop me," but I could not have checked him any more than I could have broken in on him at a time of deep meditation. He seemed the embodiment of rhythmic prayer, the spirit of worship incarnate. When he came to a stop before the holy place, a sudden consciousness of many eyes roused him, he left the hall quickly and did not return for an hour or longer.

Sankirtan is a specially popular form of religious recreation. A group of people, sometimes large, sometimes small, will meet together in some gentleman's house and spend two hours or more singing holy songs in chorus, to the accompaniment of various instruments. One such group met each Friday evening at the home of the head medical officer of Madras, a few doors from my house; another near by on Saturday evening, a third not far away earlier in the week.

During the month of May this third group would make the turn of the four streets around the Temple every day. They would start from the Temple gate at five in the morning. I could hear the voices grow louder as they approached, then grow faint again as they passed

on, until just at six they would die away at the Temple gate. The chorus sang a special series of songs and some of the singers as they walked played on musical instruments.

A slight eclipse called forth from Swami Ramakrishnananda the mention of another interesting religious custom. "An eclipse," he said,"means that the Cosmic Mind is a little clouded. When we know that this Universal Mind is overclouded we should be watchful. At the time of an eclipse we are enjoined by our Scriptures to take a bath, repeat some holy Name, pray and meditate, being careful to allow no frivolous thought to cross our mind."

Religious observances, like Indian spiritual practices, are innumerable. Every occasion has its special observance. Some among them may have become mere empty forms, but this only bears out these words voiced by Swami Ramakrishnananda one evening as we talked together after the Vesper Service:

"Religion never deteriorates; man deteriorates. Religion is eternal, it is always the same. If you stand before that wall it will not reflect your image, but let there be a bit of mirror on the wall and at once you see yourself. So religion is always there unchanged, but sometimes man reflects it and sometimes he does not.

"The great incarnations like Christ, Krishna, Buddha, were perfectly clear mirrors which gave us a perfect reflection. They did not bring us anything new. Truth is always existent. Christianity existed before Christ. Christ was only the mouthpiece. Mohammedanism existed before Mohammed. Mohammed was only the mouthpiece. Each one was a reflector of eternal Truth, but one man catches the light from Christ so he says

'Christ has given me the Truth. I belong to Christ. I am a Christian.' Another sees the light through Mohammed and says, 'I am a Mohammedan.' A third says, 'Buddha is Truth. I belong to Buddha.' So each great teacher has his followers who believe that the Truth can come from him alone; but all teachers reflect the same Truth.

"Human nature is all the same, dresses differ. You may wear a coat and trousers. I may wear this one simple cloth; but underneath, the nature is all the same. What is there in dress? Naked I came out of my mother's womb and naked I shall have to go away, but behind all dress, all ceremonies and religious rites is this one idea —to realize God. Hindus, Jains, Christians, Buddhists, Mohammedans, all agree in this. To realize God is the aim of religion. The ideal of every religion is God and God alone. Hence we must not find fault with other forms of religion or with differences in external manners and customs. That which makes up the external is the shell side. It is always rough and hard; yet it has one advantage, it preserves the kernel.

"In this apparent battle of life, God is the infinite side and matter the finite side. The infinite is bound to gain the victory over the finite; that is, spirit is bound to conquer matter. It may seem at times that matter overpowers spirit, but that is only for a short period. The infinite is bound to triumph at last."

The boy so long delights in his play; the youth so long pursues his damsel; the old man so long broods over uneasiness, that no one meditates on the Supreme Being.

—*Sankara.*

LAW OF PERFECTION

From Stunden der Andacht

(An early nineteenth century devotional work generally ascribed to the German thinker Zschokke.)

When God from the beginning willed the existence of the world, He willed it in His infinite wisdom. Therefore the conflict of forces, created no confusion, but progressive development; not internecine destruction, but a great and wonderful life, comprising all, and in which each serves the other. Such was, such is, and such will ever be the great order of the universe, in which stars and grains of dust move in their appointed circles, in which the humblest grasses and mosses bloom and die away as do entire nations. . . . The terms chance and accident are merely terms applied to those things the immediate cause of which man is unable to detect. There can be no such thing as chance, as every effect has its cause. Everything is under the rule of necessity; everything has been included in the councils of eternal destiny. . . He, the All-good One, willed that the whole should be infinitely harmonious, and that all the sentient forces in it should enjoy happiness. Therefore we see provision made even for the happiness of the humblest insect; and for the spirit of man He provided far higher bliss.

But the insect is bereft of its joy, and feels pain, as soon as it violates the laws of it nature; and in like manner the spirit of man forfeits the higher joys provided for it, when it fails to fulfill the law of its being. And this law is, that it should become perfect as its Father in Heaven is perfect; consequently that it should maintain the more exalted position assigned to it, and rule the lower forces, not allowing itself to be ruled by them.

The spirit is bound to hold in abeyance the animal forces that reside in its body, to subdue the impure desires of the latter, and to look up to God and to the spiritual world to which it belongs. The spirit's law is conscience, yearning after perfection, abhorrence of all evil, and indestructible desire for freedom. If man allows his spirit to be conquered in its conflict with the animal and plant-like parts of his nature, he becomes wretched and contemptible in his own eyes. For in the order of the universe, everything is a concatenation of necessary consequences. Sin and imperfection give birth to suffering.

Man is consequently not pre-ordained to be the victim of sin and corruption, but to be made happy through his perfections. If he firmly wills it, he can attain this perfection in all the relations of life. He may know beforehand, that when he feels sorrow or suffering there is something in himself which is not as it ought to be. The sorrow and suffering are in themselves his guide to happiness. . . All things pre-ordained by God are beneficent, they strengthen our powers; by gentleness they lure, or by terrible earnestness they force the spirit to rise from that which is earthly and perishable, from the animal to the spiritual, which constitutes our true dignity. Wars and battles, famine and misery, disease, robbery and arson, come within the rule of destiny. But what are they? Nothing more than the destruction of what is perishable. They point towards that which is imperishable, eternal, that is, to that inward happiness of which nothing can deprive us. Thy despair at the misfortunes which befall thee, was it comprised in the doom of thy destiny? Yes, because it is a necessary consequence of thine own imperfection. The peace of mind which the sage enjoys in spite of every misfortune, is an

equally necessary consequence of his greatness of mind and of the conquering power of his soul.

He who places himself under a strange master, must submit to his yoke. He who resigns his freedom and self-control, must be content to be treated like a slave. Therefore, only he who places his happiness in outward things, is really unhappy. . . To them that love God, all things, even the apparently most terrible, work for good. Among thousands, however, there may perhaps be one who recognizes God's thoughts and ways in the decrees of destiny; there may be one to whom his inward being, the consciousness of innocence and the peace of God, are of more value than all outward goods; one who has given himself entirely to Christ, who acknowledges Him, not in the performances of church ceremonies, but in mind and heart, in willing and acting, in self-abnegation and self-control. . . .

He who acknowledges no master but himself, his virtues, and his God, is master of all things; he is further removed than other men from the sorrows of this earth, and over him destiny holds no sway. He may be poor, despised, persecuted; he may lose his fortune, his comforts, his friends, the consideration in which he was held by others; but his inward contentment. . . . he need never lose. He is raised above fate. It is not to the world he owes his inward peace and happiness, and the world cannot rob him of them. . . . The more virtuous and the more self-possessed the human spirit be, the more invulnerable it is, the more independent of destiny. God is raised above destiny because He is the All-Holy One. The more holy our inward being, the nearer we stand to God; and the nearer we are to God, the higher we are lifted above the power of destiny. Thus the apparent

contradictions are dissolved into beautiful harmonies; and from out of the darkness comes forth light. . . .

Merciful and eternal God, Love inexhaustible, Father of the universe, my Father! If I have but Thee, all that life may bring is but a shadowy phantasm. If I have but Thee, I shall pass without fear through light and through darkness, and shall find my way, and shall not falter, though want and death may threaten. If I have but Thee I am sufficiently rich, though all fail me that others call riches; I am sufficiently exalted, though all the world look down upon me; I am strong enough, though thousands conspire against me; I am safe, though disasters may befall me, and all my earthly possessions be lost. If I have but Thee, death itself cannot rob me of my joy. . . . If I have but Thee, I possess all things! Amen.

It is said that the ancient sages of the Orient succeeded by means of analogical methods and by pure force of intuition several milleniums ago, in learning the profound verities, which our Occidental scientists with analytical methods are only now finding out—such as for example, that of the unity of matter and energy. It is certain that Asia is the most ancient source of all philosophies, and the cradle of human thought.

It is necessary, therefore, to cease considering Asiatics as barbarians; it is necessary to break down the barriers which separate us from those hundreds and hundreds of millions of men who do not demand anything more than to be allowed to progress. When we will have created currents of thought which permit us to know each other and understand each other, the yellow peril will dissolve of its own accord.—*Mussolini.*

FLOWER LEGENDS

By Mildred Phillips

PART II.

As a symbol of devotion and faithfulness the sunflower is consecrated to St. John. In an ecclesiastical painting of note St. John is represented as standing on one side of the Cross while Mary, the mother of Christ, stands on the other. Both are crowned with sunflowers which are all turned toward the Christ as the true Sun. The inhabitants of Peru were sun-worshippers and the sunflower was held in great reverence by them. Their Temple of the Sun was made beautiful with images of the Sun done in gold while the virgins who took part in the worship walked in ceremonial processions with crowns of sunflowers on their heads and clusters of them in their hands. The Spaniards carried the flowers back to Spain where they were much cultivated. The quality of constancy attributed to the sunflower on account of its continually turning to the sun is memorialized by Thomas Moore in these pretty lines:

"The heart which has truly loved, never forgets,
But as truly loves on to the close;
As the sunflower turns on her god when he sets
The same look which she turned when he rose."

The marigold was a favorite flower in the days of ancient Greece and Rome. It has a part in Grecian mythology and was much used by the Greeks in decorations. In Rome it was called calendula from "calends," the first day of the month, because it was supposed to bloom during each month of the year. In England it was called "gowles" or "golde" and following the custom of early Christianity of prefixing the name of the Virgin Mother to the name of anything of especial beauty, it later came to be called "Mary-golde."

In ancient Britain, too, the verbena was closely associated with religious observance and the Druid priests conducted their worship with branches of it in their hands. Great care was used in gathering it and many rules observed for taking it properly from the ground. It was called holy weed or herb-of-the-cross.

The lotus was the especial flower of divinity in China, Egypt and India, and the legendry accounts of the creation in Egypt and India are remarkably similar. In Egypt the story of the creation describes the appearance of the lotus on the face of the waters and the unfolding of its beauty before the radiance of Osiris, the divinity represented by the sun,while in the Indian legend, Vishnu the Preserver appeared upon the water supported upon nine golden lotuses. Another golden lotus grew from the centre of his body and within this was seated Brahma the Creator who caused the earth to rise from the sea. The representations of Buddha show him seated on a lotus flower, and other divine manifestations are shown holding or wearing the lotus. The flower was much used in sculptural decoration and in painting. One writer states that when it was used for the adornment of the pedestals of columns it was the eight-petalled lotus, while on the cap of the column it was the thousand-petalled lotus thus corresponding to the unfolding of the spiritual nature of man. According to the Yoga philosophy of India, there are located in man's body certain nerve centres or lotuses. As the spiritual nature of man evolves, these centres open one by one, beginning with the lotus at the base of the spine and culminating in the thousand-petalled lotus in the head which unfolds at the moment of illumination.

It is not surprising that the lotus should be so closely

associated with divinity for it illustrates a divine quality in one of its own characteristics. From the black mud and slime of the lake bottom and the marsh the lotus rises in unsullied purity and when plucked no stain of mud or drop of water remain upon it. Although growing in the water it is not wet by the water. In like manner the subtle essence of the soul, the divine particle, or spark or flame, existing, though we may not perceive it, in the heart of everyone, lives in the world contacting the world's folly, sordidness and evil and yet is untouched by them. The Bhagavad-Gita says: "He who performs actions surrendering them to Brahman and abandoning all attachment is not polluted by sin, as a lotus leaf is not polluted by water."

In the England of long ago the rosemary played an important part in the Christmas celebrations. The wassail bowl was wreathed with it as was also the first platter of meat to be carried to the table. There was a tradition that when the Holy Child and his parents were fleeing from the wrath of Herod the outspreading branches of the rosemary bush protected them from discovery by the soldiers, so it was called Mary's rose or rose-of-Mary.

As the lily is the symbol of purity so the snowdrop is the emblem of hope and faith. In the early days of the church it was set apart as the especial flower of the Virgin Mary and was much used in worship on the second day of February which was the anniversary celebration of the Purification and of the presentation of the Holy Child in the Temple. During this festival the statue of the Virgin was removed and the place where it had stood was covered with snowdrops. The snowdrop was said to possess the power of guarding the mind from unlovely thoughts, making it impossible for the

wearer of it to have any but good and noble thoughts. Hans Christian Andersen has immortalized the snowdrop in one of his stories which tells how, impatient for the coming of the summer and the consequent opportunity for showing her new white gown, she vigorously pushed her way upward through the snow and stood for a short time thrilled with her success, but she found herself alone without any flower companions, and very soon she was obliged to succumb to cold and wind and storm. He draws a parallel between the coming of the pure and lovely flower into a hostile world and the advent of those few illumined souls who come among us for our upliftment, but who meet with misunderstandings, persecutions and ofttimes death.

In all times flowers have been in intimate relationship with the inner life of man and this relationship has grown closer as his soul nature has developed.

"Wondrous truths and manifold as wondrous,
God has written in the stars above;
But not less in the bright flowerets under us
Stands the revelation of His love."

THE SOUL

By Friedrich Schiller

(This poem was written by Schiller directly in English, not translated from the German)

The soul, secured in her existence,
Smiles at the drawn dagger and defies its point.
The stars shall fade away,
The sun himself,
But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,
Unhurt amidst the war of elements,
The wreck of matter and the crash of worlds.

ASHES OF SELFISHNESS

A Parable by Sadhu Sundar Singh

In the mountainous regions of North India, where it is very cold, travellers are in the habit of keeping warm in this way. They take a small vessel, put burning coal in it and cover it up. They weave strings around it and wrapping it with cloth, carry it under their arm. Three men were travelling thus toward the sacred place known as Amarnath. One of them saw several others suffering with cold and, taking the fire out of his vessel, lit a fire so that every one could get warm. So every one left the place alive. When they had all to walk in the dark, the second man of the party took out the fire in his vessel and lit a torch with it and helped them all to walk along in safety. The third man of the party mocked them and said: "You are fools. You have wasted your fire for the sake of others." "Show us your fire!" said they to him. When he broke open his vessel there was no fire, but only ashes and coal. With his fire one had given warmth to others and another had given light. But the third man was selfish and kept the fire to himself, and it was of no use even to him.

In the same way, it is God's will that the fire of the Holy Spirit which we receive should give warmth and light to others. . . Many people despise those who spend their health, strength and money for the salvation of others and call them mad and yet it is they who will save many and who will be saved themselves.

Hard it is to understand: By giving away our food, we get more strength; by bestowing clothing on others, we gain more beauty; by donating abodes of purity and trust, we acquire great treasures.—*Gautama Buddha.*

TEMPLE OF THE LORD

By Helen Beresford

(Chanted as a Processional at the consecration of the site of the Temple of the Universal Spirit—Ananda-Ashrama.)

The place whereon thou standest is Holy Ground,
For lo! it is the Temple of the Lord!
And let the earth keep silence, a silence deep, profound,
That thou mayest hear the Still Small Voice uttering the Word.

Holy, holy, holy is the Temple of the Lord;
Mighty, mighty, mighty is the whispered sacred Word.
Out of the silence, the silence deep,profound
The Spirit comes to bless thee on this Holy Ground.

Sing, sing, O soul, to praise Him, Whose Love is in the Word.
Lift, lift, O hands, to serve Him with willing cheer!
Beat, beat, O heart, in purity and oneness with the Lord!
And look, O eyes, to see Him, as He draweth ever near!

Holy, holy, holy is the Temple of the Lord;
Mighty, mighty, mighty is the whispered sacred Word.
Out of the silence, the silence deep,profound
The Spirit comes to bless thee on this Holy Ground.

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?—*St. Paul.*

REPORT

The Eastertide was celebrated at Ananda-Ashrama by Services of unusual beauty. At three o'clock on Good Friday afternoon Swami Paramananda, who recently returned to the Ashrama from Boston, gave an address embodying the special message of the day of Crucifixion, arousing in the hearts of his hearers a renewed determination, not only to endure the defeats of daily life with greater courage, but to make them shine with the resplendence of and understanding of their spiritual significance. That evening the Swami again gave an address over the radio as the main feature of a program furnished by the members of the Ashrama household in connection with the Community Church of La Crescenta.

Early on Easter morning cars began to ascend the foothill road leading to the Ashrama and by six o'clock a numerous congregation was seated on the terrace in front of the Cloister overlooking La Crescenta valley across the lower end of which lay level shafts of sunlight. As the sun wheeled above the horizon line of the hills surrounding the Ashrama, Swami Paramananda directed the thoughts of his audience to the rising of the Sun of Righteousness from the darkness of materiality and in glowing words told of that Radiance which finds reflection in every heart. At eleven o'clock a second Service was held, this time in the patio of the Cloister and especial Easter music formed a distinctive part of the order of worship. After both the Sunrise and the morning Service,a light repast was served at the Community House to those desiring it. The days's observance culminated in the afternoon Service at half past three o'clock. Owing to lack of space the report of the Swami's visit in the east will be given in the next number of the "Message."

TEMPLE OF THE UNIVERSAL SPIRIT

On Easter Sunday afternoon at Ananda-Ashrama, Swami Paramananda, in a deeply impressive ceremony, consecrated the ground upon which is to be erected the Ashrama Temple, to be called "The Temple of the Universal Spirit," where Jew and Gentile, Buddhist and Confucian, Mohammedan and Christian, in fact the adherents of every form of faith, will be received and welcomed. The building of this Temple not only marks a new epoch in the life of the Ashrama, but it is an unique event in the history of religious work in this country.

The Service was held on the newly graded hill at the west side of the Cloister and proved to be the climax of the events of Eastertide. After the chanting of the processional and the singing of Easter hymns, the Swami told of his dream for a universal Temple, a dream shared by many lofty souls, but which it is his blessing to bring to fulfillment. As the Swami consecrated the ground he strewed flowers over the spot where one day the altar will stand, scattering them to the north and south, to the east and the west. Following this ceremony was an address by the Swami which will be given in full in a later number of the "Message."

A feature of the Services was the chanting in Sanskrit by Gayatri Devi of the ancient Vedic Hymn on Immortality, sung by the Indo-Aryans for thousands of years:

"Hear ye, all ye children of the Immortal One,
I have known that indestructible, all-glorious Being;
He is beyond darkness, like the radiant sun.
By knowing Him alone, mortals overcome death.
There is no other way;
There is no other way;
There is no other way.

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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

June, 1927

Consecration Address

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ASHRAMA ARTS AND CRAFTS

Hand-weaving is the newest addition to the Arts and Crafts Department at Ananda-Ashrama, the gift of a loom by a friend, making it possible for members trained in the art to weave dress goods by the yard, scarfs, bags, linen towels,, runners, etc. The Department also has on sale bronzed reproductions of the Vedanta symbol—the lotus with the Sacred Word—hand-illuminated book-marks with quotations from the Swami's poems, many of the poems themselves illumined and framed, artistic lamp-shades, book-covers, incense made from California native shrubs and Eastern spices, etc. Information concerning prices will be given on request.

PURE HONEY

The Ananda-Ashrama has for sale the purest quality of black or white sage honey from the Ashrama hives. Sold in glass jars or sealed in tins for shipment. Prices on request.

All of Swami Paramananda's works and other Vedanta literature, as well as the monthly publication, "Message of the East", may be obtained directly from Ananda-Ashrama, La Crescenta, Los Angeles County, Calif., and from Vedanta Centre, 176 Marlboro St., Boston, Mass. They are obtainable also from the following addresses:

Cincinnati, Ohio: Mr. W. H. Starick, 2360 Rohs St.; Dr. Peter Boike, 6121 Madison Ave., Madisonville.

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MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."
—Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East."
—Tyndall.

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CONSECRATION ADDRESS

By Swami Paramananda

(Delivered Easter Sunday afternoon at the consecration of the ground for the Temple of the Universal Spirit—Ananda-Ashrama.)

MAY the Supreme and Infinite Spirit of the universe,—One only One,—Who is Father, Mother and Protector of us all, may He bestow upon us His tender blessings. May we through His grace hear with our ears that which is holy and uplifting to our souls; may we behold with our eyes that which is pure, spiritual and sublime. May all our thoughts, words and actions be consecrated to Him whose children we are. Peace, peace, peace be unto us and to all living beings.

In these words we find a spirit of intermingling, not only of east and west, of north and south, but intermingling of all the deeper feelings and emotions of human life which lie at the heart of religion. Thus as we consecrate this ground for a Temple to the Supreme One, let us tune our hearts with this thought, that we may receive inspiration, devotion and the highest sense of consecration, thus becoming instrumental in bringing happiness to many and blessings to many.

"Truth is One, men call It by various names." That

is our motto. In Boston where this work has been established for many years, people of all denominations, of all faiths, come to our Centre for worship, and always find a spirit of welcome. Truth is One—God is One, only we worship Him variously, we conceive Him variously, because we are of different temperaments and have different thoughts and feelings concerning Him. Therefore, in connection with this ceremony, we are not going to make it an occasion for invoking the gods of tradition and sect, but rather that One—one Father, one Lord, one Guardian, Who presides over all and bestows upon all His love and His protection.

There is an ancient Buddhist prayer that I want to read to you, not that we would lay special emphasis on Buddhism, but because it is a prayer which any one with breadth of vision, spirit of tolerance and immensity of love might have written in any age:

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

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

"In the east and in the west, in the north and in the south, let all beings that are—without enemies, without obstacles, overcoming sorrow and attaining cheerfulness —move forward freely, each in his own path!"

There is nothing I think, that could give a better background for the thought which inspired us to conceive this Temple, this place of worship, this sanctuary that is to embody all the great religions so far as we can

understand them, than do these lines: "Let all things that breathe . . . move forward freely, each in his own path!" And it is our prayer that the ideal of Christ and Christ-men like St. Francis, who gave to the world undying blessings; of Buddha and his followers who learned the art of loving and serving without ever striking a discordant note; of Zoroaster, the great prophet of the Parsees; of Judaism; of Mohammedanism; of Sufism; of the Chinese faith as exemplified in Laotze, Confucius and others who gave of their spirit of love and consecration to mankind, that all these great faiths may continue to shed blessings upon the world of men, and that all may be united here in this Temple that we are about to build.

As a matter of fact we cannot build any Temple. The real Temple, the real Church, the real place of worship is built not by man's hands. It is built by the souls of the consecrated, those who are imbued with divine inspiration, those who give their lives for the service of God and humanity. Such souls may leave no trace behind them in the form of a church or a building, but their lives radiate and continue to radiate unbounded light, and that is the spirit we want to invoke. For it is not merely by giving our lip praise to Jesus the Christ, or to any other Divine manifestation whom we may call our Saviour, that we are going to make ourselves worthy of our belief, but by blending our life with faith, with fervent spirit, with devotion—nothing less than that.

We have no desire to establish here a new cult or creed. We call this *Ananda-Ashrama*, or place of peace and spiritual happiness, a place where we may live the life ourselves and by living it in accordance with the highest principles, aid those who have need of aid; a

place where we may serve with selfless devotion, drawing our inspiration from the Source, the Supreme, Who is boundless, limitless and all-loving,—the Father, Mother, Friend and Guide of the entire humanity. For this reason we have chosen for this new Temple the name of "Temple of the Universal Spirit,"--Temple of God, which conveys the universal aspect, leaving no room for condemnation, sectarianism or anything that divides or separates, but bringing all things to blending harmony. That is the sum and substance of this work, and in consecrating this ground, we do it not with the idea of erecting something which embodies grandeur or peculiarity, or which signifies a sectarian cult, but rather that which may breathe with its prayers, with its devotion, with its service and with its love, those ideals which all men who serve God try to express by following each his own line.

A Temple, no matter how big it may be, or how mighty, and no matter how lofty may be its ideals, can never stand unless it has within it the seed of immortality, and that is the seed we want to plant. Wherein lies that seed? Not in our pettiness and smallness, not in our mortal life and limitations, but in the breadth of vision which enables us to realize the immensity of Godhead, the illimitable, uncompassed conception of the Universal Being. We want to tune our hearts, we want to tune our thoughts and aspirations in such a way that we may become instrumental in helping those who have need of inspiration, courage and hope. For that reason this place exists, and we hope that our efforts and the efforts of those who come and love it, and who want to make these dreams come true, may find many, many avenues for self-expression.

I do not want you to think that I am the first to conceive this idea of a Temple to the Universal Spirit. I do not desire any such credit. It has been dreamed of by many souls. I have known great personages who have had this vision. Nor is it that one Temple or one Church will suffice for humanity; but even a single Temple blending such atmosphere will help others to receive inspiration from the same Source. If we have need of anything in the world to-day it is of unity and universality. Everyone who thinks sincerely along any line, whether of study, national or international questions, philosophy, ethics or higher spirituality, is coming to this conclusion, that there must be unity, there must be a more and more perfect understanding of what we are and what we are here for. It is not, however, by enlarging any one cult or creed or nationality that we are going to find the basis for that unified consciousness. The logical basis for true tolerance we can find only by going deep down within our own souls. We must turn over the pages which are left unread —the pages of our religious consciousness, our spiritual aspirations—and as we read them and compare them, as we listen to others, what they have to read to us, we shall come to a realization, a state of conviction that there is but One, one presiding Deity Whom we all worship. As we worship Him truly we become brethren to man, we become united with others.

The ideal of brotherhood, the ideal of fatherhood, of manhood and womanhood, all these great ideals blend in one harmonious consciousness that there is only One, and we are part of that One. We cannot sever ourselves from That, and yet find true Self-expression. There is no man who can find his fulfillment or happiness by cutting himself off from his Source, or by feeling aloof from the rest

of humanity. The Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man, loving your neighbour as yourself,—that is the spirit of all great religions. Buddhism, Hinduism, Indo-Aryanism, Chinese philosophy, all have taught this lesson, and the great teachers of the world have given it to us. So my prayer is that as we consecrate this ground, we may, even in small measure, realize these higher aspirations, may live in the consciousness of a larger humanity, a humanity that is not contained in one country, one creed, or one dogma, but finds its realization in human souls.

Not through armament, not through political scheming, not by dividing and separating one man from another, one country from another, one nation from another, not by these means will the world's ideals be realized; but rather by man's finding his inner unity with the Divine Spirit Who is unbounded, ever-abiding, ever-protecting. When we rise up with this realization in our hearts we cause other men to rise with the same consciousness. It is in this way we find fellowship, unity and fulfillment, and in no other. For as we realize that the same Deity presides over all men, our hearts will be united in one love, one consciousness and one spirit of service.

I am not going to preach to you a long sermon. All that I might say in many words already has been said in that beautiful prayer from the ancient wisdom, which I read to you. I would rather have you carry with you the inspiration, the thoughts which come down to us through the ages, through Christ's spirit, and through the spirit of Buddha, the Compassionate.

Let us bring into fruition that which will create harmony and constructive feeling within us. We are here in

this world, and we must do something—something of a beneficent nature. We have our ideals, we have our great aspirations, and these aspirations, these ideals are carried on into the future. My prayer is that we may erect something on this spot that will stand through the centuries, telling of its tolerance and its vision. And my hope is that you may all have a part in it. The offering that you make to-day, make it with this prayer and feeling—not for me, not for any sectarian idea, but that some good work may be done. When our prayers are united they are no longer feeble. If we pray for our own personal gain, for personal ambition, that prayer will not have power. Therefore I ask you, I beg you, I implore you to put your best into what you give; not what I want or what somebody else may want, but what the Divine Spirit, our Father, our Mother, our Friend and Guide, our spiritual Source inspires within you, puts into your hearts, so that you may become instrumental in creating something that will be of benefit and of lasting value.

"Let your light shine." That is our motto. The magnitude of spiritual ideals we convey not through our utterance, but through our life. Those who have the real spirit of consecration, let them live the life. If we merely speak of love or of tolerance, that will not convince anyone. We must live and create an atmosphere. Whatever I have said or tried to say, I hope that it will convey to you something of this nature, so that you will not take it just as theories. Ideas, ideals and ethical teachings, we have in great abundance, and they all strike the same note; but the real helpfulness we find when they become manifest in flesh, when they become concrete, definite facts in our life.

May this place convey to you something of that Spirit

which is unbounded and unlimited, which breathes its blessings into us when we open the avenues of our soul, the gates of our heart. As we realize that Infinite One as the background of our life, that Everlasting—our Father, our Mother, our Sustainer—as we think of that One, then we certainly can blend our lives without effort. With that thought of Infinitude, of all-abidingness and unboundedness, let us rise with prayer in our hearts and receive the benediction.

THE VALLEY OF SILENCE

By William Sharp

(William Sharp, English critic and essayist, put forth under the name of Fiona MacLeod, poems of a deeply mystical nature, charged with the Celtic spirit. It was some time before the identity of these two writers was discovered. The poem here given was written in his mystical mode.)

In the secret Valley of Silence
  No breath doth fall;
No wind stirs in the branches;
  No bird doth call;
  As on a white wall
    A breathless lizard is still,
So silence lies in the valley
    Breathlessly still.

In the dusk-grown heart of the valley
  An altar rises white;
No rapt priest bends in awe
  Before its silent light:
  But sometimes a flight
    Of breathless words of prayer
White-wing'd enclose the altar,
    Eddies of prayer.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Beware of prejudice. Light is good in whatever lamp it is burning. A rose is beautiful in whatever garden it may bloom. A star has the same radiance if it shines from the East or West.—*Abdul Baha.*

The glory of Him Who moveth everything
Doth penetrate the universe.—*Dante.*

A temple reminds me of the Lord indeed,—His thought flashes into my mind! Wherever men speak of Him, there God appears, and all holy places become present. Verily the sight of such places invokes the recollection of God Himself.—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

The new church will be founded on moral science. Poets, artists, musicians, philosophers will be its prophet-teachers. The noblest literature of the world will be its Bible—love and labor its holy sacraments—and instead of worshipping one Saviour, we will gladly build an altar in the heart for every one who has suffered for humanity.

—*Emerson.*

To God belongeth the east and the west; therefore, whithersoever ye turn yourselves to pray, there is the face of God; for God is omnipresent and omniscient.

—*Mohammed.*

No politics, song, religion, behaviour, or what not, is of account unless it compare with the amplitude of the earth.—*Walt Whitman.*

One Universe made up of all that is; and one God in it all, and one principle of Being, and one Law, the Reason, shared by all thinking creatures, and one Truth.

—*Marcus Aurelius.*

He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love.

—*St. John.*

A PRAYER FOR ALL CREEDS

(This prayer, published recently, and widely circulated throughout the United States, is of deepest significance, showing that the obstructing crust of creed and dogma is breaking, thus letting through into men's minds the light of the one Spiritual Sun, which is the life-blood of all religions.)

Almighty God—We who are of different races and faiths desire to realize together Thy Fatherhood and our kinship with each other. In our differences we find that many of our hopes, our fears, our aspirations are one. Thou art our Father and we are Thy children.

We are heartily sorry for the mists of fear, envy, hatred, suspicion and greed which have blinded our eyes and thrust us asunder. May the light that comes from Thee scatter these mists, cleanse our hearts, and give health to our spirits. Teach us to put away all bitterness and to walk together in the ways of human friendship.

Open our eyes to see that as nature abounds in variation, so differences in human beings make for richness in the common life. May we give honor where honor is due, regardless of race, color or circumstance. Deepen our respect for unlikeness and our eagerness to understand one another. Through the deeper unities of the spirit in sympathy, insight and co-operation, may we transcend our differences. May we gladly share with each other our best gift and together seek for a human world fashioned in good under Thy guidance. Amen.

Rev. John A. O'Brien,
Pastor of St. John's Catholic Church
Rabbi Benjamin Frankel,
Director of Hillel Foundation
Rev. James D. Baker,
Pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church
Urbana, Illinois,
February 23rd, 1927.

SAINT PETER
An Irish Folk Tale

(As told by Douglas Hyde who heard it from a man named O'Connor, who got it from an old woman named Biddy Casey, in the County Sligo, Ireland.)

At the time that St. Peter and our Saviour were walking the country, many was the marvel that his Master showed him, and if it had been another person that was in it, and who had seen half as much, no doubt his confidence in his Master would have been stronger than that of Peter.

One day they were entering a town, and there was a musician sitting half drunk on the side of the road and he asking for alms. Our Saviour gave him a piece of money, going by of him. There came wonder on Peter at that, for he said to himself, "Many's the poor man in great want that my Master refused, but now He has given alms to this drunken musician; but perhaps," says he to himself, "perhaps He likes music." Our Saviour knew what was in Peter's mind, but he did not speak a word about it.

On the next day they were journeying again and a poor friar (sic) met them, and he bowed down with age and almost naked. He asked our Saviour for alms, but He took no notice of him, and did not answer his request.

"There's another thing that's not right," said Peter in his own mind. He was afraid to speak to his Master about it, but he was losing his confidence in Him every day.

The same evening they were approaching another village when a blind man met them and he asking alms. Our Saviour talked with him and said, "What do you want?" "The price of a night's lodging, the price of something to eat, and as much as I shall want to-morrow; if you can

give it to me you shall get great recompense, and recompense that is not to be found in this sorrowful world."

"Good is your talk," said the Lord, "but you are only seeking to deceive me. You are in no want of the price of a lodging or of anything to eat; you have gold and silver in your pocket; and you ought to give thanks to God for your having enough to do you till next day."

The blind man did not know it was our Saviour who was talking to him, and he said to Him, "It is not sermons, but alms I am looking for. I am certain that if you did know that there was gold or silver about me, you would take it from me. Get off now; I don't want your talk."

"Indeed, you are a senseless man," said the Lord; "you will not have gold or silver long," and with that He left him.

Saint Peter was listening to the discourse, and he had a wish to tell the blind man that it was our Saviour who was talking to him, but he got no opportunity. But there was another man listening when our Saviour said that the blind man had gold and silver. It was a wicked robber who was in it; but he knew that our Saviour never told a lie. As soon as He and Saint Peter were gone, this robber came to the blind man and said to him, "Give me your gold and silver, or I'll put a knife through your heart."

"I have no gold or silver," said the blind man; "If I had I wouldn't be looking for alms." But with that the robber caught hold of him, put him under him and took from him all he had. The blind man shouted and screamed as loud as he was able, and our Saviour and Peter heard him.

"There's wrong being done to the blind man," said Peter.

"Get treacherously and it will go the same way," said our Saviour,"not to speak of the Day of Judgment."

"I understand you; there is nothing hid from you, Master," said Peter.

The day after that they were journeying by a desert, and a greedy lion came out. "Now, Peter," said our Saviour, "you often said that you would lose your life for Me, go now and give yourself to the lion, and I shall escape safe."

Peter thought to himself and said, "I would sooner meet any other death than let a lion eat me; we are swift-footed and we can run from him, and if I see him coming up with us I will remain behind, and you can escape safe."

"Let it be so," said our Saviour.

The lion gave a roar, and off and away with him after them, and it was not long till he was gaining on them, and close up to them.

"Remain behind, Peter," said our Saviour; but Peter let on that he never heard a word, and went running out before his Master. The Lord turned round and said to the lion, "Go back to the desert," and so he did. Peter looked behind him, and when he saw the lion going back, he stood still till our Saviour came up with him.

"Peter," said He, "you left Me in danger and, what was worse than that, you told lies."

"I did that," said Peter, "because I knew that you have power over everything, not alone over the lion of the wilderness."

"Silence your mouth, and do not be telling lies; you did *not* know, and if you were to see Me in danger to-morrow you would forsake Me again. I know the thoughts of your heart."

"I never thought that you did anything that was not right," said Peter.

"That is another lie," said our Saviour; "do you not remember the day that I gave alms to the musician who was half drunk, there was wonder on you, and you said to yourself that many's the poor man in great want whom I refused, and that I gave alms to a drunken man because I liked music? The day after that I refused the old friar, and you said that that was not right; and the same evening you remember what happened about the blind man. I will explain to you now why I acted like that. That musician did more good than twenty friars of his sort since ever they were born. He saved a girl's soul from the pain of hell. She wanted a piece of money and was going to commit a deadly sin to get it, but the musician prevented her, and gave her the piece of money, though he himself was in want of a drink at the same time. As for the friar, he was not in want at all; although he had the name of friar, he was a limb of the devil, and that was why I paid him no heed. As for the blind man, his God was in his pocket, for the old word is true, 'Where your store is, your heart will be with it.' "

A short time after that Peter said, "Master, you have a knowledge of the most lonesome thoughts in the heart of man, and from this moment out I submit to you in everything."

"To give is right:" with this thought, to give to one who does nothing in return, in a fit place, time and to a worthy person, is regarded as a *Sattwica* (pure) gift. . . The gift which is made in the wrong place or time, to unworthy persons, with disrespect and contempt, that is said to be a *Tamasica* (impure) gift.– *Bhagavad-Gita.*

ATOM AND INFINITE

A comparison of Pascal, Confucius and the Upanishads

(Blaise Pascal: famous French mathematician, physicist and religious, 17th cent.- Confucius: Master Teacher of China, 3rd cent. B. C. The Upanishads: spiritual portion of the Vedas, the sacred Scriptures of India.)

Pascal

The whole visible world is but an imperceptible speck in the ample bosom of nature. No idea approaches it. We may swell our conceptions beyond all imaginable space, yet bring forth only atoms in comparison with the reality of things. It is an infinite sphere, the center of which is everywhere, the circumference nowhere. It is, in short, the greatest sensible mark of the almighty power of God; in that thought let imagination lose itself.

Then returning to himself, let man consider his own being compared with all that is; let him regard himself as wandering in this remote province of nature; and from the little dungeon in which he finds himself lodged —I mean the universe—let him learn to set a true value on the earth, on its kingdoms, its cities, and on himself.

What is a man in the infinite? But to show him another prodigy no less astonishing, let him examine the most delicate things he knows. Let him take a mite, which in its minute body presents him with parts incomparably more minute; limbs with their joints, veins in the limbs, blood in the veins, humors in the blood, drops in the humors, vapor in the drops; let him, again dividing these last, exhaust his power of thought; let the last point at which he arrives be that of which we speak, and he will perhaps think that here is the extremest diminutive in nature. Then I will open before him therein a new abyss. I will paint for him not only the visible universe, but all that he can conceive of nature's immensity in the inclosure of this diminished atom. Let

him therein see an infinity of universes, of which each has its firmament, its planets, its earth, in the same proportion as in the visible world; in each, earth animals, and at the last the mites, in which he will come upon all that was in the first, and still find in these others the same without end and without cessation; let him lose himself in wonders as astonishing in their minuteness as the others in their immensity; for who will not be amazed at seeing that our body, which before was imperceptible in the universe, itself imperceptible in the bosom of the whole, is now a colossus, a world, a whole, in regard to the nothingness to which we cannot attain.

Whoso takes this survey of himself will be terrified at the thought that he is upheld in the material being given him by nature, between these two abysses of the infinite and nothing,—he will tremble at the sight of these marvels; and I think that as his curiosity changes into wonder, he will be more disposed to contemplate them in silence than to search into them with presumption.

For after all, what is man in nature? A nothing in regard to the infinite, a whole in regard to nothing, a mean between nothing and the whole; infinitely removed from understanding either extreme. The end of things and their beginnings are invincibly hidden from him in impenetrable secrecy; he is equally incapable of seeing the nothing whence he was taken, and the infinite in which he is engulfed.

What shall he do then, but discern somewhat of the middle of things, in an eternal despair of knowing either their beginning or their end? Who can follow their marvelous course? The Author of these wonders can understand them, and none but He.

Chandogya-Upanishad

All this is Brahman (the Absolute.) Let a man meditate on that (visible world) as beginning, ending, and breathing in It (the Brahman).

Now man is a creature of will. According to what his will is in this world, so will he be when he has departed this life. Let him therefore have this will and belief:

The intelligent, whose body is spirit, whose form is light, whose thoughts are true, whose nature is like ether (omnipresent and invisible) from whom all works, all desires, all sweet odours and tastes proceed; he who embraces all this, who never speaks, and is never surprised,

He is my Self within the heart, smaller than a corn of rice, smaller than a corn of barley, smaller than a mustard seed, smaller than a canary seed or the kernel of a canary seed. He also is my Self within the heart, greater than the earth, greater than the sky, greater than heaven, greater than all these worlds.

He from whom all works, all desires, all sweet odours and tastes proceed, who embraces all this, who never speaks and who is never surprised, He, my Self within the heart, is that Brahman. When I shall have departed from hence, I shall obtain Him. He who has this faith has no doubt; thus said Sandilya, yea thus he said.

Confucius

The moral law is to be found everywhere, and yet it is a secret. The simple intelligence of ordinary men and women of the people may understand something of the moral law; but in its utmost reaches there is something which even the wisest and holiest of men cannot understand. The ignoble nature of ordinary men and women of the people may be able to carry out the moral law; but

in its utmost reaches even the wisest and holiest of men cannot live up to it.

Great as the Universe is, man with the infinite moral nature in him is never satisfied. For there is nothing so great but the mind of moral man can conceive of something still greater which nothing in the world can hold. There is nothing so small but the mind of moral man can conceive of something still smaller which nothing in the world can split.

THE SOUL'S SECRET

By Luella Topliff

Whosoever would live the life of a contemplative in love with God, must be well grounded in the virtues and in the deeply rooted principles of living; must have a free heart and will, ready, for the love of God, to renounce all he does and loves disproportionately. These things are essential to secure true peace of the spirit between himself and God. Moreover everything he possesses, or can possess, contrary to the will and glory of God, must be disclaimed if he is to seek the life of a mystic. To do this he must needs form a habit of recollection and reflection, that is to say,—developing a sensitive response to the subtle movements of grace and inspiration that come from the inner voice and deifying powers of Love. The soul craves this union with the Author of its being, and God, in response to its ardent desire, lifts it through love to Love. The soul moved to die unto itself, goes out to live the life of the virtues for the glory of God; again dies that it may enter into Life. These cycles of dying to self and resting in Love comprise the perfect life.

If this already enamoured soul goes on practising these virtues, joined to the practice of recollection, it

will find its understanding made clearer and more simple; its intuitions and perceptions keener; its heart will have expanded with love to overflowing; it loves to dwell in the presence of God, living and moving in Him. Thus the ascent of its observation and feeling grows through its upliftment and the sincere intentions with which it clings to God. But God can only give His grace and illumination according to the state and condition of the soul to take. Man must remember he does not belong to himself; he is indebted to God for his existence, his gifts and eternal bliss. It therefore behooves him to discharge his dues by accepting freely, lovingly, nay, joyously,—by the grace of God--the will of Divine Wisdom and Love, in place of his own often misguided wishes, leaving it to the all-seeing Maker and Guide of this universe and the Father of all beings, to do His work in the souls of men through time and eternity.

It being the work of rebellion when the heart is troubled, it is self-evident that in such a state one's love must be weak and exacting. For were love deep, unshaken, the heart would be unmoved by the ups and downs of the balance wheel of life. When the heart has acquired this repose and achieved its union with God, it has attained its contentment through practice of the virtues which are its true riches. There are many good men who are not responding to this life of grace, but all can who will. They but need to give up an inordinate love of worldly interests, customs, methods; for these immerse the soul in a multiplicity of good works and outward things, rather than inward and simple feelings.

The Purgative state is one of discipline, and for the soul's clarification. Heretofore it has been concerned with the outpourings of God's Love, and its dying to self;

it has yet to endure in its period of Purgation, and with patience, the piercing, heart-searching Light of Truth and Goodness, which is God's Very Self. The examination of its heart's fondest emotions, its most frequent and insistent thoughts, its actions, are they consistent with its high calling of grace?

The soul finally comes to a realization, through the Illumination of God, of its birthright in the ground of its being, a state or region of Silence and Quiet. "God alone, alone with God, alone!" This is a perception or apprehension of God. The soul feels and knows that God has silenced all images it has ever seen or heard,—knows that by active love it can preserve that love and knowledge. God, seeing its submission to grace, at His pleasure unites Himself with His beloved in heavenly beatitude.

The mystic soul on its path to perfection is very mercifully made receiver of visions, raptures and ecstasies. The two former being considered psychic, are temporary experiences. The state of ecstasy seems to have a value that is original inasmuch as it tends to confirm faith in the union and gives enlightenment. It becomes a never-to-be-forgotten star to guide, also a kind of textual criterian, inasmuch as it helps the intuitional perception to form its image of Spirit. To those who follow it, it will bring the soul to the perfection of its Ideal.

Thus it happened to one soul; the soul was ravished into a state of ecstasy that was both seeing and feeling; seeing in regard to Light. Light was suffused by Love and animated by Life, an eternal, fiery energy of creative Spirit in the substance of the soul. There were no forms, no persons, neither was there consciousness of earth or any world experience. The many was lost in the One.

There was no perception of a second other; just uncreate stillness, profound solitude, eternity, bliss, sweetness, innocence, lightness, yet without division.

The life of union with Divine Love, of which state ecstasy is a foretaste, follows upon a total surrender by the soul of its being, and is necessarily preceded by the second Dark Night where the substance of its being seemed lost forever. Of this state of union who can tell its experiences? The Saints would tell us if they could. Words seem of little worth, for it is a state of Being, not of knowing, that they wish to portray. Yes, this life lived in the hush of the soul is The Soul's Secret and must forever remain unspoken. The effects we see and sense in the out-going fullness of the Spirit, but its joy is hidden. It's NAME no other shall know.

But this is not the end. There is something more. God by His grace pours His deifying Powers through the lower order of being even to the heart, so that love, delight, joy, pierce through flesh and blood to the whole bodily nature. Thus a man can pass through bodily, ghostly and Godly feelings, above his reason, and through his Godly feeling he finds himself in that pure and simple blessedness without images, where he abides in rest. This is the life that can become common to all men who can thus attain to the God-seeing Man.

A man is lift up from earthly things with two wings—they are simplicity and purity; simplicity ought to be in intention, purity in affection: simplicity intendeth God, purity taketh Him and tasteth Him. . . If thou wert inward, good and pure, then shouldst thou see all things without impediment and understand them. A pure heart pierceth heaven and hell.—*Thomas a Kempis*

LOVE AND WISDOM

By Bhai Vir Singh

(A fragment of a poem from "Nargas—Songs of a Sikh," translated by Puran Singh. Bhai Vir Singh is a modern Punjabi poet, living at Amritsar.)

(Note: A nightingale, emprisoned by a gardener, escapes from her cage after long confinement only to find the garden despoiled and in ruins, and her heart's love, the rose, gone. In absolute despair she stops a wayfarer with her lament and asks what has become of "that all-owner of the loveliness of youth," her rose. A dialogue ensues, of which we give the concluding portion. The wayfarer asks why the eye of the nightingale failed to discern that one day "both the garden and its blossoms gay" would die, that spring would pass and "the autumn of dead and decaying leaves take its place." In agony of soul, the nightingale cries out for death and in pity the wayfarer strives to comfort her with the assurance of ever-recurring spring. "Again the purple leaf buds. Again the green leaves shall appear in millions! Again the buds blow and the armies of flowers come and encamp again! Why weepest thou, O bird?")

The nightingale sings:
"If beauty lasts not forever,
Of what worth then is beauty?
If my garden waves not forever,
If all is the sport of time,
If time conceals him we love behind its ever-
enwrapping sheets and reveals him at
will below its folds,
And conceals him again from us,
If love is not our own, but time's,
If time is supreme, and we only propose for time
To dispose, and our heart

Is merely to run to waste in time's sands,
Then all wanderings in search of him, ay, even
life and goodness, all are as death.
To thirst for love, to roll through despair and
separation for the hope of meeting him
is all illusion:
If the lightning flash of love shows itself only
to kill us, then where, where is love?
If all is change,and there is naught save waiting
and thirsting, and waiting and thirsting
for nothing to be,
If this is the law eternal as thou sayest,
If we are but the passive balls that a mocking
destiny rolls;
Then let me tell you that too sad, too sad is
life. . ."

The wayfarer replies:
"Peace! Peace! O lovely bird!
There is the rose still perfuming thy tender
heart,
If it be thy wish to see the glory that fades not,
If it be thy longing to be with thy rose
forever,
Turn within, turn within thine own self thy
love-thirsty glance!
In vain is thy search for thy rose in this visible
world of change.
The eternal spring is theirs who have entered in
and seen him within their soul.
If it be thy wish to dwell in the eternal glances
of thy love, then be at peace with thyself.
Let the flame of the heart burn slow and steady,

Let the mind be calm, like an unrippling clear,
transparent lake;
And pass, O bird, into the being of the beloved,
whence come these forms of beauty!
Thou hast indeed thy rose when thy heart falters
not—sure, unmoved. . . .
O bird!
The worlds are all within thyself.
There blossoms thy rose which no hand of might
can rob or destroy;
The eye of the soul, so fixed on the beloved,
drinks deep at the fountain of life.
Good-bye, O bird! This is the ancient wisdom!
The law of beauty that ye learn amid the
young brood in the nest,
This is the law of true life, which is the life
above this life,
The life of rapture caught from the lips of the
rose,
The rose that blossoms within, where eternal
spring doth roll.
There, as thou sayest; and only there—only
there!
It is a subtle, subtle feeling,
An unbalanced and balanced joy.
An unconscious and conscious love; soft de-
licious reeling, a little rippling, and a
slow breeze.
The heart is full of glory,
And the life full of peace.
Within that *Golden Land* there is neither right
nor wrong;
And might *is* frail and love *is* strong."

DAYS IN AN INDIAN MONASTERY

By Sister Devamata.

VIII.

INDIAN EDUCATION OF TO-DAY

It would be impossible to tear out and discard the deeply rooted educational systems of earlier India. They would spring up again and still again, because they are the outgrowth of Indo-Aryan life itself, the product of its racial experience. So, old and new move on together, sometimes converging, sometimes diverging, sometimes mingling, the more ancient method always plainly distinguishable and always vital. A rich cultural storehouse for the Indian people has been found at all times in their Sacred Writings—the great religious Epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana; the Forest Books or Upanishads; the Puranas or minor Scriptures; and the older Vedas. For these the Temple porch or the shade of a holy tree is the classroom and the Sadhu the teacher.

I remember going one evening to the home of a close devotee of the work at Mylapore. Several branches of the family lived together, forming a community household. I found the head of it in the central court of the house surrounded by children of all ages, some toddling, some crawling, one wee one of a few weeks swinging in a suspended crib. I asked him how he happened to be playing nursemaid. He replied that a wandering *Sannyasi* was reading the Ramayana every evening in the porch of the Vishnu Temple nearby and that night Sita was to give her answer to Ravana, the hostile king who had carried her off. The ladies of the house were so anxious to hear it that he had offered to stay with the children while they all went. I saw one of them running eagerly down the road as I approached.

When I first reached Madras, the other sacred epic, the Mahabharata, dealing with the life and teaching of Sri Krishna, was being read at the Mylapore High School. The school stood at the lower corner of the four streets of the Temple, close to the Primary School building where I was then living, and I could hear the sound of the voices from my room there. A rich resident of Mylapore had engaged a learned Pandit and another Brahmin scholar to read the whole of the epic. It took six months. This is a not infrequent form of public service.

Every evening at dusk the Pandit would take his place at a table on the school verandah with a lamp beside him and a large Sanskrit tome open before him. A bench stood at right angles and on it sat cross-legged the other Brahmin holding a tamboura. Next to him on the bench stood a large picture of Sri Krishna. Their appearance was a signal for people to gather. The readers waited patiently for their listeners. Brahmin widows with shaven head, unbordered cloth, arms and neck bare of ornament, climbed the few steps shyly, hung a garland over the picture and disappeared in the darkness of a classroom which extended at right angles to the verandah, meeting it just where the readers sat. Young women, elderly women and girls, old men and young, poor and rich, came one by one in silence, the men taking their seats on the verandah, the ladies in the shadow of the schoolroom. Many brought garlands for the holy picture.

When a sufficient number had gathered, the Pandit began to chant in a deep voice a passage from the Mahabharata; then he paused and the other Brahmin rendered the passage in the vernacular, intoning it in a soft, melo-

dious tenor voice to the accompaniment of the tamboura. It was remarkably beautiful and musical. During the hour that this continued, many stopped in the street outside to listen. Tired burden-bearers laid down their loads and sat in the dust of the road beside them to hear the heroic lines; home-coming coolies and peons and sweeper-women joined them. Sometimes I too lingered near to enjoy the mellow rhythm of the chanting and always some one ran out from the school with an armchair for me. This was the old method of teaching carried on in the stronghold of the new.

A Brahmin friend from Madura said to me one day at the Monastery: "Formerly the father woke his sleeping brood at five o'clock and for two hours, while the mother was busy making the house fresh and clean, he taught them the Sacred Scriptures or told them of the life of some saint or spiritual hero. Now tired from overstudy, the children roll off their mats wearily at seven o'clock and begin reading about the wars of Napoleon or Alexander the Great."

This is the difference between yesterday and to-day. It was not that under the earlier regime secular education was lacking. They had a highly-developed and comprehensive system of schooling, but this was regarded as secondary knowledge. To discern and understand the ultimate basis of all knowing was the end of every method of training. As Swami Ramakrishnananda once put it to me:—

"Real learning is that which will enable man to realize Truth. As our Master used to say, 'Repeating food, food, will not appease your hunger; so repeating the texts of books will not appease your hunger for knowledge.' Your hunger will be satisfied only when you

perceive Truth. Truth is that food, eating which you will never hunger again. Truth is that, drinking of which you will never thirst again. Health, wealth, property and book learning, you imagine unless you have these you cannot be happy. But you have actually need of nothing. You are already complete. You are now really omnipotent.

"You are really omniscient and you have forgotten it. You have thrown away the diamond and are making much of a pebble in the street. You have given up your omniscience and are thinking of yourself as a scholar with a little learning. You are infinitely better than all this. Truth dwells in the heart of every man. It is the nearest thing to each one of us, but the mind has been dragged out so long by the things of this world that now it is difficult for it to come home."

Modern education in India packs the mind with facts, the ancient system developed a ready instrument of knowledge, one that would respond on demand to every call. The result of the earlier method is apparent in the subtlety and quickness of the Indian mind, its piercing penetration and its remarkable power of concentration. I had constant evidences of this. During the evening hours at Madras the family life is lived chiefly on the front verandah. The *Purdah* system does not exist there and the women do not remain in hiding. They go about freely. As I walked through the streets after nightfall, I would see the entire household seated on the floor of the verandah around one small candle light. The father would be reading the daily paper aloud to the mother, while five or six children would be studying their lessons out loud, one of them perhaps walking up and down declaiming a piece; yet no one seemed disturbed by the

sound of the many voices near at hand or on neighbouring verandahs. Each was intent on his own task. The contrast with the scattered, restless Occidental mind was striking.

The memory which comes with such concentration is remarkable. The uncle of an Indian boy I knew could let fifty people ask him questions in rapid succession, then he would begin with the first one, tell him what his question was and answer it. So he would do with the entire fifty. He never attached a question to the wrong person. Swami Ramakrishnananda once remarked to me: "When people sometimes say to me, 'I find it so difficult to concentrate my mind. It goes to my business, to my household affairs, to amusements, and it is impossible to hold it on any higher point. Why is this?' I tell them: 'It is because your mind does not belong to you. You have sold it to your worldly interests. How can you expect to command what is not yours?' "

Education was defined by Swami Ramakrishnananda as "a process of rolling out." In this development from within a new power of vision must be acquired. "You cannot see God with these eyes," he said, "they are too inadequate. These are owl's eyes, they cannot see in the daylight."

"The teacher," he declared again, "is a dunce who knowing a pot has a hundred holes in it says to his pupil, 'Fill it with water.' He is the true teacher who says, 'First mend all these holes and then fill the pot with water.' As long as you are held by your senses, as long as you care for good food, for sweet sounds or for beautiful sights you cannot hope to fix your mind steadily on any point. True education consists in the sacrifice of vanity and the manifestation of the God within."

In considering Indian educational problems we must never forget that India, like the continent of Europe, is made up of many principalities and provinces each with its own language. In Madras Presidency alone there are four languages—Tamil, Canares, Telegu and Malayan. The first three are derivatives of Dravidian tongues, the Dravidians having preceded the Indo-Aryans in that part of the country. Sanskrit is the one universal tongue indigenous to India and at present Sanskrit is the language of Scripture and religion. For this reason it has been difficult to centralize or create a unit in secular education. To meet this difficulty, the government decreed that English should become the language of the classroom from the first grade in High School through the University. The vernacular, however, is obligatory through the whole curriculum up to graduation in the University. So also is English. Besides these, two optional courses of study are required.

This subordinating of the varnacular, it was felt by Indian educationalists, lessened literary productivity and put a check on the intellectual life of the nation. Reiterated protest has finally reinstated the mother tongue in many places. The University of Calcutta has accepted the change and other Universities are following its example. Now in certain districts it is permissible to give all instruction in the vernacular. Until the present time there has been no free education provided by the government but a movement is now on foot to make no charge for primary grades.

(To be Concluded)

Learning is a good thing, but it availeth not. True wisdom can be acquired by practice only.—*Buddha.*

REPORT

During the month of May, Swami Paramananda's voice continued to be carried radio-wise through the air to thousands of listening hearts. KGFH, Mr. Frederick Robinson's La Crescenta station, which was the first to obtain him as a speaker, broadcasted his message intermittently, while KHJ, the large broadcasting station of the Los Angeles Times, secured the Swami for a series of Tuesday night talks. The first evening, May 3rd, contained a delightful surprise which "Uncle John," the well-known announcer, had prepared unbeknown to the Swami. He asked permission to read a few of the Swami's poems. This being granted, he rose and with deep feeling and artistic sense read consecutively the seven opening poems of "The Vigil," to the accompaniment of the first movement of Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata." The rhythm of the music seemed to bring out as never before the rhythm and majesty of the lines. But this was not all. "Uncle John" in glowing words introduced the Swami to his unseen public, paying him such tribute that those who know him were touched to the heart. For the benefit of his many friends who on account of distance, were unable to tune in to KHJ we give "Uncle John's" words:

"To-night we are going to introduce to you Swami Paramananda, a man who has come to California all the way from India, and who has made his home—we hope his permanent home—up at beautiful La Crescenta where he has established a simple Temple of nature, of faith and belief in God, not ornate, but carrying the spirit of the great out of doors; the spirit of sunshine, of growing things, of flowers and of nature's beauty; and this, to-night, will be his introduction to you for the

first of a series of talks which we hope may continue every Tuesday night for sometime. Before the Swami speaks to you,—we are presuming perhaps,— we are going to read to you from his beautiful book called "The Vigil." This is a surprise to him and we hope, Swami, that we are not imposing upon you, but we have a very great reason in asking this. We want to read a few of these poems that our friends out in Radio Land, before you speak to them, will perhaps feel your own spirit.

We feel, friends of Radio Land, that we are introducing to you a man who has placed paramount in his life unbounded love of God, faith in God, and whose greatest wish in life is that he may impart that love and that faith to his fellowmen without ostentation. Perhaps that is the word that I was wishing would come to me—without ostentation, just simply, perhaps as Jesus Christ Himself imparted that word to His disciples, to the men of Galilee. And we are going to watch his development here at KHJ, if he continues to talk here every Tuesday night, in the same way that we have watched the beautiful spirit of our children of KHJ. In the case of the children, we have watched them, perhaps jealously—we have guarded them, if we may say so. In the case of this man, we watch him, not in the spirit of guarding him, but that he may guard us and our friends. You know it is a great joy to have a man speak through this microphone the word of God in a non-sectarian spirit, in the spirit of unselfishness, without thought of commercialism, so we are very frank when we tell you that we want you to watch this man, because we have faith in him."

Since this initial occasion many letters of appreciation have come from new-made friends of the air, who are gradually finding their way to Ananda-Ashrama.

JUL 16 1927

VOL. XVI. NUMBER 7

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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

NOT ISSUED IN AUGUST OR SEPTEMBER

July, 1927

Indian Culture and Modern Education

Issued by

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Report

ASHRAMA ARTS AND CRAFTS

Hand-weaving is the newest addition to the Arts and Crafts Department at Ananda-Ashrama, the gift of a loom by a friend, making it possible for members trained in the art to weave dress goods by the yard, scarfs, bags, linen towels,, runners, etc. The Department also has on sale bronzed reproductions of the Vedanta symbol—the lotus with the Sacred Word—hand-illuminated bookmarks with quotations from the Swami's poems, many of the poems themselves illumined and framed, artistic lamp-shades, book-covers, incense made from California native shrubs and Eastern spices, etc. Information concerning prices will be given on request.

PURE HONEY

The Ananda-Ashrama has for sale the purest quality of black or white sage honey from the Ashrama hives. Sold in glass jars or sealed in tins for shipment. Prices on request.

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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. XVI. July, 1927 Number 7

INDIAN CULTURE AND MODERN EDUCATION

By Swami Paramananda

(A Lecture delivered before the Teachers' Forum at Los Angeles on June 2nd, 1927)

ALTHOUGH to-night I have been introduced to you as a teacher, I have not come with any thought of teaching. When we go out with the aggressive idea of impressing any one, we never gain a victory. Some of you probably have already learned that lesson. Do you ever win your pupils by such an attitude? Rather you lose their confidence, and when they are armed against you, they are not going to receive from you the best that you are capable of giving them. That is one of the fundamental principles we have to learn at the outset, no matter what may be the nature of the teaching which we want to impart.

I come from a country which can easily boast of very ancient wisdom—India. If India has anything at all it is her philosophy. One of our friends here spoke very appreciatively of India's influence over all the religions of the world. It is rather for you to say that than for me to say it. Coming from India it might seem that I was prejudiced in her favor. I have lived in this country for over twenty years, going many times from coast to coast as a lecturer, therefore I can see things a little

bit from your point of view; yet last year when I returned to India, I could say with even greater conviction that it was a most remarkable country and that there was a very great deal that it could teach mankind, not only along the lines of metaphysics, occultism and higher branches of wisdom, but even in the simple way of living.

Here let me read to you some thoughts from one of the greatest of Orientalists, Professor Max Muller. I chose this man because he studied for the sake of studying. He did not go at his task with the idea of proving anything at any cost, as we in our missionary zeal often do, stretching a point because we have an axe to grind. This great soul and learned scholar without any question gave his life and time and devotion purely for the interest of the thing itself, to educate himself and then extend what he had learned to others. And this is what he says of India:

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

People who have been in the Orient may challenge this statement. It may seem to them a tremendously idealistic point of view, and it would not be fair for me to read this beautiful sentiment to you and say that it

was all there was of India. It is not; it is the heart of India. Each country has its best and its worst. India has its dust, India has its ignorance, India has its climatic difficulties, even greater than you have here; but deep in its heart it has something more, and you must have enough understanding, tolerance and insight into human nature to find a meeting place in India's heart, otherwise what you hear from travellers might make you think that it is an awful country. In one sense it is. Last year after so long an absence, I saw, as travellers see, the dust, the poverty, the naked humanity; but at the same time there was that which thrilled me. I said, what is this? Why is it I find a thrill in this soil even after living in the dazzling splendor of Occidental civilization? Why is it that even the dust seems very interesting?

You may think, here is a man exhibiting a lot of sentimentality, but it is more than that. There is something buried under that dust which we have to dig out before we find the real India. This is one of the points I must make clear to you. Let me resort to the fairy tales. It is useless for a man to go to a castle to seek the treasure-house unless he has already secured the key. Exactly so is it with India. When a traveller goes to visit that vast country, so colorful, with great treasures of learning, philosophy and religion all stored up within it, if he merely takes a ten days' excursion under Thomas Cook, he will find nothing. That is not the way to see India.

India is a country of great extremes. It has the richest and the poorest, the hottest climate and the coldest, the highest mountains in the world and the lowest of tropical plains. The people also are like that. They

have extreme points of view. You will find there those who are engaged in idol worship so that if you are able to see only from the surface you will be horrified, and also you will find men who have reached the great Absolute, who have no use for forms, ritual, creed or dogma. They have come to a point where they can say: There is but One and I am part of that One; there is but one deathless, invincible Absolute and I am part of That. You are at once astounded; you ask, what is this incongruous unity? And yet this is what you find in India.

At the outset of my spiritual venture when I was young, both physically and in experience, I started from Calcutta for Madras, a distance of over a thousand miles. At the end of my journey I felt as if I had arrived in a foreign country. I could not convey my ideas unless I spoke in English and the food was so totally different from the food of Bengal that I wondered if I could possibly survive it, so hot it was with chili and red pepper. In that tropical climate it seemed to me that they had found a wonderful device for counteracting poison by poison. Does this not give you a little picture of the diversity of that great country? Difference of language, customs and costumes, while in the background like an undertone sounds the great philosophy of India as expressed in the Rig Veda thousands of years ago: "Truth is One, men call It by various names." There is but One, one Truth, one God, one indivisible Being—and no other. This gives the hypothesis for Indian culture, for her literature, her social customs, and her tolerance for other religions and races. When the Jews were driven out of their own country they sought refuge in India. In India there are Mohammedans, there are Jews, there

are Christians, there are Parsees,—in fact on the soil of India we find the orthodox of all creeds, cults and religions existing side by side. And the Hindus have never tried to convert them. How could they when they believe that "Truth is One," with many expressions.

Most of you know that throughout her history, India has never sought victory. According to the modern attitude of mind, it was probably her greatest fault; she should have been aggressive. That is political dogmatism, and I am not going to discuss it. I do not believe in aggressiveness, however, and I think that by the time we get through, none of us will believe in it. We shall come to an entirely different attitude of mind; and shall hold with Christ that those who live by the sword will have no other end than to perish by the same sword.

India lost her political freedom because she was rich, very rich. Owing to foreign invasion there is little of her recorded history left; also because a people who deal with Absolute Reality do not lay so much importance on keeping a detailed record of human doings. If, however, we go back to the Greek period of history, we find a very wonderful document written by the hand of Megasthenes, one of the Greek ambassadors to the court of the Indian King Chandragupta, which gives us an insight into the great culture of India at that time. He shows us a people living harmoniously together, peace-loving and happy, without jails or prisons. Of course they are supposed to have been not so civilized as we are. Look at the prison-houses we have, and all filled! Look at our military forces, at our ammunition, at our preparedness! I am no authority on politics, but God has given me common sense. So long as there is this mode of thinking existent in the world, this preparing for war, war will

come, although we may say that we do not want it. We shall bring it, because in our sub-conscious mind we are planting the seed for it. So long as we are making ammunition, high-power destructive elements, we shall invite destruction. There is no knowing when and where these great explosives will explode: they do not discriminate. So long as humanity stoops down to any form of diabolical method, so long there will be disaster. As one of the great Chinese philosophers said: The sign of advancement does not consist in having a military force to keep order in a country, it consists in not needing any one to keep order—in being ourselves self-governing. I hope and pray that our modern education is going to be directed along that line.

There is a danger signal in the life of to-day. So much is being done for us through science, through machinery, through artificial means that we no longer have to do anything for ourselves in order to make life run smoothly. What a tremendous difference in this respect between us and the ancient peoples who were forced to use their hands and minds, who had to create something for their own unfoldment! And yet our freedom from this necessity is looked upon as a sign of advancement, as a great blessing. Is it a blessing? That is the question. This question I bring forward to-night because although I may be a philosopher, I do not escape the problems that you are confronted with. Take the problem of suicide, for instance, especially suicide among the very young, so prevalent now,— what is the reason for it? With old people there might be some excuse, but that young people who should be full of hope and life's aspiration should come to such a morbid state as to feel that there is nothing to live for, shows a terrible condition, a

tremendous lack somewhere. Why do they feel this? Because one part of their nature is under-nourished.

Intellectual training is a very great boon. It polishes the mind, making it sharp like an instrument, keener for perception; but at the same time it must be balanced by a sense of spiritual values. Young people need something to stimulate their higher imagination. They should be brought into contact with the undiluted forms of Nature, things that are not just the creation of man's hand. Intellectual education has its province, but we must seek other inspiration as well. It is that which gives us the balanced point of view. Teachers in all departments feel the need of this deeper note. Sometimes they have great battles with their pupils. There are those among my friends who tell me that they have been sick over the problems of education.

I cannot help but pause for a moment and look back into the past,—at India which produced what the Greek ambassador Megasthenes described as a peace-loving people, and later on, the Buddha, who taught a very fundamental principle which any teacher may adopt with benefit in any department, whether it be along the lines of political interest or human welfare. "Hatred," he said, "is never conquered by hatred, it is conquered by love." This need not be given in the name of religion which naturally arouses controversy. Let us not call it religion; let us call it a practical hypothesis for life itself. Evil is never conquered by evil; it is conquered by good. Now there is only one way we can convey any good to any one, be it to children, to friends, or to our fellow-men, and that is by what we are and not merely by what we say. Especially in connection with children's education we are confronted with this problem of practical being.

Children are not so ignorant as we often think; they have a very keen sense of intuition. They take us not just by our words, but by our deeds. How often you and I try to teach children to be quiet, to be patient, not to be angry or boisterous; yet in spite of all that we say to them, we find that our words do not make much impression upon them, because they imitate us. If they see us angry, or impatient, or lacking in self-control, we may talk to them, but it will avail nothing. This is one of the points upon which India laid great stress. In her ancient educational system she used to send the children to the homes of the teachers in order that they might form,—might absorb—character through this close contact. I do not say that we should adopt this method; it would not be at all suitable to present-day conditions. But what does it imply? Children are the most impressionable creatures in the whole world. Behind your back they will talk like you, they will walk like you, they will make faces like you. Therefore, if we through our lives can give them a constructive ideal which their imagination can play with, will it not be a tremendous asset for evolution?

When I came to-night I wondered what I was going to tell the teachers who already know all about education; but I believe you will agree that to influence character by means of our own character is the most fundamental way of treating the educational problem. Making a point of contact with the soul is the great factor. Without that we shall produce not the best type of humanity, but machines of which we already have too many. How can we reduce our troubles and solve our difficulties unless we can increase the fundamental good? You may say, you are talking only abstract principles. It

would be wrong for me merely to touch on the abstract; but there is nothing so abstract that we cannot bring it to a concrete demonstration. That is where our responsibility lies. All the idealism, all the ethical teaching, all the intellectual facts that have been given to us become real only as we apply them practically in our lives. This requires a certain fundamental understanding of life itself. We cannot, however, gain this understanding merely by following the superficial current of events. We must go deeper within our own soul; we must learn to understand ourselves, our capacity and our strength.

Poise, concentration, co-ordination—we all need these; but how many of us have them? If we are afraid, if we are weak, if we are nervous, if we are scattered, life becomes a losing game. No matter how strong a man may be, he cannot indulge in these lower emotions without impairing his own happiness and health. It is not over-work, it is not over-strain that breaks us down; it is the lack of application of some of these basic principles, and how can we impart these things to the hearts of the rising generation, unless we ourselves possess them? I have known people to feel heart-broken because they could not keep order in their own households. Of course there may be exceptional cases, but as a rule it was because they could not keep order within themselves. I admit that children are sometimes very trying. They are lovely if we do not have to take care of them; but when we have something to do with them, we find that they are not always the most enjoyable of creatures. If, however, we make our task that of understanding and of comradeship, if through our actions we gain their confidence, then though our work may not be easy necessarily, it does become very inspiring. In this we need

much the same courage as animal tamers. Not that I want to use that simile in connection with human beings, but there is in humanity an uncontrolled animal nature that must be mastered, and the work begins within our own self.

First of all we should cultivate silence. Apart from its mystical significance, we need it just for our physical rest. There come times when we feel that if we do not get away somewhere we shall lose control over ourselves. Here is where we must learn to go within, for in the depth of our soul is the true silence. No matter what our vocation is, whether we have a tendency to metaphysical and spiritual expression, or are concerned with intellectual or material duties, we all need this inner silence, this faculty of indrawing, for our self-preservation, for a healthier body and a more co-ordinated mind.

Sometimes I have been told: you come from a country where people naturally have poise. It is true that in this the Hindus excel, but if we observe humanity we shall find the same traits everywhere. All the people in India have not reached the state of absolute peace and poise, just as in the West all people are not born restless. Here we deal with the question of the soul which is the common heritage of mankind. Nothing is impossible for the soul. It is a good hypothesis to start with in educational work. Do not say that in connection with children it is too difficult. When it comes to that fundamental objection we are all like children. It is too difficult. It is too difficult to get up early in the morning; it is too difficult to rule over our mind; it is too difficult to control our uncontrollable nature. When we hypnotize ourselves with this negative thought, it becomes too difficult. This is where we have to take a stand. We can gather

up our nervous force, concentrate our vital energy to such an extent that we can overcome any difficulty, face any emergency.

What type of mind can think the most clearly, can retain most normally its store of knowledge? That mind which is co-ordinated. When a man gathers up his God-given thinking faculty and goes deep down, not scattering his forces, not allowing his thoughts to be carried away by ambition, jealousy, hatred and all those evil traits; when he really finds Himself within himself, then there is for him the beginning of a new era. The trouble is that whenever we touch any province of idealism, no matter how sweet it may be to us, or how convincing, we say it is an impossible thing to give to this scattered humanity. If every one took this attitude, the world would never progress. At first it must be an individual problem. The man of genius often stands alone. You teachers must realize this fact. Anything worth while, anything fundamental, anything that means a radical stand, is the beginning of progress. What can we not do when we individually have that attitude and determination?

One individual life sheds its light upon other individual lives. For instance, when some one comes to you tired and weary, a nervous wreck, and you give to him a word of sympathy, a word of support, and more than that, a moral expression through your own being, you lift that person, you inspire him with new faith and courage. It is in this way of individual effort that humanity travels along the path of progress. We cannot afford to take a negative attitude and say, what difference does it make how I live or what I think. It makes a great deal of difference. If the world to-day is in any confusion, we have our share in that confusion. Our thoughts, our

habits, our tendencies, our spiritual belief or disbelief, are helping to create that atmosphere throughout. It can all be changed, however, and the change must begin with the individual. Individually we must express whatever may be for us the closest contact with the supreme Source of intelligence, call It by what name you will.

Again I return to that fundamental and great teaching given through the mouth of the illumined sages of India: "Truth is one, men call It by various names." God is One—Him we worship variously according to our conviction. Let there be no quarrel. There need be none. Hindus have proved this through the centuries. It is the only way of unity and universality, the fulfillment of the great ideal,—the brotherhood of humanity.

The flint on being struck by the steel marvelled greatly and said to it in a stern voice, "What arrogance prompts you to annoy me? Trouble me not, for you have chosen me by mistake; I have never done harm to any one." To which the steel made answer, "If you will be patient you will see what a marvellous result will issue forth from you." At these words the flint was pacified and patiently endured its martyrdom, and it saw itself give birth to the marvellous element of fire which by its potency became a factor in innumerable things.

This is said for those who are dismayed at the outset of their studies, and then set out to gain the mastery over themselves and in patience to apply themselves continuously to these studies, from which one sees result things marvellous to relate.—*Leonardo da Vinci.*

From each object of nature and of life there goes a path toward God.—*Friedrich Froebel*

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

We do more for others by correcting ourselves than by endeavouring to correct them.—*Fenelon*

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.

—*Gautama Buddha*

Blessed influence of one true human soul on another.

——*George Eliot*

From performing just actions a man becomes just; and from performing temperate ones, temperate; but without performing them no person would even be likely to become good. The generality of men do not do these things, but taking refuge in words, they think that they are philosophers.—*Aristotle*

All things that seem to be
But in one mind exist
And have their being.—*Chiyo*

To make our word or act sublime, we must make it real. Use what language you will, you can never say anything but what you are.—*Emerson*

Do not feed children on a maudlin sentimentalism or dogmatic religion; give them Nature. . . Put the best in them by contact with the best outside. They will absorb it as a plant absorbs the sunshine and the dew.

—*Luther Burbank*

Knowledge is to find unity in the midst of diversity,—to establish unity among things which appear to us to be different from one another. That particular relation by which man finds this sameness is called Law.

—*Swami Vivekananda*

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

By Robert Andrews Millikan, Ph.D., Sc.D., L L.D.

(Compiled from Dr. Millikan's article on this subject in his book "Science and Life." Dr. Millikan is the Director of the Norman Bridge Laboratory of Physics, California Institute of Technology. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in physics of the Swedish Academy of Sciences in 1923, and has been the recipient of many honors both in the United States and abroad.)

There seems to be at the present time a strange recrudescence of a point of view which is completely out of keeping with the developments of the age in which we live, a point of view which thoughtful leaders of both science and religion have in all ages realized never had any basis for existence. In the time of Galileo it is perhaps understandable, in view of the crudity of the sixteenth century, that certain misguided religious leaders should have imagined that the discovery of the earth's motions might tend to undermine in some way the basis of religion. Yet it is to me not a little surprising that men even of such opportunities as Galileo's persecutors, could have got religion upon such an entirely false basis in their thinking as to make its fundamental verities, its very existence, dependent in any way upon any scientific discovery. That even those inquisitors were far behind their own times in supposing that there could be any real contradiction between religion, properly understood, and the findings of astronomers cannot perhaps be better demonstrated than by the following quotation from St. Augustine, who lived twelve hundred years earlier, about 400 A. D., and is probably recognized as the most influential authority, next to Jesus and St. Paul, of the early Christian church.

"It very often happens," says Augustine, in commenting upon the entire distinctness from his point of view of the two great lines of thought, the natural and spiritual, "that there is some question *as to the earth or the sky, or the other elements of this world. . . .*

respecting which one who is not a Christian has knowledge derived from most certain reasoning or observation: and it is very disgraceful and mischievous, and of all things to be carefully avoided, that a Christian, speaking of such matters as being according to the Christian Scriptures, should be heard by an unbeliever talking such nonsense that the unbeliever, perceiving him to be as wide from the mark as east from west, can hardly restrain himself from laughing."

That this same controversy that Augustine thus saw nearly sixteen hundred years ago had no basis for existence, because it is outside the proper field of religion, should have appeared again in as enlightened a country as America, in the year 1922, is one of the most amazing phenomena of our times. But I am not going to place the whole blame for the existence of this situation upon misguided leaders of religion. The responsibility is a divided one, for science is just as often misrepresented as is religion, by men of little vision, of no appreciation of its limitations, and of imperfect comprehension of the real role which it plays in human life—by men who lose sight of all spiritual values and therefore exert an influence upon youth which is unsettling, irreligious, and sometimes immoral.

The first fact which seems to me altogether obvious and undisputed by thoughtful men is that there is actually no conflict whatever between science and religion when each is correctly understood. The simplest and probably the most convincing proof of the truth of that statement is found in the testimony of the greatest minds who have been leaders in the field of science, upon the one hand, and in the field of religion, upon the other. Suppose, for example, that we select the greatest names

in the last two centuries of the history of British sciences, or, for that matter, of world science. Everyone would agree that the stars that shine brightest in that history, as one's glance sweeps down from 1650 to 1920, are found in the names of Newton, Faraday, Maxwell, Kelvin and Lord Raleigh. No more earnest seekers after truth, no intellects of more penetrating vision, can be found anywhere, at any time, than these, and yet every one of them has been a devout and professed follower of religion. It was Kelvin who first estimated the age of the earth at something like a hundred million years without seeing the least incompatibility, in spite of the first chapters of Genesis, between that scientific conclusion and his adherence to the church, of which he was a lifelong member and a constant attendant. Indeed in 1887, when he was at the very height of his powers, he wrote:

"I believe that the more thoroughly science is studied the further does it take us from anything comparable to atheism." Again in 1903, toward the end of his life, he wrote: "If you think strongly enough you will be forced by science to the belief in God, which is the foundation of all religion. You will find it not antagonistic, but helpful to religion." His biographer, Silvanus P. Thompson, says: "His faith was always of a very simple and childlike nature, undogmatic and untainted by sectarian bitterness. It pained him to hear crudely atheistic views expressed by young men who had never known the deeper side of existence."

Just as strong a case of the same sort can be made by turning to the biographies of any of the other men mentioned, and these were chosen, let it be remembered, not because they were religious men, but because they are universally recognized as the foremost of scientists. If

some one says I am calling only on the testimony of physicists or Englishmen, then listen to the man whom the French nation has repeatedly voted the foremost of all Frenchmen, and who is also the peer of any biologist who has ever lived anywhere, Louis Pasteur, of whom his biographer says, "Finally, let it be remembered that Pasteur was a deeply religious man." Over his tomb in the Institute Pasteur are inscribed these words of his: "Happy is he who carries a God within him, an ideal of beauty to which he is obedient—an ideal of art, an ideal of science, an ideal of the fatherland, an ideal of the virtues of the Gospel."

Turn now to the other side of the picture and ask what have been the views of the most outstanding and most inspired religious leaders upon the relations of science to religion, and you obtain altogether similar testimony. Was it not Jesus himself who said, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free"? There is not one syllable in all that he taught nor one idea which he introduced into human life which would justify one in arraying him on the side of those who would see antagonism between any scientific truth and the deepest of spiritual values. There were no creeds in Jesus' teaching, no verbal inspirations of any sort. Religion was to him a life of love and duty, the simple expression of the Golden Rule.

The purpose of science is to develop without prejudice or preconception of any kind a knowledge of the facts, the laws, and the processes of nature. The even more important task of religion, on the other hand, is to develop the consciences, the ideals, and the aspirations of mankind. The definition of science I think all will agree with. The definition of religion is in essence that em-

bodied in the teachings of Jesus, who, unlike many of his followers of narrower vision, did not concern himself at all with creeds, but centered his whole teaching about a life of service and the spread of the spirit of love. Science without religion obviously may become a curse, rather than a blessing to mankind, but science dominated by the spirit of religion is the key to progress and the hope of the future. On the other hand, history has shown that religion without science breeds dogmatism, bigotry, persecution, religious wars and all the other disasters which in the past have been heaped upon mankind in the name of religion.

There is a very simple and scientific way of finding out for yourself what is the heart and centre of the Christian religion, the fundamental and vital thing which it stands for in human society, and that is to get far enough back so that details are lost sight of and then to observe what is the element which is common to all Christian churches. He that does that will see at once that it is the life and the teachings of Jesus which constitute all that is essential to Christianity, that the spread of his spirit of unselfishness, of his idealism, and of his belief in the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God is the great purpose of the Christian religion.

Every one who reflects at all believes in one way or another in God. From my point of view the word atheism is generally used most carelessly, unscientifically and unintelligently, for it is to me unthinkable that a real atheist should exist at all. I may not, indeed, believe in the conception of deity possessed by the Congo negro who pounds the tom-tom to drive away the god whose presence and influence he fears; and it is certain also that no modern religious leader believes in the god

who has the attributes which Moses, Joshua and the Judges ascribe to their deity. But it seems to me as obvious as breathing that every man who is sufficiently in his senses to recognize his own inability to comprehend the problem of existence, to understand whence he himself came and whither he is going, must in the very admission of that ignorance and finiteness recognize the existence of a Something, a Power, a Being in whom and because of whom he himself "lives, moves and has his being." That Power, that Something, that Existence, we call God.

I am not much concerned as to whether I agree precisely with you in my conception or not, for "can men with thinking find out God?" Least of all am I disposed to quarrel with the man who spiritualizes nature and says that God is to him the Soul of the universe, for spirit, personality, and all these abstract conceptions which go with it, like love, duty, and beauty, exist for you and for me just as much as do iron, wood, and water. They are in every way as real for us as are the physical things which we handle. No man, therefore, can picture nature as devoid of these attributes which are a part of your experience and mine, and which you and I know are in nature. If you, then, in your conception, identify God with nature, you must perforce attribute to him consciousness and personality, or better, superconsciousness and superpersonality. You cannot possibly synthesize nature and leave out its most outstanding attributes. Nor can you get these potentialities out of nature, no matter how far back you go in time. In other words, materialism, as commonly understood, is an altogether absurd and an utterly irrational philosophy, and is indeed so regarded by most thoughtful men.

Without attempting, then, to go further in defining what in the nature of the case is undefinable, let me reassert my conviction that although you may not believe in some particular conception of God which I may try to give expression to, and although it is unquestionably true that many of our conceptions are sometimes childishly anthropomorphic, every one who is sufficiently in possession of his faculties to recognize his own inability to comprehend the problem of existence, bows his head in the presence of the Nature, if you will, the God, I prefer to say, who is behind it all and whose attributes are partially revealed to us in it all. Let me then henceforth use the word God to describe that which is behind the mystery of existence and that which gives meaning to it. I think you will not misunderstand me, then, when I say that I have never known a thinking man who did not believe in God.

All of us see much in life which tends to make us pessimists. The good does not always prevail. Righteousness does not always triumph. What is the meaning of existence? Is it worth while? Are we going anywhere? Jesus and modern science have both answered that question in the affirmative. Jesus took it as his mission in life to preach the news of the goodness of God. He came in an age which was profoundly ignorant of modern science. He used the terms, in dealing with disease and evil, which were appropriate to his day, but he saw a God who was caring for every sparrow and who was working out through love a world planned for the happiness and well-being of all creatures. Similarly science in the formulation of the theory of evolution has seen the world developing through countless ages higher and higher qualities, moving on to better and better things.

It pictures God, however you may conceive him, as essentially good, as providing a reason for existence and a motive for making the most of existence, in that we may be a part of the great plan of world progress. No more sublime conception of God has ever been presented to the mind of man than that which is furnished by science when it represents him as revealing himself through countless ages in the development of the earth as an abode for man and in the age-long inbreathing of life into its constituent matter, culminating in man with his spiritual nature and all his godlike powers.

But let me go a step further. Science in bringing to light the now generally admitted, though not as yet obvious and undisputed fact, that this is not a world in which things happen by caprice, but a world governed throughout by law, has presented the most powerful motive to man for goodness which has ever been urged upon him, more powerful, even, than any which Jesus found. That "whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap" is no longer merely a biblical text; it is a truth which has been burned into the consciousness of mankind by the last hundred years of the study of physics, chemistry and biology. Science, then, not only teaches that God is good, but it furnishes man with the most powerful of motives to fit in with the scheme of goodness which God has provided in nature. It teaches him not only that disease breeds disease, but also, by inference at least, that hate breeds hate, that dishonesty breeds dishonesty, that the wages of sin is death, and on the other hand, that love begets love. It teaches him that the moral laws and the physical laws alike are all laws of nature, and that violations of either of them lead to disaster and to misery.

If there be a man who does not believe, either through

the promptings of his religious faith or through the objective evidence which the evolutionary history of the world offers, in a progressive revelation of God to man, if there be a man who in neither of these two ways has come to feel that there is a meaning to and a purpose for existence, if there be such thorough-going pessimism in this world then may I and mine be kept as far as possible from contact with it. If the beauty, the meaning and the purpose of this life as revealed by both science and religion are all a dream, then let me dream on forever.

HOW BEAUTIFUL IS NIGHT!

By Julia P. Dabney

How beautiful is night, that softly folds us
In its embracing shadow like a charm;
God's dusky mantle where like babes He holds us
Close-cherished with His arm.
For unto Him no darkness is,
He veils His regnant Mysteries
In shadow, lest they flame too bright
And sere the mortal sight.—
How beautiful is night!

So to the shadow sweetly we surrender,
And wrap us in the garment of His grace;
And feel His brooding love, surpassing tender,
Though we see not His face.
We know we of His substance are,—
The core of every heart a star,
Without us dreams the darkling night,
Within is light—all light!—
How beautiful is night!

BORODADA*

By Anil Kumar Mitra, B. A.

(Note: Dwijendra Nath Tagore, Rabindra Nath's oldest brother, was called "Borodada" (first brother) by all his brothers and cousins, for he was the first son of the family. In the early part of his life he had a prominent place in the literary field of Bengal through his wonderful writings—poetry, prose and drama. But later on something bigger than literature, something higher than mere intellectual learning drew him into the sanctuary of his inner being and from then on his whole life and time were absorbed by the great Vedic philosophy of ancient India.

In the last part of his life, at Shantiniketan, where Rabindra Nath has his great educational centre, he lived very much cut off from the outer world, lost in his silent work. From morning till night he would sit at his desk, reading and writing, quite unconscious of the world going on around him. Once it is said an artist came and sitting before him for hours painted his portrait but the philosopher did not even notice his presence in the room.

Though the world could not demand his time and attention, he never denied the call of the playmates of nature. He was a friend of birds and squirrels who used to come to him during all hours of the day, sit on his shoulder and draw his attention by picking up pieces of biscuit and corn from his pocket which was kept full by the servant. One could hear the philosopher scolding them, "Ah, don't disturb me, run away, this is not the time for play."

All the literary works of Dwijendra Nath Tagore, including his highly philosophical research works, are

*Reprinted from "Current Thought," Madras, India.

among the greatest treasures of the big Indian libraries, but what India values most is his God-consecrated life which like a shining lamp sheds light upon the path of many who strive to follow the same road that was his.

Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore, through his poetic genius and personal contact has endeared himself to the people of the Occident; so it is interesting for them to know about other members of his family. The above notes regarding the life of his brother were gathered not from personal experience, but were told me by those who had the privilege of living at Shantiniketan and who knew him personally. —*Gayatree Devi.*)

The mind of Dwijendra Nath Tagore was essentially universal. He belonged to no sect, for he was a seeker after Truth, which has no caste, colour or nationality. He imitated no one and founded no school. He tried all his life to find out the meaning of the verse in the Ishopanishad, "The man who seeth the Self in all beings and all beings in the Self, has no disdain for anything that is!" He not only realized the inner significance of this verse but lived up to it. He was a Sadhaka (one who gives himself to profound spiritual practice.) He had communion with God, who was to him *pranaramam, mana-anandam, santisamrdham amrtam*—the delight of life and mind, the fullness of peace and eternity.

He was a scholar, a poet, a philosopher, but above all he was a yogi; for though versed in books, he never wanted to make an intellectual parade of his learning. He was a gifted poet, but gave up poetry in favor of philosophy in the quest of God, and to find Him he considered no sacrifice too great. He studied philosophy;

but to him abstruse metaphysical subtleties had no attractions. The Upanishads are to him the supreme work of human mind and genius and he found great inspiration from them. He studied Kant thoroughly, but could not find in him that inexhaustible light which he could easily derive from the Upanishads. He used to say that Upanishads are no philosophical speculation or a metaphysical analysis, but a true record of the deepest spiritual experience of the human soul. He often said to his visitors that "Truth cannot be established by argument. Buddha was reticent about the Supreme Truth, God, because he knew full well that He cannot be proved by words and therefore he was wise in avoiding all idle talk about God."

It will not be out of place to mention here the deep agony of that Soul which once possessed the Truth but lost it somehow. One evening he was talking in his utter humility about his life and work, and was lamenting the lost time and opportunity which God so lavishly showered on him. He said:—"To be frank with you we are all groping in darkness crying for light. I have passed long years of my life in the deepest pain to think of the many errors and neglect of duties. But it is no use crying over spilt milk. We must keep our mind even under all circumstances. It is folly to disturb the inner equilibrium of the mind. I have ceased to quarrel with the opinion of others. The Gita truly exhorts us to 'be equal to friend and foe, to honour and insult, pleasure and pain, praise or blame, grief and happiness, heat and cold.' This is very difficult to attain, but all the same very true. This philosophy of equality is no stoic quietude, or Christian resignation, or philosophic indifference, but it is the equal poise of the soul, an active self-

giving, the larger equality of the sage. I want to dive deep into the truth of this. I once found it but somehow lost it, and this is why my loss is ever so great."

In this very strain he wrote a letter to Mahatma Gandhi during his twenty-one days' fast at Delhi:

Shantiniketan,
October 18, 1924

Beloved Mahatmaji,

Once or twice in the course of my sinful life of blind enjoyment of worldly happiness I prayed to God for light with my whole heart—laying at His feet the unbearable load of my sin and sorrow. The last time I did so, God in His mercy vouchsafed to me light in such abundance that I was raised as it were to the seventh heaven. I was utterly amazed and overjoyed to see in in an instant as clearly as daylight that I not only held in my possession Absolute Truth, but that Absolute Truth was no other than my own innermost Self. I was totally unaware at that time that a portion of my heart still remained behind which clung to worldly things with all its might. Hence I thought I could never lose the previous possession which I held in my hand because one cannot lose his own self. This state of my mind continued for two or three months during which time my love exceeded all bounds, and utter joy and peace reigned in the depths of my soul.

After a time however I began to commit some trifling transgressions at the behest of my lower self. Thenceforward my lower self gained ground in opposition to the call of my higher Self; and after a few months more an impassable gulf presented itself between me and my higher Self. Then I began to pray incessantly to God to restore to me the lost Paradise. But God in His mercy

could not grant me what I prayed for, for the sole reason that I prayed to Him with one half of my heart only, while the other half still derived its sustenance from worldly things, so that if God in answer to my half-hearted prayer raised me in a moment from the water-pool of the world, I would be like a fish out of water, and the life of my body and mind would be greatly endangered in consequence thereof. Notwithstanding this, God in His infinite mercy, had not failed from time to time to help me out of several great dangers which threatened total ruin to all my hopes of amelioration.

Only very recently I have come to know that if I really want to have the great boon I am praying for, I must first of all prepare myself for it by freeing my mind from the thraldom of Avidya, i. e., of the fascination of the mundane things and especially of those which the shastras call six enemies, namely, lust, anger, greed, deadness of soul, pride, envy;—a thing which is so difficult to accomplish that my endeavour to perform it ends in repeated failure until at last I think it best to give it up in despair. But the doctors say that to know the disease is half the cure, so there is no room for despair under the watchful eye of our Divine Father and Mother —who is Justice, Mercy, Knowledge and Power combined in perfect union. Therefore, I still hope to rouse myself betimes to attempt, at any cost, to do steadily and unwaveringly everything that is needful for my success in attaining the goal of my heart's desire so long delayed.

Your affectionate

Borodada,

Dwijendra Nath Tagore.

Two years after that he gained the lost ground, and enjoyed the bliss of Divine Communion.

DAYS IN AN INDIAN MONASTERY

By Sister Devamata.

VIII.

INDIAN EDUCATION OF TO-DAY (Concluded)

Few peoples of the world have such ardent longing for education as the Indian. They are willing to endure any hardship to obtain it. I saw boys go hungry and cold for it, and widowed mothers deny themselves food and all the necessities of life that their sons might procure it. To help such boys is one of the most favored forms of charity in India. I knew students who went through their preparatory and University courses without touching money. One gentleman let them sleep on his verandah or in his house, another gave them their clothes, a third their books and for tuition they earned a scholarship. There were families of my acquaintance who stinted themselves to share their modest daily meal with one or two such students.

The University examinations are open to men and women alike and women are taking part in them more and more, sometimes with distinction. One young wife, whose family I know, passed ninth among twenty thousand students who came up for matriculation. Her sister likewise made a brilliant record. Women have a separate college until they receive their degree of B.A. After that all post-graduate work is carried on with the men. At the present time there are at the University of Calcutta many hundreds of women students.

Girls' Schools also are multiplying everywhere. As the average girl leaves school at an early age, the courses of study are primary, with the addition of some art and other higher branches. I visited a number of these schools and spoke at some. I recall one such occasion

especially. Swami Ramakrishnananda and I were both invited to address a school at its closing exercises. They sent a carriage for us and we had a long drive. When we were a half mile from the end of it, the whole school met us, with parents, neighbors and friends. There was also a band of musicians. Our carriage was stopped, two little girls climbed in and sprinkled us all over with rose water. They got out and two more climbed in to place flower garlands around our necks. Then another little girl came and presented me with a bouquet.

This ceremony over, the crowd fell into line, officers of the school took their places on either side of the carriage; a garlanded banner was raised before it; and we moved in slow procession through the street between crowded verandahs, the school children singing, the musicians playing and bystanders cheering. At the school the exercises were simple. The scholars spoke pieces shyly, danced modest little dances—more with the hands than the feet, sang songs and listened with gentle courtesy to our addresses. It was all delightfully simple and spontaneous.

In connection with the work of our Order there are a number of educational institutions, Night Schools and Day Schools for both boys and girls, Libraries and Reading-Rooms. There are two notably important institutions—one in Bengal, the other in Madras. Both began modestly, impelled by an immediate need. Swami Akhandananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, was wandering through the plague-stricken District of Murshidabad in Bengal, begging his food and bringing help where he could. One day as he was going along a road he felt a little hand slip into his larger one and a small boy made appeal to wander with him. His fam-

ily, the child said, were all dead of the plague and he was alone in the world. A few days later another little lad joined them, then another and another, until there were six.

A rich gentleman, not willing that they should have only the shade of a tree or a chance verandah for their shelter, offered them the use of a vacant house in his compound. Out of this unplanned beginning has grown up a large Orphanage, an Industrial School and an Agricultural Training Farm. Boys and girls are admitted to all three. There is also a Night School for men and women who labor during the day in the field.

The inception of the Ramakrishna Students Home at Madras was equally uncalculated. It is in reality the achievement of a single devotee, an ardent disciple of Swami Ramakrishnananda, under whose guidance, blessing and inspiration the Home was established. It began in a small rented house with one resident teacher and a few young boys, chiefly sons of widows. The boys did all the work except the cooking and attended outside schools. Unless they kept up to a certain average in their studies they were not allowed to remain. Everything was provided for them except their tuition. That they had to earn by their standing. There were certain incidental courses given in the Home, such as stenography and on certain days a Brahmin scholar trained the boys to chant the Vedas in Sanskrit. Such was the Home as I knew it.

This passage from a letter which came to me recently from the one who started the work tells into what it has grown:

"We have now attached a residential High School to the institution. It has been working satisfactorily for the

past three years. A permanent building has been erected this year for the School at a cost of one and a quarter lakhs. We have an idea of raising it to the status of a college ere long and I am sure it will fructify through the grace of the Lord and through the love and good wishes of friends like yourself."

There are over one hundred and twenty-five boarders at present. Teachers and pupils live in close association. The boys are divided into bands of twelve or fifteen, each with a teacher in charge. The general direction is in the hands of a resident warden. Sanskrit and one of the South Indian vernaculars are compulsory in the High School and some manual training is required. Formerly boys who failed in their studies were sent out of the Home; now they are kept and taught rattan work, weaving, carpentry, machine knitting and other trades. The institution is steadily expanding, yet it still retains the simplicity, sincerity and fervent spirit of its first days.

At a small town of South India called Vayambadi is another educational Centre of unusual character. It consists of two schools for boys and girls of the forgotten class of society. Connected with these schools is a non-sectarian Temple where the children receive daily spiritual instruction of the loftiest, most universal nature. On Sunday also they gather there for various services of song and prayer and counsel. The founder and director of the schools, the builder and preacher of the Temple is one simple man of lowly station. He has no resources for his work save the meagre profits of a stall in a local bazaar; but he gives what he has without stint, reserving for himself scarcely enough to feed and clothe his body. Complete self-effacement makes its demands few.

He possesses certain untrained, natural gifts which enable him to deliver sermons with stirring rustic eloquence and to compose songs, words and music, which his scholars sing with lusty enthusiasm in school and Temple. He feels that the impetus for his work came to him from Sri Ramakrishna through Swami Ramakrishnananda and he pays periodic visits to the Madras Monastery. He came once while I was there and Swami Ramakrishnananda asked him to sing some of his own songs for me. With complete lack of self-consciousness he sang song after song and so intent was his devout feeling that tears stood in his eyes and trickled down his cheeks. At the school festivals the children march through the streets singing these songs and all the houses along the way are alight with rows of flickering tapers.

I have said nothing of Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore's school because I had no personal contact with it when in India and already much has been told of it. My aim has not been to write an exhaustive treatise on modern Indian education, but merely to give pictures and impressions as I gather them, hoping thereby to contribute a little towards deeper insight into the thought life of India.

REPORT

On Sunday, the 12th of June, Swami Paramananda left California on a flying trip to Boston, so for the remainder of the month, Ananda-Ashrama was without his presence. He left at a time of great activity, every Sunday bringing increased numbers to the out-of-door Services at Ashrama Cloister, many being drawn by the Swami's continued Tuesday night talks over radio KHJ, and, at intervals, over the Ashrama's neighboring station, KGFH. In addition the Swami spoke on two successive Fridays at the Hollywood Metaphysical Fellowship, and on the evening of June 2nd, before some of the school teachers of Los Angeles, at a dinner given by the Teachers' Forum. Mr. Schwankovsky, the president of the Forum and an old friend, in introducing the Swami, spoke with deep appreciation of his message, what it had meant to him and what he felt it would mean to all who were interested in the spiritual problem as connected with education.

OCT 1 2 1927

VOL. XVI NUMBER 8

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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

October, 1927

Self-Knowledge and God-Knowledge

Issued by

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

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The King and the Rishi	Mahabharata
The Hills of Vision	Mildred Phillips
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In Memoriam	

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Hand-weaving is the newest addition to the Arts and Crafts Department at Ananda-Ashrama, the gift of a loom by a friend, making it possible for members trained in the art to weave dress goods by the yard, scarfs, bags, linen towels,, runners, etc. The Department also has on sale bronzed reproductions of the Vedanta symbol—the lotus with the Sacred Word—hand-illuminated book-marks with quotations from the Swami's poems, many of the poems themselves illumined and framed, artistic lamp-shades, book-covers, incense made from California native shrubs and Eastern spices. ASHRAMA HONEY in glass jars or sealed for shipment. Prices on request.

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MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East."
—Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East."
—Tyndall.

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THY GRACE

By Swami Paramananda

THY grace is my strength:
In waking and sleeping,
In talking and walking
Make me possess Thy grace.

Thy grace is my safety:
When alone or in crowd,
When abroad or at home
Oh, let me not walk or sleep
Without Thy grace of safety.

Thy grace is my glory,
Yea, Thy grace is my abiding peace.
When I possess Thy grace
My heart sings joy,
My body vibrates life
And my soul is exalted.

O mind, in world's confusion
Forget not this truth.
My poor, distracted mind,
Cling to the holy grace
With all thy strength.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

That was the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.—*St. John*

The human soul enlightened by religion no longer lives merely by the life of this world as irreligious people live, but lives by the eternal, infinite life, for which sufferings and death in this life are as insignificant as the corns on his hand and the fatigue of his limbs are insignificant to a laborer plowing a field.—*Tolstoy*

Lord of the Universe, glory to Thee! Thou art the Self of All, Thou art the maker of All, the enjoyer of All; Thou art all life, and the lord of all pleasure and joy. Glory to Thee, the tranquil, the deeply hidden, the incomprehensible, the immeasurable, without beginning and without end.—*Upanishads*

Man is a traveller seeking his own land. Let him not walk with downcast eyes, but keep them uplifted to the stars in order to know the right path to follow.

—*Lamennais*

If a person could be persuaded of this principle as he ought, that we are all descended from God, and that He is the father of gods and men, I conceive he never would think meanly or degenerately concerning himself. Suppose Caesar were to adopt you, there would be no bearing your haughty looks; and will you not be elated on knowing yourself to be the son of Zeus?—*Epictetus*

The drop wept for his severance from the sea,
But the sea smiled, for "I am all," said he,
"The Truth is all, nothing exists beside,
That one point circling apes plurality."

—*Omar Khayyam*

SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND GOD-KNOWLEDGE

By Swami Paramananda

To live in the world and not be drowned by worldliness; to live in the midst of all materialism and not become a materialist, is a very great achievement. It is an art, a great knowledge, but it requires that we have something substantial as a foundation for our life. In the Greek world we are told: "Man, know thyself." In India they call this "Self-knowledge," while in the Christian world it is spoken of as the knowledge of God. The name makes no difference, however; it is all one. In similar analysis we find that every philosophy, every religion, every logical, wholesome thought brings us this vision,—that we are something other than we seem: we wear a body, we have all the apparent limitations of a body, but with it we possess that which is omnipotent. Would it not be a tremendous thing for us to realize this? Yet we are afraid of big ideas. We say, "What is going to happen if a man should discover this truth? Why, he will be unbearable; he will be arrogant,—a tyrant!" But no man can know his true worth and be aggressive, harsh or discordant.

"Know thyself" we are reminded in the Vedic Upanishads as well as in many parables which were given to yearning disciples in India when they gathered together to be taught of the master. Sometimes when the pupil was ready the master would state in a single, simple sentence: "My son, know that thou art That." It may seem that the teacher was not imparting any knowledge at all, yet that hiddenmost, that inmost, that cave of the heart, that final recess of our being, contains the secret of all wisdom, and until we learn to look there for knowledge, for satisfaction, for peace and strength, we seek in

vain. We may possibly find a little bit of help in other ways, but it is not abiding, it is not sufficing; it comes and goes. To have the ultimate knowledge we must go to the ultimate Source. Therefore, we are reminded again and again, "Man, know thyself."

There is no distinction between God-knowledge and knowledge of the true entity of man. We cannot have a sense of the real worth of our life apart from God-knowledge, because that unbounded life is the Source of existence, and if we are connected in our consciousness with that limitless supply, we can never feel weak or ignoble,—we can never be small.

Spiritual life in its reality is a life of transformation. How can we ever believe that a man is spiritual, how can we believe in his doctrine, in his ideas or ideals, unless we see that these are manifested through him, that he knows what he is talking about? This means nothing superficial. We may quarrel with ideas and theories when they are abstract, because abstract ideas are very difficult for us to grasp. We may like the intellectual beauty of them, but until they have been made concrete they are of little practical use to us. And that is exactly what the sages meant when they said, "Know thyself." There cannot be any borrowed knowledge.

In the Bhagavad-Gita it is proclaimed that the soul of man is indestructible, and we read in other classics and Bibles that man is invincible, yet when danger arises, —danger of death, of disease, or of misfortune,—we find that man begins to tremble. He forgets the great truth of his being and acts exactly like the parrot in the parable. A parrot has the gift of imitation. If you teach him a holy song he will sing it as you do, he will imitate your voice and your intonation, but when he is molested

he will forget all that and begin to scream. A parrot does not think of holy songs when a cat comes after him. Same way it is with us. We are like parrots if we have no real knowledge of Truth. We may have many theories and we may try to convince others, but that is the last thing we should expect to do if we have not convinced ourselves. If we have not proved in our life that which we believe to be true, that which we call our religion, our soul-existence—God—if we have not proved it with definiteness to ourselves, certainly we should not try to prove it to any one else. For this reason the voice of wisdom always tells us, "Know thyself,—know the Truth, and the Truth will make you free." Free from fear, free from ignorance, free from bias, prejudice, suspicion. This freedom can be possible in our life only when we have known the Truth.

"Truth," you may say, "is a very vague word. What is Truth?" Truth is that which does not require any explanation, which is self-revealing. When the sun rises in the morning, it needs no heralding; it does not need that a man should come with a torch and point out to you that it is the sun. It is self-effulgent. So in the spiritual world there are certain things just as real; we know, and therefore we believe—believe with such conviction that nothing can shake us. Suppose we can have even a small measure of that kind of knowledge; suppose that whenever we are under affliction we can say with definiteness, with firmness:"We are That,"at once we shall find that troubles, enemies,—all will fly away. It is not imagination. Whenever man asserts himself with spiritual strength, his frailties and weaknesses vanish. That is the eternal law. We cannot manifest power through a weak vessel. We cannot have God-knowledge in a

giving, the larger equality of the sage. I want to dive deep into the truth of this. I once found it but somehow lost it, and this is why my loss is ever so great."

In this very strain he wrote a letter to Mahatma Gandhi during his twenty-one days' fast at Delhi:

Shantiniketan,
October 18, 1924

Beloved Mahatmaji,

Once or twice in the course of my sinful life of blind enjoyment of worldly happiness I prayed to God for light with my whole heart—laying at His feet the unbearable load of my sin and sorrow. The last time I did so, God in His mercy vouchsafed to me light in such abundance that I was raised as it were to the seventh heaven. I was utterly amazed and overjoyed to see in in an instant as clearly as daylight that I not only held in my possession Absolute Truth, but that Absolute Truth was no other than my own innermost Self. I was totally unaware at that time that a portion of my heart still remained behind which clung to worldly things with all its might. Hence I thought I could never lose the previous possession which I held in my hand because one cannot lose his own self. This state of my mind continued for two or three months during which time my love exceeded all bounds, and utter joy and peace reigned in the depths of my soul.

After a time however I began to commit some trifling transgressions at the behest of my lower self. Thenceforward my lower self gained ground in opposition to the call of my higher Self; and after a few months more an impassable gulf presented itself between me and my higher Self. Then I began to pray incessantly to God to restore to me the lost Paradise. But God in His mercy

could not grant me what I prayed for, for the sole reason that I prayed to Him with one half of my heart only, while the other half still derived its sustenance from worldly things, so that if God in answer to my half-hearted prayer raised me in a moment from the water-pool of the world, I would be like a fish out of water, and the life of my body and mind would be greatly endangered in consequence thereof. Notwithstanding this, God in His infinite mercy, had not failed from time to time to help me out of several great dangers which threatened total ruin to all my hopes of amelioration.

Only very recently I have come to know that if I really want to have the great boon I am praying for, I must first of all prepare myself for it by freeing my mind from the thraldom of Avidya, i. e., of the fascination of the mundane things and especially of those which the shastras call six enemies, namely, lust, anger, greed, deadness of soul, pride, envy;—a thing which is so difficult to accomplish that my endeavour to perform it ends in repeated failure until at last I think it best to give it up in despair. But the doctors say that to know the disease is half the cure, so there is no room for despair under the watchful eye of our Divine Father and Mother —who is Justice, Mercy, Knowledge and Power combined in perfect union. Therefore, I still hope to rouse myself betimes to attempt, at any cost, to do steadily and unwaveringly everything that is needful for my success in attaining the goal of my heart's desire so long delayed.

Your affectionate

Borodada,

Dwijendra Nath Tagore.

Two years after that he gained the lost ground, and enjoyed the bliss of Divine Communion.

DAYS IN AN INDIAN MONASTERY

By Sister Devamata.

VIII.

INDIAN EDUCATION OF TO-DAY (Concluded)

Few peoples of the world have such ardent longing for education as the Indian. They are willing to endure any hardship to obtain it. I saw boys go hungry and cold for it, and widowed mothers deny themselves food and all the necessities of life that their sons might procure it. To help such boys is one of the most favored forms of charity in India. I knew students who went through their preparatory and University courses without touching money. One gentleman let them sleep on his verandah or in his house, another gave them their clothes, a third their books and for tuition they earned a scholarship. There were families of my acquaintance who stinted themselves to share their modest daily meal with one or two such students.

The University examinations are open to men and women alike and women are taking part in them more and more, sometimes with distinction. One young wife, whose family I know, passed ninth among twenty thousand students who came up for matriculation. Her sister likewise made a brilliant record. Women have a separate college until they receive their degree of B.A. After that all post-graduate work is carried on with the men. At the present time there are at the University of Calcutta many hundreds of women students.

Girls' Schools also are multiplying everywhere. As the average girl leaves school at an early age, the courses of study are primary, with the addition of some art and other higher branches. I visited a number of these schools and spoke at some. I recall one such occasion

especially. Swami Ramakrishnananda and I were both invited to address a school at its closing exercises. They sent a carriage for us and we had a long drive. When we were a half mile from the end of it, the whole school met us, with parents, neighbors and friends. There was also a band of musicians. Our carriage was stopped, two little girls climbed in and sprinkled us all over with rose water. They got out and two more climbed in to place flower garlands around our necks. Then another little girl came and presented me with a bouquet.

This ceremony over, the crowd fell into line, officers of the school took their places on either side of the carriage; a garlanded banner was raised before it; and we moved in slow procession through the street between crowded verandahs, the school children singing, the musicians playing and bystanders cheering. At the school the exercises were simple. The scholars spoke pieces shyly, danced modest little dances—more with the hands than the feet, sang songs and listened with gentle courtesy to our addresses. It was all delightfully simple and spontaneous.

In connection with the work of our Order there are a number of educational institutions, Night Schools and Day Schools for both boys and girls, Libraries and Reading-Rooms. There are two notably important institutions—one in Bengal, the other in Madras. Both began modestly, impelled by an immediate need. Swami Akhandananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, was wandering through the plague-stricken District of Murshidabad in Bengal, begging his food and bringing help where he could. One day as he was going along a road he felt a little hand slip into his larger one and a small boy made appeal to wander with him. His fam-

ily, the child said, were all dead of the plague and he was alone in the world. A few days later another little lad joined them, then another and another, until there were six.

A rich gentleman, not willing that they should have only the shade of a tree or a chance verandah for their shelter, offered them the use of a vacant house in his compound. Out of this unplanned beginning has grown up a large Orphanage, an Industrial School and an Agricultural Training Farm. Boys and girls are admitted to all three. There is also a Night School for men and women who labor during the day in the field.

The inception of the Ramakrishna Students Home at Madras was equally unealculated. It is in reality the achievement of a single devotee, an ardent disciple of Swami Ramakrishnananda, under whose guidance, blessing and inspiration the Home was established. It began in a small rented house with one resident teacher and a few young boys, chiefly sons of widows. The boys did all the work except the cooking and attended outside schools. Unless they kept up to a certain average in their studies they were not allowed to remain. Everything was provided for them except their tuition. That they had to earn by their standing. There were certain incidental courses given in the Home, such as stenography and on certain days a Brahmin scholar trained the boys to chant the Vedas in Sanskrit. Such was the Home as I knew it.

This passage from a letter which came to me recently from the one who started the work tells into what it has grown:

"We have now attached a residential High School to the institution. It has been working satisfactorily for the

past three years. A permanent building has been erected this year for the School at a cost of one and a quarter lakhs. We have an idea of raising it to the status of a college ere long and I am sure it will fructify through the grace of the Lord and through the love and good wishes of friends like yourself."

There are over one hundred and twenty-five boarders at present. Teachers and pupils live in close association. The boys are divided into bands of twelve or fifteen, each with a teacher in charge. The general direction is in the hands of a resident warden. Sanskrit and one of the South Indian vernaculars are compulsory in the High School and some manual training is required. Formerly boys who failed in their studies were sent out of the Home; now they are kept and taught rattan work, weaving, carpentry, machine knitting and other trades. The institution is steadily expanding, yet it still retains the simplicity, sincerity and fervent spirit of its first days.

At a small town of South India called Vayambadi is another educational Centre of unusual character. It consists of two schools for boys and girls of the forgotten class of society. Connected with these schools is a non-sectarian Temple where the children receive daily spiritual instruction of the loftiest, most universal nature. On Sunday also they gather there for various services of song and prayer and counsel. The founder and director of the schools, the builder and preacher of the Temple is one simple man of lowly station. He has no resources for his work save the meagre profits of a stall in a local bazaar; but he gives what he has without stint, reserving for himself scarcely enough to feed and clothe his body. Complete self-effacement makes its demands few.

He possesses certain untrained, natural gifts which enable him to deliver sermons with stirring rustic eloquence and to compose songs, words and music, which his scholars sing with lusty enthusiasm in school and Temple. He feels that the impetus for his work came to him from Sri Ramakrishna through Swami Ramakrishnananda and he pays periodic visits to the Madras Monastery. He came once while I was there and Swami Ramakrishnananda asked him to sing some of his own songs for me. With complete lack of self-consciousness he sang song after song and so intent was his devout feeling that tears stood in his eyes and trickled down his cheeks. At the school festivals the children march through the streets singing these songs and all the houses along the way are alight with rows of flickering tapers.

I have said nothing of Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore's school because I had no personal contact with it when in India and already much has been told of it. My aim has not been to write an exhaustive treatise on modern Indian education, but merely to give pictures and impressions as I gather them, hoping thereby to contribute a little towards deeper insight into the thought life of India.

REPORT

On Sunday, the 12th of June, Swami Paramananda left California on a flying trip to Boston, so for the remainder of the month, Ananda-Ashrama was without his presence. He left at a time of great activity, every Sunday bringing increased numbers to the out-of-door Services at Ashrama Cloister, many being drawn by the Swami's continued Tuesday night talks over radio KHJ, and, at intervals, over the Ashrama's neighboring station, KGFH. In addition the Swami spoke on two successive Fridays at the Hollywood Metaphysical Fellowship, and on the evening of June 2nd, before some of the school teachers of Los Angeles, at a dinner given by the Teachers' Forum. Mr. Schwankovsky, the president of the Forum and an old friend, in introducing the Swami, spoke with deep appreciation of his message, what it had meant to him and what he felt it would mean to all who were interested in the spiritual problem as connected with education.

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OCT 1 2 1927

VOL. XVI NUMBER 8

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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

October, 1927

Self-Knowledge and God-Knowledge

Issued by

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

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ASHRAMA ARTS AND CRAFTS

Hand-weaving is the newest addition to the Arts and Crafts Department at Ananda-Ashrama, the gift of a loom by a friend, making it possible for members trained in the art to weave dress goods by the yard, scarfs, bags, linen towels,, runners, etc. The Department also has on sale bronzed reproductions of the Vedanta symbol—the lotus with the Sacred Word—hand-illuminated book-marks with quotations from the Swami's poems, many of the poems themselves illumined and framed, artistic lamp-shades, book-covers, incense made from California native shrubs and Eastern spices. ASHRAMA HONEY in glass jars or sealed for shipment. Prices on request.

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By Swami Paramananda. Price $2.50. Postage 15 cts.

MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."
—Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East."
—Tyndall.

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THY GRACE

By Swami Paramananda

THY grace is my strength:
In waking and sleeping,
In talking and walking
Make me possess Thy grace.

Thy grace is my safety:
When alone or in crowd,
When abroad or at home
Oh, let me not walk or sleep
Without Thy grace of safety.

Thy grace is my glory,
Yea, Thy grace is my abiding peace.
When I possess Thy grace
My heart sings joy,
My body vibrates life
And my soul is exalted.

O mind, in world's confusion
Forget not this truth.
My poor, distracted mind,
Cling to the holy grace
With all thy strength.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

That was the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.—*St. John*

The human soul enlightened by religion no longer lives merely by the life of this world as irreligious people live, but lives by the eternal, infinite life, for which sufferings and death in this life are as insignificant as the corns on his hand and the fatigue of his limbs are insignificant to a laborer plowing a field.—*Tolstoy*

Lord of the Universe, glory to Thee! Thou art the Self of All, Thou art the maker of All, the enjoyer of All; Thou art all life, and the lord of all pleasure and joy. Glory to Thee, the tranquil, the deeply hidden, the incomprehensible, the immeasurable, without beginning and without end.—*Upanishads*

Man is a traveller seeking his own land. Let him not walk with downcast eyes, but keep them uplifted to the stars in order to know the right path to follow.

—*Lamennais*

If a person could be persuaded of this principle as he ought, that we are all descended from God, and that He is the father of gods and men, I conceive he never would think meanly or degenerately concerning himself. Suppose Caesar were to adopt you, there would be no bearing your haughty looks; and will you not be elated on knowing yourself to be the son of Zeus?—*Epictetus*

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body, a mind and a heart that have been made weak through contact with the material world. Therefore we must cleanse them, purify them and bring them a sense of renewed consciousness. That is Self-knowledge, the knowledge of the Truth. When a person really attains this realization and recognition, he becomes a potent factor in the life of humankind.

What is man? It is not irreligious for us to ask that question. Who am I? What am I here for? What is my mission? What is my origin? The world does not give the answer; we must seek it deep within our own self. We may read books of science, astronomy, philosophy—all the literature we can gather together, but that is not going to give us any absolute proof, although the study may stimulate the mind and quicken us to such an extent that we shall not stop until we know for ourselves. As I have said, there is no such thing as borrowed knowledge. When a man is seeking, stumbling, faltering, if a friend comes and reminds him that there is a Soul which is beyond all this struggle, it is a great consolation to him, a great help; but if that same friend can teach him how to connect himself with that Soul, it is an even greater help. And this means not merely talking about it, but actually giving him something definite to hold on to. No one can do this for us against our will; no one can force us to look within. Therefore, spirituality in its final analysis means individual work.

There are some people who are afraid of inward gazing. If you suggest to them that instead of being scattered, instead of being always restless and under nervous tension they take a certain hour for quiet, for introspection, they will say that they do not like it, that it frightens them. This means that they have an entirely false notion. If

we are afraid to look to the Source of things, the sacred current of life, if we are afraid to look on life, there is something abnormal within us. Suppose, however, that we do have some abnormal condition which we have absorbed through our contact with the world, it does not mean that we should let that remain in our mind. We can remove it; there is an antidote. Apart from everything else we can remind ourselves of our true nature—what is called affirmation. It is a very wonderful thing when we are despondent, fallen down, or absorbed by negative thoughts or ideas. I do not ask you, however, to be content only with affirmation. There must be a positive, a definite relationship with your ideals in your present life; then only do you find that they become fruitful.

You may think that this is nothing but a very lovely poetic vision, an imagination, a dream. How can any man of flesh feel that he is one with the Unbounded? Take that beautiful song of the soul from the Gita: "The real I, the real Self, the real Soul of man is invincible,—sword cannot cut it, fire cannot burn it, water cannot wet it, air cannot dry it." You may have heard this dozens of times, you may perhaps have read it, but if even for an instant you can relate yourself with That which it signifies, that transcendent consciousness, you at once shake off all bodily limitations. You know how ducks coming out of the water shake themselves so that every drop rolls off them? In same way there are souls who when they meditate on that pure Essence of life, absolutely shake off all contact with bodily existence. Of course they are renewed and refreshed. They demonstrate their teaching. That is why we are here,—to demonstrate our ideals. Do not be afraid of this.

Rather fear to be bound constantly by material consciousness. We cannot afford to be bound.

We want life and yet we cling to that which brings death. We want health and yet we are constantly holding on to that which brings disease. It is illogical. If we want health, happiness and all that makes for happiness, we must look to the very Source which holds in its bosom unending happiness and blessedness. This is something no one can thrust upon us. We have to train our mind to dwell upon it. At first it may seem vague and visionary. We may feel almost dizzy to think of such things. It is a tremendous flight for us; but we become accustomed to it. Sometimes a man accustoms himself to live upon very ordinary food when nothing else is given to him. He may even turn away from finer and more wholesome food because he has not developed a taste for it. In like manner we are starving ourselves with a very unwholesome diet; we are depending on the material world and it is robbing us, impoverishing us. As soon, however, as we learn again to make our contact with the Source of spiritual being, our whole life will be filled. Then we can cry out in unison with the mystic souls: "I am renewed; I am refreshed; all my past wretchedness is gone!" We shall become a centre of great spiritual manifestation. And not only will what we have received be sufficing to us in our hour of need, but even unconsciously we shall begin to give to others through our thought, our word, our action.

When we feel that we are charged,are filled with God's unending power, what is there for us to fear? And here let me repeat that this Self-knowledge of which we speak is not in any way the opposite of God-knowledge. There is no difference between then. It is the same light, the

same vision, the same flight of consciousness. In Christ's teaching do you remember how at one time He says, "Not my will be done, but Thine"—humility, surrender, self-abnegation—and then again He says,"I and my Father are one." It seems like a contradiction. The same way it is with us. At first when a man looks upon himself he cannot think that such a miserable creature can be a part of that infinite, unbounded Spirit. It seems to him a fallacy, a madness. Yet when that same man rises up spiritually, his whole life is transformed and he cannot think of himself except as a part of that unbounded Infinite. Of course, merely saying this, as a person may say, "I am That," is not sufficient. These thoughts are found in the Vedic Upanishads, in some of the New Thought teachings and in Christian Science. They are true, but their truth is more potent when our utterance blends with our life and conviction. At first, perhaps, it is not conviction. At first we can only try. In a way, religious life in the beginning is a life of imitation,—imitation of holy life, imitation of a great person. We want our life to be likewise holy; but there cannot be imitation only. What we try to imitate, what we try to make ourselves like unto, must be truly ours before we can stand up and defy all the frailties that are born of ignorance.

Self-knowledge is the greatest possible strength. God-knowledge is the only safeguard against all the evil of the world. We want this world to be free from evil, to be like a paradise. We want to make it safe against all affliction. There is, however, but one way that we can make it so. Not by increasing our wealth, not by increasing our material strength, not by learning to produce machines for destruction, or by developing our

brain power, but only by teaching man his God-part. There alone do we find blending harmony. It is not so difficult. Do not put it aside, saying: "It sounds too big, too visionary, and we have tried so many different ways." In this modern world what we have tried is to reverse the teachings of Christ. Christ tells us: "First seek ye the Kingdom of God." The man of to-day says: "Let us first seek the kingdom of the world; let us even risk our life for it." And see the crash that comes, and will always come!

What does it mean to follow a creed, a dogma or a religion? One person rises up and says: "I am a Christian, I am superior to you." Another says: "I am a Hindu," and still another, "I am a Jew, or a Buddhist." Religion does not consist in name, in putting on a label such as: "This is this and that is that." It is the manifestation of true power, of true life, and that true life is ever one and the same. The sages when they proclaim: "Man, know thyself," give the greatest possible treasure that man can possess. When we have found it we have found the solution for all of life's problems. This reminds me of a practical illustration of the strength that Self-knowledge, God-knowledge gives us against evil. Once a saintly man was attacked and roughly handled by some wicked people who beat him until he was unconscious. His Brothers found him and carried him home to the monastery where they nursed him and watched over him. In order to test whether he had come back to his senses and would know that he was being cared for by loving hands, they asked him:"Brother, who is nursing you?" And he replied: "The same One who struck me."

Do you understand the import of it, the majesty of it?

It is the Christ Ideal. It is the Ideal given by Buddha,—by all men of vision. And so absolutely do they know the truth of it that even under the most adverse circumstances they can never deny it. They rise up without sword or gun and by their rising defy all the evil in the world. They overcome it by their very presence, by the force of their spiritual life.

PORTALS OF ETERNITY

By Chuang Tzu

(Chinese Mystic and Moralist, 3rd and 4th centuries, B. C.)

The Yellow Emperor sat on the throne for nineteen years and his laws obtained all over the empire. Hearing that Kuang Ch'eng Tzu was living on Mount K'ung-t'ung, he went thither to see him, and said, "I am told, Sir, that you are in possession of perfect TAO. May I ask in what perfect TAO consists? I desire to avail myself of the good influence of heaven and earth in order to secure harvests and feed my people. I should also like to control the Two Powers of nature in order to protect all living things. How can I accomplish this?"

"What you desire to avail yourself of," replied Kuang Ch'eng Tzu, "is the primordial integrity of matter. What you wish to control are the disintegrators thereof. Ever since the empire has been *governed* by you, the clouds have rained without waiting to thicken, the foliage of trees has fallen without waiting to grow yellow, the brightness of the sun and moon has paled, and the voice of the flatterer is heard on every side. How then speak of perfect TAO?"

The Yellow Emperor withdrew. He resigned the throne. He built himself a solitary hut. He lay upon straw. For three months he remained in seclusion, and

then went again to see Kuang Ch'eng Tzu. The latter was lying down with his face to the south. The Yellow Emperor approached after the manner of an inferior, upon his knees. Prostrating himself upon the ground, he said, "I am told, Sir, that you are in possession of perfect TAO. May I ask how my self may be preserved so as to last?"

Kuang Ch'eng Tzu jumped up with a start. "A good question indeed!" cried he. "Come, and I will speak to you of perfect TAO. The essence of perfect TAO is profoundly mysterious; its extent is lost in obscurity. . . .

"Cherish that which is within you, and shut off that which is without; for much knowledge is a curse. Then I will place you upon that abode of Great Light which is the source of the positive Power, and escort you through the gate of Profound Mystery, which is the source of the negative Power. These Powers are the controllers of heaven and earth, and each contains the other. Cherish and preserve your own Self, and all the rest will prosper of itself. I preserve the original ONE, while resting in harmony with externals. It is because I have thus cared for my Self now for twelve hundred years that my body has not decayed."

The Yellow Emperor prostrated himself and said, "Kuang Ch'eng Tzu is surely God. . . ."

Whereupon the latter continued, "Come, I will tell you. That Self is eternal; yet all men think it mortal. That Self is infinite; yet all men think it finite. Those who possess TAO are princes in this life and rulers in the hereafter. Those who do not possess TAO, behold the light of day in this life and become clods of earth in the hereafter. Nowadays all living things spring from the dust and to dust return. But I will lead you through

the portals of Eternity into the domain of Infinity. My light is the light of sun and moon. My life is the life of heaven and earth. I know not who comes or who goes. Men may all die, but I endure forever."

KARMA AND CONDUCT

By Katharine F. Sherwood

In order to come to any conclusion in regard to life and man's position in the world we must answer the questions of Whence, Whither and What for. There is an old proverb which says that we never declare one thing to be true that we do not see that the opposite might be said with almost the same certainty. These paradoxes appear continually, and so as we begin to admit that there seems to be some plan about life and that there must be a goal beyond anything that we see at present, we are confronted with the question: What shall we do about it? For here we find ourselves very complex beings in the midst of a very complex world, having come from we know not where, with apparently no intention on our part, yet having a seeming power of choice in regard to our present lives, although sometimes thwarted in our efforts no matter how sincere our motives nor how strong our wills.

Men in different parts of the world have given different definitions to this condition. In one place it is called fate, in another Nemesis, in another Karma, while a great English novelist of our day has given it the name of "The Circumstantial Will." No one who has studied the teaching of the Hindus and become familiar with the word Karma and who at the same time realizes how the Western mind revolts against strange words, can fail to rejoice in finding so good a substitute as this,—"The

Circumstantial Will," for if one understands its application one can but see that it means that relentless condition of effects that have had their causes far, far back in point of time, and in many places, and have made a result that is impossible to overcome. At least so it seems. Let us take an illustration. Have you never seen a whole family who seem destined to be poor? No matter what they do, circumstances are against them. If they marry, they marry into poverty. We say it is their luck. Perhaps it changes for a time, but it goes back again. Another family, on the other hand, turns everything into gold, each member the same. They attract others of like destiny. Circumstances favor them.

Some people, no matter what they do, cannot escape some kind of accident as we call it. They say, "Next time I will do better," but no, it is the same. Fate, we say, overtakes them. Their own will is useless for they come up against something which after much repetition they call law. They cannot accept it as coming from the Divine or Overruling Intelligence—not the Divine Will; but still as denoting will of some kind, something with intelligence back of it, though circumstantial nevertheless. The Hindu has learned to call it Karma and in that one word is embodied what we know as action, destiny and the law of cause and effect, the last being the explanation of it and the acknowledgment that accident does not exist, nor caprice, nor wilfulness on the part of an outside Creator; but a just law working and bringing its inevitable result. It is indeed the will of circumstance, of the unlooked for, thwarting individual effort many, many times.

Have we not heard from our childhood that we cannot gather grapes of thorns nor figs of thistles? Have

we not heard that as we sow so shall we reap? Do we not know that if we cast our bread upon the waters it will return to us after many days? And are we not familiar with the teaching that there is not one jot or tittle of the law but must be fulfilled? "What law?" we have sometimes asked. May it not be this law? For if there is one law that can be counted on as inexorable it is that effect follows cause and in its turn becomes a cause leading to another effect and so on and on. Can the personal will be strong enough to overcome it? That is the question in point. Can it and should it?

There is a weak way and a strong way of meeting every situation in life. We can say, "This is my Karma, I can do nothing about it. No matter what I do always the same thing happens over and over—there is a fatality about it." It is true enough. We say it is our fate when, to a certain turn of the road, we always meet the same conditions. The weak way is to succumb to them and do nothing to make it different next time,—not enquiring into the cause. So we go on repeating the experience over and over in ignorance of the law that brings it or that would counteract it, until either we leave this world without changing it, or sufficient suffering drives us to discover the way out. That is the weak way, to give in and be ruled by circumstances. But we are told in popular parlance that we can be masters of our fate, and that means that we must be willing to pay the penalty and then begin a new way of life. Christ said, "Go, sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you." We must sow a different seed if we wish to reap a different harvest. That any one can see.

This brings us to the second part of our subject, the question of conduct; for throughout the whole life it is

conduct that shows our character, and once we have admitted the law of Karma as the law of cause and effect we must realize that instead of railing at the effects we must attend to the causes. Character, after all, is what really matters in life, for that alone is what we take with us as the final result of life's experiences, and conduct shows how far character has developed. We might also say that it is through conduct that character is developed. Certain it is that through conduct forces are set in motion that bring results for good or evil. It would be very unfortunate if this led us to too great consideration of plan in our lives. That would defeat the end in view if the object were for personal gain.

Another saying very familiar to us of the West is, "He that seeketh his life shall lose it." This has been accepted as referring to life on the material plane. But that is not what it says. It merely speaks of life in general, and if we look deeply and realize that it is motive that counts we shall see that there can be no greater selfishness than comes from spiritual ambition. You remember that in the "Inferno" Dante finds in the deepest Hell those who had been spiritually proud. If we say that we must not have too much plan in our lives we only mean that there should not be too much calculation in everything we do. We must, however, realize that conduct is very important and that the emphasis must be placed on that and the results to come in accordance with it.

We have two sets of laws which govern us: God's laws and man's laws. There is a difference between these two. Man's laws may be evaded, or they may be changed; but what we call God's laws are immutable and they cannot be evaded. Sometimes we call them natural laws

because they work naturally, i.e., by themselves. They are called laws because man has noticed the inevitable recurrence of certain effects, given certain causes. If man fully realized the inevitability of the working of these laws he would pay more attention to them. He seems sometimes to escape from the result of his action, but in time the result comes. Often, it is true, justice does not seem to be done, and that is why in considering the law of Karma we cannot omit the law of reincarnation, for only by that can we explain the apparent inconsistency or injustice of life. If we consider this the only incarnate life it is certainly puzzling. One cannot see the causes lying back of many of the effects, but if one can accept the idea that the one life that we know is as a day to the whole experiential life of the soul, one is satisfied to believe that the cause was made in another incarnation.

This does not change the idea that it is the "Circumstantial Will" just the same in both cases, the will that seems to be connected with circumstances that are so baffling to the unthinking ones, the ones who have as yet no philosophy of life. The same author to whom we have already referred, is said to have the conviction "that a spiritual logic governs man's life and conduct." This is only another way of recognizing the same inevitable law of cause and effect, perhaps making conduct too much dependent upon the inevitability. That raises the question: how much choice does man really have? Something has been said lately in regard to man's not being a rational being; rather is he irrational and instinctive, responding to stimuli in what he does, as do the insects. In fact the more one knows about the life of the social insects the more one finds the similarity to

man, any difference being rather in favor of the insect, if one considers perfection of life in a community the standard. Man has what the insect has not, the power of debasing his natural instincts, and if he has that power it means that he has the power of choice, though possibly only within certain limits. If he has the power to debase he must also have the power to uplift and transmute.

In the Christian Scriptures we are told that by man came sin into the world and by man also came resurrection from the dead. To my mind this means that man has the power of choice, that he can either go up or down, and it is the human plane that is great just on account of this. Man has gone out of Eden wherein he was not conscious of the difference. He had not yet eaten of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. The insects have no power of choice. Age after age they continue in the same life that their ancestors lived, no real change once their evolution is complete. A recent authority says that the ant has been for three hundred million years on the earth and for sixty five million years has been practically as at present. A banyan tree can live to be many hundred years old, but once a banyan tree always a banyan tree. Social life has been perfected among the insects far beyond anything that man has accomplished. Individual development is so strong in man that it seems he is not capable of so much self-effacement as is necessary in such a society. It may not be desirable, and yet it is the dream among a certain type of people. It would appear, however, to do away with individual responsibility and the freedom to go wrong in order to learn to go right consciously, not unconsciously as with the insect.

This at once puts conduct in a place where it seems to be almost the whole of life, for it means action according to choice. As we watch people's conduct, however, and see how, given certain conditions, one can almost unerringly predict certain results, it would seem as if it were true that man is not rational, only instinctive, only acting in response to stimuli. One man strikes another, quickly he returns the blow without stopping to think. It is a self-protective action. Anger then rises. The first man strikes again. Again response from the other. But we know that this is not always so. There are individuals who have gone beyond this and they show what is possible for the race. There are individuals who have learned to control their instincts, or in whom something higher and better has become instinctive. They have chosen the good rather than the evil, or even the pleasant.

You may ask if it is worth while to dwell upon these things, if it is not better just to go on living, doing the best we can rather than to become analytical and introspective. It is hard to say that any one way is the best and only. There cannot be one way for all when people are in such different stages of evolutionary development. If it is possible for any one to live as the lilies of the field "who toil not neither do they spin," let him do so. It is a childlike condition devoutly to be desired, but it may be one that has to be outgrown before the other childlike state is reached, which is conscious surrender to the Divine Will. Much has to be experienced to bring about that confidence and give an understanding of what that Divine Will is. To some people it comes naturally, without question. They have an ideal surpassing the ordinary one, and they live with it and grow

to be like it. But no matter what the ideal, we cannot get away from the question of conduct which brings its consequences for good or ill. This we cannot ignore. Every one must be judged, if judged at all, by what he does. This does not mean the judgment of condemnation. We only mean that a tree is known by its fruits—that conduct is important because it is the seed of the future. When one first hears and understands the meaning of the word Karma it is not unnatural to begin to trace back and try to find the causes for existing conditions; but it is the most futile waste of time. We can never find out and it would do us no good to know. What we need to do is to realize that every moment we are making new Karma, know it but not dwell upon it. We should also realize that we are a part of the "Circumstantial Will" and we can only help the whole, the composite, by what we do and are ourselves. And we also need to remind ourselves, in the midst of more attractive speculations concerning mysticism, the Absolute, heaven, etc., that it is only in ourselves that we can make the necessary corrections of these faults that seen in the whole or in others we do not like. We must overcome in our own characters everything that we detest in others. We must do it from within and then it will come out in conduct. We must put our thoughts into action and start better forces in motion.

It sounds so easy, this starting of new habits; but we know it is not. It may be easy to start, but it is difficult to continue until new habits are formed, and only in the old way of line upon line, precept upon precept, can it be done. Has some one injured us? We blame him as the child blames the wall where it has struck his head. We needed just that experience and had in some way at-

tracted it. When we have overcome the thing in ourselves, never again will any one injure us in that way. Is it jealousy that possesses us? We think it is the fault of the one who has neglected or forgotten us. If we show the jealous spirit we grow more and more unlovely. It can only be overcome by love. That is bitter medicine to give to any one suffering from a sense of injustice, but medicine which we give to ourselves is not so hard to take. That is one reason that we need to ponder these things in our hearts and make up our own minds. We are at least not resentful to others because of their criticism. We are anxious to know the history of the world. We like to fathom the depths of all the philosophies. We would know all mysteries. We would dive into the deepest recesses of man's nature and understand it; but of what use is it all unless we get from it something of practical value in daily life and for the regulation of conduct?

Shall we take each individual defect and try to get rid of it? Shall we let our minds dwell all the time on the idea of self-development? Alas, such a course would defeat its own end. Life brings us daily the fruits of what we are. When things go well perhaps we do not notice; but when they go ill, then is the time for us to put our teaching into practice. It is not easy, but it has to be done if we wish to help along the evolutionary development both of ourselves and others with whose lives we are inevitably connected. Only by helping ourselves can we truly help others, and then, strange paradox as it is, only by doing for others do we help ourselves. There is no contradiction here. We help the whole by changing ourselves. We grow by doing something for some one else—not in correcting them, but in doing for them. If

we could love them it would be the best way; but we cannot love what is unlovely. We can, however, do unto others as we would have them do unto us. No wonder it is called the "Golden Rule." If we could follow it nothing else would need to be known; no theories concerning Karma or the "Circumstantial Will,"or that "By whatsoever judgment ye mete it shall be meted to you again." No, none of these, if we could live by that wonderful rule. Understanding these things, however, may help us to see the necessity for practising it and consequently make it easier to do so.

So it is well for us to dwell upon them now and then and in their boldest aspect; face them and admit the necessity for living accordingly. In so doing we not only help humanity, including ourselves, but we are living in line with the highest Truth. That is the best reason of all. We may fail many times in these efforts, but in failing we learn what can never be taken from us. As Thomas Hardy says, "It is strange that those people who have gone right after first going wrong, know more about the way of going right than those who have never gone wrong." So even failures are of use if we know how to make them so, and when we reach the light, how the darkness is forgotten!

There is a far-away dream that is called the "Joy of the Lord." Most of us do not admit to our consciousness the fact of its reality. If it has a reality what can it mean, and what has it to do with Karma and conduct? There are people who tell us that they have experienced it, and experience is the test, and experience comes through conduct, and Karma is produced by conduct; so we see that there is a relationship and that the far-away dream may some day be realized if we start the right

forces into action. Sages have told us that this is the final goal of life. If we can believe them we may be led through a recognition of the law of Karma or the "Circumstantial Will" to a more speedy attainment. But believe them or not, the law is working just the same, and it does not need a sage to tell us that "we cannot gather figs from thistles." Life has told us. We only need to carry the simile further and into every condition of life.

THE KING AND THE RISHI

Compiled from the Mahabharata

Once on a time a king of Janaka's race, while ranging the uninhabited forests in the pursuit of deer, saw a superior Brahmana or Rishi of Bhrigu's race. Bowing with his head unto the Rishi who was seated at his ease, king Vasuman took his seat near him and obtaining his permission, put to him this question:—O holy one, what is productive of the highest benefit, both here and hereafter, to man endued as he is with an unstable body, and who is the slave of his desires? Properly honored by the king, and thus questioned, that high-souled Rishi possessed of ascetic merit then said unto him these beneficial words:

The Rishi said: "If thou desirest both here and hereafter what is agreeable to thy mind, do thou then, with restrained senses, abstain from doing what is disagreeable to all others. Righteousness is beneficial unto them that are good. Righteousness is the refuge of them that are good. From Righteousness have flowed the three worlds with their mobile and immobile creatures. O thou that art eagerly desirous of enjoying all agreeable objects, how is it that thou art not yet satiated with the

objects of desire? Thou seest the honey, O thou of little understanding, but art blind to the fall.* As one desirous of earning the fruits of knowledge should set himself to the acquisition of knowledge, even so one desirous of earning the fruits of Righteousness should set himself to the acquisition of Righteousness.

"Ascertaining the merits of the religion of Acts and that of abstention from Acts, do thou, with concentrated senses, be devoted to the practices of Righteousness which appertain to thought, word, and deed. Acquiring wealth by righteous means, one should give it away unto those that are deserving. One should make gifts, casting off anger; and having made gifts one should never give way to regret nor proclaim those gifts with one's own mouth.

"O thou that art endued with an impatient soul, betake thyself to the practice of patience. O thou that art of a foolish understanding, seek to be possessed of intelligence! Destitute of tranquillity, seek then to be tranquil, and bereft of wisdom as thou art, do thou seek to act wisely! He who moves in the companionship of the righteous succeeds, by his own energy, in acquiring the means of accomplishing what is beneficial for him both in this world and the next. Verily, the root of that benefit, which thus becomes his here and hereafter, is unwavering firmness. The royal sage Mahabhisha, through want of this firmness, fell from heaven. Yayati, also, though his merits had become exhausted (in consequence of his boastfulness and though he was hurled down from heaven) succeeded in regaining regions of felicity through his firmness. Thou art sure to attain to great intelligence, as also to what is for thy highest good, by paying court to virtuous and learned persons possessed of ascetic merit."

Hearing these words of the sage, king Vasuman, possessed of a good disposition, withdrawing his mind from the pursuits of desire, set it upon the acquisition of Righteousness.

THE HILLS OF VISION

By Mildred Phillips

In the Sierra Madre mountains there lies a lovely valley looking toward the sea. In shape it is a long crescent and its history bears out the symbolic meaning of this crescent, for the valley grows steadily in population, in material values, and in those concomitants of daily living which are spoken of as advantages. But better than the gain in outward prosperity is the basic thing upon which this well-being rests. There is, in this crescent valley, a different atmosphere from that of the bustling life of the cities a little farther away. The high tide of commercialism has not reached this secluded spot enshrined in the blue foothills, but it is permeated with a sense of serenity and repose.

Many years ago it was held by the Indians resident here as a sacred spot, a place of peace, where tribes at war with each other did not enter until their differences were adjusted and their animosities healed; later, the sheep herders taking their charges on long journeys in search of pasture, planned to stay here for the night knowing that in the shelter of these enfolding hills nothing ever molested their flocks. Also secure in the knowledge, ranchers, cattlemen and travellers made of this place a camping ground and the valley never broke faith with them or betrayed their trust. That faith has been the heritage of succeeding generations and the spirit of peace and restfulness broods over the valley to-day as it has done through the centuries.

The sparkling effervescence which is the natural tone of many localities is present when life is without depth and afar from reality; but here, this quality of peacefulness, this hush that broods, is vibrant with chords of unearthly sweetness and holds warm within the heart of its being, a prescience of something awaiting fulfillment, something which tarries until the coming of another day to be transformed from indefiniteness to full development.

Is it somnolence? Is there here the slumber of the clod without hope and without reward? Rather it is the quiet of creation, the repose which carries the seed of light within, which in time to come will pour forth its radiance. What is this which is obscurely felt to lie ahead? What revelation is forming in the matrix of this stillness? What apocalypse is taking shape within this pregnant calm?

The blue hills surrounding the valley are instinct with expectation and athrill with dream and into this dream has come from far-away India, the land of dreams and of lofty idealism, one who bears within his heart and hand the power to irradiate the twilight of vague feeling, to bring the dream to its ultimate reality. Among these hills the feeling of ideality increases, the sense of the unknown expands and the veil which falls between the human sense and the ultimate disclosure seems to grow more thin.

Does the nearer boundary of that realm which lies beyond our perception always recede with the ever-widening circumference of our spiritual development? Or does the unknown grow greater in proportion to our growth? Certain it is that he who has come, while he bears in one hand the power to transform the darkness of our ignorance to light, bears in the other the grace of

loving-kindness and leads gently forward no faster than stumbling feet can go.

The serenity and quiescent expectation of the valley, here in the upward-looking hills have changed to active urge, to constant effort to attain to something as yet beyond the scope of consciousness. What is this urge that unceasingly impels forward toward some far, unpictured goal of development? With what degree of certainty is the pathway to that completion followed? And, finally, what is this accomplishment toward which all impulse moves?

This goal, this consummation of hope and desire, of faith and dream, of inner urge and outer activity is conscious immortality, the definite knowledge of our inherent godliness, the divine communication that gives the ultimate vision of Reality, and he who has come into the dream guides with unerring wisdom along the only trail that can lead to the dream's fulfillment.

It is by expanding our consciousness to ever-widening horizon lines and by lifting our hearts to ever-increasing heights of vision, under this unfailing guidance, that we at last exchange our materiality for the life immortal and are enabled to know the Truth,—that Truth which makes us free. For the realm of freedom, of purity and of immortality can be entered only by those who have attained to purity of living. *Nanya pantha vidyate ayanaya. Nanya panthavidyate ayanaya. Nanya panthavidyate ayanaya.* "There is no other way. There is no other way. There is no other way."

Have you used the Summer well, then the Winter shall be beautiful to you. Have you made good use of Life, then Death shall be exceeding glorious.

—*Edward Carpenter*

REPORT

August and September at Ananda-Ashrama, far from being months of drowsy indolence, have been full of intense activity, resulting in a definite widening of the scope of the Vedanta work in Southern California,—and beyond; because the Swami's talks over Radio KHJ on Tuesdays, and two devotional talks over KNX put him in touch with many outside the boundaries of the state, while his lecture work brought him in contact with people from various sections of the country.

Ever since the closing in 1922 of his small Centre in Los Angeles, the Swami has had it in his mind to establish a library and reading room there in connection with the Ananda-Ashrama. This has finally been brought about, two very attractive rooms being secured at the Music Arts Studio Building where the Swami had his original Centre. These rooms were formally opened on August 14th, with a public lecture delivered by the Swami in Symphony Hall in the same building. Although only two days were given for announcement, the hall was crowded and the response was so enthusiastic that a lecture for the following Sunday was arranged. Increased numbers and enthusiasm drew forth the promise of a third lecture which proved the crowning success of the series, over six hundred people listening to the Swami's words, undistracted by the warmth of the evening or the noise of a political meeting next door. In fact, so great was their appreciation of what the Swami represented, that the entire audience rose to its feet in tribute as he came to the platform. It was only a sudden call to Boston that prevented a continuation of these lectures. The rooms, so auspiciously inaugurated, are open daily to

visitors. A consecrated worker from the Ashrama is in charge of them, and daily many come there to enjoy a quiet time of rest and study. Besides these lectures in Symphony Hall, the Swami spoke every other week during the latter part of July and the first part of August, for the Divine Science Fellowship, in Los Angeles.

In addition to these activities, the Swami opened a reading-room in Pasadena at 19 N. Oak Knoll Ave., just off the main thoroughfare of the city. In a new building, this room, clean, fresh, and of good dimensions, is admirably suited to the needs of the work, its large front window providing a place of display for the Vedanta literature, the Ashrama weaving and other handiwork. In opening this room, the Swami chose as his subject of address, "The Spirit of this Work." Many good friends of the Ashrama live at Pasadena, and on this evening there was no lack of numbers or good will. The room has been put in charge of an old friend of the work.

Many visitors have spent happy days or weeks at the Ashrama Guest House, among these being the distinguished leader of the Philadelphia orchestra, Mr. Leopold Stokowski, who with Mrs. Stokowska passed a night at the Ashrama. Mr. Stokowski is soon to leave for India where he plans to study Indian music.

Finally, to complete the chronicle of the past two months, we must tell of the Swami's dinner at which about one hundred and twenty-five guests sat down under the stars and partook of Indian dishes, as usual prepared by the Swami's own hand. The evening was balmy, and the long tables, forming a square within the patio, made a charming appearance with their background of trees, the soft grass under foot and the happy faces around them. The grassy rise from which the Swami gives his

Sunday Addresses, looked a veritable bower with one beautiful hand-painted lantern throwing its magic gleam on leaf and stem.

At the close of the dinner there was varied light entertainment by members and friends, culminating in stirring tributes to the Swami and his work, given by old friends who were present. Mrs. John P. Jones set the ball rolling with gracious words, to be followed by Mrs. Marion Craig Wentworth, well-known author and playwright, Mr. Walter Raymond, head of the Divine Science Fellowship, Mrs. William de Mille, and last but not least, Miss Ruth St. Denys, world renowned dancer, who gave a most delightful ten minute address on the balancing point between Eastern and Western Culture, which she feels is vitally needed in the world to-day and which the Swami exemplifies in his life and teachings. This was in many ways the most successful of all the Swami's dinners, unique as these always are, in their happy blending of the material and the spiritual.

On August 30th the Swami left for Boston. It is still uncertain how long he will be away, but during his absence the work at the Ashrama will continue uninterruptedly, with two Services on Sunday, a Tuesday afternoon Class, and two outside Classes, one at the Vedanta Library in Los Angeles, Wednesday evening at 8 o'clock, and one at the Pasadena Library, Thursday evening at the same hour.

VEDANTA CENTRE OF BOSTON

In Boston, the summer months are apt to be a time of quiet, thus the Vedanta Centre of Boston has to report for the months of August and September merely the regular observance of Services and Classes.

HINDU TEMPLE—SAN FRANCISCO

The Hindu Temple in San Francisco, which suffered such sad loss at Swami Prakashananda's death, is fortunate in having as its new head, Swami Madhavananda, who, until his departure for the West, was president of the Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati. Swami Dayananda who has faithfully conducted the San Francisco work since Swami Prakashananda's passing, will remain as an assistant to the new Swami.

SERVICE AS WORSHIP

Service of humanity as a form of worship was an ideal that Swami Vivekananda laid tremendous stress upon, and nowhere is this ideal being exemplified more than in the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service at Benares. There during the year 1926, relief in various ways as well as medical treatment was given to 1679 persons at its in-door hospitals, refuge wards, Girls' Home, etc., while through its out-door dispensaries 22,325 persons were afforded medical aid, were supplied with weekly doles of rice, money and clothing, or received other kinds of assistance according to their needs. The entries show that practically all the provinces, as well as almost all the creeds and communities of India were represented.

That a work like this, conducted with such a consecrated spirit should suffer for lack of funds is deplorable, and yet, though the number of people relieved far exceeds that of the preceding year, the funds were not adequate. We can only pray that many will contribute their mite or their abundance to this selfless work in whose spirit lies healing for the soul as well as for the body, for the servers as well as for the served.

All contributions can be sent to the Ananda-Ashrama, La Crescenta, Los Angeles Co., California, from where they will be forwarded.

BOOK REVIEW

"Dynamic Religion," a book from the hand of Swami Prabhavananda, head of the Vedanta Society of Portland, seeks to state the universal truth of the Vedanta philosophy, in a simple, concise manner, free from sectarian bias and suited to the needs of the Western enquirer. The book is neatly bound and with its striking title should attract many readers.

IN MEMORIAM

Once again the Great Master has called home one of his own. On August 18th, Swami Saradananda, a member of the original group of Sri Ramakrishna's direct disciples, laid down the burden of his physical life in answer to that call. Given the office of Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission by his illustrious Brother, Swami Vivekananda, at its inception, he would never consent to lay it aside for any higher honor. Humble, wise, loving, faithful, his life was as a shining light, and his death means an irreparable loss, not only to the Mission, but to all who came under the influence of his benign and illumined personality.

Full details of the end are lacking at present, but we hope that in the next number of the "Message of the East" we shall be able to give a fuller account of the passing of this lofty soul, and of his years of service to his fellow-men.

NOV 10 1927

VOL. XVI NUMBER 9

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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

November, 1927

Healing of Soul and Body

Issued by

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

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CHRISTMAS SUGGESTIONS

ASHRAMA ARTS AND CRAFTS DEPT.

HAND WEAVING:—Scarfs, bags, linen towels, runners, dress goods, etc. LEATHER WORK:—Book covers, etc. Metal or hand-illumined book-marks and poems of Swami Paramananda. INCENSE, "Breath of the California Mts." PURE ASHRAMA HONEY, in glass jars or sealed for shipment.

We would also suggest that a subscription to "THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST," or any one of the Swami's books, especially his poems or his "BOOK OF DAILY THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS" makes a thoughtful and valued gift.

MESSAGE OF THE EAST

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."
—Ezekiel.
"Light shall come again from the East."
—Tyndall.

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HEALING OF SOUL AND BODY

By Swami Paramananda

SPIRITUAL healing is a new phase in Occidental thought. There are many people who are tremendously faithful to it, not only faithful, they believe it to be the most vital factor in all spiritual teaching. Any psychological society or sect that is started must have a healing department, and I have often been asked how it is regarded in India. It has always been practised there, but with a hush of silence. Even to-day although India has gone through a great deal of upheaval and adjustment owing to foreign invasion and Occidental methods, you still find the belief that nothing is impossible through spiritual influence, through love. In India a holy man is expected to raise the dead, there is so much faith. When every hope is abandoned by physicians the sick man often will go on a pilgrimage just to lie in the dust of a sacred shrine, he has such faith that if he can only get there, he will be restored.

We may say it is nothing but superstition, but superstition never brings any power. Sometimes we see the man through his faith and fervor becoming whole. It is not, however, the holy place which holds the secret of miracle. In a great measure it is the person himself who by

his faith opens the gate, the avenue of healing. We find this in the Bible. When sick people came to Christ, imploring Him to heal them, He asked simply: "Do ye believe that I can do this thing?" "Yes." "Then let it be so." There is a wonderful psychology here. He did not merely say with aggressiveness, "I am going to heal you," but, "Do you believe that it is possible for me to become a channel through which you can receive such a blessing?" "I believe;" "then let it be according to your faith."

Faith is a very potent factor. What it is we cannot analyze. Take a rose. If we pull it apart, petal after petal, in order to find the source of its fragrance, of its exquisite beauty, we shall ruin it, and I doubt very much if we shall come to any conclusive proof as to wherefrom that fragrance is coming. Same way in regard to faith or any spiritual principle. We recognize its power, but we say, "It must be put through the test of rationalism." Rationalism we may have, and we may try to analyze wherefrom faith comes, and why it exerts an influence on human destiny, and yet I doubt whether we shall ever discover its essence; it is too subtle.

According to an Indian parable there was once a man who wanted to cross the sea. Another man, a holy man, put something in his hand and said to him: "My son, if you believe in this you can walk safely over the water," and he believed. He started and all went well till he was about half way over. Then curiosity seized him. "What is this thing," he thought, "that is performing such magic?" He opened his hand and found nothing but a simple written word, the name of some special deity. "Is that all!" he exclaimed, and no sooner had he said this than he began to sink. Now try to understand the

significance of it. Faith gives one power. Doubt destroys that power. Analyze it in relation to your human affairs. You will find that when you are full of faith, you are potent, you are dynamic, and when you lack faith you seem to fade away, you are not even able to meet the simple problems that are given to you. Here is one of the fundamental principles in all spiritual healing. When we have roused ourselves, brought ourselves to a consciousness which is other than flesh, the flesh is healed, made over.

We all of us believe in change. Often a physician who has exhausted every means of help will advise a patient who is not recovering to have a complete change. That seems to be the ultimate hope,—a change of climate, a change of environment that will make him forget his pain, will help him to rise above that brooding consciousness of body-suffering and of disease. If we thus believe in a change of climate, why should we not believe in the change that brings even greater and more vital results, the spiritual change which performs miracle. We call it miracle, but it is the fulfillment of higher laws.

We form the habit of having aches and pains. In India, for instance, there is a great deal of malarial fever. There are certain hours in the day when this fever comes on, and patients have their blankets and quilts prepared for it. Sometimes they are so prepared for it, so apprehensive, that if the fever does not come, they are disappointed. They have formed the habit. The same way it is with us. We have formed the habit of wearing a physical garment, and we find that this garment seems often too heavy, we are weighted down by it, we feel bereft of life because of it. You know how when something falls on you, you feel as if life were going out

of you? Just so the body, the consciousness of flesh falls upon us with its dead weight, and the only remedy lies in that which will counteract it and make us forget it. This is the method of spiritual healing. India believes in it; Christ believed in it and proved it; all the great saints and sages believed in it. Through right living and spiritual consecraton we can manifest a certain amount of power, of radiance, by means of which we destroy the weight of the flesh. Whenever light comes into a room, into a dungeon even, it destroys the darkness, and whenever a person, no matter how dense or gross he may be, is brought into living contact with a pure channel of spiritual radiance, his heaviness melts away.

In India we have a great many miraculous records, but I am not going to recite these, because you all know; also, it is not enough for us merely to be interested in physical healing. There is something far beyond that, —when the spiritual being is touched. A wonderful incident is given in the life of Lord Gouranga,—a life similar to the Christ-life. This great Indian Teacher was very beautiful, in fact his physical beauty was so extraordinary that he was called the Golden Being. He was God-intoxicated and knew nothing else but to live with that consciousness, yet he went everywhere without ostentation. The real saints never carry a sense of pomp and glory. That is why to-day we might not recognize them, because our gaze is fixed on that which implies material glamour. But with this saint, although he went so simply, there were always some who knew him instinctively. Thus he came one time on a pilgrimage to the Temple of Jaggernath, which literally means, "Lord of the Universe," and a leper heard of him,—

a great sufferer, and walked many miles to the Temple in order that he might see him even from a distance. When he arrived there, however, he was told that the saint had already passed through the city. On hearing this there was such agony in his soul that he cried out: "O, Lord, why hast thou forsaken me?" and fell down in a swoon.

Now with a spiritual personage, his heart is clear, just like a crystal, and Lord Gouranga, going along the road with his friends to another place of pilgrimage, suddenly stopped and said: "I hear some one calling me." Then he turned and ran like one mad all the way back to the Temple. When he came to the prostrate figure of the leper, he lifted him in his arms, never caring that he was a leper, caring only to respond to his need, and when this man came back to consciousness, he found to his amazement that all his leprosy was gone. He was healed and made whole. There was, however, a strange and unusual reaction in his mind. He said: "I did not come to be healed physically,—that was not my prayer, I wanted only to obtain your grace, your blessing, just a sight of you." And then he added: "My illness taught me humility. It increased my yearning for God; but now that I have a good wholesome body, I may again go astray, I may forget."

This may be a very difficult thing for you to conceive, but I want you to conceive it. It is more important to be cured spiritually than bodily. That is the spiritual interpretation. Also it works for prevention. If a man does not yield to arrogance, selfishness, egotism and the vanities of the world, he at once closes the avenues which lead to sickness, and these qualities he can check and overcome only through spiritual power. We are

interested in the performance of miracle, but the greatest miracle is when man's inner life is transformed. Today if a person gives us relief from a headache or from some pain, we think it wonderful, yet often we pass by that person who can quicken the life force in us, the higher consciousness. The next turn will be when we shall be interested in wiping out those qualities which make for sickness, war, intolerance and devastation. Until we come to that we shall never have the wholesome life.

It is permissable for us to be interested in seeking temporary relief, but that is all that it is. Even miracle means merely temporary aid. It is not that we do not have miracles performed in our life, only we forget their import. If there is blindness within, we cannot help but have blindness without. If a person loves the vanities of the world more than high ideals, then he must accept those things which go with vanity. We cannot touch fire without burning our fingers, and sometimes we do not learn our lesson, even after we have been burned many times. We forget.

A Hindu saint once was asked by one of his friends, "Why when you have so much power do you not turn your mind on yourself and get rid of all your physical defects?" The saint replied, "My friend, the mind, the heart, all that I have, I have given to God, shall I turn it back to the flesh?" We may not be able to grasp the significance of this, because it is too spiritual, and yet here is great strength manifested. Body will take care of itself, it will become more and more in tune with higher principles as we learn to tune our heart and mind and all our inner faculties with the eternal Principle. This is the real remedy. A selfish person is always suffering; he dies many deaths through fear, through ignor-

ance, through attachment; but that one who has outgrown all these, what freedom comes to him, what immensity, what power! He is not afraid. There is nothing for him to fear. It was in India that they taught this great truth, that man is invincible, deathless, diseaseless, that the soul is immortal, and cannot be touched by any disease. The idea is, that the more we believe in that soul principle, the less are we afflicted by disease and death. It is not that we can expect to live forever in one body. That which is undying, That lives forever, and as we realize That, we cease to fear and are no longer overcome by bodily conditions.

In your Occidental world to-day you have Christian Science, New Thought, Psychology and many kindred movements. In India these sects have been recognized, for the Indo-Aryans have always known the principle upon which they are based. They have, however, gone a little bit further. Their sages and saints do not believe in bargaining and bartering. Spiritual healing can never be made into a profession. I speak this with absolute conviction. It is one of the things we can learn from India. But this does not mean that spiritual healing is not a fact, only it cannot be brought to a material level. Christ did not do healing with an ulterior motive. He was even reluctant to receive any credit. Those people whom He helped, He said to them, "Go, make your offering at the Temple." If we study profoundly we shall find that His mind was at once uplifted to the Source. His attitude was, "Not I, not my will, but Thine,—the Father in Heaven." The same attitude we find through and through the entire spiritual world. Those great personages who become instrumental in bringing light, blessing, healing and that which we call

the miraculous to their fellow-men, are seldom conscious that they are doing so. This is something you may find puzzling. How do they do it? There is no self-consciousness, there is no self-assertion, there is no egotism. That was the significant thing with Christ when He asked: "Do you believe that I can?" Through love, through a certain amount of spiritual aspiration, we become channels, and because of that we may bring help to others, yet if we think that we have done so, if we are made to feel that we are the doers, then at once we raise a blockade. There is no weighing and measuring on the spiritual plane.

It is true, as it is often quoted, that "man is worthy of his hire;" but this does not mean that he has to ask for it. There is no compromise between the spiritual and the material. Among the Indo-Aryans they were so strict that they were reluctant to put even secular teaching on a material basis. It was God's gift; they were merely avenues for it. Here is where we find a clash of ideals, when materialism asserts itself. We try to bring down the big truths and utilize them for our small purposes, but it cannot be done. If we stay on the lower plane, if we still seek to be shrewd and keen, if we are still actuated by lower instincts, then we may expect a shortage of power.

"Convinced that he is not the body, the wise man attains oneness with his higher being," which in the Sanskrit is called the *Atman*, the Higher Self, the Cosmic Energy. Take as an illustration the lotus. It grows in the water and yet it is not spoiled by the water, its leaves are so smooth and oily that the water runs off from it. Now when our heart, our mind, our consciousness become like that through spiritual understanding,

we can go through anything and everything without being touched. "Convinced that he is not the body"--think of it! You may say, "How can I deny the body? Do I not see it? Feel it?" Right here lies the conflict between the real and the apparent. We never can attain spiritual beatitude, or, as Christ says, be perfect as our Father which is in Heaven, so long as we think of the body. When, however, we purify it, when we tune it with understanding and lofty aspirations, then it becomes instrumental in lifting us to something higher.

All our ailments come through contact with the gross, with the material. We may not be able to avoid the contact, but we can avoid the reaction that results from it. There are some people who would like to eliminate all that is harsh, discordant or disagreeable to them. But we cannot destroy this world in order to find peace. If an individual could destroy all the things he does not care for, the world would be very much poorer. What we do not like at one stage of our evolution may prove very helpful to us at another; we could not afford to leave it out. That is the way of life, and the best means of safeguarding ourselves is not to destroy anything, but to increase our power. When we are weak,—weak in understanding—our endurance is less and we feel the aches and pains more—we are too conscious of bodily conditions. But as we gain more and more spiritual strength, these things mean nothing. There are those who would not even feel a burning coal put on their body. It actually happened with a saint in India. This simple holy man used to pass into higher consciousness at which time he would lose all bodily sensation. One day, when he was in this state, a Temple priest who was jealous of him, in order to test him, thrust a red hot coal into his

flesh, and he was not conscious of it. It may seem a strange, unbelievable thing, but there are many things we do not realize now because of our lack of faith, our lack of courage. We are afraid, and every time we fear, we bring self-limitation. In this way we miss the great things in life.

Often God's gifts are given to us,—we have them in our own hand, in our own heart, but we do not believe in them and vainly seek hither and thither. Never shall we find anything that way. We love mystery and we are always looking for miracle; but the greatest miracle is the miracle of Light. If we believe in that Light, if we try to cultivate it, care for it, live close to it, it will destroy all death and disease. When in the hour of meditation a person transcends his bodily consciousness, naturally he is restored. Just one moment of contact with the Supreme Source brings a new influx, a fresh life. Even one who has been pronounced incurable, when he turns to the inner resources of his being, is redeemed, his body is healed. The power comes from within. To receive the gift of healing from others depends upon our own power of receptivity.

Tuning, tuning, tuning,--the best thing we can do is to tune our instrument, and when we have learned to tune it, to live in rhythm, in harmony, avoiding all harshness and discordance. In this way we shall establish health, we shall prevent illness, and whenever we have need of any special grace from Heaven, it will come to us. We shall then know how to receive and be able to retain when we do receive. At first we may have difficulty; but it is not an impossible task. The trouble is we have filled our mind with doubt—doubt of self, doubt of God, doubt of that sacred Principle that is in us, so naturally,

disease, death and all afflictions come and overwhelm us, make us forget our divine heritage.

"Hear ye, ye children of immortal life, eternal happiness, unbounded strength!" Weeping, wailing, doubting, despondent humanity must hear that call, must be revived with that great strength. For it is strength that overcomes weakness, it is light that overcomes darkness and death, and the more we can bring that Light into our house, the more shall we be possessors of life in its purity and in its immensity.

VISION

(Taken from the "Lives of St. Bridgid of Kildare" as told by Father John Colgan, an Irish Franciscan monk who lived in 1647 and who translated the original Irish legends into the Latin.)

One evening, as the sun went down, Bridgid sat with Sister Dara, a holy nun who was blind; and they talked of the love of Jesus Christ and the joys of Paradise. Now their hearts were so full, the night fled away while they spoke together, and neither knew that so many hours had sped. Then the sun came up from the Wicklow mountains and the pure, white light made the face of earth bright and gay. Bridgid sighed when she saw how lovely were earth and sky, and while she knew that Dara's eyes were closed to all this beauty. So she bowed her head and prayed. She extended her hand and signed the dark orbs of the gentle Sister. Then the darkness passed away from them, and Dara saw the golden ball in the east, while all the trees and flowers glittered with dew in the morning.

She looked a little while, and then turning to the Abbess said: "Close my eyes again, dear Mother, for when the world is so visible to the eyes, God is seen less clearly in the soul." So Bridgid prayed once more and Dara's eyes grew dark.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Junnaid, when ill, prayed for his recovery. A Voice answered him, "Dost *thou* come in between Myself and thee?"—*Makhdum-ul-Mulk*

As I wander through the dark, encountering difficulties, I am aware of encouraging voices that murmur from the spirit realm. I sense a holy passion pouring down from the springs of Infinity. I thrill to music that beats with the pulse of God. Bound to suns and planets by invisible cords, I feel the flame of eternity in my soul. Here, in the midst of the every-day air, I sense the rush of ethereal rains. I am conscious of the splendour that binds all things of earth to all things of heaven—immured by silence and darkness, I possess the light which shall give me vision a thousandfold when death sets me free.
—*Helen Keller*

God did not make the soul after the body . . He made the soul in origin and excellence prior to and older than the body, to be the ruler and mistress, of whom the body was to be the subject.—*Plato*

Yes, it is true there are moments when the flesh is nothing to me, when I feel and know the flesh to be the vision; God and the spiritual the only and true. Depend upon it, the spiritual is the real.—*Alfred Tennyson*

When wealth is lost, nothing is lost; when health is lost, something is lost; when character is lost; all is lost.
—*From the German*

He who has in himself abundantly the attributes of the *Tao* (The Supreme) is like an infant. Poisonous insects will not sting him; fierce beasts will not seize him; birds of prey will not strike him.—*Tao-Teh King*

FAITH

By Ratnolka Dharani

Faith is the guide, the womb, the guardian, the begetter and the cherisher of all virtues.

Expelling lust, bridging the stream, Faith shows to us the City of Bliss.

Faith is the calm of pure thought: rooted in honour, free from pride.

Faith is the foot on which we go to find great treasure, the hand with which we grasp happiness.

Faith gives gladness even in self-denial. Faith gives delight in the Law of the Victor.

Faith gives the pre-eminence in knowledge of virtue; it guides and crowns the Buddha with victory.

Faith is a power unto keenness and clearness of morality, keeping the five great qualities from extinction.

Unconquerable by passion, Faith seeks out the noble traits of Buddhahood.

Unattached to carnal joys, delivered from evil, Faith is the truest and only joy.

Faith goes beyond the realm of Mara (passion), and reveals the way to Deliverance.

Faith is the seed and root of virtues, Faith nourishes the tree of wisdom, Faith increases the joys of knowledge.

Faith it is which reveals the Victorious Ones.

They who put Faith in Buddha leave not the way of virtue.

How glorious is that soul which has indeed been able to pass from the stormy ocean to Me, the Sea Pacific, and in that Sea, which is Myself, to fill the pitcher of her heart.—*St. Catherine of Siena.*

SPIRITUAL LETTERS

Of Brother Lawrence

(Brother Lawrence,—Nicholas Herman of Lorraine, was a lowly and unlearned man who after having been a footman and soldier was admitted as a Lay Brother among the barefooted Camelites at Paris, in 1666. His simple, God-consecrated life, lived mostly in the monastery kitchen, became as a light to his fellows, superior and inferior alike.)

I do not pray that you may be delivered from your pains, but I pray God earnestly that He give you strength and patience to bear them as long as He pleases. . . Happy those who suffer with Him. Accustom yourself to suffer in that manner, and seek from Him the strength to endure as much, and as long, as He shall judge to be necessary for you. I wish you could convince yourself that God is often (in some sense) nearer to us, and more effectually present with us, in sickness than in health. Rely upon no other physician; for, according to my apprehension, He reserves your cure to Himself. Put, then, all your trust in Him, and you will soon find the effects of it in your recovery, which we often retard by putting greater confidence in physic than in God. Whatever remedies you make use of, they will succeed only so far as He permits. When pains come from God, He only can cure them. He often sends diseases of the body to cure those of the soul. Comfort yourself with the sovereign Physician both of the soul and body.

* * * * *

If we were well accustomed to the exercise of the presence of God, all bodily diseases would be much alleviated thereby. God often permits that we should suffer a little to purify our souls and oblige us to continue with Him.

Take courage; offer Him your pains incessantly; pray to Him for strength to endure them. Above all, get a habit of entertaining yourself often with God, and forget Him the least you can. Adore Him in your infirmities,

offer yourself to Him from time to time, and at the height of your sufferings beseech Him humbly and affectionately (as a child his father) to make you conformable to His holy will. . . I know not how God will dispose of me. I am always happy. All the world suffers; and I who deserve the severest discipline, feel joys so continual and so great that I can scarce contain them.

* * * * *

I am in pain to see you suffer so long. . . As your case is, it is my opinion that you should leave off human remedies, and resign yourself entirely to the providence of God. Perhaps He stays only for that resignation and a perfect trust in Him to cure you. Since, notwithstanding all your cares, physic has hitherto proved unsuccessful, and your malady still increases, it will not be tempting God to abandon yourself in His hands and expect all from Him.

I told you in my last that He sometimes permits bodily diseases to cure the distempers of the soul. Have courage then. Make a virtue of necessity. Ask of God, not deliverance from your pains, but strength to bear resolutely for the love of Him, all that He should please, and as long as He shall please. Such prayers, indeed, are a little hard to nature, but most acceptable to God, and sweet to those that love Him. Love sweetens pain; and when one loves God, one suffers for His sake with joy and courage. Do you so, I beseech you; comfort yourself with Him, who is the only Physician.

* * * * *

I render thanks to our Lord for having relieved you a little according to your desire. . . However great the sufferings may be, receive them with love. It is paradise to suffer and be with Him; so that if in this

life we would enjoy the peace of paradise, we must accustom ourselves to a familiar, humble, affectionate conversation with Him. We must hinder our spirits wandering from Him upon any occasion. We must make our heart a spiritual temple, wherein to adore Him incessantly. We must watch continually over ourselves that we may not do nor say nor think anything that may displease Him. When our minds are thus employed about God, suffering will become full of unction and consolation. . . Knock, persevere in knocking, and I answer for it that He will open to you in His due time, and grant you all at once what He has deferred during many years.

* * * * *

God knoweth best what is needful for us, and all that He does is for our good. If we knew how much He loves us, we should always be ready to receive equally and with indifference from His hand the sweet and the bitter. All would please that came from Him. The sorest afflictions never appear intolerable, except when we see them in the wrong light. When we see them as dispensed by the hand of God our sufferings will lose their bitterness and become even matters of consolation.

Let all our employment be to *know* God. The more one knows Him the more one desires to know Him. And as knowledge is commonly the measure of love, the deeper and more extensive our knowledge shall be, the greater will be our love; and if our love of God were great, we should love Him equally in pains and pleasures. Let us not content ourselves with loving God for the mere sensible favors, how elevated soever, which He has done or may do us. Such favors though never so great, cannot bring us so near to Him as faith does in one simple act.

Let us seek Him often by faith. He is within us; seek Him not elsewhere.

THE WIND OF SUFFERING

By Sadhu Sundar Singh

God is Love, and therefore He will not punish. I do not agree with those who say that sickness and misfortune are punishments. They are what I should call "the loving slap." A doctor was telling me of an experience he had. Before a child is borne it cannot breathe, but as soon as it is born it breathes. But it is necessary for the child to cry. If the child does not cry his lungs are contracted and he dies. One child was unable to breathe when he was born and within a few minutes would have died. So the nurse gave him a slap. The mother must have thought: "She came to help me, but she is killing my son. It is only a few minutes since he was born and now she is giving him a slap." Through that slap she made the child cry. When the child began to cry he began to breathe. Just so God sometimes gives us a loving slap.

Once while coming down a mountain I sat down in the porch of a house. A strong wind began to blow. A little bird came along helplessly driven by this wind. From another direction a hawk swooped down on the little bird to make a prey of it. The little bird, faced by danger from two directions, fell into my lap. This bird never likes to come to men and yet it sought refuge with me in the day of trouble. So the strong wind of suffering drives us into the lap of God. Suffering and the way we suffer is a splendid way of serving God, an effective way of glorifying Him. . . . He who has not endured suffering cannot know the reality of joy.

RABIA

By Ananda

(Adapted from the story recorded in the Bengali work "Tapasamala." Reprinted from the "Prabuddha Bharata.")

"O my Lord! Give to Thy enemy what Thou hast apportioned for me in this world, and bless Thy admirer by that with which Thou wishest to reward me in after-life. Thou alone art sufficient for me. Nothing more do I want. If, O God, I worship Thee being afraid of eternal hell, then do Thou afflict me day and night by its red flame, and if I worship Thee to gain the pleasures of Heaven, do Thou, then, shut its gate before me. And if I worship Thee for Thy sake, then do Thou not deprive me of Thy resplendent glory."

This was the constant prayer of the great Mussalman saint, Rabia. And truly her biographer painted her as a rare woman living in the innermost apartment of divine love, burning behind the screen of stern renunciation.

She was the fourth daughter born of poor parents in the town of Bussora, in Turkey. Hence she was known as Rabia, for "Raba" in Arabic denotes "four." Both her father and mother died when she came of age and a deadly famine reduced the poor family to a state of utter destitution. She was separated from her sisters and fell into the hands of a wicked man who sold her as a slave for a few copper coins. Her new master, whose chattel she now became, was also inexorable, and he employed her in hard labour beyond her age or capacity. She could not always carry out his command and had to suffer for this. She bore everything till her cup of misery became full to the brim, and at last, being unable to suffer insult and contempt any more, she fled from the house of her master. A poor and helpless girl, she was

not accustomed to walk along unknown paths, thus she stumbled on the ground and one of her hands was fractured. She saw nothing now but gloom and misery around her, and the very earth seemed to slip away from under her feet.

Laying her head on the ground, she fervently prayed: "O Lord, I am a poor orphan, a slave of others. My limb is broken. But these misfortunes cannot bend me. I want only Thy satisfaction. Tell me if Thou art satisfied with me, Thy servant." And she heard a sweet Voice, "My beloved child, do not grieve. In no time thy glory will be enhanced and the angels in Heaven shall love thee."

Rabia was consoled and she returned to her former place. Thenceforward she used to serve her master during the day-time, but the night she spent in prayer and in studying religious books. One midnight her master awoke from his sleep and overheard Rabia muttering something in her room. The poor girl was praying at that solemn hour when all nature is hushed into a sombre silence,—"O my Beloved, Thou knowest that to obey Thy command is my constant desire. How I wish to serve Thee in Thy temple day and night! But Thou hast ordained otherwise. Thou hast made me a slave of another. I am forced to oblige him, and thus I am always late in coming to Thee, my dear Lord." She was thus humbly speaking to God and the master of the house heard it from his room. When his eyes fell upon Rabia, he saw her person encircled by a divine aureole and the whole room illuminated by its resplendence. Her every word spoke of the steady flame of devotion that was burning in her heart. He was stunned and stood agape for a minute. The next moment the idea flashed in his

mind,—"It does not behoove me to engage such a pious and devout person in my service, rather I should serve her with all my might." The following day she was released and her master said to her with proper respect and courtesy, "It will be a great favour to me if you live here and I will serve you as a slave." But Rabia left the place with his permission and engaged herself in stern asceticism.

She spent every minute of the day and night in constant prayer or study of the holy Koran. Sometimes she would come to the place of the saint Hosein Bussorie and discourse with him on spiritual topics. Then she spent some time in a lonely forest engaged exclusively in prayer and meditation, and next lived in the holy precincts of a mosque. Lastly she made a pilgrimage to the holy Mecca and there the last days of her life were spent. She remained a virgin till the end of her life and offered herself, body and soul, in the service of God.

Rabia was practically an illiterate woman, and yet people flocked to her from far and near to kiss the hem of her garment, or hear the sweet words of devotion that fell from her lips. The great seer Hosein once remarked that Rabia had come to acquire superhuman and supersensuous wisdom by dint of her inner illumination, without leaning upon the secular knowledge of the time. He had a profound respect for her, and one day finding her absent in a religious congregation he remained silent. All pressed him to speak, saying it mattered little if an old woman were not present. But he retorted, "I cannot offer to an ant the sherbet which I have prepared for an elephant." One day when asked why she had never married, Rabia replied with humility, "Marriage is related to the body. But where is my body, that I may be bound

in a nuptial tie? This body I have surrendered to God once for all, and now it belongs to Him alone. It is under His command and is engaged in carrying out His mandate."

"How did you make," asked Hosein one day, "such advance in spirituality?" "When I lost all worldly things, then and then only was I able to embrace God," she replied. "What do you know of God?" continued Hosein. She said, "You know Him to be like this or that, but I do not know Him as such. I find Him beyond all these. I would not have worshipped Him if I had not seen Him as clearly as I see you."

One day some people came to Rabia and sought her advice. She asked, "Why do you worship God?" One replied that he prayed to God so that he might not be tormented by the afflictions of hell, and another man said he adored God to enjoy the beauty and happiness of Heaven. "It is only the coward slaves," she said to them with sweet admonition, "who serve their master, being influenced by fear of punishment or prospect of reward. Would not God be worshipped if there existed neither Heaven nor hell? One should really love and adore Him for His sake only."

Rabia's faith in divine dispensation was constant and unwavering. Every turn of events she accepted as the will of her Beloved. "The kind and gracious Providence not only rescues me from a shipwreck when every one else is drowned, but He also takes away the last plank from under my feet, leaving me alone amidst surging waves, when everybody else is saved." Such was her faith and trust in God. Rabia never accepted any presents from the rich, but spent her days in bitter poverty. One day on her sick bed she said to a friend who wished her to

pray for her recovery, "It is the divine will which has sent me the disease, and I cannot run counter to His gracious dispensation."

LOVE ENVIETH NOT

By St. Gregory the Great

It is difficult for one not to envy in another what he desires to obtain; for whatever is received that is temporal, becomes so much the less for each in proportion as it is divided among many; and therefore envy torments the mind of the desirer, because he desires that which another getting either takes away entirely or restricts in quantity. Let him, therefore, who desires to be totally free from the bane of envy, love that inheritance which the number of fellow-heirs does not lessen; which is one to all, and whole to each; which is revealed as so much the more copious as the multitude of those that participate therein is extended. Therefore the lessening of envy is the feeling rising of internal sweetness, and its complete death is the perfect love of eternity. For when the mind is withdrawn from the desire of that object which is divided among a number of receivers, so much the more does it love its neighbor as it less fears its own loss from his advance. And if the mind is perfectly caught up into the love of the heavenly country, it will also be fully established in the love of its neighbor without trace of envy; for when it desires no earthly things there is nothing to contradict its charity towards its neighbors. And what is this charity, save the eye of the mind, which if it is touched by the dust of earthly love, is at once dimmed and cast back from the comprehension of the light within.

THE CITY OF BRAHMAN

Chandogya-Upanishad

Hari Om. There is this city of Brahman (the body), and in it the palace, the small lotus (of the heart), and in it that small ether. Now what exists within that small ether, that is to be sought for, that is to be understood.

And if they should say to him: "Now with regard to that city of Brahman, and the palace in it, i.e., the small lotus of the heart, and the small ether within the heart, what is there within it that deserves to be sought for, or that is to be understood?"

Then he should say: "As large as this ether (all space) is, so large is that ether within the heart. Both Heaven and earth are contained within it, both fire and air, both sun and moon, both lightning and stars; and whatever there is of Him (the Self) here in the world, and whatever is not (whatever has been or will be) all that is contained within it."

And if they should say to him: "If everything that exists is contained in that city of Brahman, all beings and all desires, then what is left of it, when old age reaches it and scatters it, or when it falls to pieces?"

Then he should say: "By the old age of the body, That (the ether or Brahman within it) does not age; by the death of the body That is not killed. That (the Brahman) is the true Brahma-city (not the body). In it all desires are contained. It is the Self, free from sin, free from old age, from death and grief, from hunger and thirst, which desires nothing but what it ought to desire, and imagines nothing but what it ought to imagine. Now as here on earth people follow as they are commanded, and depend on the object which they are attached to, be it a country or a piece of land.

"And as here on earth, whatever has been acquired by exertion, perishes, so perishes whatever is acquired for the next world by sacrifices and other good actions performed on earth. Those who depart from hence without having discovered the Self and those true desires, for them there is no freedom in all the worlds. But those who depart from hence, after having discovered the Self and those true desires, for them there is freedom in all the worlds.

THE ULTIMATE GOAL

From the Letters of Swami Turiyananda

Man is but the instrument and the Lord is the manipulator of it. Blessed is he through whom he gets His work done. Every one has to work in this world, no one can avoid doing it; but for one who works for selfish ends, the work, instead of liberating him, adds fresh bondage. The intelligent man works for Him, breaks through the fetters of work, and enjoys the bliss of *Mukti* (liberation). Not I but He is the agent—this knowledge severs the bonds. And this is the eternal truth. The notion that I am the doer is merely a delusion. For it is difficult to trace where the ego is. If we carefully analyze the ego, it ultimately melts in Him. Our identification with the body, mind and intellect,etc.,is merely a delusion created by nescience; they do not survive till the end. Analysis puts an end to them all. They all go, and there remains only the One Reality from whom all things proceed, in whom they rest, and wherein they merge in the end. That Reality is the Existence—Knowledge—Bliss Absolute, the Witness of the ego-consciousness; and again, it is the Omnipresent Lord who is creating, preserving and destroying the universe, and is yet untouched

by it all. This machine of a universe rests in Him and is working through His power. The ever playful Lord is watching His play and enjoying it.

He only unto whom He unfolds this secret understands it, while others cannot understand it even though they hear of it. They consider themselves apart from Him and come under delusion. This is His Maya. This Maya vanishes if one works surrendering himself unto Him. The doer then understands that he is not the doer, but only an instrument. This is what is called inaction in the midst of action. This is realizing oneself as not doing anything—this is liberation-in-life. It is with a view to enjoy the bliss of this liberation-in-life that the soul takes up a body; otherwise it militates against reason that the eternally free soul can ever come to be born for the purpose of enjoying sense-pleasures. The ultimate goal of human life is the realization of one's being above the body-idea, even though possessed of this body, and realizing this, man attains the consummation of his life. Our sincere prayer to the Lord is that we may through His grace attain to that bliss of liberation-in-life in this very birth; that this life may be our last life, that is to say, that we may not have to take up another body for the fulfillment of any selfish ends; that He may give us in this very life the notion, the conviction, the realization that our life is for Him and for nothing else.

Like can only comprehend like. When you cease to be finite, you become one with the Infinite, you realize this union, this identity. Things that exalt the soul, such as beauty, poetry, music, prayer, devotion,—all assist till we stand in the immediate presence of the Infinite, who shines out from the deeps of the soul.

—*Letters of Plotinus*

THE GIFT OR THE GIVER?

By Sister Daya

There are certain deep emotions of the soul, which cannot be commanded. Love is one; faith is one; humility is one; and thankfulness.

At this season of the year, in our Western Republic, the command goes forth to the heart of man, "Be thankful." And the heart replies: "If throughout the days of the year, I have received humbly both good and ill, the one without pride and the other without bitterness, if I have taken nothing for granted, if even the smallest joy vouchsafed to me has come like a miracle into my life, then on the day of Thanksgiving—equally with all days—every outgoing breath will be a breath of gratitude and every indrawn breath will bring blessing. Otherwise, for all my prayers and efforts on that one day, for all my church-goings and offerings, for all my reviewing of benefits received, I shall remain unwarmed by that suffusion of the soul which men call thankfulness."

None of the great spiritual qualities ever come, or ever can come, through calculation. They are the flowering of the life, and the fragrance of that flowering. They may enter us sometimes like the rush of wings, like the sudden sweep of wind through a forest, but only after the long, loving process of preparation has been undergone, every minute of every hour of every day. We cannot forget God three hundred and sixty-four days in the year and remember Him on the three hundred and sixty-fifth. We must be deep rooted in Him, and it takes time to make roots. The Lord Buddha gives "Right Remembrance" as one of the imperative spiritual practices. Right remembrance of what? Of our real nature and being, of Truth, of that which lies back of this limited,

cabined life of ours. What we are at any moment is the sum of what we have been in all our past moments. We cannot month after month live in careless indifference to the significance of life, we cannot carry around with us a demanding, selfish and ungrateful spirit and then suddenly fill our hearts with the sweet flow of gratitude. It must be a steady flow, fed by the streams of love and true humility. In this way the whole nature of a man will be washed clean and the divine processes will take place in his soul almost without his being aware of them.

The question may arise,—"To whom should we be thankful, and for what should we be thankful?" Here again there can be no calculation and there certainly is no compulsion. That vast, mysterious, impelling Power of the universe, which men name according to their convictions, is not dependent on our gratitude. "All-pervading is the great Tao," writes Lao-tze, the Chinese mystic and philosopher. "It may be found on the left hand and on the right. All things depend on it for their production, which it gives to them, not one refusing obedience to it. When its work is accomplished, it does not claim the name of having done it. It clothes all things as with a garment, and makes no assumption of being their Lord." Yet although the rain of its giving may fall equally on the just and on the unjust, on the thankful and on the thankless, all do not equally receive it. The very act of ingratitude closes the doors of the inner being, not only against the gifts, but against the Giver, while, on the other hand, the mellow, surrendered, grateful heart invites the miracle of divine communion.

Here some one may ask, "What of the man who believes not, what of him? If he looks upon this universe

as a mechanical play of blind forces, how can he feel thankfulness, or to what should he direct his thanks should they arise?" Again, there is no "should." If a man believes or disbelieves, the result is written in his own soul, for as our vision contracts,so does our world and the scope of our happiness.

"I cannot give thanks," another may cry, "for there is but One, and I am That. How can I give thanks to Myself?" When we realize that oneness to the extent that we now realize our separation, not only from That but from all other things and beings,—when we know ourselves to be That with the same surety as we now feel ourselves to be "this," then argument will die on our lips and gratitude will be lost in union. Till then, however, let us glorify our sense of separation by thankfulness and love and worship, instead of degrading it by envy, greed and selfishness. The real world is a world of being. The lover loves, he does not just talk about it. In fact the more he loves the less he talks. Thankfulness is not dependent on any system of philosophy. Where faith, love and worship are, it is. And what draws it forth? We are told each year to give thanks because of the blessings of God,—prosperity, peace, health, wealth and all abundance. To give thanks, perhaps, that we are not as other men, as other nations. Does this mean that if we were bleeding with China, or suffering with India or bearing the burden of want of some of the other peoples that we would not have any cause for Thanksgiving? That some gifts from the hand of the Giver are blessed and some are cursed?

Pain, loneliness, poverty, struggle, should we then seek to throw these back into the face of the Giver, or have they, too, their meaning and blessing? According

to our vision of happiness we shall answer this question. If happiness for us is centred in self, then all that enhances bodily comfort, all that tends to individual satisfaction, irrespective of the well-being of others, will be for us fulfillment; if, however, our happiness lies in a loosening of the bonds of self, in surrender to the Supreme Source, in a merging of our little life with the Great Life, then the sword of pain, severing all that binds us to the small, the limited, the finite,—cutting away everything but God—will be for us the divine stroke, and even when we know not its purpose, still that purpose will be revealed in our life as time goes on. In spite of ourselves we shall be chiseled into the likeness of the Ideal.

A good, wise and loving mother disciplines her children, seeing past their immediate material happiness to a more profound well-being. So the Divine, Infinite Mother sometimes denies us temporary human happiness, lest we should rest in that, never knowing the bliss, the marvel, the eternal beatitude which lies waiting for us just beyond the barriers of self. It is not love but attachment that binds us to earth, and it is not because of love but because of our attachments that we suffer. A story is told of the Lord Sri Krishna, which seen in this light glows with a deep meaning. In company with his disciple Arjuna, so the story runs, the Lord went on a visit to a king who was also a disciple of his. Arrived at the court, he was given gracious welcome by the king's representatives, was offered gifts, and entertainment by them, but always came word from the king himself, that he regretted that he could not receive the Lord in person, but he was detained by matters of the state, occupied with ambassadors of foreign countries, therefore his master would have to excuse his absence. Finally Sri

Krishna and Arjuna left, still without a glimpse of their royal host, but on leaving Sri Krishna sent this message: "Say to his Majesty that as a blessing I wish for him more riches, more honor, more power."

On their homeward way, the Lord and his disciple stopped for a day or so, deep in the forest at the hut of a very poor devotee, who loved the Lord with his whole heart, or nearly with his whole heart, and served Him and sacrificed for Him in every way in order to make Him happy and comfortable during his visit.

Now there were only two attachments in the world that held this man from complete devotion to the Ideal, and these were an attachment for his son, his one comrade, the source of his earthly happiness, and attachment for his cow, the source of his nourishment. Therefore, when on leaving, the Blessed Lord wished for him that he should lose his son and his cow, Arjuna burst forth in anger. "How is it, Master," he cried, "that that king who treated you with disrespect, who put you, his spiritual teacher, aside for other concerns, is blessed by your prayer, with more wealth and enjoyment, while this poor man, so loving, so faithful, you condemn to the loss of the two things in the world that are dear to him?" Smilingly Sri Krishna answered, "My son, I wished for the king more of the earthly treasures, because only by being surfeited with them will he learn their true nature and value, while for this devoted soul I wished the loss of son and cow because these alone keep his heart from being given wholly to God."

In some form or other each one of us possesses a son and a cow, and to each one in time the Lord comes with his liberating blessing which we, in our blindness, call pain. Also at some time or other we are, as it were,

kings who turn away from the Lord at the call of the world, and the increased wealth and power which He bestows upon us, we call happiness.

Once again you will ask: "Should we not then, give thanks for the beauty around us, for the care that enfolds even this little body of ours? Should we glorify only the dark and the painful, and Puritan-like, turn our backs on that which seems to us so full of brightness and joy?" We should cease to analyze the gifts and look to the Giver, then all that comes to us will bring blessing. Then we shall not be concerned so much with what we are receiving as what we are capable of offering. Our whole being will flow to that radiant Source in one great river of consecration. "They who God's face can understand feel not the motions of His hand." Was it not this spirit which moved the heart of Christ, the heart of Buddha, which inspired St. Francis and armed Joan of Arc with undying faith and courage? Possessed with that consciousness do we cling to pleasure and shrink from pain, or contrariwise, delight in pain or shun the pleasant? No, because binding ourselves to that One, nothing in this world can draw us aside, seeing only that One, no outer glamour can ever again blind us, for all will shine with the light of the divine countenance. Equal then to us will be pleasure and pain, and we shall receive with grateful heart, with unspeakable love and yearning all that that One deems best to give us, finding joy in suffering, life in death, and freedom in surrender.

Every law of the universe has but one end,—the union of the soul with God. Some are led by joy, some are led by sorrow, but ultimately all come to the great Meeting-Place where the gifts fade away before the Giver, and all limits of the heart are lost in love.

REPORT

Another milestone was passed by the Vedanta Centre of Boston when on October 2nd, Swami Paramananda dedicated its beautiful new home at 875 Beacon Street, at three impressive Services. The chapel was filled to over-flowing with friends old and new, and all expressed themselves delighted with the change brought about by the necessities of the work. Flowers and music helped to create a lovely atmosphere which the Swami sanctified by his words of dedication. The music was contributed by two distinguished artists, old friends of the work,—Mrs. William Y. Allen and Miss Florence Colby. The new home is admirably situated and well adapted in every way to the requirements of the Centre, and the Swami's prayer is that it will prove to be for many hearts a sanctuary and a blessing.

The Thursday following the dedication, a reception was held at the Centre, a true house-warming with the Swami as the presiding spirit. Many came, eager to greet him and to express their pleasure in the new abode. The evening was one of inspiration and happiness.

Travelling,as he does,between his eastern and western Centres, the Swami is able to remain but a short time in either place, and that time is crowded with many activities. This present sojourn in Boston has been no exception. The process of moving from one house to another, Services, Classes, interviews, as well as a two days trip to New York have kept the Swami occupied every moment. He hopes to be back in California about November first.

During the months of September and October, the Ananda-Ashrama was without the presence of Swami Paramananda who had been called to his Boston Centre. The work, however, went on as usual with two Sunday Services and three week-day Classes.

DEC 2 9 1927

VOL. XVI NUMBER 10

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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

December, 1927

THE CHRIST IDEAL

Issued by

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CHRISTMAS SUGGESTIONS

ASHRAMA ARTS AND CRAFTS DEPT.

HAND WEAVING:—Scarfs, bags, linen towels, runners, dress goods, etc. LEATHER WORK:—Book covers, etc. Metal or hand-illumined book-marks and poems of Swami Paramananda. INCENSE, "Breath of the California Mts." PURE ASHRAMA HONEY, in glass jars or sealed for shipment.

We would also suggest that a subscription to "THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST," or any one of the Swami's books, especially his poems or his "BOOK OF DAILY THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS" makes a thoughtful and valued gift.

Subscribers, notice! Now is the time to renew your subscription to the "Message of the East."

MESSAGE OF THE EAST

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

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

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LOWLY JESUS

By Swami Paramananda

Jesus, most tender!
I would not call Thee such, Thou
majestic Being;
But once Thou didst reveal to me
a strange mystery:
I saw Thee, not in Thy dazzling
glory,
But as a lowly Being intent on a
holy mission.
Thou didst not stop to receive
pompous worship and loud
prayers of men,—
I saw Thee stoop and lift from
the dust a stricken, discarded
life, to revive and redeem.
O Thou Holy Compassion,
Love embodied,
I know Thee now,
I love Thee now;
My heart is full in adoration.
I knew Thee not in Thy dazzling glory.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.—*Jesus the Christ*

Love conquers all things; let us yield to love.—*Virgil*

The Son of God, the Eternal Word in the Father, who is the glance, or brightness, and the power of the light eternity, must become man and be born in you, if you will know God: otherwise you are in the dark stable and go about groping.—*Jacob Boehme*

A house may be dark, but it is not the fault of the sun. A soul may be dark, but it is not because the Light of the World does not shed beams abroad.—*Armory*

Not only breathe in the encompassing air, but also think the thoughts of the all-surrounding Mind. For this intelligent Power is no less diffused and pervasive for him who can apprehend it, than is the air for him who is able to breathe it.—*Marcus Aurelius*

I am not the first Buddha who came upon earth, nor shall I be the last. In due time another Buddha will arise in the world, a Holy One, a supremely enlightened One, endowed with wisdom in conduct, auspicious, knowing the universe, an incomparable leader of men, a master of angels and mortals. He will reveal to you the same eternal truths which I have taught you. He will preach his religion glorious in its origin, glorious at the climax, and glorious at the goal, in the spirit and in the letter. He will proclaim a religious life, wholly perfect and pure; such as I now proclaim.—*Gautama Buddha*

THE CHRIST IDEAL

By Swami Paramananda

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

What is given here by Hierocles in many words can be summed up simply in this way,—that the import of a spiritual personage, or one whom we call a divine Incarnation, is that he keeps his balance by perpetually and constantly holding fast to his ideal, for it requires balance for any one to hold his gaze fixed on an ideal. Also by his life he shows the world-weary, those who are struggling, failing and faltering, how by following his example they may become like unto him. Such a person naturally is called a hero, because it requires more than ordinary strength of character, of determination, to accomplish this.

"For the soul of Christ received grace in such a manner that from it, in a measure, grace overfloweth upon others. . . . Inasmuch, also, as he is man, it belongs to

him to join men to God, by showing the precepts and gifts of God to men and making satisfaction and intercession in men's behalf. And hence he is most truly called mediator as man." So writes Thomas Aquinas. Humanity must have some concrete point of contact with the abstract Absolute and this contact we find in divine personages—Incarnations or Avatars, as in India these manifestations of the personal aspect of Divinity are called. God becomes man that man may find his way back to Godhead. That is the summary of the whole theme. India of course has its own way of looking on it. Every nation has an ideal of a Saviour whom it worships, and it is only when we believe in the God of tradition that we feel that there can be too many Saviours, too many gods.

Fundamentally it is one Spirit—one indivisible, absolute, all-loving Spirit; but that One becomes many, takes on varying aspects and attributes from time to time, from age to age, in order to fill our need. Back of it all, however, is One, and only One. There is no war between the spirit that manifested through Christ and the spirit that manifested through Buddha, St. Francis, or even lesser men. There can be no war between them, but when we fail to understand them we find tremendous opportunity for conflict and fanaticism.

No man upon this earth can serve his ideal truly who has any conflict concerning it, any misconception about it. Christ-ideal is universal and not confined merely to the people who profess Christianity. It is a pure ideal, it is pure air which we breathe from the atmosphere, and no one has any special claim on it except the man who has the capacity for inhaling it and deriving benefit through it.

The pure Spirit that comes down to us, that descends

upon us, is One, and the only way we find our contact with It is by following the ideal. This does not mean following the letter, though we may manifest the letter in some definite form in our life, by the practice of the Christ-ideal. We must practise the Christ-ideal in order to become holy. When we say "become holy" it may frighten people as it has frightened them through the ages. Holiness has become so abstract for men, so removed from their every day life and living that they think that it means becoming something different from what they are, something abnormal or super-normal. That is not the meaning of it. Holiness is to teach us the normal, simple way of life, the balanced way of living.

My conception of the divine ideal is this,—perfect balance between humanity and Divinity. One who manifests this, does not degrade humanity, but raises the standard of humanity to such a point that it balances up with the divine conception. Such a one becomes so exalted that he lifts his consciousness to the plane of Divinity without trying to drag Divinity down to his plane. It is something we need in this age. People have said again and over again that this is not the age for the Christ-ideal, for the ideal of non-resistance, that it is not practical. If it was ever practical, it will have to be made practical to-day, because we need it more than we have ever needed it. We have made overwhelming advancement along the line of material science, we are producing things which can be of immense value to us, we are evolving power, but though this may be a great blessing to us, it should be balanced with the wisdom to direct that power. Man is curious, he seeks to possess all magic, to uncover all secrets, and to this end he seeks power, but often it comes with such stupendous force that unless

he knows how to control it, it may crush him. That is the danger we are facing. We are unlocking the secret chambers of great forces. See what has happened in just a few years,—electricity, radio, telegraphy, flying, things which were not recognised as sane facts a few years ago, which were not believed even among men of science. We may well boast of these achievements if we can base them on a spiritual foundation, otherwise they may prove disastrous, as scientific discovery proved at the time of the war. You may say it was not disastrous, it was beneficial, it helped to destroy our enemies. Also it helped us to destroy ourselves. "Resist not evil, but same do ye overcome by good." That would be the answer of Christ. Another voice, the voice of the Buddha, speaking of practical idealism, tells us with the same certainty and clearness, "Hatred, my friends, is never conquered by hatred, it is always conquered by love. This is an eternal rule." No man has ever been able to shift it, improve upon it or change it; it is a divine principle. Hatred is never conquered by hatred, it is conquered only by love—the positive force. This is truly practical. Our way, however, is to scheme and destroy, thereby diminishing our power of lifting ourselves to a higher grade of consciousness, of rising to our ideal, instead of seeking to drag it down.

There is a strange tendency in the human mind. We all love ideals but when we fail to realize them, we try to make a compromise. We saw this at the time of the war when eminent men, men of intellectual achievement, preached many sermons in an effort to give an explanation, a justification of war. There were those who even drew a picture of a militant Christ and gave a warlike interpretation to some of his sayings, such as, "I come

not to bring peace but a sword." In various places He used this expression; also He cursed the fig tree, and people can easily interpret these things according to their taste. It was, however, what Christ stood for, the example, the ideal that was made manifest through His life and action, which reveal His spirit. How did He treat His adversaries? How did He meet His problems? That is what gives the whole secret, and that is the practical part of His teaching, the part we can take and apply. It gives the idealism we need to-day to improve our own situation and destiny.

The life of man is not so different now from what it was two thousand or four thousand years ago. It is the same consciousness that inhabits human flesh, and the same mind which meets the same big problems. We have the same capacity, the same brain, the same heart and through these we can again expand our consciousness and rise to meet the divine Source. The mission of a great personage, Christ for instance, is to inspire men for Divinity. By Christ I do not mean only the man Jesus of Nazareth, I mean Christ as an Office, or as One who brings redemption to the world, and do not be shocked if I say that you also can be a Christ. Christ would not be shocked. On the contrary, He came that men might attain Christhood. As we read from that mystic source, he who constantly thinks of the Creator, who constantly reflects the light that is shed upon him by the Creator, becomes the Mediator. You may say, it is not possible for us, we have to think of other things. We are however, not asked to think of this exclusively, that would be impossible for us, it is for our own good we need to think of it and there are times when we can. What tree ever lives when it is severed from the root? It is the

mission of Christ to show man that he cannot live, he cannot flourish, he cannot be successful, he cannot be happy, or make any one else happy, he cannot have peace in his heart or bring any peace to others, if he is severed from his source, the root of his life. Very simply is this acted, very simply is this lived in the life of Christ.

It is the example which teaches us more than the precept. Thus to-day we should question absolutely the sanity, the practical wisdom of following the path of non-resistance of evil, if it were not for the Christ example. If I were to tell you that you must not resist evil at all, it might be wrong advice. The practical working hypothesis is to resist less and less. We can minimize evil until we come to a point where evil cannot touch us. The Gita tells us that man can make his character assume the character of the lotus which lives in water but is not wet by the water. So can we live in the world and not be touched by the world, nor be wounded by the world. How may we do this? Not by thinking on our sorrow, not by dwelling on our imperfections or on the things that are constantly surrounding us, but by connecting ourselves with something that is higher, greater, more potent, more exalted,—by cultivating the upward gaze. That is what the Christ-ideal teaches in all circumstances.

Here is what a mystic soul says—I have not the exact words, but this is the spirit: "If it is for me to crawl, I will crawl contentedly, if it is for me to fly, I will fly with the same spirit and fervor, but let me always remember never to be unhappy under any condition." This is a wonderful lesson in life. It is not for us to think whether a gust of wind is going to throw us down and another is going to pull us up, whether the sun is going to smile on us or is going to frown, but to learn this lesson

so that we can stand up and face everything, knowing that we possess that which is unalterable. We have within us the very divine grace, that grace which the mystic soul speaks of, and because of that we can smile, because of that we can endure all that may try to thwart us. Such faith, such heroic spirit is needful.

In the Upanishads, the great books of Hindu wisdom, we have a saying, that this great Spirit can never be attained by the weak, by the doubting mind, by those who are failing and faltering, but only by the strong of soul. When we say, "Oh, this is too much for us to do; it is only possible for a Christ;" we do injustice to the very lesson that Christ sets before us. Did he come with manifest pomp and glory to prove that He was not of this earth? No. He was more human than we are sometimes. More human in His sympathy, in His feeling, in his bearing—humble, lowly, with no ostentation, walking with man, feeling for man, sometimes choosing the poorest of the poor, the discarded people whom we would not associate with, seeking them out as His companions. He was so intensely human, so intensely natural and simple. How much more proof do we need of His divine nature? That was the great lesson He brought us, that no matter how human we may be, how imperfect we may seem, there is a divine grace for us, and if we touch that divine grace we shall be healed.

Christ was divine. So are you. Have you not the same origin? Did He not say, be perfect as your Father which is in Heaven? You may think such notions are fancies but here we find all the great teachers are in one accord. They do not come and say, "Fall at my feet and worship me." They rather set the example, saying by their lives, "Be a servant, be lowly,—blessed are the low-

ly, blessed are the peace-makers, blessed are the lovers, those who can forgive indefinitely, they shall inherit the Kingdom of Heaven." Here is our choice. Do we want to inherit the kingdom of earth, or is there room in our consciousness for the other Kingdom? Do we believe in that and crave for it, or do we speak of it glibly as of something abstract or as a fancy, like the fairy tales we tell to children? If we do crave for it from the depths of our being, then we can transcend all limitations. It does not require artificial means, pomp or glory. It rather requires of us simplicity, directness, guilelessness, purity of heart, and to my mind purity of heart in its spiritual significance means that heart whch holds the image of truth, the image of God, without which there is no purity, there can be none. This means discarding all thoughts which are of the nature of vanity, jealousy, anger, worry or calculation. It means making a shrine in our hearts for the divine manifestation, for the indwelling of that great Being.

Spirituality is very practical, intensely practical, but we will not believe this, therefore we do not follow it. People who do believe, they follow it, and they realize something through it; they realize power—power which we are craving for—power to act, power to think, power to believe, power to be happy, and to make other people happy. We live in a vague world of desire, pomp and vanity. They live in a definite world. They make God their foundation. "I will not step one step anywhere unless Thou art with me." That is the stand they take. Sometimes children who are very fond of their parents say to father or mother,"I will not go out without you, I am afraid to go without you," and see how tenderly, how firmly the stronger hand holds the

child. Same way it is with the devotees, the spiritually minded personages. A wonderful, trustful surrendered aspect is quickened within them, not only some times, but at all times, and it transforms their life. They become like unto those examples we read of, Christ, Buddha, St. Francis, Sri Ramakrishna,—all-compassionate, all-loving. How can we say His grace is all-loving and all-compassionate until we see His spirit incarnate in flesh? A person who is really expressing that love, people say of him, "He is like Christ, so loving, so forgiving, so tender, so radiant." It is the greatest tribute one man can pay to another.

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

People often ask in what way the Vedanta in its universal form differs from this concept. Vedanta assumes a universal form with this idea that there are many, many finite expressions, each expression filling a definite purpose and fulfilling a definite need of humanity. All

these expressions are equally true—there is no conflict. Unity in variety, that is the greatest thing to remember at all times. You may wonder why I speak of this in connection with the Christ-ideal. Man cannot follow that ideal if he merely takes the name of Christ, sings supplications and passes as a Christian in name. He may think he is doing his duty because he is following his particular course and faith rather than the course and faith of others, but here is a danger-point. What the world needs to-day is a great tolerance—I think every one feels that—and we want to be able to do our share by holding the bigger thought, the thought which brings blending harmony.

Christ and Buddha,—in order to give our worship to them we need to follow their fundamental spirit, to become like unto them. The model is there and the real artist, the real worker, the real devotee, the really practical man does not waste his time; but goes to work and tries to produce something like unto that model. This to my mind, is the significance of the practice of the Christ-ideal. The life and example of the great Incarnate Spirits form a definite bridge over the chasm of finite and infinite, and as we learn to partake of their divine attributes, of humility, trust in the Divine, forgiveness and endurance, maintaining ever a lovingness of spirit which neither human nor superhuman experience can alter, by these means we find our way out of endless perplexities and are established in the unchanging and unbounded divine life.

The end of life is to be like unto God; and the soul following God will be like unto Him; He being the beginning, middle, and end of all things.—*Socrates*

FRIENDS IN RELIGION

A Letter From China

The following letter, appearing with a commentary, in "The Eastern Buddhist," published at Kyoto, Japan, seems to illuminate the missionary field with a clear ray of light. Who can measure the far-reaching influence of one such Christ-like, Buddha-like attempt at unity and mutual understanding? "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte!" said Jesus, as if foreseeing what would be done in His name. To lead a man through love, brotherhood, wisdom and sympathy to the heights of his own particular faith is paramount to leading him to Christ—the eternal Spirit within. "Truth is one, men call it by various names." He who understands the meaning of that great utterance and works with that understanding is the true missionary. This letter from China is a glowing Christmas message of *Peace on earth good will towards men.*

"A Christian Brotherhood was established in Nanking five years ago by the Reverend K. L. Reichelt, a Norwegian missionary, who had been engaged in various kinds of missionary work in different parts of China for the last twenty-five years, including a professor in theology. Reverend K. L. Reichelt has always had a painful feeling of the lack of deeper understanding and sympathy towards Buddhism and Buddhists on the part of the Christian missionaries just as he felt that it was very difficult for the Buddhists to come to the state where they could really understand and appreciate the deepest meaning of Christianity. So he started this remarkable home in Nanking, the famous old city, through which so many thousand pilgrims pass on their way to the holy

mountains and the illustrious monasteries; and the work has proved a success, for not less than five thousand Buddhists and Taoists have visited the place and stayed there for days, weeks, or months, studying Christianity, taking part in the common worship centred around Jesus Christ, of whom a very beautiful statue of white, precious limestone is placed on a purely Chinese altar in the main Temple hall.

"What is the secret of this success? The external arrangements so fittingly laid up to the common structure of Chinese temple life and mode of worship does of course partly account for this. The vegetarian food, the temple bell, the fine hangings and scrolls with deep and powerful sayings from the Mahayana sutras and the New Testament—all serve to fill the whole place with a refined, religious atmosphere indigenous to the religious soul of China. But the main reason is another. The main reason for this success is the fact that all sincere religious people who come there are met with as *Tao-yu*, that is, as friends in religion. At Ching-feng Shan, the Illuminating Wind Mountain, the significant and beautiful name taken from the Nestorian monument, the Christians acknowledge the fact that in spite of all differences there exists a strong and precious common platform on which all enlightened and sincere religious people can meet and communicate in holy communion for mutual help and blessing, and that common platform, that wonderful sanctuary in the religious realm, is the *Tao*, the *Logos*, the all-embracing, wonderful *Dharma*.

"As we all know, the name given to Jesus Christ in the Gospel of St. John, is *Logos*, i. e., *Tao*. Very fittingly the word over the altar in the temple hall of the Ching-feng Shan is the famous passage from the first verse of

the first chapter of St. John's Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word." The symbol carried by all who have joined the Brotherhood is also very significant. It is a silver cross on the lotus. The cross and the lotus must come together again, because they both originate in the *Tao*.

THE CANTICLE OF THE SUN

St. Francis of Assisi

O Most High, Almighty, good Lord God, to thee belong praise, glory, honor, and all blessing.

Praised be my Lord God, with all his creatures, and specially our brother, the sun, who brings us the day and who brings us the light; fair is he, and he shines with a very great splendor. O Lord, he signifies to us thee!

Praised be my Lord for our brother, the wind, and for the stars, the which he has set clear and lovely in heaven.

Praised be my Lord for our brother, the wind, and for air and clouds, calms and all weather, by which thou upholdest life in all creatures.

Praised be my Lord for our sister water, who is very serviceable to us, and humble and precious and clean.

Praised be my Lord for our brother fire, through whom thou givest us light in the darkness; and he is bright and pleasant, and very mighty and strong.

Praised be my Lord for our mother the earth, the which doth sustain us and keep us, and bringeth forth divers fruits, and flowers of many colors, and grass.

Praised be my Lord for all those who pardon one another for love's sake, and who endure weakness and tribulation; blessed are they who peacefully shall endure, for thou, O Most High, wilt give them a crown.

Praised be my Lord for our sister the death of the

body, from which no man escapeth. Woe to him who dieth in mortal sin. Blessed are those who die in thy most holy will, for the second death shall have no power to do them harm. Praise ye and bless the Lord, and give thanks to him and serve him with great humility.

(The last stanza in praise of death, was added to the poem on the day St. Francis left the world, October 4th, 1225.)

What profit Scriptures, law books, reading of pious stories, bulky tomes of lore, and the medley of works and rites that win for reward lodging in a hut in Paradise? Save the entrance into the abode of bliss in the soul, which is like Time's fire sweeping away the works that burden life with sorrow, all is but trafficker's craft.

O mother Earth, father Wind, friend Sunshine, kinsman Water, brother Sky· for the last time I clasp my hands in reverence before you. The might of all error is overthrown in me by the stainless, radiant knowledge from the rich store of good works born of your comradeship, and I sink into the Supernal Spirit.

—*Vemana (a Hindu philosopher)*

We walked in so pure and bright a light, gilding the withered grass and leaves, so softly and serenely bright, I thought I had never bathed in such a golden flood, without a ripple or murmur in it. The west side of every wood or rising ground gleamed like the boundary of Elysium, and the sun on our backs seemed like a gentle herdsman driving us home at evening. So we saunter towards the Holy Land, till, one day, the sun shall shine more brightly than ever he has done, shall perchance shine into our minds and hearts, and light up our whole lives with a great awakening light, as warm and serene and golden as on a bankside in autumn.—*Thoreau.*

SWAMI SARADANANDA

By the Editor of the "Prabuddha Bharata"

As has already been recorded in these pages, Swami Saradananda, Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, passed out of this physical existence at half past two in the morning, on Friday, the 19th of August, at the age of sixty-three. The following appreciation was compiled from the review of his life which appeared in the Vedanta publication, "*Prabuddha Bharata.*"

Swami Saradananda or Saratchandra Chakravarti, as he was known before he renounced the world, came of a pious Brahmin family of Calcutta. As a young student he was a member of a Brahmo Association started under the inspiration of Keshub Chandra Sen, and through that he came to learn of Sri Ramakrishna. One afternoon in October 1883, when the Association was holding its anniversary festival at the Dakshineswar Temple, he went with a cousin to pay a visit to Sri Ramakrishna in his room. . . . Sarat felt deeply attracted by the Master and became a frequent visitor at Dakshineswar; and soon became one of his staunch followers. When he first visited Sri Ramakrishna he was a student of the St. Xavier's College, Calcutta, . . . After passing the examination, he joined the Medical College. But on the passing away of their Master, he was persuaded by Swami Vivekananda, then known as Narendranath, to renounce the world along with a few other young disciples, and joined what has now become known as the Ramakrishna Order of monks. . .

At Baranagore where the first monastery of the Order was situated, strenuous and wonderful days of *tapasya* (spiritual discipline) and divine ecstasy were spent by the monks. Their whole heart was set on God.

Narendranath often spoke highly of Sarat's meditation and spiritual fervour. But even this hard *tapasya* did not satisfy the monks and the life of wandering soon lured them into the open road. After visiting Puri, Swami Saradananda left Calcutta and started on a pilgrimage to the Himalayas. He visited Kedernath and Badrinarayan and came to Almora. Those were days of great hardship and *tapasya*. He also passed some time at Hrishikesh practising severe Sadhana. After that he returned to the Baranagore monastery. He did not live there long before he was called by Swami Vivekananda in 1895 to join him in London.

Swami Saradananda reached London in April. After some time, at the earnest request of the Vedanta students of America, Swami Vivekananda sent him to New York. His sweet and gentle personality and his masterly exposition of the Vedanta philosophy proved at once attractive. He was invited to be one of the teachers in the Greenacre Conference of Comparative Religions, and there lectured on Vedanta and held classes on the Yoga systems. After the close of the sessions, he lectured in Brooklyn, New York and Boston. At the Brooklyn Ethical Association he lectured on the Ethical Ideas of the Hindus. Everywhere he made friends and won staunch followers for the cause of Vedanta. He finally settled down in New York to carry on the Vedanta work in an organized way. He also taught at the Cambridge conferences. "In Cambridge the classes in the Vedanta Philosophy, constituting a single feature in the broad field of comparative study outlined for the Cambridge conferences, attracted large and intelligent audiences, in part made up of professors and students of the Harvard University." . . . Just at this time when he was at the height of his usefulness in Amer-

ica, Swami Vivekananda recalled him to India to help him in organizing the monastery at Belur. He reached India in early February, 1898, and devoted himself to the duties for which he was called, and became the Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, which he continued to be to his dying day. . . .

The thought of Swami Saradananda invariably brings to our mind the picture of the ideal man as variously depicted in the Gita. He was the perfect *Sthita-pragna*, the man of steady wisdom. He was the ideal devotee of whom it has been said: "He who has no enemy and is friendly and compassionate towards all, who is free from the feelings of 'me' and 'mine;' even-minded in pleasure and pain, forbearing, ever content and steady in meditation, self-controlled, possessed of firm conviction, with mind and intellect fixed on Me,—he who is thus devoted to Me, is dear to Me." Swami Saradananda was indeed dear to the Lord, and his soul was fragrant with all the graces enumerated of the Lord's beloved. To those who knew him intimately, he seemed almost perfect with his deep spirituality, intellectual acumen and above all his wonderful character. He was equally great in the graces of the head, hand and heart. This unique synthesis was the main reason which, apart from his intense spirituality, made him a centre of irresistable attraction. . . .

It is said that during the early days of his discipleship Sri Ramakrishna once asked him how he liked to realize God and what divine visions he liked to see in meditation. The Swami replied: "I do not want to see any particular form of God in meditation, I want to see Him manifested in all creatures of the world. I do not like visions." The Master said with a smile: "That is the last word about spiritual attainment. You cannot have it all at

once." "But I won't be satisfied with anything short of that," replied the disciple, "I shall trudge on in the path of religious practice till that blessed state arrives." We have reasons to infer that that blessed state did arrive to him. In dedicating his little book, *Bharate Sakti-puja* the Swami himself admits that he had realized the special presence of the Divine Mother in all womankind.

A characteristic habit of the Swami was his aptitude for *tapasya*. Contemplation and meditation were constant and natural with him. In the beginning of his Indian work he used to meditate whole nights without the least sense of fatigue; and he said that unless one kept intimate relations with God, one was likely to lose oneself in one's activities. All his time was taken up by either work or Sadhana (spiritual practice). Even during the last years when his health broke down, he kept up this habit and in spite of doctor's warning, spent long hours in meditation. This *tapasya* made all his actions perfect. To his love every life that came in touch with him bears testimony. It was like cool moonlight in a summer night. There was no demonstrativeness in it, it was silently potent and deep. It was not confined to the members of the monastic Order and his intimate acquaintances, but was extended to all who even casually approached. All erring individuals found shelter under his great love. Many were the occasions when the Swami sat by the bed-side of the sick members of the Math, patiently nursing them hour after hour, and his affectionate touch and sweet words lightened their suffering. Once when a servant of the monastery fell ill, he spent the whole night fanning him. He had entered the room of the patient after dark so that he might not discover his identity and feel embarrassed.

His humility never knew bounds. He was great in every respect in spirituality, intellect and achievements. But it was an unconscious greatness. There was never a touch of superiority in his behaviour with others. A man of more perfect self-control was scarcely to be seen. His steadiness and mental poise were marvellous. And once Swami Vivekananda having teased him variously and long is said to have declared that Sarat had "the blood of fish" in his veins and could never be made angry. . . . He never judged anyone or anything without considering all sides. He never listened to slanders. About this he himself observed that he was guided by the behest of Swami Vivekananda who had asked him to allow slanders to enter his one ear only to throw them out by the other. The story of his feeling heart can never be ended. The Ramakrishna Mission usually tries very promptly to take the field whenever there is famine, flood, epidemic, etc., and its selfless and efficient relief-activities are well known. Though Swami Saradananda could not personally go to the field of action, his heart would shed tears of blood at the suffering of the people.

The Swami's intellectual accomplishments were not of a mean order. He was possessed of deep scriptural scholarship and was an author of great repute. Besides a few English works and a Bengali booklet, he has left behind a masterly exposition of the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna in five volumes. This is certainly the greatest and most authoritative work on Sri Ramakrishna. He did not leave the narrative completed. The passing of the Holy Mother and Swami Brahmananda seemed to paralyse his activity and he gradually withdrew himself into meditative seclusion.

His last great act was the calling of the first Conven-

tion of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, which was held in April, 1926. But it is a by-product of the Convention which was perhaps the most important of its results,—the appointment of a Working Committee for the control and conduct of the entire activities of the Organization. After that he did not take much active part in its operations. The call of the undifferentiated Transcendental was sounding clearer and clearer in his ear. He became yet more meditative and at last the fateful August 6th arrived. He was sitting in his room at 8:30 p. m., prepared to come down stairs to meet the assembled devotees, when he suddenly felt faint, lay down on his bed and gradually lapsed into unconsciousness. Doctors were hastily called in; they declared that it was a case of apoplexy. Devotees flocked from all parts of India to have a last look at the beloved Swami. On Thursday, the 18th August, he got fever and his temperature rose to 105. The doctors declared the case hopeless. Next day at 2 a. m. the attendants felt that the last moment was imminent, called on the devotees and chanted the holy name of Sri Ramakrishna. At 2:30 a. m. the immortal Spirit left its mortal tenement and attained its pristine glory. At noon the remains were taken to the Belur Math and cremated there.

In this world we must not become attached to anything—not even things the most innocent, for they fail us at the moment when we are least expecting it. The eternal alone can satisfy us. —*Sainte Therese of Lisieux*

Every man can build a chapel in his breast, himself the priest, his heart the sacrifice, and the earth he treads on, the altar.—*Jeremy Taylor*

THE DIVINE BIRTH WITHIN

Extract from Sermon by John Tauler

He, therefore, who desires to commune more and more with himself; and to find himself in his Source, in God, and to be conscious of God in his heart (which is conformed to God and inclines to Him, and cleaves to God, as a ray to the sun). . . . must turn away from all transitory things, and gather up the powers of his mind, and commune with himself and pass over out of self into God who is present within him, in the innermost parts of his spirit, wherein are the three highest powers of the soul, that there he may be united with and become one spirit with God; and there God will work in him. His memory will be made fruitful, his understanding will be transfigured, his will inflamed and inebriated with Divine Love. God Himself becomes the Food of his spirit, the Life of his soul, and the Preserver and Guardian of his body.

Therefore at all times we ought to commune with the image or the ground of our souls, where the three powers of our souls are one with God, that we may be united with God, poor in spirit, soul and body, fervent and communing with God with all our powers, so that we may begin and end all our works with a pure intention to the glory of God. . . Thus we must remain empty, bare and dead to all around us, that all the powers of our souls may continue in the place appointed for them,and our wills,desires and intentions may be obedient to God in all things, that God may work with us according to His dear will. Then man will be lifted up in himself by God above all powers into the wilderness of the Godhead, his spirit will sink deep in the Divine Union, and his whole being will be saturated with the Divine Being, so that the Divine Birth will take place without let or hindrance in

our spirits, in our souls, and also spiritually in our bodies, from the gifts which break forth and overflow from soul and spirit into the body.

A NEW LIGHT ON THE "IDYLS"

By Mildred Phillips

In order to understand the inner spiritual meaning of "The Idyls of the King" it is necessary to have clearly in mind at the outset, the pattern of the fabric of these really great poems. Those who find in Tennyson's "Idyls" only charming romances and thrilling tales of the heroism of an older time, miss an inner significance of the stirring traditions, and it is equally a mistake to consider them wholly legendary. There was a real King Arthur who ruled Britain about 500 A. D. and who was the most enlightened ruler of his time. Under him the people prospered and as an aid in maintaining order and justice in his realm he founded an Order of the Knights of the Round Table. Many tales of the heroic deeds of these knights were handed down and after many years had passed, as in all such cases, it became impossible to sift the small grains of fact from the chaff of legend. The stories that have been preserved have been invested by Tennyson with an inner meaning and through them he weaves a vivid symbolism, the pattern of which may be traced without much difficulty. The poet himself calls it "Sense at War with Soul," and the mystic conflict is portrayed in varying phases in each of the poems, sometimes as the main feature and again overshadowed by other suggestion.

Throughout the twelve poems which constitute the "Idyls" there runs a double symbolism,—an outer symbolism founded on form and arrangement, and an inner

which typifies the search of the soul for Truth. As to the arrangement, it is in the form of a three-fold cycle, four poems representing the four seasons of the year being given three times successively in cumulative sequence. They are in their order: first cycle,—*Enid*, *Elaine*, *Vivien* and *Guinevere*; second cycle,—*The Coming of Arthur*, *The Holy Grail*, *Pelleas and Ettarre* and *Morte d'Arthur*; third cycle,—*Gareth and Lynnette*, *Balin Balan*, *The Last Tournament* and *The Passing of Arthur*.

In the first cycle, the spring poem, *Enid*, is vital with the newness of the spring, and Enid bears within herself all the sweet graces of young maidenhood; in the spring poem of the second cycle, *The Coming of Arthur*, the idea of newness of life is amplified and we are given the story of the magical coming of the baby king brought by the Lady of the Lake, (who represents Divine Wisdom) and the three queens (Faith, Hope and Love) in the shining ship and borne by the waves to Merlin's feet;in *Gareth and Lynnette*, the spring poem of the third cycle, the note of youth and of unsmirched beginnings reaches its fullest diapason. It represents the pure essence of the spring, and even death itself is proven to be but masquerading youth and freshness of new life. In like manner, the seasonal poems of each cycle expand successively the idea presented in the first cycle.

Elaine, the first summer poem, is the time of full summer with casement windows wide, and in her character Elaine represents the summer of matured womanhood brought to sudden ripening through unrequited love. In the second cycle, *The Holy Grail* adds to the ripe mellowness of the late summer the glory of spiritual aspiration which like the glory of the autumn woods, held within it the seed of decay inasmuch as it was the

search for the Holy Grail which made the first break in the Order of the Round Table. *Balin and Balan* of the third cycle reveals a summer-tide yet farther advanced, a ripened renewal of earlier promise.

Vivien whose characteristic is treachery, well represents the autumn when the lure of the sunshine is made a mockery by the chill winds foretelling the winter that is to come. In *Pelleas and Ettarre* crime is added to treachery, and in *The Last Tournament*, the treachery which has developed into crime meets with its just deserts and the knight who had stood in valor second only to Launcelot, reaps his harvest of death.

Guinevere is the winter of untrustworthiness and in *Morte d'Arthur* comes the tragic conclusion of her faithlessness in the dissolution of the Table Round and the passing out of the King. *The Passing of Arthur*, the last poem of the last cycle, is a repetition of *Morte d'Arthur* with the addition of a note of cheer and hopefulness when Sir Bedivere says:

> "He passes to be king among the dead,
> And after healing of his grievous wound
> He comes again."

In the development of the second and inner symbolism, there are two distinct themes,—one centering in the guilty love of Launcelot and the Queen, and the other in the quest for the Holy Grail. We see clearly how King Arthur represents spiritual attainment and his beautiful and faithless bride, Guinevere, portrays ecclesiastical power, or in other words, the King represents reality, and the Queen, the outer token of it, and being but the emblem without the background of reality, her character crumbles at contact with the influence of Launcelot who depicts the attractions of the sense world.

" . . . . by Dubric the high saint,
Chief of the church in Britain, and before
The stateliest of her altar-shrines, the King
That morn was married, while in stainless white,
The fair beginners of a nobler time
And glorying in their vows and him, his knights
Stood round him, and rejoicing in his joy.
And holy Dubric spread his hands and spake,
"Reign ye and live and love, and make the world
Other, and may thy Queen be one with thee
And all this Order of thy Table Round
Fulfil the boundless purpose of their King.
And Arthur and his knighthood for a space
Were all one will, and through that strength the King
Drew in the petty princedoms under him
. . . . . and made a realm and reigned."

Here is the greatest determination, the highest resolve that any heart can hold,—to give up every thought of individual advantage for the uplifting and betterment of the whole, and it can be held to only so long as all live in obedience to the Good Law. When that Law was broken, the great dream of the King for a knighthood brave and strong because of purity of living, was shattered, and from the failure of his knighthood to be true to its highest ideals the whole kingdom fell in ruins. The vision of the Holy Grail which came to Sir Galahad as the knights sat together in the great hall which Merlin built, proved to be the forerunner of that desolation. The King returning to the hall, finds his knights in commotion, "some swearing, some protesting," and he questions them and each one cries that he saw the light and heard the sound, but since he did not see the Grail "he sware

an oath to follow till he saw." And the King sternly reminded them that, having sworn, they must go, but that they were leaving their opportunities to right the wrongs of the kingdom while they were "following wandering fires, lost in the quagmire."

His words proved true, the most of those who went upon the Holy Quest were lost, scarcely a tenth returned, and of these only one had beheld the Holy Grail and that afar off, and the great Order was broken. In their King's words of rebuke those who returned realized how great was their own loss and what a death-dealing blow they had struck at the King's plan and lofty vision. Their chance of seeing the Holy Grail would have been to remain where they were, discharging faithfully their duties of self-forgetting service and upholding their leader and his teaching.

(To Be Continued)

ONE-AND-ONLY ONE

From Hermes Trismegistus

(Sermon of Hermes to his son Tat. Egyptian teaching. Date unknown. Translated by G. R. S. Mead)

Would it were possible for thee to get thee wings, and soar into the air, and, poised midway 'tween earth and heaven, behold the earth's solidity, the sea's fluidity, the flowing of its streams, the spaciousness of air, fire's swiftness, and the coursing of the stars, the swiftness of heaven's circuit round them all!

Most blessed sight were it, my son, to see all these beneath one sway—the motionless in motion, and the unmanifest made manifest; whereby is made this order of the cosmos and the cosmos which we see of order.

If thou wouldst see Him too through things that suf-

fer death, both on the earth and in the deep, think of a man's being fashioned in the womb, my son, and strictly scrutinize the art of Him who fashions him, and learn who fashioneth this fair and godly image of the Man.*

Who then is He who traceth out the circles of the eyes; who He who boreth out the nostrils and the ears; who He who openeth the portals of the mouth; who He who doth stretch out and tie the nerves; who He who channels out the veins; who He who hardeneth the bones; who He who covereth the flesh with skin; who He who separates the fingers and the joints; who He who widens out a treading for the feet; who He who diggeth out the ducts; who He who spreadeth out the spleen; who He who shapeth heart like to a pyramid; who He who setteth ribs together; who He who wideneth the liver out; who He who maketh lungs like to a sponge. . .?

Behold how many arts employed on one material, how many labours on one single sketch; and all exceeding fair, and all in perfect measure, yet all diversified! Who made them all? What mother or what sire, save God alone, unmanifest, who hath made all things by His Will?

And no one saith a statue or a picture comes to be without a sculptor or without a painter; doth then such workmanship as this exist without a Worker? What depth of blindness, what deep impiety, what depth of ignorance! See then thou ne'er, son Tat, deprivest works of Worker!

Nay, rather is He greater than all names, so great is He, the Father of them all. For verily He is the Only One; and this His work, to be a father. . .

He is Himself, both things that are and things that

*the Heavenly Man; man is the image of The Man, the Logos, or Image of God.

are not. The things that are He hath made manifest, He keepeth things that are not, in Himself.

He is the God beyond all name; He the unmanifest, He the most manifest; He whom the mind alone can contemplate, He visible unto the eyes as well; He is the one of no body, the one of many bodies, nay, rather He of every body.

Naught is there which He is not. For all are He and He is all. And for this cause hath He all names, in that they are one Father's. And for this cause hath He Himself no name, in that He's Father of them all.

Who, then, may sing Thee praise of Thee, or praise to Thee?

Whither again, am I to turn my eyes to sing Thy praise; above, below, within, without?

There is no way, no place is there about Thee, nor any other thing of things that are.

All are in Thee; all are from Thee, O Thou who givest all and takest naught, for Thou hast all and naught is there Thou hast not.

And *when*, O Father, shall I hymn Thee? For none can seize Thy hour or time.

For what, again, shall I sing hymn? For things that Thou hast made, or things Thou hast not? For things Thou hast made manifest or things Thou hast concealed?

How, further, shall I hymn Thee? As being of myself? As having something of mine own? As being other?

For that Thou art whatever I may be; Thou art whatever I may do; Thou art whatever I may speak.

For Thou art all, and there is nothing else which Thou art not. Thou art all that which doth exist, and Thou art what doth not exist,—Mind when Thou thinkest, and Father when Thou makest, And God when Thou dost energize, the Good and Maker of all things.

REPORT

Swami Paramananda returned to Ananda-Ashrama from Boston, on October 30th and immediately resumed the series of Sunday evening lectures in Los Angeles. A larger hall was secured in the Music Arts Studio Building, and many came to hear the Swami speak on "Soul's Secret Door," November 13th, and "Reincarnation and Spiritual Birth," November 20th. The third lecture which had been announced, was cancelled because an imminent trip to India made it needful for the Swami to give his full time to the Ananda-Ashrama before his departure. On the fifth Sunday after his arrival, the Swami, preparatory to his long absence, announced the abandonment of the Sunday afternoon Service at the Ashrama, but in spite of this, on the following Sunday afternoon so many came that the Swami held an impromptu Service under the trees, the day being summer-like in its quality. Also he invited all for the following Sunday, his farewell Sunday, when both morning and afternoon he purposed to tell them of the nature of the work and of the reason for his trip to India. After he has gone, however, there will be but the Sunday morning Service at the Ashrama at 11, with the Ashrama open for visitors Sunday afternoon; and two Classes,—the one at Pasadena, Tuesday evening at 8, and the one at Los Angeles, Wednesday evening at the same hour. Gayatri Devi, who has been conducting the work at the Vedanta Centre of Boston for the past few weeks, will take charge of all Services and Classes at the Ashrama while the Swami is away.

Of all the Swami's activities since his return the pleasantest was, perhaps, the dedication of the Ashrama Library in Pasadena. This had temporarily occupied a room at 19 North Oak Knoll Ave., but on Nov. 15th

it was moved to its permanent headquarters at the New Arcade Building, 690 East Colorado Street. This building, which is just completed, is one of the most attractive in Pasadena with its Spanish Court and all the charming accessories which belong to that type of architecture. The Ashrama Library and Reading Room is on the second floor. It looks out over the length of the patio, over the playing fountain, and the tiled roofs to the blue southern sky, and nearly all day long it is flooded with sunshine. On the evening of the dedication, the large number of friends who came, filled every available corner. As people entered the room, there were exclamations of delight over its brightness and artistic quality. Long handwoven curtains from the Ashrama looms, hung like rainbows at the two windows, while other products of the looms were draped over screen and table. Ashrama honey, Ashrama incense and varying examples of the Ashrama Arts and Crafts were displayed as evidence of the creative quality of the work which Swami has established in the California hills; flowers added their grace so that the whole scene was full of light and colour. The Swami gave the crowning touch by his words, drawing all hearts together by the magic of his spirit, which is the universal spirit of the work.

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From Swami Prabhavananda, head of the Vedanta Society of Portland,, comes the gratifying news that a Vedanta Society has been established in St. Louis with a large nucleus. The Swami, after its inauguration, had to return to his Portland work; but a new Swami from India, for whom he has sent, is due to arrive shortly. This Swami will relieve Swami Prabhavananda in Portland so that he will be free to go to St. Louis and give uninterrupted time to the care of this new centre. May it have true success and bring blessing to many.

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