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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

# Message of the East

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JANUARY, 1931

## Fragrance of Happiness

Issued by

THE VEDANTA CENTRE
32 FENWAY, BOSTON, MASS.

(Entered as second class matter, March 26th, 1930, at the Post Office at Boston, Mass., under act of March 3rd, 1878.)

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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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## TWENTIETH YEAR GREETING

Man not infrequently becomes a channel through which the Master of his destiny works His will. His own mind trembles at the enormity of his ideal, and his hand falters with the fear of defeat; but He Who stands behind urges him to go forward and unfold His benign intent.

Who can measure the fruit of our mission? Should we not always leave it to Him Who makes all things possible unto us?

As "THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST" starts out on its mission of understanding service, we offer our prayers that it may carry out its ideals in the face of all obstacles, and hold forth with indomitable courage and faith its banner of love and unfailing tolerance.

To the readers who have faithfully advocated and encouraged its existence, we send our heart-felt greeting at the outset of its twentieth year. May we through their coöperation make its course more far-reaching and helpful. —*Paramananda.*

December 1, 1930
The Vedanta Centre,
745 West Adams Boulevard,
Los Angeles, California

# UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Happiness is a glory shining far down upon us from Heaven. She is a divine dew, which the soul feels dropping upon it from the amaranth blossom and golden fruitage of paradise.

—*Charlotte Bronte.*

You traverse the world in search of happiness, which is in reach of every man; a contented mind confers it on all.

—*Horace.*

He whose heart is unattached to external contact (of the senses), realizes the happiness that is in the Self; being united to Brahman by meditation, he attains to eternal bliss.

—*Bhagavad-Gita.*

Who is the happiest of men? He who values the merits of others, and in their pleasure takes joy, even as though 'twere his own.

—*Goethe.*

If the principles of contentment are not within us, the height of station and worldly grandeur will as soon add a cubit to man's stature as to his happiness.

—*Lawrence Sterne.*

The great man is he who does not lose his child's heart.

—*Mencius.*

To be happy is not the purpose of our being, but to deserve happiness.

—*Fichte.*

The scent of flowers is not borne against the wind, though it were sandal, rose-bay or jessamine; but the fragrance of the holy is borne against the wind; the righteous do pervade all space.

—*Dhammapada.*

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. —*Solomon.*

# FRAGRANCE OF HAPPINESS

*By Swami Paramananda*

Our real strength lies in our practical moral being, that is, in not merely having a sense of intellectual understanding and appreciation of higher realities, but a grasp which enables us to put everything into action, and apply our more exalted thoughts and feelings in our everyday life.

Twenty-five hundred years ago in India Lord Buddha proclaimed:

"We live happily indeed, not hating those who hate us! Among men who hate us we dwell free from hatred!

"We live happily indeed, free from ailments among the ailing! Among men who are ailing let us dwell free from ailments!

"We live happily indeed, free from greed among the greedy! Among men who are greedy let us dwell free from greed!"

These words fall upon our ears as if from a far distant realm. Modern man, with his advancement, his education, his scientific trend of mind, does not seem to believe that this manner of teaching can have any practical value; yet, in accepting this negative attitude, in feeling that such ideas are merely poetic fancies, we in a sense rob ourselves of our spiritual heritage.

Is it possible for one who desires to live the life—to teach not violence or hatred, but love—to survive and triumph in a world where there is so little faith in the ideal? Can anyone even exist who takes these teachings literally? This is the question we are continually asking; but it is a question which each man must answer for himself, and in order to do so with thoroughness he must approach the problem with unbiased spirit. If we prejudice our minds at the start

with the thought that such idealism is not possible of attainment, we make it not possible.

Now let me ask a simple question: When do you feel most strong—when you love or when you hate; when you are angry or when you are calm and full of poise? Is your influence over others greater when you yield to unmanliness and weakness or when you are able to remain tranquil and maintain your connection with something that is higher than the physical self?

If we really go within, if we examine our essential being, I think there are not many of us who would say that these greater things are unpractical for our modern life. Spiritual principles have nothing to do with modern or ancient; they are eternally fresh and beneficial. Of course it is for the strong, not for the weak, to practice the higher ideal. For only the strong man can conquer hatred with love; the weak man always strikes back. It may be that a weak person, who has not the courage to give a blow to his enemy, will assume the rôle of non-violence or forgiveness; but that is very far from the true spirit. We have to be honest. Sometimes we are amazed at the revelation of our own hidden strength. An act of forgiveness on our part shows us that we are better than we thought ourselves to be. One noble action inspires us to perform another.

Let us, however, turn again to the utterances of the Lord Buddha, and see what we can gain from them of definite value.

"We live happily indeed, free from greed among the greedy! among men who are greedy let us dwell free from from greed."

Happiness is a universal theme. East and west, north and south, in all countries and among all people, we find that men are striving for happiness. But happiness is

nothing that we can gain by bargaining, bartering or bribing. It is very like the fragrance of a flower. If we succeed in bringing a flower into blossom, the fragrance is not lacking. When the rose blooms or the lotus, it gives of its perfume naturally. Same way it is with our life. There are certain exalted attributes which we possess under the proper conditions, and happiness is one of those attributes. When our life is rhythmic, when we show forth the qualities we know to be fundamental in our spiritual nature, we are happy, we feel a great glow of satisfaction, which is increased by the thought that there is nothing that can rob us of this. A man may dwell in a palace or in poverty, it makes no difference. If he is in tune with his true entity, he will be happy in either condition. There are some people who live surrounded by wealth, luxury and every comfort, and yet are not happy. I need not give you any examples of this; they can be seen in every turn. In fact often we find the greatest misery among people who have an abundance of wealth and power, and the greatest happiness where apparently there is nothing in the way of outward possessions. This is not just imagination—they have actually found something within themselves which no outer circumstance can overthrow. These things I say to you, not that they may give you momentary stimulation, a fictitious hope, or a passing sense of exaltation, but that they may impel you toward that which is abiding.

Every one of us can find that abiding happiness. The great Indo-Aryan concept of God is the Blissful One. Truth, when it arises within us, is like the dawn. When the dawn comes it brings a glow. Birds and beasts begin to sing, and those whose hearts are in tune, they also sing. We have all, I am sure, experienced this many times—the desire to burst out in song, to express some sweet emotion

through music. This does not happen, however, unless we are ourselves in harmony.

There are times when we feel great sadness at the coming of morn. This, of course, is a very abnormal state, but though we may recognize that it is so, yet, when the sad mood comes upon us, we say, "I cannot help it." On these occasions, if we analyze, we shall find that perhaps on the previous evening we retired carrying a tremendous load; instead of sweet repose, we bore a great burden, a weight; naturally, exhaustion was the result, and when the dawn came we were not able to rise up with a song, a smile, or any sense of new inspiration.

We are the result of what we think, what we feel, what we carry. If we think with unkind spirit, unhappiness follows. It may not follow immediately, but sooner or later it is bound to come. This is an infallible rule. When we harbor any unworthy thought, ungenerous feeling, though we may do it with great caution, in hiding as it were, and try to cover it with our skilfulness, yet our moral being will be injured, and it is the moral being which gives us the fragrance of flowers or the aroma of despair. Both spring from that one source. Mind is the medium which conveys them, and the human heart is their seat. The heart is capable of experiencing great exaltation and also profound sadness. There is no fundamental difference in people. When you see someone who is suffering under depression because of an inner lack, do not think that it is a fundamental lack. Side by side with him may be another with great merit, who is happy and blessed. In the case of the first man, we see one who through distortion of mind has closed the doors, the avenues of his soul, and thus has deprived himself of the light of the Spirit; while, in the second case, we find one who has learned to open his whole being to

the radiance of the Sun. It is for this reason that I made the comment that none of us differs inherently from any other. Our basic endowment is the same; that is, it is our common heritage. Every one of us possesses the same powers, the same faculties, but we must learn how to operate them; we must apply the right principle. Do not let us follow the "trend of market value," as Emerson used to say. Truth shall never be covered by that; it cannot be.

"We live happily indeed, not hating those who hate us! Among men who hate us let us dwell free from hatred."

Someone has done you harm, and you think the only way you can remedy it is to do him more harm. That is the popular philosophy; but the moral philosophy, the fundamental philosophy, the true, practical wisdom tells us that whenever we yield to our lower instincts we do ourselves more harm than we do any one else. There is no man who can withstand the injury that he inflicts upon himself when he stoops to a low order of things. Oh, what a wonderful world it would become if we could only learn to put into practice the things that we know to be true! We have the power to do it—the same power as was manifest in Christ, Buddha, St. Francis, and in all men of genius. Our inner constitution is the same as theirs. Of course if we keep on denying it and not believing in it, we shall hinder its unfoldment and postpone our journey toward its realization. We have to believe in order to do anything properly. We believe in our body, therefore we take care of it; we believe in all manner of physical comforts, therefore we do our utmost to procure them. When we begin to believe with equal faith in our spiritual heritage, in the Divine Power within us, we shall achieve success.

"As a man thinketh in his heart so is he." No better, and he certainly can be made no worse. This is as true

as any philosophy that has ever been given to man, and it is limited to no particular religion or system of thought. As far back as we can go, we find this principle. It is the basic principle for concentration and meditation. It is the hypothesis for our whole spiritual existence. Why do we think certain thoughts? Why do we do certain things? Because we believe in them. We become imbued with the spirit of Truth, because we have faith in Truth. Same way it is when we lower ourselves to the ignoble or the sordid. It is because we believe in it. Our hands become soiled, our mind unclear, and our heart heavy. Man, however, can rid himself of what he has acquired; he has the power. These detrimental conditions can be again discarded. It is not that we should try to overcome all our past habits at once. We should do it little by little. Instead of thinking all the time that we are nothing, let us, at least some of the time, think that we are part of the great Immensity. Thereby we shall counteract the long-standing habit of negation, of believing that we cannot do anything, or that we have not the power of achievement. Before an uplifted spirit, all these ideas will vanish. A courageous, cheerful heart is irrepressible.

Many of us have come to regard a spiritual personage as one who is very solemn and does not smile. This is nothing but our ignorance. The spiritual man is most spontaneous, most natural and without any calculation. He is like some radiant being—in his presence you forget all your preconceived ideas. It is as if you were looking into something that is clear and beautiful. And same way we become as we gain more and more of higher vision. Our fictitious notions about ourselves and our fellow-beings vanish. Our doubts, our thoughts of disbelief and suspicion are nothing but a disease of mind which is dispelled when

our consciousness is raised to a loftier level. In this way, we learn to live among the ailing free from any ailments. In the world of doubt we live free from doubt; in the world where people are afraid, we have no fear. No fear! How we have nurtured our fear! People who are selfish are always afraid. They are afraid of themselves. When we can free ourselves of this selfish element, at once we find that our heart becomes inspired, our consciousness cleansed, and we no longer feel like a prisoner in our dwelling-house—this body. Our whole being rejoices because the Right One has entered, and, just as we find the birds singing at dawn, so all our faculties begin to revive and rejoice. At first all this may seem like fancy, but once we become convinced of it, we realize what power and benediction Truth holds for us when we abide by Truth.

Truth is not the exclusive property of any creed or place or age. It is man's birthright. Just as every man has the right to breathe the air and absorb the rays of the sun, so are all alike privileged to draw from the unseen Source of life, strength, and wisdom. That infinite supply cannot be exhausted. Never think it! Never say, "If I take so much there will be none left for anyone else." Take all that you can—not only will it be sufficing for you, but through it you will become instrumental in helping your fellows. Your smile will inspire another to smile; your strength will impel another to be strong. A noble soul always draws forth the noble quality in others.

Spiritual attainment is infectious. Just as evil spreads rapidly, so also do the godly qualities. If one possesses them, another will strive after them. In this way, we are all missionaries for good or evil. There are some people who love to repeat bad news—and for what end? Generally it does not concern them at all, yet they carry it. Others,

again, infuse God's light; they shed benediction. As a result, their own strength and blessing are increased. We never lose anything when we give. When you give your love do you find that you have less love in your heart? On the contrary, you are conscious of an even greater power of loving. But no one can be convinced of these things till he has applied them in a practical way. An ounce of practice is worth tons of theory.

We boast of this being a practical age. It is a practical age. Therefore it is for us to make our idealism more practical. It all depends upon how we direct our thoughts. The same mind which enables us to advance along scientific lines and other avenues of material prosperity will, when properly directed, give us access into our spiritual being; and when we make our contact with that, we shall never know any more emptiness or inner need.

Let us then turn this mind of ours away from the low and the vulgar and focus it upon That which is pure, spiritual and sublime, so that our soul may in time become truly fragrant, making the world richer and filling our own life with radiance and beauty.

---

Is Good unseen?

Hush! Who is more manifest than He? For this one reason hath He made all things, that through them all thou mayest see Him. This is the Good of God, this is His virtue—that He may be made manifest through all. For naught's unseen, even of things that are without a body. Mind sees itself in thinking, God in making. So far these things have been made manifest to thee, Thrice-greatest one! Reflect on all the rest in the same way, within thyself, and thou shalt not be led astray.

—*Hermes Trismegistus.*

# WHAT IS CHARACTER?

*By Sister Devamata*

All Nature is a vast workshop. In the woodland and the field, in the wearing flow of waters and in the mountain's heart, one hears the ring of her anvils, the hum of her mills. Tirelessly she toils and to what end? To achieve perfection; to transform the type into the archetype. Humanity has a full share in her labors. Its perfecting is indeed the chief aim of her effort.

Man cannot escape from perfection. He is predestined to it. It presses upon him with greater insistence and force than the atmosphere on his body. It is the law of his being, which must attain fulfillment. Everything that happens to him, happens to this end; everything is made to serve it, even his rebellions and the barriers he sets up.

Nature converts all experience into chisel strokes to shape and fashion him. No opportunity is lost, no effort is wasted or overlooked. There is no cause, therefore, for anxiety as to his ultimate state, or for grief over his present one. This is the true significance of that reassuring promise given at the close of the Bhagavad-Gita. "I will free thee from all imperfection. Grieve not."

It must not be imagined from this that perfection is superimposed from without, like a pasted picture. It is the fruit of the coöperation of the God within and the God without—not two Deities, but two manifestations of one Supreme Power. The ground on which these two expressions of Divinity meet to accomplish their work is the character.

The innermost essence of man's being does not evolve. It is ever unchanged and unchanging. It exists in eternity, finds expression in time, yet never reverts from its eternal estate. It is like the geometric point at the centre of a circle,

which does not turn or shift however many the circumferences, wide or narrow, described round it. This inalterable centre of being is the soul of man.

What is the relation of character to it? Character is the interpreter of the soul, the medium through which it contacts the outer world. Its nature is a composite one, made up of the perceptive faculties, the mind, the intellect, the moral sense and the ego or sense of "I-ness." That which holds these component parts together as one united whole is memory. We are a continuous personality only because we remember.

Memory and its correlate, habit, are the stone and timber of the structure of character. They have built into it all that is there. Man needs no recording angel in a geographic heaven to keep account of his thoughts and deeds. They are written large in his character. It holds a complete record of his life-habit of thinking and doing.

This record is more subjective than objective. The action of the world on the human being leaves but faint trace; it is his reaction against the world's action which cuts the deep grooves in memory. The more violent the reaction, the deeper the groove. That is why it is so difficult to forget an attack of anger or a feeling of hatred.

If we would have noble characters we must fill our memory with deeply graven records of generous, heroic impulses. We must write it full of exalted reactions which proclaim us superior to dishonor and insult, superior to failure and defeat, superior to loss and pain. We must be bigger than ourselves and transcend even our character.

We should not be discouraged if this habit of larger vision does not come to us at once. We must ever bear in mind that as human beings we are unfinished products—rough-hewn statues awaiting the refining chisel of the Master-

Sculptor. Objects in the making do not always please. The germinating seed is less sightly than when it lay in its pod; and the half-cut diamond tells little of the polished gem.

Like all else in creation, man is in the process of becoming. We must watch his unfoldment with sympathetic interest, therefore, and not apply to him the measure of the completed product until the work is done. In art we judge only after the last touch has rounded out the marble, or the last brush-stroke has added color to the canvas. Why should we adopt a different method in judging living beings? When we take this attitude of mind, we shall learn to be more lenient and patient toward ourselves and toward others.

Since character is merely an interpreter, it can have only an interpretive value. Disconnected from that which it interprets, it is barren of meaning. Character disjoined from soul is as voiceless and ineffective as a Stradivarius violin without a musician to give it voice. This answers the oft-repeated claim that a highly-developed moral sense is all that man needs to meet the requirements of life. Life to be secure and dependable must rest on a stable and immovable base. The moral sense expands and contracts. It grows with our growth. Each experience alters it. It can never serve as an inalterable ultimate. The same may be said of all the component parts of character. Not one of them offers an unchanging basis for living. It becomes evident, then, that development of character without unfoldment of soul consciousness is like building without a foundation—we shall have a house on soft sand that will go down in the first driving storm.

Character-building must be linked at every step with spiritual training, if we are to have an enduring structure. We must be steadfast, heroic, strong; but strong and steadfast "in the Lord and in the knowledge of His might." We

must not rest our strength on our variable human nature. We must stand firm on principle or Truth, and both of these dwell in the soul-realm.

Any education that does not include spiritual development defeats its own end and must prove abortive. Meditation, study of holy books, the practice of inwardness should form as vital a part of education as learning to read and write and count. Soul-training must begin in the primary school and continue without interruption through all grades to the end of life. It is the one department of schooling in which no recesses or vacations are granted.

This may seem to put a heavy weight of responsibility upon us, but the weight lifts when we remember that the Soul does the work, not we. It will reveal itself more and more vividly and flood the whole character with radiance, if we but let it work unhindered.

---

# PSALMS OF THE BUDDHIST SISTERS

*From the Pali Canon*

(Translated by Mrs. Rhys Davids in "Psalms of the Early Buddhists;" published by the Oxford University Press, London.)

Over twenty centuries ago, there walked the soil of India one who drew the hearts of men as the wind draws the straws, causing them to follow after him by the truth of what he taught, by the glory of what he was. Pure, compassionate, wise, serene, he, the Lord Buddha, by his very presence, dispelled the darkness of ignorance from the minds of his fellows, so that their feet were set upon the Path. This we have read in the records which have come down to us through the ages, covered with the moss of time—records in which fact and legend interblend, poetic dream and starkest, whitest Truth.

Now, for some hundreds of years after the Buddha's

advent, these records, following the custom of the country, were conveyed orally from teacher to pupil; and, in order to facilitate memory, were caste into a metrical, repetitive form, which, to modern readers, is confusing and wearisome. Men's minds in those days were accustomed to retain accurately whatever was transmitted to them, and even now there are Hindu Pandits who hold within their consciousness great bodies of Scripture.

About the year 80 B.C., however, fearing that the purity of the original doctrine was being impaired by false teaching, certain Bhikkhus—members of the Brotherhood—met together in Ceylon, under the King Vattagamani, and compiled what is known as the Pali Canon, which constitutes the Bible for the Hinayana or Southern School of Buddhism. This Canon consists of "Three Pitakas," or "Baskets," the *Vinaya Pitaka*, the *Sutta Pitaka*, and the *Abhidamma Pitaka*. Of these, the *Sutta Pitaka* is by far the most important since it contains the main body of the Buddhist Gospel, and includes that with which we are at present concerned, the "Psalms of the Brethren and Sisters," which collectively has been termed "the most important literary production of early Buddhism." It is more than that—it is the heartbeat of seeking men and women, who, at the Buddha's call, left the unreal for the Real, darkness for Light, death for the Deathless; it is the essence of their life-story told with simple directness; and, finally, it is a cry of release and freedom. Moreover, these songs are lovely in line and structure, and of a simple dignity which lifts them above place and period. The ancient chronicles which accompany them, from the Commentary by Dhammapala, though less venerable than the Psalms, can not well be spared from the picture; for in them the history of each Psalmist is given, even back many incarnations to that point in time when her

first great resolve was made. That there is a question in the minds of scholars as to the actual authorship of the songs themselves concerns us very little; in their passage through the years, they have brought to us the essence of the human feelings which inspired them and warmed them into life; the dross has been dropped by the way. As Mrs. Rhys Davids puts it: "Enshrined in the casket of legends constructed by the loving piety of centuries, these little poems of the Theris take life and breath and color. Whether the verses in search of an owner have perchance missed their way, whether, indeed, in some of the first few stanzas a name may not have been created to fit the words, still may we see, in this dream-pageant of Sisters of the antique world conjured up for us by the chronicler, the reiterated testimony to high quest, to devoted heart, to indomitable resolve."

It is interesting to note that not in one single instance is there any reference made in the Psalms or the Chronicle to the practice of *Suttee* or the self-immolation of widows. In fact many of the writers themselves were widows, having joined the Order only after the death of their husbands.

Another notable feature revealed in these writings is the freedom to wander and preach enjoyed by the Bhikkuni or Buddhist nun, affording a striking contrast to the more cloistered life of the Occidental religieuse.

And most important of all, the whole body of the Psalms provides a corrective to a certain Western misapprehension concerning Buddhist life and practice. Again to quote from Mrs. Rhys Davids:

"Even in the verses of those women who have sought refuge in the Order from overwhelming misery or disgust, there is little or no expression of the obtained relief in terms of that quiescence and apathy and mortified vitality so readily imputed to the religious ideals of the East. Life

under the Vinaya was one of both active and contemplative discipline. The emancipation won implied 'space'—*okasa*—opportunity, that is, for developing, regulating, and concentrating both thought and deed."

So much for the Psalms themselves. To gain their full significance, however, we must see them against the background of the Buddhist Sangha or Order of Brethren, which was formed almost immediately after the Buddha's Great Illumination, and developed rapidly under the inspiration of his ministry. Wherever he went men followed him, so that his Company often numbered hundreds, who, in time, divided into smaller groups, and were sent forth by their Master "for the good of many and the happiness of many, out of compassion for mankind, to preach the doctrine which is glorious in the beginning, glorious in the middle, and glorious in the end."

The admission of women into the Sangha was not so easily accomplished, and since the story of it is inevitably linked with the Psalms which afterwards flowed from their hearts, we give it here as recounted by Dr. Coomeraswamy in his "Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism." The account takes us back a little, to where the Buddha averts a war.

"Now three rainy seasons were spent by the Lord in the Bambu Grove. It was in the fifth season, when he was residing in the Kutagara Hall of the Great Forest near to Vesali that there arose a dispute between the Sakyas and the Koliyas regarding the water of the river Rohini, which, because of a great drought, did not suffice that year to irrigate the fields on both banks. The quarrel rose high, and matters were come nearly to battle, when the Buddha proceeded to the place, and took his seat on the river bank. He enquired for what reason the princes of the Sakyas and Koliyas were assembled, and when he was informed that

they were met together for battle, he enquired what was the point in dispute. The princes said that they did not know of a surety, and they made enquiry of the commander-in-chief, but he in turn knew not, and sought information from the regent; and so the enquiry went on until it reached the husbandmen, who related the whole affair. 'What then is the value of water?' said the Buddha. 'It is but little,' said the princes. 'And what of earth?' 'That also is little,' they said. 'And what of princes?' 'It cannot be measured,' they said. 'Then would you,' said the Buddha, 'destroy that which is of the highest value for the sake of that which is little worth?' and he appeased the wrath of the combatants by the recital of sundry Jatakas.

"The princes now reflected that by the interposition of Buddha much bloodshed had been avoided, and that had it not been so, none might have been left to report the matter to their wives and children. And since, had he become, as he might if he had so pleased, a universal monarch, they would have been his vassals, they chose two hundred and fifty of their number, from each party, to become his attendants, and join the Order. But these five hundred were ordained at the wish of their parents, and not by their own will, and their wives were filled with grief for their sake.

"About this time Suddhodana the king fell ill with a mortal sickness, and as soon as this was reported to the Blessed One, he proceeded to Kapilavatthu and visited his father. And when he had come before him, he preached to him the instability of all things, so that Suddhodana attained to the Fruit of the Fourth Path; to Arahatta, and Nibbana (Nirvana), and thereafter he died.

"After the death of her husband, the widowed queen, the Matron Gautami*, decided to adopt the life of the

*Foster mother of the Buddha, afterwards known as Pajapati Gotamid.

hermitage, cut off her hair, and proceeded to the place where the Buddha was residing. She was accompanied by the wives of the five hundred princes who had been ordained on the occasion of the imminent battle at the Rohini river; for these considered that it was better for them to retire from the world, than to remain at home in widowhood. The Matron Gautami said to the Buddha that as Suddhodana was now dead . . . she had no wish to reside alone, and she asked that she might be admitted to the Order, together with the princesses who were with her. But this request the Buddha refused, a first, a second, and third time, for he reflected that if they were admitted, it would perplex the minds of many who had not yet entered the Paths, and would be the occasion of evil speaking against the Order. And when they were still refused, the women feared to ask a fourth time, and they returned to their homes. And the Buddha returned to the Kutagara hall, near Vesali.

"Then the Matron Gautami said to the other princesses: 'My children, the Buddha has thrice refused us admission to the Order, but now let us take it upon ourselves to go to him where he now is, and he will not be able to deny us.' They all cut their hair, adopted the garb of religieuses, and taking earthen alms-bowls, set out for Vesali on foot; for they considered that it was contrary to the discipline for a recluse to travel by car. Then they who in all their life had walked only on smooth pavements, and regarded it as a great matter to ascend or descend from one story of their palaces to another, trod the dusty roads, and it was not until evening that they reached the place where the Buddha was. They were received by Ananda (the 'beloved disciple'). And when he saw them, their feet bleeding and covered with dust, as if half dead, his breast was filled with pity and his eyes with tears, and he enquired the meaning of their

journey. When this was made known, he informed the Master, describing all that he had seen. But the Buddha merely said: 'Enough, Ananda, do not ask me that women retire from the household life to the homeless life, under the Doctrine and Discipline of Him-who-has-thus-attained.' And he said this three times. But Ananda besought the Blessed One in another way to receive the women into the homeless life. He asked the Blessed One: 'Are women competent, Reverend Sire, if they retire from the household to the homeless life, to attain to the Fruits of the First, the Second, the Third, and the Fourth Paths, even to Arahatta?' The Buddha could not deny the competence of women. 'Are Buddhas,' he asked, 'born into the world only for the benefit of men? Assuredly it is for the benefit of women also.' And the Blessed One consented that women should make profession and enter the Order, subject to the condition of the Eight Duties of Subordination to the Brethren."

Here we shall continue the story as it is given by Mr. Edward J. Thomas in his "Life of the Buddha," following the account in the *Anguttara-Nikaya*:

"Ananda went to Mahapajapati (the Matron Gautami), stated the rules, and said, 'If, Gautami, you will take upon yourself these eight Strict Rules, this will be your ordination.' Mahapajapati replied, 'Just as, reverend Ananda, a woman or a man, who is young and fond of adornment, after washing his head receives a garland of lotus or jasmine or atimuttaka flowers, takes it with both hands, and puts it on his head, even so do I take upon myself these eight Strict Rules, not to be transgressed while life shall last.'

"Ananda returned, saluted Buddha, sat down at one side, and told him that Mahapajapati had accepted the Rules. Buddha replied: "If women had not received the going forth in the doctrine and discipline, the religious system

would have lasted long, the good doctrine would have stayed for a thousand years; but as women have gone forth, now the religious system will not last long; now, Ananda, the good doctrine will last only five hundred years. . . . And just as a man might in anticipation make a dyke for a great reservoir, so that the water should not overflow, even so, Ananda, have I in anticipation prescribed these eight Strict Rules for the nuns, not to be transgressed while life shall last.' "

"In this way," to quote once more from Dr. Coomerswamy, "the Matron Gautami and the five hundred princesses were admitted to the Order; and it was not long before Gautami attained to Arahatta, and the five hundred princesses attained the Fruit of the First Path. And this took place in the sixth year of the Enlightenment."

From then on, many women sought refuge in the Sangha, wherein were mingled daughters of royal blood and those of low degree, former virtuous wives and erstwhile famous courtezans—all made one in the great heart of the Buddha. This the Psalms reveal directly and indirectly. Out of them emerge the struggle, the agony, the final liberation of these women; while through every word, permeating the whole, we perceive the majestic, wisdom-crowned figure of the Master.

It is our intention to print these inspired songs from time to time in the "MESSAGE OF THE EAST." Now we proceed to the life and the Psalm of her who was known as Sister Soma: giving a combined version as taken from two sources.

### HER STORY

She was, in the time of Sikhi Buddha,* reborn in the family of an eminent noble, and, when grown up, was made the chief consort of the King Arunava. In this Buddha-era,

*One of the preceding Buddhas.

she was reborn as the daughter of the chaplain of King Bimbisara at Rajagaha, and named Soma. Come to years of discretion, she came to believe in the Master in her own home, and became a lay-disciple. And later on, growing anxious, she entered the Order of Bhikkunis, and, working her way to insight, she not long after won Arahantship, with thorough grasp of the Norm in letter and in spirit.

Then, dwelling at Savatthi in the bliss of emancipation, she went forth one day to take siesta in the Dark Grove, and sat down beneath a tree. And Mara (the Tempter), alone, and wishing to interrupt her privacy, approached her, invisible and in the air, saying:

That vantage-ground the sages may attain....
Is hard to reach. With her two-finger consciousness
*That* is no woman competent to gain!

For women, from the age of seven or eight, boiling rice at all times, know not the moment when the rice is cooked, but must take some grains in a spoon and press it with two fingers; hence the expression "two-finger" sense. Then the Elder rebuked Mara:

How should the woman's nature hinder us?
Whose hearts are firmly set, who ever move
With growing knowledge onward in the Path?
What can that signify to one in whom
Insight doth truly comprehend the Norm?
To one for whom the question doth arise:
Am I a woman in these matters, or
Am I a man, or what not am I, then?
To such an one is Mara fit to talk!
On every hand the love of pleasure yields,
And the thick gloom of ignorance is rent
In twain. Know this, O Evil One, avaunt!
Here, O Destroyer! shalt thou not prevail.

THE STORY OF A SISTER WHOSE NAME IS UNKNOWN

How was she reborn?

Long ago, a certain daughter of one of the clans became a fervent believer in the teaching of the Buddha Konagamana, and entertained him hospitably. She had an arbor made with boughs, a draped ceiling, and a sanded floor, and did him honor with flowers and perfumes. And all her life doing meritorious acts, she was reborn among the gods, and then again among men when Kassapa was Buddha, under whom she renounced the world. Reborn again in heaven till this Buddha-dispensation, she was finally born in a great nobleman's family at Vesali. From the sturdy build of her body they called her Sturdykin. She became the devoted wife of a young noble. When the Master came to Vesali, she was convinced by his teaching, and became a lay-disciple. Anon, hearing the Great Pajapati, the Elder, preaching the Doctrine, the wish arose in her to leave the world, and she told this to her husband. He would not consent; so she went on performing her duties, reflecting on the sweetness of the Doctrine, and living devoted to insight.

Then, one day in the kitchen, while the curry was cooking, a mighty flame of fire shot up, and burnt all the food with much crackling. She, watching it, made it a basis for rapt meditation on the utter impermanence of all things. Thereby she was established in the Fruition of the Path of No-Return. Thenceforth she wore no more jewels and ornaments. When her husband asked her the reason, she told him how incapable she felt of living a domestic life. So he brought her, with a large following, to Great Pajapati the Gotamid, and said: "Let the reverend Sisters give her ordination." And Pajapati did so, and showed her the Master; and the Master, emphasizing, as was his custom, the visible basis whereby she had attained, spoke the following verse:

HER PSALM

Sleep softly, little Sturdy, take thy rest
At ease, wrapt in the robe thyself hast made.
Stilled are the passions that would rage within,
Withered as potherbs in the oven dried.

Now, when she had attained Arahantship, the Sister repeated that verse in her exultation, wherefore this verse became *her* verse.

THE STORY OF METTIKA

Heaping up merit under former Buddhas, she was born during the time of Siddhattha, the Exalted One, in a burgess's family, and worshipped at his shrine by offering there a jewelled girdle. After many births in heaven and on earth, through the merit thereof, she became, in this Buddha dispensation, the child of an eminent brahmin at Rajagaha. When she had come to years of discretion, she heard the Master teaching at the gate of Rajagaha, and, becoming a believer, she was ordained by the Great Pajapati the Gotamid. And, at length, in her old age, when she had climbed to the top of a high peak, and had done the exercises of a recluse, her insight expanded, and she won to Arahantship. Reflecting thereon, she said in exultation:

HER PSALM

Though I be suffering and weak, and all
My youthful spring be gone, yet have I come,
Leaning upon my staff, and clomb aloft
The mountain peak.
My cloak thrown off,
My little bowl o'erturned: so sit I here
Upon the rock. And o'er my spirit sweeps
The breath of Liberty! I win, I win
The Triple Lore! The Buddha's will is done.

To be continued.

# PENN'S PEACE

*By Helen Keller*

The world which my imagination constructs out of my philosophy of evolution is pleasant to contemplate. It is a realization of everything that seems desirable to us in our best moods, and the people that live in it are like those we sometimes meet whose nobility is a prophecy of what we shall be when we have reached the state in which the different parts of our bodies and souls, our hearts and minds, have attained their right proportions. This state will not be attained without tribulation.

The clatter of a changing world is not pleasant, and those who have enjoyed the comforts and protection of the old order may be shocked and unhappy when they behold the vigorous young builders of a new world sweeping away their time-honored antiquities. I look forward to the time when the most atrocious of these antiquities—war—will be as much shunned by mankind as it is now glorified. The voice within us that cries so passionately for peace cannot lie.

"The great God," said William Penn in his address to the Indians, "hath written His Law in our hearts, by which we are taught and commanded to love and help do good to one another. It is not our custom to bear hostile weapons against our fellow creatures, for which reason we come unarmed. Our object is not to do injury, but to do good. We are now met on the broad pathway to good faith and good will, so that no advantage may be taken on either side, but all is to be openness, brotherhood, and love, while all are to be treated as of the same flesh and blood."

If the experience of the other colonies of the Atlantic seaboard was any criterion, Penn and his followers were preparing themselves for destruction. Any wise militarist

of Massachusetts or Maryland or Virginia would have told him of the treacherous Indians, of their bloodthirstiness, of their unexpected raids with tomahawk and torch, and the necessity, therefore, of being armed. But the Quakers did not know, or if they did know, they did not believe, and so they came to this wilderness, without so much as a sword or a rifle, to establish a "City of Brotherly Love," and they succeeded. While other settlements were attacked and burned, and slaughtered or carried off into captivity, the little Pennsylvania colony enjoyed uninterrupted peace and prosperity. The Quakers had no forts or soldiers, no arms. They lived in the midst of a savage people who knew that we say because of it, they knew no war for seventy years. "Whatever were the quarrels of the Pennsylvania Indians with others," says one of the Quaker historians, "they respected and held, as it were sacred, the territories of the Quakers. The Penn colony never lost a man, woman or child by the Indians. The flowers of prosperity and good will smiled in the footprints of William Penn."*

I should like to see all the energy that is going into preparation for war express itself in ideals that we should be proud to cherish—that would make us ashamed of the sordidness which prevails at the present time. Work should be joyous. Everyone should go to his labor singing as Whitman hears America singing "the varied carols," the mechanics singing blithe and strong—the vitality of America voiced in building for a race of free men and women. There is a passage in Whitman which expresses my desire for America with such sympathy I shall quote it here:

This moment yearning and thoughtful, sitting alone,

*But he was dealing with savages. Would the experiment have succeeded with any of our so-called "civilized peoples?"

It seems to me there are other men in other lands yearning and thoughtful;
It seems to me I can look over and behold them in Germany, Italy, France, Spain—or far, far away, in China, or in Russia or India—talking other dialects;
And it seems to me if I could know those men, I should become attached to them, as I do to men in my own lands;
Oh, I know we should be brethren and lovers;
I know I should be happy with them.

## GOD'S WILL OR SELF-WILL?

*From the writings of St. John of the Cross*

When beginners become aware of their own fervor and diligence in their spiritual works and devotional exercises, this prosperity of theirs gives rise to secret pride—though holy things tend of their own nature to humility—because of their imperfections; and the issue is that they conceive a certain satisfaction in the contemplation of their works and of themselves. From the same source, too, proceeds that empty eagerness which they display to some extent, and occasionally very much, in speaking before others of the spiritual life, and sometimes as teachers rather than learners. They condemn others in their heart when they see that they are not devout in their way. Sometimes, also, they say it in words, showing themselves herein to be like the Pharisee, who in the act of prayer boasted of his own works and despised the Publican. . . .

Some of them go so far as to desire none should be thought good but themselves, and so, at all times both in word and deed, fall into condemnation and detraction of others. They see the mote in the eyes of their brother, but not the beam

which is in their own. They strain out the gnat in another man's cup, and swallow the camel in their own.

Sometimes, also, when their spiritual masters, such as confessors and superiors, do not approve of their spirit and conduct—for they wish to be praised and considered for what they do—they decide that they are not understood, and that their superiors are not spiritual men because they do not approve and sanction their proceedings. So they go about in quest of someone else, who will accommodate himself to their fancy; for in general they love to discuss their spiritual state with those who they think will commend and respect it. They avoid, as they would death, those who destroy their delusion with the view of leading them into a safe way, and sometimes they even hate them. Presuming greatly on themselves, they make many resolutions, and accomplish little. They are occasionally desirous that others should perceive their spirituality and devotion, and for that end they give outward tokens by movements, signs, and divers ceremonies; sometimes, too, they fall into certain trances in public rather than in private . . . and are pleased when others are witnesses of them. . . .

Some beginners, too, make light of their faults, and at other times indulge in immoderate grief when they commit them. They thought themselves already saints, and so they become angry and impatient with themselves, which is another great imperfection. They also importune God to deliver them from their faults and imperfections, but it is for the comfort of living in peace, unmolested by them, and not for God; they do not consider that, were He to deliver them, they would become, perhaps, prouder than ever. They are great enemies of other men's praise, but great lovers of their own, and sometimes they seek it. In this respect they resemble the foolish virgins, who, when their

lamps gave no light, went about in search of oil, saying: "Give us of your oil, for our lamps are going out."

From these some go on to very serious imperfections, and come to great harm thereby. Some, however, fall into them less than others, and some have to contend with little more than the first movements of them. But scarcely anyone can be found who, in his first fervors, did not fall into some of them.

But those who at this time are going on to perfection proceed in a very different way, and in a very different temper of mind: they grow and are built up in humility, not only looking on their own works as nothing, but also dissatisfied with themselves; they look upon all others as much better, they regard them with a holy envy in their anxiety to serve God as they do. For the greater their fervor, the more numerous their good works; and the keener the pleasure therein, the more they perceive—for they humble themselves—how much that is which God deserves at their hands, and how little is all they can do for Him; thus the more they do, the less they are satisfied.

So great is that which they in their love would fain do, that all they are doing seems nothing. This loving anxiety so importunes and fills them that they never consider whether others are doing good or not, and if they do, it is, as I have said, in the conviction that all others are much better than they are. They think little of themselves, and wish others to do so also, to make no account of them and despise their works. Moreover, if anyone should praise and respect them, they will give them no credit, for they think it strange that anybody should speak well of them.

They, in great tranquillity and humility, are very desirous to learn from anyone the things that are profitable to them; in this respect, the very opposite of those of whom I have

just spoken, who are willing to teach everybody, and who, when anyone seems about to teach them anything, take the words out of his mouth, as if they knew it already.

But they of whom I am now speaking are very far from wishing to instruct anyone; they are most ready to travel by another road if they be but commanded, for they never imagine that they can be right in anything. When others are praised they rejoice, and their only regret is that they do not serve God themselves as well as they. They have no wish to speak about their own state, for they think so lightly of it, that they are ashamed to speak of it to their own confessors; it seems to them unworthy of any mention whatever. But they have a great desire to speak of their shortcomings and sins, which they would rather have known than their virtues; thus they incline to treat of the affairs of their soul with those who have no great opinion of their state and spirit. This is a characteristic of that spirituality which is pure, simple, true, and most pleasing unto God. For as the wise Spirit of God dwells in these humble souls, He moves and inclines them to keep His treasures secretly within, and to cast out the evil. For God gives this grace, together with the other virtues, to the humble, and withholds it from the proud.

## REPORT

### CALIFORNIA

Swami Paramananda turned his face toward California, November 17th, after a six months' stay in Boston. The hearts that had waited so eagerly and patiently for his return received him with much enthusiasm and joy. As usual, the Swami's coming brought new life and impetus to the work both at Ananda-Ashrama and at the Vedanta Centre in Los Angeles.

Thanksgiving Day, heavy showers fell in the land of sunshine and storms swept the surrounding hills, yet at the Ashrama, when the Swami rose to speak, the Temple of the Universal Spirit was filled. After an inspiring service, he invited the entire congregation to remain for dinner which he cooked with his own hands for all those who accepted his hospitality and shared in the day's festivity.

Christmastide was indeed complete in California this year with the presence of the Swami whose spirit flowed in constant inspiration from one Service to another. On Sunday, December 21st, he spoke on the "Coming of Christ," and on the Holy Eve his message of love and tenderness was so exquisite and unsurpassed that it will ever remain alive in the memory of those who came up to the mountain-top to worship their Saviour.

### BOSTON
### VEDANTA CENTRE

The work here has passed through some changes this season, as Charushila Devi, who has been in charge of the Vedanta Centre for the past two years, sailed for India and is now in Calcutta. Her friends in America hope that she will return to them soon.

Gayatri Devi came back from Europe to take charge of the Swami's Boston work. When in Geneva, she represented India at the Convention of International Professional and Business Women's Clubs. Delegates from Great Britain, Germany, France, Switzerland and Italy (seventeen countries in all) together with twelve hundred clubs of America, met at a formal banquet at which Gayatri Devi spoke as a guest of honor. Her message of universal note made a deep and lasting impression upon all.

Beside the activities at the Vedanta Centre, Gayatri Devi was invited to Elm Lea School at Putney, Vermont, where

she addressed a large group of interested listeners. They were so deeply touched by her earnestness and sincerity that on the following Sunday the heads of the School together with several students paid a return visit to the Vedanta Centre for the Evening Service.

While warm and bright California enjoys the Swami's presence, his work in cold and frosty Boston moves on steadily with the support of many understanding and sincere friends. The Thursday evenings with their Hindu dinners and vivid and beautiful legends of ancient India have been very successful. Also the Services on Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Sunday conveyed such a spirit of truth and loveliness that all unanimously felt the nearness of the Swami's living presence.

The Spirit of Christmas descended upon Boston, spreading a heavy wrap of snow over the trees and paths, roofs and towers. When on the significant eve many windows were illumined to reveal the light within, the Vedanta Household also united their hearts in worship and prayer. The beautiful Service, in the hush of the evening hour, with lighted vigils and adoring flowers, the front windows with smiling Mother and Child, made it an occasion of unearthly beauty and holy joy.

### COHASSET ASHRAMA

The little winter cottage at Ananda-Ashrama, Cohasset, which was recently built and decorated by the hands of the Swami's consecrated workers, has fulfilled a great need. Every Saturday, in spite of unpleasant weather and extreme cold, a group has gone there to enjoy the peace, the rest and the fragrant atmosphere of this little house in the pines, and has returned to Boston with glowing enthusiasm. All feel deeply grateful to the Swami for his gracious gift, this little place of unspoiled beauty.

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VOLUME XX NUMBER 2

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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

# Message of the East



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## India's Spiritual Gifts

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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## INDIA'S SPIRITUAL GIFTS

*By Swami Paramananda*

(An address delivered before a private group at Alhambra, California.)

THE very word India has a fascination for certain people. It casts upon their minds something mysterious, mystical and beautiful; they are drawn by anything which pertains to the Orient and will flock to hear so-called Yogis or Swamis without differentiating between the false and the true.

Then again, there is another type of mentality which is covered with such a thick layer of prejudice that it shuns even the name *Yoga,* and all that is connected with the East.

Now the question is, where in these conflicting opinions lies the truth? Before attempting to answer, let me quote to you this beautiful reflection made by Max Muller, one of the greatest Oriental scholars in the Occident:

"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 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."

You can see with what exalted feeling and with what conviction he speaks of India; yet if you should go to India and travel, as we find most people traveling—rather hurriedly, perhaps in a Cook's party—or if you read books by missionaries and casual tourists, what you will find will not coincide at all with the idea that he expresses, and naturally you will be very much puzzled as to which is the real India. There is, however, a parable given centuries ago by Lord Buddha, and later by one of the great spiritual lights of modern India—Sri Ramakrishna—which will help explain to you why people have so many different ideas in regard to this vast country:

Once there were some blind men who were desirous of knowing something about an elephant. So a friend took them to a place where there was one, in order that they might feel its various parts. This was the result: the one who felt its leg said that the elephant was like a great pillar; another cried, "Not at all! It is like a club." He happened to touch its trunk. The third, catching hold of its ear, exclaimed, "You are both wrong! It is like a winnowing basket." They began to quarrel and kept on arguing, till their friend, who was not blind like themselves, showed them how each was right and yet how each was wrong, because he had only taken hold of a part of the elephant. Same way, in our ignorance, we often dispute and judge.

I have lived in this country for twenty-five years, and during this time I have had many questions asked me about India. Sometimes these questions have amazed me. For instance, people still have a notion that Hindu mothers throw their children before the car of Jagannath or into the mouth of a crocodile. Many, many superstitious ideas are attributed to India. Those who give them out are not altogether liars, but

if we are observing we shall find that what they tell us as the whole truth represents only a partial truth. And this applies to almost everything that is said. For instance, India has the reputation of being a very hot country. This, however, is not all of India. India has the coldest climate as well as the hottest, and everything that lies between. Her climate, her culture, her tradition, her religion and philosophy, which are very ancient, all represent that extreme of heat and cold, poverty and riches, great spiritual wisdom and perhaps the greatest of unwisdom. Therefore, when a person touches but one phase, he gets a very incomplete picture. If a man should say that in India there are nothing but saints, he would be giving a wrong impression. Yet India has produced saints. The greatest gift she has made to the world is what is coming through her spiritual genius. It is there that her heart beats; it is from there that her light shines.

Every nation has its special traits. One is advanced in science; another is especially alert in the province of commerce; another again, is famous for its creative art. India, however, not only has been, she still is alive in the spiritual province; and let the world help her to keep that life intact; for is it not part of the whole?

What did the Great War prove to us? It was a lesson that I personally learned. That whenever one part of a body is struck, the other parts also feel and suffer; whenever one portion of humanity is afflicted—no matter who has caused the trouble or why—the rest of humanity is bound to suffer. Take our bodies for example: our hands, our feet, our eyes, our ears, our brain and heart, each has its own province. The work we do with our hands we cannot expect our brain to do, yet the brain directs and supports the action of the hands, and all the other parts. Same way the whole of human life is organized. We have our varied interests, and it is a very

beneficial thing that we do have, otherwise life would be extremely dull; but, to my mind, it grows ever more and more vivid that we are fundamentally one. This is strikingly expressed in the Indo-Aryan philosophy—the philosophy and religion of the Hindus. "That which is real is One—only One without a second."

Here we have the keynote of India's spiritual life; and not only India's: no matter how far back we go, we find the same sentiment running through the life of humanity. Man has conceived that One in many ways. In India, however, people follow the simple principle: Truth is One; God is One; His children worship Him differently according to their concept. It is for this reason that though India has dozens—no, that is limiting it—hundreds of sects, there is no room for sectarianism; but rather a place for every one. This is a very vital lesson that mankind can learn from India today. If she had not given anything but the thought that we can follow different lines, entirely different, yet reach the same goal, her service would be incalculable. Suppose there are four sons in a household, and instead of all traveling by the same road, each goes a different way and brings his contribution for the general storehouse, how much richer the result than if all four went to the same place, did the same thing, and quarreled over the same treasure. In our social life, in our political life, in our national life, we need to include this idea—that each one can go on his individual path and give his share to the whole, without interfering with his fellows or having any clash with them. It is a very, very great concept, and the only basis for tolerance. India stands for tolerance, and tolerance is one of the most vital factors in human existence. Small people, however, can never be tolerant of each other, and for this reason, they lose many opportunities and blessings.

You, perhaps, have devoted time and strength to building up a beautiful garden. You take great pride in it; you think what you have is quite perfect. But does that hinder your going to your neighbor's garden, or letting him come to enjoy yours in exchange? To your astonishment you may find that he also has evolved something, and knowing that something, you become wiser and your garden more complete.

We must go out; reach out; give and take. To be able to give is a blessed privilege, and also it is a very great thing to be able to receive. We can shut our doors and say, "This is Oriental and that is Occidental," and feel justified in doing so; we may point to certain outer differences of color, ideas and customs, but these are fictitious distinctions. When we meet people face to face, we find that they are just as interesting as we are, and that our life becomes richer when we have the influx of wisdom from other minds and other lands. This interchange of life and thought, this true spirit of tolerance, is India's heritage. She has never had the tone of proselytizing. Five hundred years before Christ, the Buddha sent his missionaries out into the world, but he did not say to them: "Go and increase my following—make converts!" Not at all. His injunction was: "Go, ye Bhikkhus, for the good of many, for the happiness of many." They went. They became servants of humanity, and the only converts they made were through love and service. Often they were misunderstood, were looked upon with suspicion, but that did not discourage them. Even when people hated them, they followed their Master's command, and remembered that hatred is never conquered by hatred; it is always conquered by love. You may say, "Why, that is Christ's teaching!" It is Christ's teaching; also it was Buddha's. There is no difference between one holy teaching and another. We create the differences and make boundary lines. If a man should seek

to partition off the sky, we would say, "That man is insane!" Yet that same insanity enters into us when we declare, "This is West; that is East. This is God's home or country, and that is not." We make a caricature of God when we feel this way. Is He a little God of tradition—an idol—a limited revengeful Deity, or the Ever-beneficent, All-loving Father of Unbounded Blessedness? You may call yourself a Christian while another may call himself a Jew, a Hindu or a Mohammedan, and it does not matter. The real question is: which God do you worship—the God that is made by your self-limitation and self-interest, or that Immensity which pervades the whole universe with love and loveliness?

The Infinite, All-blessed Deity has put no limitation over us; we ourselves create it. If our heart is not free from envy, malice, hatred, anger and all ill feelings, it makes no difference what kind of prayer we repeat. God is not deceived; He sees our heart. In India, the standard of greatness for a spiritual man is not how much learning he has acquired or from what family he comes, but whether or not he lives the life—*is* the thing that he is preaching. If he is preaching love, we like to see that he embodies love, so that people may learn from him not through what he says, but just by looking at him, touching him and associating with him. Whom does India respect most? Saints, lowly people who have nothing and who want nothing, because in them she finds the most definite imprint of her spiritual idealism. Godhood is manifested in such men. They crave no power, for God's power has charged them entirely.

Do not think that I am trying to prove to you that what India has is superior to Christianity, or that Christianity has something better than Buddhism. It is not my idea to draw lines of difference. Every fundamental thought contained in the world history of religion blends with every other. Did not

Christ say: "I come not to destroy but to fulfill?" Basically, we all have the same great ideas and ideals, but we demonstrate our faith only when we begin to live it. A man's face should shine with his religion. If through each face the Diety shone, what a wonderful blessing it would convey.

Let your light shine! Religion does not consist in going to church or reading the Bible; it does not consist in the observance of ritual or in following the tenets of any particular creed; religion is being and becoming. Wherein lies the greatest strength of Christ's message? It lies not in what He said, but in what He was. Today we sometimes forget this.

Being and becoming—living the life—that is, I think, the sum total of India's religion. There was a man who once said —perhaps in a humorous way—that over there in India they eat religion, drink religion and sleep religion. This gives a very fair and true picture. Religion for the Hindus is involved in every act of their daily living.

Often people throw up against India her poverty. But is it not one of the greatest indications of spiritual strength when a people can go through every kind of privation, can live in the midst of the most terrible want, can even be deprived of their freedom, and yet stand up and manifest their inner ideal? It is here that India's glory lies. Her life is complex—so complex that we can hardly imagine it—for it seeks to fulfill the needs of all, from the most ignorant to the most exalted, and that is why it is often so hard for the average person to grasp its significance. There are many with superficial minds who would destroy everything which does not appeal to their particular tastes. That, however, is not the way to improve matters. I do not mean that we should make a compromise with things which are illogical and harmful, but denunciation accomplishes nothing. We must never denounce. That is the first lesson we should learn. America is learning; Europe

is learning; India is learning.

It is a great tragedy when we become exclusive. Exclusiveness always brings trouble. Those who draw a narrow circle and feel that they are quite complete and self-sufficing end by making themselves hateful to others, and certainly it does not help them to understand their fellow-beings. India needs understanding; the West needs understanding; every country needs it. Here in the West if you make the outside beautiful and shining, you do not care what is happening within. On the other hand, India lays tremendous emphasis on the inner, and thus sometimes neglects the outer. That is the reason the West often misjudges her. How wonderful it would be if these two tendencies could be balanced—the internal and the external! Sri Ramakrishna, one of the greatest of India's modern teachers, gave the key to our whole life and its solution in this one simple sentence: "Make your mind and mouth one." What does it mean? It means that there should be no variance between our inner life and its outer expressions. In fact there is no power in our outer expressions unless they are backed by our inmost conviction. In other words, we cannot play a make-believe game. In order to express the highest in us, we must always try to cultivate and maintain a harmony between our inner thought and outer action.

India wants your help in practical methods, and she can give you help in the spiritual province. We are apt to think that the spiritual gift is the highest. It is, but it must have support from the material side. Each gift is great in its own place. That should be our motto. There should be balance. East and West must come together—not only East and West, but North and South, and all quarters. Unity—that is the cry of the world today; and we can help toward it by showing a living interest in it through our individual life. We may, however, preach brotherhood for another thousand

years and not attain it, if we fail to touch the vital chord of being. Brotherhood exists, yet we can realize it only when we perceive a common Fatherhood, only when we recognize the true God, who is not the God of tradition, but the God that India speaks of in her philosophy. Throughout the ages, the echo of that Word has rolled down to us ever fresh and vibrant. "Truth is One—God is One—men call Him by various names." Who is there that can quarrel with that? Christ taught this same principle; all holy men have taught it. How often Christ said: "Go and make thy peace with thy brother, and then come and lay thy gift on the altar." The Lord will not accept our offering so long as we are unloving toward any of His children.

When we travel, no matter what countries we may visit—India, China or any civilization—it is wise for us to speak their language. This is not an artificial language; it is the language of love. There is no one who does not understand it, and when we have learned it, we gain our access into other souls and find a common treasure. Let us go deeper and ever deeper and learn that soundless speech. It is not turbulence; it is not outer glamor; it is not ostentation that gives us fulfillment in life; it is this going deep down and getting close to the heart of things in silence, and this silence India can teach us. When we come out of it we are transformed.

We may talk of religion, we may talk of love, but how will anyone understand us so long as we do not manifest them? As I have said, the face must shine and tell the story. Sometimes we smile from theory, and it is a mockery; the same way it is when we pretend to be kind. Once we have become the thing, however, it is no more an effort; rather it is natural—just as natural as to breathe.

Let every man first know God; let him not follow his own self-will, but rather follow God's will. India, with all the

strength of her soul, lays her emphasis upon this fundamental principle—the same that Christ taught when He said: "First seek ye the kingdom of God." Since in every turn we see this basic unity of thought and feeling, why should we not join hands, recognizing that we are brothers?

There is a story of a man who, one night, was standing alone, facing the desert. Suddenly he saw something moving toward him out of the dark. He thought it was a ghost and there was fear in his heart. As it came closer he said to himself, "It does not look like a ghost; it must be some sort of an animal." As it drew still closer, he recognized that it was a human being; and lo! when he came face to face with it, what was the revelation? That it was neither a ghost nor an animal nor any dangerous element; it was his own lost brother, and in both hearts there was rejoicing and great delight. Same way it is with Oriental and Occidental. From a distance they fear each other, but as they draw near, they perceive that they are brethren, and the misunderstandings which arose in the darkness of their ignorance become unreal; the light of the sun shows their folly.

Let us then learn to draw our inspiration, our strength and our sustenance from the One Infinite, All-abiding, All-seeing, All-loving Spirit of the Universe, that we may be led to serve, to give and to receive with humility, and with a sense of surrender to that All-highest One, the Mother and Father of us all.

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In whatever tunnel a man may be digging, he is never out of sound of the sap being dug on the other side of the mountain. My European companions, I have made you listen through the wall to the blows of Asia, the coming One. . . . Go to meet her. She is working for us. We are working for her. Europe and Asia are the two halves of the Soul.

—*Romain Rolland.*

# BRIDGET THE SAINT

*By Mildred Phillips*

Faughart, a village in the county of Louth in Ireland, the birthplace of St. Bridget, is in no way remarkable except as the birthplace of a saint. It is a small place on the bay of Dundalk, where many a bit of Irish history has been enacted. And there, where the night-tide runs to meet the stars, about the year 453 A.D. her birth occurred.

Her father, Dubtach, a powerful lord of the county of Leinster, had a young and beautiful slave girl who became pregnant by him, at which his wife, enraged, besought him to sell her. To pacify her, he consented, with the proviso that he should claim the baby when it came. The slave girl's name was Breosaget, which means "Fiery Arrow," and it was this element of fire that she bequeathed to her famous daughter.

It was believed that angels were with Bridget constantly during her childhood, and that by their help she built a little altar where she conducted her religious worship, for even at this early age she was given to God, and to the care of the unfortunate.

Dubtach was a favorite with the king who, at one time, gave him a beautiful sword, the hilt of which was set with jewels. This, hanging high upon the wall, one day caught the eye of the little nine-year-old Bridget, who was walking disconsolately through her father's great halls, wondering how she was going to procure provisions for her poor and needy ones. The glitter of the stones seemed an answer to her prayers. Immediately, she climbed upon a stone bench, and, taking down the sword, removed the gems with which the hilt was studded. These she sold and used the money for her poor. Her father coming home, noticed that the jewels were gone, and at once made a great outcry, thinking

that a servant had stolen them. Quickly Bridget came to him and confessed that it was entirely her own fault, that she it was who had taken the jewels away and sold them, so that her people might not starve. Her father, who was more concerned with the king's favor than with hungry stomachs, scolded her severely, and, as it happened, just at this time the king came riding by. As his custom was, he stopped and entered the home of Dubtach and almost at once noticed the defacement of his royal gift. An explanation was demanded, and Bridget was summoned before him.

"How darest thou tamper with the gift of a king?" he angrily inquired.

"My lord," little Bridget bravely replied, "I would give all my father hath; yea, I would give all that you have rather than that my poor should go hungry."

The king, struck by her beautiful face, forgot his anger, and praising her courage, applauded her kind heart.

As Bridget grew older, many suitors came to ask her hand in marriage, for they knew how rich and powerful her father was, and they realized that an alliance here would make them part rulers of the kingdom. Bridget, however, always thought of herself as the bride of Christ, and fearful that her parents, in spite of her, would consummate her marriage with some one of her suitors, prayed that she might be made repulsive to the sight of men. Her prayer was answered. One of her eyes became swollen to many times its natural size, and her face was drawn to one side. Seeing her thus, all the messengers who had come for her betrothal vows returned home, bearing the dreadful news of her deformity.

After this strange happening, her father said that she might have what life she pleased; so taking three maidens with her, she went to Bishop Maccail to be invested with

the white veil of a novice. Before bestowing upon her and her companions the sign and seal of their covenant with God, however, the good bishop stood doubtful, thinking of the youth of Bridget. He wondered if her desire was only an impulse or something deeper, and he hesitated before the step that she was about to take. Yet, even as he paused, a column of fire was seen to gather, which, while it filled all the place with the brilliance of its light, rested particularly over the head of Bridget, marking her as one who found favor with God. Moreover, as she bent low to receive the veil, she touched the sacred altar, and, at her touch, the dry wood burst forth in green leaves and blossoms. At the same time, the deformity, which had made her sweet face ugly, disappeared, so that she left the sanctuary with her beauty completely restored.

Always Bridget had possessed the gift of healing. When but a very young girl, she had cured her old nurse, who was suffering from fever, by giving her water to drink over which she had made the sign of the cross, thereby changing it to mead, a beneficial draught in case of illness. Now, however, her life held many marvellous things, and there was attributed to her much that would be called miraculous today. For instance, the healing of one, Marcus by name, and the making whole of a woman who was ill with leprosy; likewise she cured a man of the same trouble, and restored sight to two blind men. But her power was shown in other ways than in the restoration of health to the sick.

One day, a servant of the king's household dropped a vessel of gold, so that it was bent out of shape. Bridget, who was standing by, fearing the man might be punished for his carelessness, restored the dish to him, whole and intact. One day, so it is told, coming hurriedly into the house after a shower, she threw her wet cloak hastily over a sunbeam,

thinking it was a beam of wood. Late at night, one of the nuns came and told her that the sunbeam was still there, waiting to be set free. So she removed her cloak and the ray departed after the sun.

Everything that she asked of the Divine was granted, for she asked only that all hardships be removed from her fellow beings, and all unhappy men be spared further vexation.

After having been given the veil by Bishop Maccail, Bridget built a cell for herself under an oak-tree and called it Kildare or "The Cell of the Oak." The young people, hearing of her sanctity, came to her in ever growing numbers and made themselves amenable to her directions, so that, in course of time, there grew up a large monastery, composed of men and women, which formed the nucleus of a town of good size. The men lived separately from the women, and the bishop of the city, St. Conlaeth, became father confessor to her monks.

The church of Kildare to meet the requirements of its large and varied congregations was divided into three parts, one for the monks, one for the nuns, and the third for the people. In this way Bridget became the guiding spirit of a very large community. Her nuns became known as "The Guardians of the Fire of Kildare." Who started this fire or when it was started is not known, but legend has it that it was kindled from some deeply religious motive, and was kept constantly burning by Bridget and her Sisters, in order that people might light their torches at it, and thus kindle the fire on their hearths. This fire might be interpreted symbolically as the flame of learning and of brotherly love, which was kindled and fostered by St. Bridget, and which spread throughout the length and breadth of Ireland, reflecting abroad in churches, built in her honor in England, Spain,

Portugal, France, Germany, Italy, and Belgium. Even today in Italy and Spain travelers meet with little children bearing the name of Brigetta and Brigida, while the name Brigid is well-known in Germany. The country women of Ireland in the more remote places, up to the present time, wear the long cloak or "peasant cape," formerly worn by St. Bridget's nuns. More and more did she become known to the world for her sanctity and holiness, and, in her country, became the founder of many monasteries and nunneries, besides the famous one of Kildare.

One time, while she was listening to a sermon preached by St. Patrick, she fell asleep. St. Patrick reproved her, but she exclaimed: "Oh, but I have had a dream!"

"Relate it to me," he said.

Whereupon she related a three-fold dream which St. Patrick interpreted as being representative of the time coming when there would be dissension between the faithful and those who would bring new faiths.

Later, she foretold her own death, prophesying the very day she would die, and related this to Darlugdach, who was one of the novices of the Order and a great favorite of Bridget. Upon hearing this prophecy, she wept bitterly, and begged that she might go too. Whereupon Bridget, comforting her, said, "You shall live just a year after my passing." And it was so.

St. Bridget exchanged her mortality for immortality, February 1, 525, and her body was buried in the church of Kildare. There, the fire she had so carefully guarded, was kept burning to honor her memory till the year 1220 when it was ordered extinguished by the Archbishop of Dublin. Bridget is usually represented with the flame as her symbol, sometimes shown as the column of fire which glowed above her head when, as a young girl, she took the veil.

# ST. BRIDGET OF THE SHORES

*By Fiona Macleod*

I have heard many names of St. Bridget, most beloved of Gaelic saints, with whom the month of February is identified—the month of "Bride min, gentle St. Bride"—*Brighid boidheach Muime Chriosd,* Bride the Beautiful, Christ's Foster Mother—but there are three so less common that many even of my readers familiar with the Highland West may not know them. These are "the Fair Woman of February," "St. Bride of the Kindly Fire," and "St. Bride (or Bridget) of the Shores." They are of the Isles, and may be heard in some of the Gaelic tales, still told among seafaring and hill folk. . . .

As "the Fair Woman of February," though whatever other designation St. Bride goes by, she is often revealed. Her humble yellow fires are lit among the grasses, on the shore-ways, during this month. Everywhere in the Gaelic lands "Candlemas-Queen" is honoured at this time. *Am Fheill Bhride,* the Festival of St. Bridget, was till recently a festival of joy throughout the west, from the Highland Line to the last weedy shores of Barra or the Lews: in the isles and in the remote Highlands still is.

It is an old tale, this association of St. Bridget with February. It goes further back than the days of the monkish chroniclers who first attempted to put the disguise of verbal Christian raiment on the most widely-loved and revered beings of the ancient Gaelic pantheon. Long before the maiden Brigida (whether of Ireland or Scotland matters little) made her fame as a "daughter of God"; long before to Colum in Iona or to Patrick "the great Cleric" in Ireland "Holy St. Bride" revealed in a vision the service she had done to Mary and the Child in far-away Bethlehem in the East; be-

fore ever the first bell of Christ was heard by startled Druids coming across the hills and forest lands of Gaul, the Gaels worshipped a Brighde or Bride, goddess of women, of fire, of poetry. When, to-day, a Gaelic islesman alludes to Bridget of the Songs, or when a women of South Uist prays to Good St. Bride, to bless the empty cradle that is soon to be filled, or when a shennachie or teller of tales speaks of an oath taken by Bridget of the Flame, they refer, though probably unconsciously, to a far older Brighid than do they who speak with loving familiarity of *Muime Chriosd*, Christ's Foster Mother, or *Brighid-nam-Bratta,* St. Bride of the Mantle. They refer to one who in the dim, far-off days of the forgotten pagan world of our ancestors was a noble and great goddess. They refer to one to whom the women of the Gael went with offerings and prayers, as went the women of ancient Hellas to the temples of Aphrodite, as went the Syrian women to the altars of Astarte, as went the women of Egypt to the milk-fed shrines of Isis. They refer to one whom the Druids held in honor as a torch bearer of the eternal light, a Daughter of the Morning, who held sunrise in one hand as a little yellow flame, and in the other held the red flower of fire without which men would be as the beasts who live in caves and holes, or as the dark *Fomor* who have their habitations in cloud and wind and the wilderness. They refer to one whom the bards and singers revered as mistress of their craft, she whose breath was a flame, and that flame song: she whose secret name was fire and whose inmost soul was radiant air, she therefore who was the divine impersonation of the divine thing she stood for, Poetry.

"St. Bride of the Kindly Fire," of whom one may hear to-day as "oh, just *Brighde min Muim* (gentle St. Bride the Foster Mother), she herself an' no other," is she, that ancient

goddess, whom our ancestors saw lighting the torches of sunrise on the brows of hills, or thrusting the quenchless flame above the horizons of the sea: whom the Druids hailed with hymns at the turn of the year, when, in the season we call February, the firstcomers of the advancing Spring are to be seen on the grey land or on the grey wave or by the grey shores: whom every poet, from the humblest wandering singer to Oisin of the Songs, from Oisin of the Songs to Angus Og on the rainbow or to Midir of the Underworld, blessed, because of the flame she put in the heart of poets as well as the red life she put in the flame that springs from wood and peat. None forgot that she was the daughter of the ancient God of the Earth, but greater than he, because in him there was but earth and water, whereas in her veins ran the elements of air and fire. Was she not born at sunrise? On the day she reached womanhood did not the house wherein she dwelled become wrapped in a flame which consumed it not, though the crown of that flame licked the high unburning roof of Heaven? In that hour when, her ancient divinity relinquished and she reborn a Christian saint, she took the white veil, did not a column of golden light rise from her head till no eyes could follow it? In that moment when she died from earth, having taken mortality upon her so as to know a divine resurrection to a new and still more enduring Country of the Immortal, were there not wings of fire seen flashing along all the shores of the west and upon the summits of all Gaelic hills? And how could one forget that at any time she had but to bend above the dead, and her breath would quicken, and a pulse would come back into the still heart, and what was dust would arise and be once more glad.

The Fair Woman of February is still loved, still revered. Few remember the last fading traditions of her ancient great-

ness: few, even, know that she lived before the coming of the Cross: but all love her, because of her service to Mary in Her travail and to the newborn Child, and because she looks with eyes of love into every cradle and puts the hand of peace on the troubled hearts of women: and all delight in her return to the world after the ninety days of the winter-sleep, when her heralds are manifest.

What, then, are the insignia of St. Bridget of the Shores? They are simple. They are the dandelion, the lamb, and the sea-bird popularly called the oyster-opener. From time immemorial, this humble, familiar yellow plant of the way-side has been identified with St. Bride. To this day shep-herds, on *Am Fheill Bhrighde,* are wont to hear among the mists the crying of innumerable young lambs, and this with-out the bleating of ewes, and so by that token know that Holy St. Bride has passed by, coming earthward with her flock of the countless lamps soon to be born on all the hill-sides and pastures of the world. Fisherfolk on the shores of the west and on the far isles have gladdened at the first prolonged repetitive whistle of the oyster-opener, for its advent means that the hosts of the good fish are moving to-wards the welcoming coasts once more, that the wind of the south is unloosened, that greenness will creep to the grass, that birds will seek the bushes, that song will come to them, and that everywhere a new gladness will be abroad. By these signs is St. Bridget of the Shores known. One, per-haps, must live in the remote places, and where wind and cloud, rain and tempest, great tides and uprising floods are the common companions of day and night, in order to real-ize the joy with which things so simple are welcomed. To see the bright sunsweet face of the dandelion once more—*an dealan Dhe,* the little flame of God, *am bearnan Bhrighde,* St. Bride's forerunner—what a joy this is. It comes into the

grass like a sunray. Often before the new green is in the blade it flaunts its bright laughter in the sere bent. . . . Beauty has only to be perceptible to give an immediate joy, and it is no paradoxical extravagance to say that one may receive the thrilling communication from "the little flame of God" by the homely roadside as well as from these leaning towers built of air and water which a mysterious alchemy reveals to us on the cloudy deserts of heaven. . . .

When the first lambs appear, many are the invocations among the Irish and Hebridean Gaels to good St. Bride. At the hearthside, too, the women, carding wool, knitting, telling tales, singing songs, dreaming—these know her whether they name her in thought, or have forgotten what was dear wisdom to their mothers of old. She leans over cradles, and when babies smile they have seen her face. When the *cra'-thull* swings in the twilight, the slow rhythm, which is music in the mother's ear, is the quiet clapping of her hushing hands. St. Bride, too, loves the byres or the pastures when the kye are milked, though now she is no longer "the Woman of February," but simply "good St. Bride of the yellow hair."

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A river is not like a pond, and a pond is not like a barrel, and a barrel is not like a dipper of water. But in the river, and in the pond, and in the barrel, and in the dipper, there is one and the same water, and just so with the Spirit dwelling in people: looking at the body, it seems that every man is different, but in Spirit all men are alike—in the well man and in the sick child, in the young Tsar and in the old beggar woman, and in all that which lives. One and the same Spirit of God gives life to all.

—*Tolstoy.*

# SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND SAMADHI

*Compiled from Various Authentic Sources**

The Nirvikalpa Samadhi is the highest flight of Advaita (Monistic) realization. Truth is then revealed in the heart of the Sadhaka in its perfection and glory. He feels it as a tangible thing. His illumination is steady, his bliss constant and his oblivion of the phenomenal universe is complete. Even when he descends from this dizzy height, he is devoid of the ideas of "I" and "mine" and looks upon the body as a mere shadow, an outward sheath where the soul appears to be encased. He does not dwell on the past, takes no thought for the future, and looks with indifference upon the present. Surveying everything with an eye of equality in this world of infinite variety, the liberated man is no longer touched by phenomena, carrying the reaction of pleasure and pain with them. He feels just the same if he—that is to say, his body—is worshipped by the good or tormented by the wicked, and he realizes, through the sameness of attitude, that there is but one Brahman running through the whole of Nature.

This is the crowning glory of a man's spiritual exercises—the last word about his evolution. There is no more birth, no more death, nor any further mixing up with the changes of the body. He leaves behind all these modifications of relativity like a cast-off garment. He realizes his identity with the Eternal Brahman, the One-Without-a-Second, and knows that his hitherto looking upon himself as a mortal creature dependent on phenomena, was owing to illusion and ignorance. It is authoritatively stated that for the ordinary Sadhaka there is no more return to the normal plane from this exalted state. After he has enjoyed supreme bliss

* From the "Life of Sri Ramakrishna."

in that state for a few days his body falls off, there being a complete dissociation of the aspirant's soul from the mind and body. Only those who are born with some special mission in the world can return—in an inscrutable way—from this Samadhi. They live and move in the world for the welfare of mankind. They are invested with supreme spiritual power and a divine splendor shines through them. They can transmit holiness and purity to others by a touch, a word, a look or even a thought. This is the reason why such men, otherwise without any worldly distinction, can revolutionize the world with new ideas and ideals that are irresistible.

Samadhi, broadly speaking, is a state of superconsciousness. It is leaving behind the world of gross materials as perceived by the senses, and soaring into a supersensuous state which may range from the vision of subtle elements by the truth-seeker to the merging of his mind in the Absolute. Sri Ramakrishna Deva's Samadhi covered a wide range of experience from his perception of various visions to the annihilation of his mind in the infinite consciousness of Brahman. It had also many forms. Sometimes he willed himself into them; at other times the strong current of his spiritual nature swept him into them in spite of himself. Thus he entered into a "world of power," or a "world of beauty," or "a world of spiritual grandeur," according to the nature of the suggestion from the external world. He would commune with invisible beings—forms of the Divinity or Divine Incarnations of the past. Such visions, however, belong to the domain of Personality, which is not the last word about spiritual experiences. So long as a Sadhaka is satisfied with this kind of Samadhi, his attainments cannot be said to be complete. He has not yet reached the unfathomable depths of the ocean, though undoubtedly he has gone a great deal

beneath the surface. He may even have come across some specimens of life abounding in those regions, but he has not yet ransacked the priceless treasures of the deep, which reveal themselves only to those who have the courage to dive on and on, till they have touched its solid bed. Thus we find Sri Ramakrishna spurring himself on to another course of Sadhana* altogether different from his previous ones, and his success in this was as remarkable as the practice was difficult. . . .

There came to the garden of Dakshineswar a wonderful man—wonderful both for his great Advaita realization, and for his practical demonstration of it in life. Totapuri, for that was the name of the august newcomer, was one of those itinerant monks who, realizing Brahman as the only Reality, and looking upon the world as a phantom, never take shelter under a roof, and spend their life under the canopy of heaven, alike in storm and sunshine, maintaining themselves on the slender pittances got from begging. It is said that Totapuri practiced Sadhana in a secluded forest on the banks of the sacred Nerbudda and attained to the Nirvikalpa Samadhi after a rigid discipline extending over forty years. A liberated soul, indifferent to the joys and sorrows of the world, he intended to spend the remaining years of his earthly life by making pilgrimages to the holy places. Like a released lion he roamed at will over the country and never spent more than three days at a time in one place. He had been to Puri and Gangasagar, and on his return journey along the course of the Ganges, halted at Dakshineswar. He hardly saw through the inscrutable Divine Will that guided his footsteps to this new place, for the fulfillment of a great mission.

Totapuri stopped at the main portico in front of the Kali temple where Sri Ramakrishna, dressed in an ordinary dhoti,

* Spiritual practice.

was seated in an abstracted mood. But his bright face at once arrested the attention of Totapuri who detected great parts in this apparently plain-looking young man. The more he looked at Sri Ramakrishna, the more he was struck, and at last coming up to him he said, "You seem to be an advanced seeker after Truth. Would you like to learn Vedanta?"

"I don't know. It all depends on my Mother.* I can agree to your proposal if She approves of it," was the quiet answer.

"All right," said the monk, "go and ask your mother. I shall not stop here for a long time."

Sri Ramakrishna silently left the place and came to the Kali temple. He communicated the matter to the Mother and in a state of trance heard Her command: "Yes, my boy, go and learn it of him. It is for this purpose that he has come here."

In a state of semi-consciousness and with a beaming countenance, Sri Ramakrishna returned and said to Totapuri that he had His Mother's permission. Totapuri, though struck at the innocent simplicity of the young man, must have smiled at his apparent superstition in addressing the image in the temple as mother. A great Vedantin, he believed in the personal God only as the dispenser of fruits to people for their actions. Such a God was a mere logical postulate to him, and he did not believe in the efficacy of prayer or devotion to Him on the part of an aspirant for Self-realization. Maya or Sakti, the kinetic state of Brahman, whom Sri Ramakrishna looked upon as Mother, was to this Vedantist monk nothing but an illusion, so there was absolutely no need for him to propitiate Her to extricate himself from the meshes of ignorance, and he alone was able to shatter it

* Sri Ramakrishna communed with God under the form of Divine Mother.

to pieces through self-effort. But he said nothing to Sri Ramakrishna on the point, thinking that under his training, the disciple would in no time be able to know the truth and spontaneously brush aside the superstitions.[1]

Totapuri told Sri Ramakrishna that he must be initiated with proper ceremony into the sacred order of Sannyasa, before commencing to learn the truths of Vedanta or practising the disciplines prescribed in this course. He must give up the insignia of his present state of life, such as the sacred thread or the hair-tuft, which marked him as a Brahmin and householder, and must begin a new life. Sri Ramakrishna said that he had no objection to it provided he could do it in private. He made this reservation for the sake of his old mother, who had left Kamarpukur about a year ago, to spend the remaining year of her afflicted life in the sacred precincts of Dakshineswar temple, where Mathur Babu's hospitality provided her with a room in full view of the Ganges, and all necessary comforts. It would be too much for her to see her son shave his head and take up the monk's vow. Totapuri understood his difficulty and said, "All right, I shall initiate you privately at the proper time." He then went to the Panchavati,[2] where he began to stay.

The auspicious day arrived. Sri Ramakrishna was asked by his Guru to perform the *Sradh* ceremony, or the prescribed oblations to the departed forefathers, for a Sannyasin is practically dead to the world and can no more take part in such rites. Then he was asked to perform his own *Sradh* as he must give up the desire of going to other spheres to

[1] But it was Totapuri who learned from Sri Ramakrishna and finally came to accept the Mother, it being revealed to him that Her Power was the same as That which he had realized as the Absolute and no more to be separated from It than fire can be separated from its burning or a gem from its brightness.

[2] Five Banyan trees. Sri Ramakrishna's place of meditation.

enjoy the fruits of his actions. He went through these exactly as he was told, and collecting the requisites for Sannyasa in his meditation-room at the Panchavati, according to the directions of the Guru, he observed a fast and joyfully awaited the final consecration.

The night was almost spent. In the placid silence of the last half-hour, the most auspicious time for this initiation, the teacher and the disciple entered the meditation-room. The Guru chanted the holy Mantras, which the disciple repeated as he put oblations one after another into the sacred fire. The last offering was made with which the disciple relinquished all desires of enjoyment, here and hereafter, and gave assurances of safety to all created beings who are part and parcel of his own self. He cast into the *Homa* fire his hair-tuft and sacred thread, and accepted from the hands of the Guru the loin-cloth and the ochre robe—the emblems of a new life, dedicated to the well-being of the world.

The day dawned. It was a glorious day for India and indeed for the world, pregnant with immense possibilities for the future. The ancient religion of the Vedanta found a new apostle, and the world saw the appearance of a new man filled with the all-embracing love of Buddha, and endowed with the keen intellect of Sankara. A new prophet was born who was to bridge over the two worlds, East and West, and reconcile the faiths of the past with the exigencies of the future.

Prostrating himself before his Guru, Sri Ramakrishna took his seat to receive his instructions. With a view to encourage him to feel constantly his identity with Brahman, Totapuri began teaching him about the cardinal truths of the Advaita Vedanta. "Brahman," he said, "is the only Reality, ever-pure, ever-illumined, ever-free, beyond the limits of time, space and causation. Though apparently divided by names

and forms through the inscrutable agency of Maya, the enchantress which makes the impossible possible, Brahman is really One and undivided. Because when a seeker is merged in the beatitude of Samadhi, he does not feel even a trace of time and space or name and form—the products of Maya. Whatever is within the domain of Maya is unreal—leave it off. Pierce through the maze of name and form and rush out of it like a lion. Dive deep in the search for Self, and be firmly established in it through Samadhi. You will then find that the world of name and form will vanish into nothing, and this puny ego will merge in the cosmic consciousness. You will realize your identity with Brahman, the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute." Quoting the scriptures, he said, "That knowledge is shallow by which one sees or hears or knows another. What is shallow is worthless and can never give supreme felicity. But the knowledge in which one does not see, hear or know another, which is beyond duality, is great and helps a man to attain the supreme Bliss. How can the mind and senses grasp That which shines in the heart of all as the Eternal Subject?"

Arguing in this way, and supporting his arguments by scriptural quotations, Totapuri tried that day to help Sri Ramakrishna to fix his mind firmly in the Absolute. We describe it in Sri Ramakrishna's own words: "After the initiation 'the Naked One'* began to teach me the various conclusions of the Advaita Vedanta and asked me to withdraw the mind completely from all objects and dive into the Atman. But in spite of all my attempts, I could not cross the realm of name and form and bring my mind to the unconditioned state. I had no difficulty in withdrawing the mind from all other objects except one, and that was

* Totapuri belonged to an order of naked ascetics.

the all too familiar form of the Blissful Mother—radiant and of the essence of Pure Consciousness—which appeared before me as a living reality, and would not allow me to pass beyond the realm of name and form. Again and again I tried to concentrate my mind upon the Advaita teachings, but every time the Mother's form stood in my way. In despair I said to the 'Naked One,' 'It is hopeless. I cannot raise my mind to the unconditioned state and come face to face with the Atman.' He grew excited and sharply said, 'What! You can't do it! But you have to!' He cast his eyes around for something and finding a piece of glass, he took it up and piercing its point between my eyebrows said, 'Concentrate the mind on this point!' Then with a stern determination, I again sat to meditate, and as soon as the gracious form of the Divine Mother appeared before me, I used my discrimination as a sword and with it severed it into two. There remained no more obstruction to my mind, which at once soared beyond the relative plane, and I lost myself in Samadhi!"

Sri Ramakrishna Deva passed into the ineffable glory of the Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Before that rapturous ecstasy the senses and mind stopped their functions. The body became motionless like a corpse. The universe rolled away from his vision—even space itself melted away. Everything was reduced to ideas which floated like shadows in the dim background of the mind. Only the faint consciousness of "I" repeated itself in dull monotony. Presently that too stopped, and what remained was only Existence. The soul lost itself in the Self, and all idea of duality of subject and object was effaced. The limitations were gone and finite space was one with infinite space. Beyond speech, beyond experience and beyond thought, Sri Ramakrishna had realized the Brahman—had become the Brahman.

Totapuri sat for a long time, silently watching his disciple. Finding him seated perfectly motionless, he stole out of the room and locked the door lest anybody should intrude without his knowledge. Then he awaited the call of Sri Ramakrishna to open the door. The day pased on, the night came. Another day, and still another—three days passed in this way, but still there was no call from the room. Totapuri was astonished and left his seat to know what the matter was. He opened the door and entered the room. There sat Sri Ramakrishna in the very same position in which he had left him. There was no manifestation of life in the body, but the countenance was calm, serene and radiant. He understood that the disciple was still dead to the objective world, with his mind absorbed in the Self, without a flicker—absolutely steady!

With breathless wonder, Totapuri stood before this august spectacle. "Is it really true?" he said to himself. "Is it possible that this man has attained in the course of a single day what took me forty years of strenuous practice to achieve?" Impelled by doubt, he again made a searching inquiry into the symptoms. With the utmost care he examined if the heart was beating and if there was the slightest trace of respiration. Again and again he touched the disciple's corpse-like body. There was no sign either of life or of consciousness. In joyous bewilderment he cried out, "Great God, it is nothing short of a miracle!" It was undoubtedly a case of the Nirvikalpa Samadhi—the culmination of the Advaita practice!

Totapuri immediately took steps to bring the mind of Sri Ramakrishna down to the world of phenomena. The little room in the Panchavati rang with the holy Mantra—*Hari Om*—uttered in a solemn voice. Little by little, Sri Ramakrishna came to the consciousness of the outside uni-

verse. He opened his eyes and saw his Guru looking at him with tenderness and admiration. The Guru answered the worthy disciple's prostration by locking him in a warm embrace.

Totapuri did not generally stay at one place for more than three days. But here he found a strange attraction in the new disciple, whom he wanted to establish firmly on the lofty plane of Advaita. Engaged with him in discussions on the subject, the itinerant monk passed eleven months in the garden of Dakshineswar.

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## SPIRITUAL RAPTURE

*By John Ruysbroeck*

By . . . fierce ardor and . . . impatience some men are at times caught into the Spirit, above the senses; and there words are spoken to them and images and similitudes shown to them, teaching them some truth of which they or other men have need, or else things that are to come. These are called revelations or visions. If they are bodily images, they are received in the imagination. This may be the work of an angel in man, through the power of God. If it be an intellectual truth, or a ghostly image, through which God reveals Himself in His unfathomableness, this is received in the understanding; and the man can clothe it in words in so far as it can be expressed in words.

Sometimes a man may also be drawn above himself and above the spirit (but not altogether outside himself) into an Incomprehensible Good, which he shall never be able either to utter or to explain in the way in which he heard and saw; for in this simple act and this simple vision, to hear and to see are one. And none can work this in man, without intermediary and without co-operation of any creature, save God alone. It is called RAPTUS; which means, rapt away, or uplifted, or carried away. At times God grants to such men a sudden spiritual glimpse, like the lightning in the sky. It comes like a sudden glimpse of

strange brightness, shining from the Simple Nudity. And thereby for an instant the spirit is raised above itself; but the light passes at once, and the man returns to himself again. This is the work of God himself; it is something very sublime; for those to whom it happens often become illuminated men.

## REPORT

On Sunday, January 18th, at the Ananda-Ashrama, Swami Paramananda celebrated the birthday of the Swami Vivekananda. A spontaneous quality entered into all the preparations, so that though many friends were notified and all was made in readiness for the morning and afternoon Services and the Hindu dinner to be served between them, it all came to pass easily and naturally, like the opening of a flower. A glorious California sun shed its blessing on the day, and helped to attract the many who assembled to pay honor to the flaming Spirit, whose living voice is still echoing through India and the world. In truth, as Swami Paramananda spoke on his personal reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda, it was as if one were looking into the heart of a flame, or into a heart that was filled with a fire of love which nearly consumed it, and which overflowed in the form of compassion, humility, and ever-renewed power. The Swami, as he spoke from the depth of tender memory, invoked the vibrant figure of his Master, till he seemed to stand before the Western congregation as in life. He said that while many had seen Swami Vivekananda as a great figure, a dynamic intellectual power, it had been his rare privilege always to touch the gentle side of that great soul, "'gentleness almost like that in the heart of a young girl," he said, and then he charmed his hearers with intimate narratives of this aspect of his Teacher.

Following the Service, the Hindu dinner which had been prepared by the Swami's own hands, was served at long tables on the front terrace. Many who were not able to be present at the morning Service came to partake of this feast, given in the great Swami's honor, and among these Swami Paramananda was happy to welcome his brother in the

Ramakrishna Mission, Swami Prabhavananda; the eminent head of the Raja Yoga Sat Sanga, Swami Dhirananda; Dr. Walter Raymond and other distinguished guests, all of whom came at the Swami's personal invitation.

The afternoon Service which followed the dinner was equal in attendance to the morning, and again, with magic word, the Swami pictured the heroic spirit of Swami Vivekananda, whose clarion call sounded through the lips of his disciple and held all hearts spellbound by its universal appeal for love and service. The sun's rays, entering the Temple of the Universal Spirit through one of the long windows, illumined the pictured face of Swami Vivekananda, flower-garlanded on a special altar by the speaker's chair, and then, moving softly, touched the face of Swami Paramananda with its brilliance, and the faces of the speakers that followed. Dr. Raymond spoke briefly but with deep sincerity of Swami Vivekananda's influence on all the modern religious movements of the West; Swami Dhirananda described a birthday celebration which he had attended at the Belur Math years ago, and the vision it had given him of the significance of Swami Vivekananda's life and message. Swami Prabhavananda concluded with an emphatic appreciation, while the whole was summed up by Swami Paramananda, who in these last few words following a rather long program gathered all the inspiration of the afternoon into an exalted conclusion.

The other outstanding event for the month of January at the Ananda-Ashrama was the midnight Service on New Year's eve. The Temple of the Universal Spirit took on a magical atmosphere at this hour, with its hanging vigils, its shining altar, its greens and its flowers. Outside, the crystal clear stars, so brilliant in these California hills, and the intense quiet prepared the hearts of those who came—and there were a goodly number—for the Swami's Address, which falling into the rhythm of mountain and sky, star and flaming candle, replaced the little thoughts with a loftier vision. At the close, "Children of Light" from the Swami's book "The Vigil," which has become an inherent part of the New Year's Eve Services, was recited in unison by the congregation.

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VOLUME XX NUMBER 3

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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

# Message of the East



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

MARCH, 1931

## Inner Rhythm

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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

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## INNER RHYTHM

*By Swami Paramananda*

*MAY we, in this hour of silence and prayer, feel within us that which is not the outer world, but is true and abiding;*

*May our ears hear the rhythm of it in sound, in music;*

*And may our inner eyes perceive the Beautiful, the Holy One.*

*O Thou Giver of all blessings, Embodiment of all blessedness, Do Thou manifest Thyself in our hearts, in our innermost being, that we may learn to rejoice in Thy Presence; and in Thy Presence may all our discord and unhappiness fade away.*

*O Thou all-compassionate Being, Giver of light and wisdom, bestow upon us Thy loving and abiding protection, and keep us ever and ever in peace.*

There are moments when we feel, and those moments are more precious to us than the times when we merely struggle to perceive or understand an idea; because if the feeling is true, it gives us the key to knowledge, to inspiration, to all that is worth while in life. Will is a tremendous power, yet even the will is something that we have to evolve, not by any boisterous effort, but through finding the great secret of rhythm. Without the knowledge of this secret, will-power

or intellectual force can accomplish very little. Moreover, outer things no longer can disturb or unsettle us to any great extent or throw us into a state of discord, once we have established this rhythm within. A great Christian mystic expresses it in these words:

"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 pressures, vigor in despondency, courage in fear, resistance in temptation, peace in war, and quiet in tribulation."

How many contrasts are given here that seem to us almost like impossibilities! Yet the state of mind which they describe is the direct result of a life established in rhythm. I am anxious that you may grasp the vital significance of this great and profound theme, so that by grasping it, even mentally, you may have a more definite hold on it as you go on, and a greater perception of its influence in every aspect of your daily living.

All that is beautiful, all that is harmonious, all that is musical, all that we call art and find lovely and gracious—a person, for instance, who is pleasing to you in his walking, talking, glance or expression—in fact, everything that delights and attracts you owes the greater part of its charm to that tuning—that rhythm.

Now this is not to be taken merely as a fancy or a poetic concept; the vital part of life is dependent on rhythm. As I see it, a broken rhythm means defeat; it means inharmony; it means unhappiness and depression. Each time our rhythm is destroyed we are depleted; and let us realize right at the beginning that the outside world, although it may seem to be instrumental in causing our sorrow or breaking our rhythm, cannot do so unless we give it the power. We can minimize its influence over us or we can tremendously increase it. It

all depends upon the state of our inner being.

"Behold the bird of the air,
With what ease it sways and swings;
With what gait it follows its heavenly path;
With what grace it moves its limbs!
Aerial friend, at every morn I hear thee sing.
Whose messenger art thou, sweet musician?
Whose mandate dost thou bring?
BIRD
I sing the song of life,
With the smile of the sun and the dance
of the twilight.
My mandate is to bring thee blessing
from the Ever-blessed,
And to fill thy heart with joy.
Dear dreamer, live in the rhythm of life
in waking and in sleeping,
Then thou shalt know the spirit of my song."

I give you this little poem, (in part) hoping that you may see its fundamental import—how everything—the voice of the bird, the dance of the twilight, the whole of nature—moves to the beat of harmony. I remember well the particular occasion when this poem was born—if I may use that expression—how the note, the song of the bird conveyed to me very definitely something which was rhythm. Do not think for a moment that these experiences occur only sometimes and that there are only certain persons who are capable of hearing the sermons preached by the rocks and the trees, as Shakespeare puts it. There is no hour inopportune, there is no moment when a man needs to be deaf or dumb or blind, unless he has imposed on himself the thought of dumbness and deafness and blindness within.

We can never measure to what extent inner rhythm helps us until we ourselves have approached it. We have perhaps

gained a little view of the beautiful, we have spoken great words or sung lovely hymns having the power to tune our hearts with some rhythmic chord; but this is not enough. We must find the occasion or create the opportunity to go within and seek there to establish that rhythm. And it is not only those who are interested in the religious life who should strive for this; it is needed everywhere. A mechanic if he strikes something out of rhythm may hurt himself. Often we find that this happens. When a man is distracted, absent-minded, irritable and overwrought, it is almost uncanny with what vehemence his own discordant feelings seem to strike back at him. You may not want to believe in these things, but you can prove them if you make an intelligent search into the mishaps that take place—the experiences which cause us to be brittle and bring us almost to the breaking point. More and more we shall come to realize the value, the lyrical quality, the preserving effect of rhythm. And it is something we can all cultivate. We do not have to become famous musicians before we can be rhythmic. A person may have learned the mechanical part of music, he may have acquired technique in the schools and a certain amount of outer polish, but all this will have no real value, no significance for him until he has found that rhythm within.

Occasionally we come in contact with people whose exterior says one thing and whose inner being conveys another. Something comes out of them, through their voice or their glance, which betrays. It is most amazing! They seem to shine until they have spoken. Why is it? Do not think it happens by accident. Outer rhythm we may practice, just as a dancer learns to take the right steps and do all in accordance with the rules; but there is something more—something beyond. When we have learned to establish ourselves in that, there is no longer any question of calculation—"What

shall I say when I meet so-and-so? How shall I appear? What attitude of mind shall I hold?"—these thoughts will not torment us or make us feel restless. We shall speak the right thing, and do the right thing, and be the right thing without thinking or planning; and that faculty is one of the greatest assets a human being can possess. Even in the business world, occasionally we find a man who seems to know as if by instinct exactly what to do, what to say, and how to handle his affairs. Everything blossoms forth because he is in right time and right tune. Again, another man, in spite of ambition and tremendous zeal to win, seems always to strike the wrong note, so that whatever he says is misunderstood or discordant.

"Walk in the rhythm of life—your limbs will not tire!"

Don't you believe in it? If not, try to put yourself through an endurance test as a walker or runner. You will find that you have to have that rhythm. You can wear yourself out in the first few seconds or you can make yourself hold on for a very long time. This takes me back many years to the fields of Calcutta when I was only a lad. I was a very fast runner and for this reason often used to be asked to play football with the older men. One of them, seeing what I was able to do, said, "Let me give you a little point: in running never put your whole foot on the ground, and you will have even greater speed." What he said I have always remembered, for it contains a tremendous amount of philosophy, even in a spiritual sense. If you do not put your whole foot on the ground when you walk or dance or run or have dealings with others, you will not throw your weight and therefore your weight will not come back on you. You can test this out in every turn of life. You may perhaps think that you will cast your burden on someone else. Do not do it; it will fall back upon you again with even greater

heaviness. It is only those who have learned not to throw their weight on anything or anybody who do not break the earth, the people around them or themselves. This is a physical fact, so do not pass it by as a fanciful picture.

"Sing in the rhythm of life—your voice will gain sweetness!"

All artists know that. Singers, when they sound a discordant note, it breaks them so completely that often you cannot make them sing again. And it is not just artistic temperament; something snaps within them. Same way it is with us. Whenever we are discordant, whether casually or with calculation, our moral strength is depleted, and our faith in ourselves and in the Higher Power becomes weakened. When, however, we move harmoniously, we are just like a singer singing in tune—his song seems to increase in power, in volume, in sweetness; instead of depleting, it brings greater force.

"Dance in the rhythm of life—your feet will not touch the ground!"

I think we have all seen how the greatest dancers touch the earth so lightly that they almost give the effect of floating in the air.

"Breathe in rhythm!"

Often the question is asked me: "Can you not give me some breathing exercises?" There is one way that you can practice these without impairing yourself. No matter where you stand or what your vocation is, if your thoughts have become unified, co-ordinated, one-pointed, dedicated, you will find that your breath and your entire being will sway and swing in the same rhythm. The greatest men evolve these things quite unconsciously and spontaneously. Is there not beauty in that thought? Today we are believers in all that is manufactured; we like machine-made goods, and we try to put ourselves through the same process. The real things, however, are spontaneous, inspirational and unspoiled.

Many times we hear it said, "I was born with peculiar tendencies; my life is a failure!" There is no one who needs to feel this way. It would be far better to banish such thoughts altogether. No matter how many times you have fallen down, no matter how often you have broken your promise to yourself, that is no reason why you need continue to do so, why you cannot rise and stand erect. You must do it—you have to do it. The happiness of a home, of an individual life, of the world depends on it. Immediately you draw back. When anyone talks about the world, at once we become frightened. We say, "If the world is unbelieving, if the world is in discord, how can one single person do anything?" It is, however, the one single person who brings a definite current into this world of life. Take Christ, for instance; He is an example of all that I have been saying concerning inner rhythm. Did He not have trials? Do you think that He did not? Then it means that you fail to understand the significance of His life. A hundred times more trials than one individual experiences during a whole lifetime He had perhaps in a day. And what was His fortification against these trials and tribulations? That perpetual consciousness of an established harmony, an inner rhythm which nothing could break. This you too can possess; also you can destroy it. You can make yourself so turbulent and impatient that you strike yourself by your own thought without actually laying your hand upon yourself. Through dejection and a sense of failure you can create chaos all around you and lay up a tremendous volume of difficulties to be overcome.

Why should we allow ourselves to be conquered by these things when we have that within us by which we can control them? Why should we not try to possess what is immediately ours? Whenever difficulties confront us, no matter wherefrom they come, we can master them, we can vanquish them

by just that one thing of inner rhythm, and we can do it without any noise. We do not have to talk about it. In fact it is much better that we do not. Silence is a very beautiful expression of rhythm. You can almost feel your own pulse. Because of that moment of your silence you begin to hear a voice which you have not heard before—the subtle sound; you begin to see everything becoming alive. Trees, shrubs, a flower, a bird—everything you contact—becomes living and conveys its life to you in a tangible way, because you have established that inner rhythm.

We do not gain anything accidentally. I think we all know that. There is nothing accidental in deep profound spiritual experience, nor in the moment of apparent defeat. All things come in their due order. When our rhythm is broken we suffer; our hearts grow sad, despondent and morose; again when we establish our rhythm they are quickened, and we rejoice. I doubt if there can be any real religious experience for anyone until he has gained that rhythm within. Through it we find our contact with our Ideal—with Divinity, Truth—whatever we care to call it. And if we have any harshness, aggressiveness or bitterness within us—anything that is alien or unsettling to our spirit—in that rhythm it melts away, just as the ice melts before the rising sun. There is rhythm in the sunshine. That is the reason we welcome it. We rejoice, our hearts are gladdened when we see the face of the sun. It is the face of Truth. And when we have lifted the veil that hides it from us, then we shall live altogether in another consciousness, another sphere, another rhythm that is unbroken joy.

We talk a great deal about helping our fellows, bringing happiness into the world, removing suffering, and this is one way that we can all do it, not just in theory, but in our practical life and dealings—in our thoughts, words, and ac-

tions. When we have established inner rhythm there will be fewer mistakes, fewer accidents, fewer cross-currents, and this cannot help but add to the well-being of the world.

Let us remember, whenever any evil situation confronts us, that instead of fretting, instead of trying to fight it or even shift our ground, if we will only be more resolved to give ourselves in a harmonious way to the rhythm of harmony within our souls, to resign our spirit to that, we shall gradually eliminate the evil, until there will come a day when everything will shine before us with the radiance of divine beauty, and we shall find a peace which nothing can rob us of or destroy.

## UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Beauty of expression and fine consonance and grace and rhythm, all minister to goodness of nature, a mind that is truly adorned with a beautiful and fine temper. And the absence of grace and rhythm and harmony is closely allied to an evil style and an ill sentiment. . . .

On these grounds is not education in music of the greatest importance, because more than anything else rhythm and harmony make their way down into the inmost part of the soul and take hold upon it with the utmost force, bringing with them rightness of form if one be rightly nurtured.

—*Plato.*

The meaning of song goes deep. Who is there that in logical words can express the effect that music has on us? A kind of inarticulate, unfathomable speech, which leads us to the edge of the Infinite, and lets us for a moment gaze into that.

—*Carlyle.*

Good music knows no class; it appeals to all of humanity.

—*Walter Damrosch.*

# THE POWER OF THE WORD*

By Inayat Khan

We find in the Bible the words, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God;" and we also find that the Word is Light, and that when that Light dawned the whole Creation manifested. These are not only religious verses; to the Mystic or Seer the deepest revelation is contained in them. Here is a thought which may be pondered for years; each time with fresh inspiration. It teaches that the first sign of life that manifested was the audible expression, or sound; that is the Word.

Taking this interpretation we find, when we compare it with the Vedanta philosophy, that they are identical. All down the ages, the Yogis and Seers of India have worshipped the Word-God, or the Sound-God, and around that idea is centred all the mysticism of sound or of utterance. Not alone among Hindus, but among the Seers of the Semitic and Hebraic races the great importance of the word was recognized. The sacred Name, the sacred Word, were always esteemed in the Jewish religion. Also in Islam, that great religion whose mysticism is only beginning to be known in the West, there is found the doctrine of Ismahism which translated is "the doctrine of the Mystical Word." The Zoroastrians, who had their religion given to them long before the time of the Buddha or the Christ, and who have lost many of their Teachings through change of time and condition, have yet always preserved the sacred words. It is a well-known fact that Sanskrit is now a dead language; long dead and forgotten, but in the Indian meditations called Yogas, Sanskrit words are used still, because of the power of sound,

*From "Sufism." Published by the Sufi Movement, 30 Westbourne Grove, London, W2, England.

and vibration that is contained in them. The deeper we dive into the mystery of life the more do we find that the whole secret is hidden in what we call words. All occult science, all mystical practices are based upon the Science of Word or Sound. Man is a mystery in all aspects of his being; not only in mind and soul, but also in that organism which he calls his body. It is his body of which the Sufis say that it is the Temple of God; and this is not a mere saying or belief, for if he can study his body from the mystical point of view, man will find it to be much more subtle and far-reaching, and much more capable of doing, understanding and feeling, than he believes it to be.

There are faculties of the soul which take expression through a certain centre in the body of man; and as there are parts of lands to which water never reaches and therefore they never become fertile soil, so it is with these centres when the breath never reaches them. They are intuitive, they are full of peace and balance, they are awakened, for man has breathed only in those parts of his body by which he can eat and live and perform action. He is only half alive if you compare his existence with the fulness of life that can be obtained by spiritual development.

It may be compared to living in a great town and not knowing that there are many beauties that one has never seen. As there are many people who travel to distant lands and do not know their own country, so it is with man. He is interested in all that brings beauty and joy and yet does not know the source of all such things in himself. Man breathes, but he does not breathe rightly. As the rain falls on the ground and matures the little plants and makes the soil fertile, so the breath, the essence of all energy, falls as a rain on all parts of the body. This also happens in the case of the mind; but man cannot ever perceive that part of the breath which

quickens the mind, only that felt in the body is perceptible. But to the average man it is not even perceptible in the body; he knows nothing of it except so far as it appears in the form of inhalation and exhalation through the nostrils. It is this alone which is generally meant when man speaks of breath. When we study the science of breath the first thing we notice is that breath is audible; it is a word in itself, for what we call a word is only a more pronounced utterance of breath fashioned by the mouth and tongue. In the capacity of the mouth breath becomes voice, and therefore the original condition of a word is breath. Therefore, if we said, "First was the breath," it would be the same as saying, "In the beginning was the Word." The first life that existed was the Life of God and from that all manifestations branched out. It is a manifold expression of One Life; one flower blooming as so many petals, one breath expressing itself as so many words. The sacred idea attached to the Lotus flower is expressive of this same philosophy symbolizing the many lives in the One God, expressed in the Bible in the words, "In God we live and move and have our being." When man is separated from God in thought, his belief is no use to him, his worship is but little use to him, for all forms of worship or belief should draw man closer to God, and that which makes man separate from God has no value.

Now comes the question, what is it that makes a word sacred or important? Is not every word as sacred and important as the other? That is true. But for whom is it sacred? For the pure and exalted souls to whom every word breathes the name of God; but not to the average man. There are souls who are at that stage of evolution in which every word is the Sacred Name. But when a teacher gives a method it is not given to the exalted souls, but to beginners; and therefore words are selected and given to pupils by Guru or

Teacher as a physician would give a prescription, knowing for which complaint and for what purpose it is given. Hafiz says, "Accept every instruction thy Teacher giveth, for He knoweth which is thy path and where is thy good."

Great importance is given by Mystics to the number of repetitions, for numbers are a science and every number of repetitions has a value. One repetition means one thing and a few something quite different. As a medicine one grain of a drug may heal and ten may destroy life. When Christ commanded to abstain from vain repetitions He was not, as is often thought, referring to the Sacred Name as used in worship or in religious practices. There was a custom among the Semitic people, and it still exists in the East, of the constant use of the name of God by people in the street or market place. They would bring it continually into commerce or business, into quarrels and disputes, and it was against this abuse of the most holy Name that Christ was speaking. In repetition lies the secret of power; therefore it is a great mistake when people take the ways of spiritual culture lightly as an everyday interest, as a little hobby, and learn from a book or from some slight instruction given to them. If they attempt to practice from such knowledge only, they are risking their lives. Imagine a centre which should be awakened at a certain time of evolution, waked before that time is reached; it is a disaster! There are certain words which attract a certain blessing in life; some attract power, some bring release from difficulties, some give courage and strength. There are words which can heal, others which give comfort and ease, and again others which have greater effects still. Now, when a person in need of peace and rest uses words that bring courage and strength he will become yet more restless. It is just like giving medicine which is a tonic, to cure a high fever. Then there is another question, namely, what is it

which makes a word powerful? Is it the meaning, the vibration, the way it is used or the knowledge of the Teacher who teaches the pupil to repeat it? The answer to such a question is that some words have power because of their meaning; others because of the vibrations they produce; others for their influence upon the various centres. And there are some words which are given by Saints, Sages and Prophets which have come inspirationally from God. In them is all blessing and the mystery of how to acquire all that the soul desires in life. If there exists any phenomenon or miracle it is in the power of words; but those who know of this power and who possess it never show it to others. Spiritual attainment is not a thing to be brought before people to prove that it is real, or as a show.

What is real is proof in itself; what is beyond all price or value does not need to be made much of before people. What is real is real . . . it needs no explanation nor pleading.

The greatest lesson of Mysticism is to know all, gain all, attain all things, and be silent. The more the Disciple gains, the more humble he becomes; and when any person makes this gain a means of proving himself in any way superior to others it is a proof that he does not really possess it. He may have a spark within himself; but the Torch is not yet lighted. There is a saying among the Hindus that the tree that bears much fruit bows low. Words have power to vibrate through different parts of man's body. There are words that echo in the heart, and there are others that do so in the head. And again others have power over the body. By certain words definite emotions can be quickened or calmed. There is also a science of syllables which has its own particular effect.

Wagner does but repeat the teaching of the Mystics of the East when he says, "He who knows the law of vibrations knows the whole secret of life."

# WHEN HIS MAJESTY PLAYED THE HAN-CH'IH*

*From the teachings of Chuang Tzu*

Pei Men Ch'eng said to the Yellow Emperor, "When your Majesty played the *Han-ch'ih* in the wilds of Tung-t'ing, the first time I heard it I was afraid, the second time I was amazed, and the last time I was confused, speechless, overwhelmed."

"You are not far from the truth," replied the Yellow Emperor. "I played as a man, drawing inspiration from God. The execution was punctilious, the expression sublime.

"Perfect music first shapes itself according to a human standard; then it follows the lines of the Divine; then it proceeds in harmony with the five virtues; then it passes into spontaneity. The four seasons are then blended, and all creation is brought into accord. As the seasons come forth in turn, so are all things produced. Now fulness, now decay, now soft and loud in turn, now clear, now muffled, the harmony of *Yin and Yang*.[1] Like a flash was the sound which roused you, as the insect world is roused (by the warm breath of spring), followed by a thundering peal, without end and without beginning, now dying, now living, now sinking, now rising, on and on without a moment's break. And so you were afraid.

"When I played again, it was the harmony of the *Yin* and *Yang*, lighted by the glory of sun and moon; now broken, now prolonged, now gentle, now severe, in one unbroken, unfathomable volume of sound. Filling valley and gorge, stopping the ears and dominating the senses, adapting itself

* Name of a piece of music, the meaning of which is not known.

[1] The Positive and Negative Principles of Chinese cosmogony, from whose interaction the visible universe results.

to the capacities of things—the sound whirled round on all sides, with shrill note and clear. The spirits of darkness kept to their domain. Sun, moon, and stars pursued their appointed course. When the melody was exhausted I stopped; if the melody did not stop, I went on. You would have sympathized, but you could not understand. You would have looked, but you could not see. You would have pursued, but you could not overtake. You stood dazed in the middle of the wilderness, leaning against a tree and crooning, your eye conscious of exhausted vision, your strength failing for the pursuit, and so unable to overtake me. Your frame was but an empty shell. You were completely at a loss, and so you were amazed.

"Then I played in sounds which produce no amazement, the melodious law of spontaneity, springing forth like nature's countless buds, in manifold but formless joy, as though poured forth to the dregs, in deep but soundless bass. Beginning nowhere, the melody rested in void; some would say dead, others alive, others real, others ornamental, as it scattered itself on all sides in never to be anticipated chords.

"When no machinery is set in motion, and yet the instrumentation is complete, this is the music of God. The mind awakes to its enjoyment without waiting to be called. Accordingly Yu Piao praised it, saying, 'Listening you cannot hear its sound; gazing you cannot see its form. It fills heaven and earth. It embraces the six cardinal points.' Now you desired to listen to it, but you were not able to grasp its existence. And so you were confused.

"My music first induced fear; and as a consequence, respect. I then added amazement, by which you were isolated (from consciousness of your surroundings). And lastly, confusion; for confusion means absence of sense, and absence of sense means TAO, and TAO means absorption therein."

# THE MUSIC OF THE SPHERES

*By Julia P. Dabney*

We read in the Book of Job (Chapter 38, verse 7) that at the creation of the world "the morning stars sang together and all the Sons of God shouted for joy." In this most poetical symbolic statement there is embodied a cryptic truth which very few people penetrate.

What was it that the Morning Stars sang? And this might well bring us to a second question: what, specifically *is* song? Song I take it is a musical expression of emotion which may be, or may not be, wedded to words. Thus the violin sings as well as the voice.

Psychologically speaking, music begins where language ends. The emotional impulse cannot fetter itself with concrete expression and soars into the realm of pure vibration.

Song was born, so to speak, of dance. Song and dance are twin sisters and emerge hand in hand from the mists of time. Primitive man in the remote ages in his exuberance danced, and at the same time uttered some shout or exclamation. The rhythm of his foot gave the rhythm to his word, and the rhythm of his word answered the rhythm of his foot—the two interchangeably linked. Doubtless these exclamations would be at first purely elementary—merely sounds; but, by degrees, through the generations, these would assume definite shape—words and congeries of words—until at length was evolved true song.

The music of the ancients, whether instrumental or vocal, was a single voice. It remained for very modern times to evolve that elaborate system of polyphony which we now regard as music.

So much for the music of man; but Nature is instinct with another kind of music, and of this I would now speak. Primarily there are the songs of the birds—lilts of pure rap-

ture; then the rippling cadence of the brooks; the susurrus of summer winds over rustling grain fields; the aeolian—sometimes stormy—music sweeping through wide-branching pines; and a hundred other mystical murmuring voices. These certainly are all music—"concords of sweet sounds." But they, like the music of Man, make their appeal externally through the auditory and sensory nerves; and there is throughout Nature a deeper, interior, mystical music not to be heard by material ears.

To hear this interior music requires a development of the sixth or psychic sense. One needs to pass beyond the veil of the mortal, or sensory world, into that finer consciousness called the psychic or fourth dimensional plane. In other words, one must become clairaudient.

In the East, this faculty is developed by a studied system of Yoga; but there are many records among us Westerners of a subjective condition breaking suddenly upon the consciousness of some peculiar Sensitive. One may instance Behmen, Blake, Pascal, and others.

To the Yoga-trained mind the interior rhythms of the universe become as it were an open book. Wonderful indeed is the experience of the Initiate privileged to cognize these things.

He will hear the mighty chorals of the planets upon their rushing orbits; and those profounder cadences, vibrant with metaphysical significance, rising, like cosmic fundamentals, from the deeps. And he will catch the interplay of a myriad other mysterious voices—aerial harmonics as it were—rippling from anywhere and everywhere.

And all around him he will hear the very grasses growing, the sap running in the trees, the happy sibilance of innumerable little leaves, the bursting of the flower buds from their calyxes; all paeans of joy and life!

Aerial music truly. Ravishing strains, running over with joy, not translatable to human terms.

The fact is that the whole Cosmos is one great living, pulsing organism, swinging to inter-harmonious rhythms; sentient and vocal! Multi-voiced it is—many-chorded—but all blending into one stupendous, universal, illimitable harmony of praise.

Praise—praise—praise!

This then is the inner voice of the universe—spirit-songs for spiritualized ears.

In the lovely Allegory of Creation in the first chapter of Genesis we read that each day as it was created "God saw that it was good;" and at the end of the six days, "God saw everything that He had made and behold it was very good!" Of course it was good; it could not have been otherwise; and Nature's voice could not be anything but the celebration of this Cosmic perfection. And thus it was that "the Morning Stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for joy!" Should not man—potentially a Son of God—add his canticle to the supreme diapason? Oh, surely!

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The strains of love fill the days and the nights with music, and the world is listening to its melodies. Mad with joy, life and death dance to the rhythm of this music. The hills and the sea and the earth dance. The world of man dances in laughter and tears.

—*Kabir.*

It is said that a friend once asked the great composer Haydn why his church music was always so full of gladness. He answered: "I cannot make it otherwise. I write according to the thought I feel. When I think upon my God, my heart is so full of joy that the notes dance and leap from my pen."

—*Henry Van Dyke.*

# BEETHOVEN AND THE INDIAN YOGA SYSTEM*

*By Romain Rolland*

[We are happy to be able to print the following extract from M. Rolland's great work; for it indicates clearly and emphatically both the glories and the dangers involved in the practice of Yoga. Unfortunately, the Western mind, with its will to personal achievement, has been so dazzled by the glories that, in spite of the warnings of master-spirits, the dangers have been ignored, often with disastrous results. Where the impelling genius is absent, with its contempt for danger and even death in the face of the vision, Yoga should be treated with the caution and the profound respect an intelligent novice would feel while handling chemicals in a scientific laboratory; for in it lie all potentialities from destruction to deliverance.]

"*I have never thought of writing for renown and glory. What I have in my heart must out: that is why I write.*"

—*Beethoven.*

Every true artist has within himself, diffuse and intermittent, this dream-life that flows in great streams in the subterranean world of him. But in Beethoven it attains to a unique intensity and that long before the closing of the doors of his hearing blockaded him from the rest of the universe. . . . If not so precocious as Mozart in the art of smooth harmonious speech, how much more precocious he was in his interior life, in knowledge and mastery of himself, of his passions and his dreams! His hard childhood, his premature experiences developed these aptitudes early. I see Beethoven as a child, as his neighbor the baker used to see him, at the window of that garret of his that looked out over the

* From the "Life of Beethoven."

Rhine, his head in his hands, lost in his "beautiful, profound thoughts." Perhaps there is singing within him that melodious lament, the poetic adagio of his first pianoforte sonata. Even as a child he is a prey to melancholy; in the poignant letter with which his correspondence begins we read, "Melancholy, that for me is an evil almost as great as illness itself. . . ." But even in the early days he has the magic power to win free of it by fixing it in tones.

But conqueror or conquered, he is always alone. From his infancy, wherever he may be, in the street or in the salons, he isolates himself with a peculiar strength. Frau von Breuning used to say, when he was thus lost in the distance, oblivious of everything, that he had his *raptus*. Later this becomes a gulf in which his soul disappears from the sight of men for hours and days. Do not try to recall him! That would be dangerous: the somnambulist would never forgive you.

Music develops in its own elect that power of concentration on an idea, that form of *yoga,* that is purely European, having the traits of action and domination that are characteristic of the West: for music is an edifice in motion, all the parts of which have to be sensed simultaneously. It demands of the soul a vertiginous movement in the immobile, the eye clear, the will taut, the spirit flying high and free over the whole field of dreams. In no other musician has the embrace of thought been more violent, more continuous, more superhuman.

Once Beethoven takes hold upon an idea, he never lets it go until he possesses it wholly. Nothing can distract him from the pursuit. It is not for nothing that his piano playing is characterized by its legato, contrasting in this respect with the Mozart touch, that was delicate, pointed, clean-cut, as well as from that of all the pianists of his own time.

In Beethoven's thought, everything is connected, and yet it appears to gush out in torrents. He controls the thought, and he controls himself. He appears to be delivered up to the world by his passions; but in fact no one can read the thought that is moving in the depths of him. . . .

Now I myself, when studying the essence of Beethoven's creative genius, had been struck by the "furious concentration" that is the characteristic mark of it, and that distinguishes him from all the composers of his epoch. I had insisted on this point in my commemoration address at Vienna: "In no other musician has this grapple with thought been more violent, more continuous, more invincible than in Beethoven. . . . All his music bears the imprint of an extraordinary passion for unity. . . . The whole of his work is stamped with the seal of a will of iron; we feel that the man's glance is sunk in the idea with a terrific fixity. *And it is not merely a case, as might be thought, of the solitary immured in himself by deafness, who is untroubled by any sound from the outer world. Long before the deafness the same characteristic is observable.* . . . It is a natural disposition. From infancy Beethoven is absorbed in his interior vision, that eyeless vision that is at once of the whole body and of the whole spirit. When an idea occurred to him, in the crowded street, in the course of a walk or of a conversation, he had, as he used to say, a *raptus;* he no longer belonged to himself but to the idea; he never looses his hold on it until he has made it his. Nothing will distract him from the pursuit. He described this frantic chase to Bettina in the language of hallucination: 'I pursue it, I grasp it, I see it fly from me and lose itself in the seething mass. I seize it again with renewed passion, I can no longer separate myself from it; I have to multiply it in a spasm of ecstacy, in all its modulations.' This passionate pursuit, this multi-

plication of the idea that has been seized upon, bent to his will, subdued, and is imposed on the hearer by the hammering of the rhythm, the hallucinatory repetitions, the sensuous heat of the orchestral color and the modulations, produces on simple and sincere natures that yield themselves up to it an *effect of hypnosis, a Yoga. Like the Indian Yoga, once one has attained to it one carries it about with one everywhere, when walking, talking, working, in every act of the daily life. It is subjacent; it is like an aromatic oil injected under the skin. . . .*"

It was not at hazard that I employed this word Yoga. . . . During the course of the present year my labors have brought me into contact with some of the greatest of the contemporary Indian minds that have practiced Yoga, notably the extraordinary Ramakrishna, that incomparable master of religious contemplation, and his great disciple Vivekananda. I had read their strangely precise description of all the degrees of this Yogist concentration, and of the physiological and moral effects of what they call the rising, in the canals of the body, of the *Kundalini Sakti* (the essence of energy). But they know the dangers of it, through having, like Ramakrishna, escaped them by a miracle; and they warn their disciples of these dangers. They forbid them to surrender themselves to Yoga at hazard and without an inward necessity; they know well that these exercises in passionate and boundless concentration always conduct to the brink of cerebral apoplexy or of mental alienation. Some of these adepts have come out of their spells of Yoga with eyes red and bleeding, "as if eaten by ants."

All these images recurred to my mind when I was thinking of the congestions that Beethoven used to extinguish brutally with ice-cold ablutions. And when I read Dr. Marage's diagnosis (on Beethoven's deafness) I communi-

cated to him, on the 4th February, 1928, the passage I have just quoted, and I asked him if there were not points of analogy between the state of Yogist concentration and Beethoven's violent, tenacious, continuous, absolute absorption in the fixed idea. Could not the otitis have been brought on by this cerebral regime, in truth that of a genius, but a murderous regime, the natural psycho-physiological dispositions thus provoking the catastrophe? And could this, in its turn, have reinforced tenfold the dispositions of Nature?

Dr. Marage agreed wholly with my suggestion. "The cause of Beethoven's deafness," he replied on the 6th February, "seems to me to have been the congestion of the inner ear and the auditory centres—a congestion due to the overworking of the organ by his furious concentration, his terrific fixity of idea, as you so well express it. Your comparison with the Indian Yoga appears to me to be very exact. . . ."

The conclusion one thus seems driven to by the force of the facts is one that is tragic in a different way from everything that this glorious misfortune has suggested to our imagination and our pity. The cause of the misfortune was in Beethoven, *was* Beethoven. It was his destiny; it was himself, who like Oedipus, brought about the catastrophe. It was inscribed in his nature from the beginning, as it were a law of his genius.

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## LANGUAGE OF THE SOUL

*By Swami Paramananda*

Language of the soul is spoken without tongue;
Its soundless symphony is heard not by keenness of ear,
But only by those who are deaf to the noises of the world.

# MEDITATION*

*By A. E.*

There is no personal virtue in me other than this, that I followed a path all may travel but on which few do journey. It is a path within ourselves where the feet first falter in shadow and darkness, but which is later made gay by heavenly light. As one who has travelled a little on that way and who has had some far-off vision of the Many-Colored Land, if I tell what I know, and how I came to see most clearly, I may give hope to those who would fain believe in that world the seers spake of, but who cannot understand the language written by those who had seen that beauty of old, or who may have thought the ancient scriptures but a record of extravagant desires.

None needs special gifts or genius. Gifts! There are no gifts. For all that is ours we have paid the price. There is nothing we aspire to for which we cannot barter some spiritual merchandise of our own. Genius! There is no stinting of this by the Keeper of the Treasure House. It is not bestowed but is won. Yon man of heavy soul might if he willed play on the lyre of Apollo, that drunkard be God-intoxicated. Powers are not bestowed by caprice on any. The formulae the chemist illustrates, making exposition before his students, are not more certainly verifiable than the formulae of that alchemy by which what is gross in us may be transmuted into ethereal fires.

Our religions make promises to be fulfilled beyond the grave, because they have no knowledge now to be put to the test, but the ancients spake of a divine vision to be attained while we are yet in the body. The religion which does not cry out: "I am today verifiable as that water wets

* From his book, "The Candle of Vision," published by MacMillan and Co., Limited, London.

or that fire burns. Test me that ye can become as gods!" mistrust it. Its messengers are prophets of the darkness. As we sink deeper into the Iron Age we are met by the mighty devils of state and empire lurking in the abyss, claiming the soul for their own, moulding it to their image, to be verily their own creature and not heaven's.

We need a power in ourselves that can confront these mighty powers. Though I am blind I have had moments of sight. Though I have sinned I have been on the path. Though I am feeble I have seen the way to power. I sought out ways to make more securely my own those magical lights that dawned and faded within me. I wished to evoke them at will and be master of my vision, and I was taught to do this which is as old as human life.

Day after day, at times where none might interfere, and where none through love or other cause were allowed to interfere, I set myself to attain mastery over the will. I would choose some mental object, an abstraction of form, and strive to hold my mind fixed on it in unwavering concentration, so that not for a moment, not for an instant, would the concentration slacken. It is an exercise this, a training for higher adventures of the soul. It is no light labor. The ploughman's, cleaving the furrows, is easier by far. Five minutes of this effort will at first leave us trembling as at the close of a laborious day. It is then we realize how little of life has been our own, and how much a response to sensation, a drifting on the tide of desire.

The rumor of revolt, the spirit would escape its thraldom, runs through the body. Empires do not send legions so swiftly to frustrate revolt as all that is mortal in us hurries along nerve, artery, and every highway of the body to beset the soul. The beautiful face of one we love, more alluring than life, glows before us to enchant us from our task. Old

sins, enmities, vanities and desires beleaguer and beseech us. If we do not heed them then they change, they seem to be with us, they open up vistas of all we and they will do when this new power we strive for is attained. If we are tempted down that vista we find with shame, after an hour of vain musing, that we were lured away, had deserted our task and forgotten that stern fixity of the will we set out to achieve. Let us persevere in our daily ritual and the turmoil increases; our whole being becomes vitalized, the bad as well as the good. The heat of this fervent concentration acts like fire under a pot, and everything in our being boils up madly. We learn our own hitherto unknown character. We did not know we could feel such fierce desires, never imagined such passionate enmities as now awaken. We have created in ourselves a centre of power and grow real to ourselves. It is dangerous, too, for we have flung ourselves into the eternal conflict between Spirit and matter, and find ourselves where the battle is hottest, where the foemen are locked in a death struggle. We are in grips with mightier powers than we had before conceived of.

What man is there who thinks he has self-control? He stands in the shallow waters, nor has gone into the great deep, nor been tossed at the mercy of the waves. Let him rouse the arcane powers in himself, and he will feel like one who has let loose the avalanche. None would live through that turmoil if the will were the only power in ourselves we could invoke, for the will is neither good nor bad but is power only, and it vitalizes good or bad indifferently. If that were all, our labor would bring us, not closer to Divine Being, but only to a dilation of the personality. But the ancients who taught us to gain this intensity, taught it but as preliminary to a meditation which would not waver and would be full of power. The meditation they urged on us

has been explained as "the inexpressible yearning of the inner man to go out into the Infinite." But that Infinite we would enter is living. It is the ultimate being of us.

Meditation is a fiery brooding on that majestical Self. We imagine ourselves into Its vastness. We conceive ourselves as mirroring Its infinitudes, as moving in all things, as living in all beings, in earth, water, air, fire, æther. We try to know as It knows, to live as It lives, to be compassionate as It is compassionate. We equal ourselves to It that we may understand It and become It. We do not kneel to It as slaves, but as Children of the King we lift ourselves up to that Glory, and affirm to ourselves that we are what we imagine. "What a man thinks, that he is: that is the old secret," said the wise. We have imagined ourselves into this pitiful dream of life. By imagination and will we re-enter true being, becoming that we conceive of. On that path of fiery brooding I entered.

At first all was stupor. I felt as one who steps out of day into the colorless night of a cavern, and that was because I had suddenly reversed the habitual motions of life. We live normally seeing through the eyes, hearing through the ears, stirred by the senses, moved by bodily powers, and receiving only such spiritual knowledge as may pass through a momentary purity of our being. On the mystic path we create our own light, and at first we struggle blind and baffled, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, unable to think, unable to imagine. We seem deserted by dream, vision or inspiration, and our meditation barren altogether. But let us persist through weeks or months, and sooner or later that stupor disappears. Our faculties readjust themselves, and do the work we will them to do. Never did they do their work so well. The dark caverns of the brain begin to grow luminous. We are creating our own light. By heat of will and aspiration we

are transmuting what is gross in the subtle æthers through which the mind works. As the dark bar of metal begins to glow, at first redly, and then at white heat, or as ice melts and is alternately fluid, vapor, gas, and at last a radiant energy, so do these æthers become purified and alchemically changed into luminous essences, and they make a new vesture for the soul, and link us to mid-world or heavenward where they too have their true home.

How quick the mind is now! How vivid is the imagination! We are lifted above the tumult of the body. The heat of the blood disappears below us. We draw nigher to ourselves. The heart longs for the hour of meditation and hurries to it; and, when it comes, we rise within ourselves as a diver too long under seas rises to breathe the air, to see the light. We have invoked the God and we are answered according to old promise. As our aspiration so is our inspiration. We imagine It as Love, and what a love enfolds us. We conceive It as Might and we take power from that Majesty. We dream of It as Beauty and the Magician of the Beautiful appears everywhere at Its miraculous art, and the multitudinous lovely creatures of Its thought are busy moulding nature and life in their image, and all are hurrying, hurrying to the Golden World.

This vision brings its own proof to the Spirit, but words cannot declare or explain it. We must go back to lower levels and turn to that which has form from that which is bodiless.

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And I know not if, save in this, such gift be allowed to man
That out of three sounds he frame not a fourth sound, but
a star.

—*Robert Browning.*

# REPORT

## DR. NAG VISITS THE ASHRAMA

Dr. Kalidas Nag—historian and archaeologist—one of India's most distinguished sons—who has been on a lecture tour in America, recently called at the Vedanta Centre of Boston, where in Swami Paramananda's absence, he was received by Srimati Gayatri Devi. Deeply impressed, as he admitted, by the atmosphere of the place, he turned his face westward with the resolve to behold for himself the Ashrama at La Crescenta, which Srimati had painted for him in such glowing word colors.

And so it was that on the night of Feb. 13th, following a lecture in Los Angeles, he was motored through a driving rain, to Ashrama Cloister. It was nearing midnight when he arrived, but the Swami was standing at the door to welcome him, and beyond were smiling faces and a fire of great logs, so there was nothing to do but to forget time and all its inconveniences, and linger, and talk.

If Dr. Nag felt warmth in the Ashrama welcome, he, in his turn, conveyed it, and by his spirit of brotherhood and understanding, by his great and simple qualities, soon made himself one with all the brothers and sisters of the Retreat; from Jack, the eight year old member to the wild baby deer, who, only the week before, had put its trust, without fear or hesitation, in those humans of the Ashrama, feeling, no doubt, that they would give it shelter, as did the the hermit in the classic Hindu drama, Sakuntala, when he forbade the hunter with these words: "O King, this deer belongs to the Ashrama. Restore your arrow to the quiver. Weapons were lent to you to deliver the distressed, not to strike down the innocent!"

The following morning, the sun shone forth warmly brilliant, inviting all to assemble outdoors, where, on the ter-

race, after Service and breakfast, Dr. Nag addressed the assembled household and interpreted for them most vividly the significance of the ancient Ashramas or Forest Hermitages of India under whose influence men not only found their connection with one another, but with all created things, till even the tree they cut down and the water they drew spoke to them of oneness. At the close, he conveyed his deep and sincere emotion at finding in the West this modern Ashrama, embodying the ancient ideal in its atmosphere and spirit, and in the Swami's form of unstudied and spontaneous teaching. As he traveled over the modern world, he found that it was very much like a spiritual desert, so that a place like the Ashrama was indeed an oasis.

After luncheon under the trees, at which Swami Dhirananda was also guest, Dr. Nag went on a sight-seeing tour from which he returned so late that he had but just time to eat hurriedly of a Hindu meal prepared by the Swami before being taken to his train for San Francisco.

Again and again he expressed his appreciation of Swami Paramananda's work in America and urged him to come to India and inaugurate something similar, which is, of course, the Swami's dream. Certain it is, that Dr. Nag's friendship and sympathy will help bring about its fulfilment by forging a new link in the chain of love which binds this Western expression of ancient India to the Mother-land.

### SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S BIRTHDAY

In India as well as in America, February is the month of great birthdays, and that of Sri Ramakrishna fell on Thursday, February 19th. At the Ananda-Ashrama, this day was set aside for very special observance and worship. An invitation had been issued to members and friends for a dinner to be prepared by the Swami and to be served at Ashrama Cloister at six o'clock with a Service to follow.

When the repast was ended, the ringing of the chimes sum-

moned every one to the Temple of the Universal Spirit, where lights and flowers and holy atmosphere united in casting a spell of beauty and peace over all hearts—a spell made articulate by the Swami as he paid profound tribute to the Spirit of Blessedness who was known as Sri Ramakrishna.

The following Sunday—the day of the public celebration—saw the Temple filled to its doors at both morning and afternoon Services where an eager attentive congregation waited in the Temple for the Swami's coming, while organ, voice, and violin gave of their music. Naturally, the Swami's theme was "Sri Ramakrishna." Hesitant at first before the magnitude of his task—the re-creation before the eyes of a Western audience of this God-man of India and the world—the very vastness of his subject soon swept him so that for more than an hour he held the breathless attention of his listeners. In the afternoon it was the same, his winged thought lifting the whole audience toward the Vision of boundless which Sri Ramakrishna gave to this world.

Immediately after the Service, tea was served in the library to all who cared to partake. At seven o'clock that evening, the Swami left California for his Boston Centre where he will remain about three weeks, returning in time for Good Friday and Easter.

Beside conducting two Services every Sunday at the Ananda-Ashrama, and Services and Classes at the Los Angeles Vedanta Centre, the Swami gave an early morning devotional Service for KNX of the Paramount Studio. This naturally enabled him to reach many eager hearts far and wide. He also spoke one afternoon at the Women's Club of the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena. The meeting was held in the lounge of the new Athenaeum, and in spite of the pouring rain a large number of members were present and were deeply appreciative of Swami Paramananda's talk on "The Genius of the Indo-Aryan Culture."

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GIFT
MAY 29 1931

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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

# Message of the East



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## Divine Influx

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

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

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## DIVINE INFLUX

*By Swami Paramananda*

**(An address delivered by the Swami in the "Temple of the Universal Spirit," Ananda-Ashrama, La Crescenta, California.)**

THE Indo-Aryans always begin and end their spiritual studies with the word *Shanti*—Peace: Peace to all beings! And what a mighty feeling it brings when, with harmony of spirit, with a definite, rhythmic sense, they repeat this magic word. It has a tremendous power of radiation and is a source of great good, not only for the one who vibrates it, but for all who are able to feel it within their own being. Therefore let there be no one who has anything but God's peace within him, that he may pronounce it with all sincerity, and cast it abroad.

Humility—the humility that comes as the fruit of man's knowledge and unfoldment—is the only basis for giving peace to the world. Do not think for a moment that it involves a negative idea. Humility is a very potent quality; there is nothing bigger. What avails for a man to have learning, wealth, possessions, and many material attributes, if he carries a desolate, restless, unhappy heart, and is never aware of that Influx from above and beyond his own limited consciousness?

"Verily, I say unto thee, the Blessed One has not come to teach death, but to teach life, and thou discernest not the

nature of living and dying. Self is death and Truth is life. The cleaving to self is a perpetual dying, while moving in the Truth is partaking of Nirvana which is life everlasting." Here is a very dynamic, clear and practical thought. That Infinite Power, that Divine Entity when it manifests through us, by whatever avenue It comes, enriches that avenue; even material things are harmoniously and beautifully evolved at Its touch.

There are times when a human being becomes mad with the ecstasy of divine recognition. There are times when he hears a Voice like the thunder—convincing, strong, yet full of music—proclaiming, "This whole world is full of God!" Suppose all books and teachings were taken away and that one sentence remained shining, glowing, before us, would it not be enough?

"Whatsoever exists in the universe is pervaded and permeated by God alone." This text from the Isha Upanishad has always stood out as something unparalleled, which inspires by the very sound of it. Whatsoever you see or feel or touch, and whatsoever sound you hear, is already covered by that One. This is the sense of the Upanishad, and how beautiful it is! We often wonder why, in spite of all our efforts, we are not able to block the path of misery, of evil, and of the unfortunate occurrences in life. The reason is that we have not taken this first step of seeing all things as covered by Infinitude—a step that is not so difficult if we take it in the earlier years when our mind is still in our control. You may wonder what I mean by that. Gradually the mind, because of the hard conditions that exist, begins to be fretful, to be restless, to struggle with world desires. The wise man, however, refuses to contend with such things; he refuses to scatter his thoughts, exhaust his brain-power, or allow his intellectual faculties to become caught in the

meshes of the non-essential. You may ask, "How can one avoid these things?" There is only one way, the way prescribed by all the religions and by all the spiritual leaders of the world. It is the Christian way, the Hindu way; the Jews' way, the Mohammedan way; it is the mystic way and the practical, spiritual way. It never varies; it is identical. First be fortified with God, first be filled with the Spirit of Truth, first do this and all other things will follow. Let that Infinite Power—the Divine Influx—take possession of you; then, being possessed by That, being blessed by That go ye forth into the world and do what is to be done. It is not that we must first do this thing or that, but "first be blessed, and then everything that ye touch will carry that blessing." Did not Christ with living voice tell those who were willing to listen to Him: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." What is that Kingdom? Where is it? Is it a region marked off as by a material boundary line to be kept in reserve for those who call themselves Christians, so that after they are through with this plane it can be their heritage? If we do not find the Kingdom here in the present when our need is so great, what avails waiting, with the thought that perhaps after we are dead we may find it? It is to be found now. I think there is no variance among the great spiritual lights in regard to this.

What I am saying is an appeal to the mind and heart of the individual as he struggles, as he faces his problems *now*, seeking to make him realize how definitely we can enrich everything that we touch, once we are open to the greater Influence. This does not mean that we are to divide our life, labeling this our material life, this our intellectual life, and something beyond, separate from our material and intellectual life, as pertaining to the spiritual. Not at all.

What is meant is that when the Divine Influx comes, it transforms the entire life of man, causing—I shall use a strong expression—a madness which is not the madness that is insanity but that which brings such tremendous exuberance to the soul that it can overcome all obstacles. Someone once said to Sri Ramakrishna :"You are not as others; you are like a mad man."

"Yes indeed," he replied. "So are you all mad. Some are mad after wealth: they can think of nothing else; some are mad for women: sense pleasure; and some are mad for material gain: name, fame and prosperity; but I am mad for God. I have no other thought. My madness, however, has some sense, some value, some substance."

Now when this divine madness comes upon us, in one sense we may appear to have changed. We do change—in our point of view, our thought, our entire sense of valuation. In the face of difficulty we maintain an attitude of apparent indifference; in the face of danger we are able to stand up with heroic courage—not the aggressive courage, but the courage that comes with the Divine Influx, when one feels an infinite assurance. My friend, is this not worth having from any standpoint? Without it, what is worth while in life? Do we not see right before us men struggling to become wealthy, to have possessions, power? They enslave themselves in order to make money; but this does not fill the void in their souls, although they think that it is going to do so. Those who have found riches—and many do find them—are often conscious of even greater lack than before. What then is going to suffice to fulfill our need?

Shall we not follow the way that Christ points out, and all Christ-like beings—the one way, always the same from that ancient date of the Upanishads right down to the present time? First fill your mind with God, the One, the

Omnipresent, the All-abiding, and after having covered everything with That, renounce all else. That is, when you have become permeated with That, evil will have fallen away from you, and the Infinite will take possession of your physical and your intellectual being. Your spiritual being, of course, is related to your entire life. That is how we should express spiritually; not dividing, or partitioning off, not holding any small, narrow concepts even about our own capacity. You may say, "If we think that we are divinely appointed, and that we have power within ourselves, will it not make us egotistic? First *have* it, and then let me see whether it makes you egotistic or humble. If it makes you egotistic you have not got it; you have only the theory of it. The more man knows of Infinitude, the less is he overcome by the finite circumstances of life; the more he knows about Divine Power, the less is he controlled by his human frailties. He can no longer indulge in ordinary feeling, such as ambition, aggressiveness, and egotistic notions. He becomes more or less a tool in the hands of the Supreme—flexible—while his smile grows benign, as of heavenly nature, and casts its beneficence upon all.

I am not talking theories. It would be better for us if we reduced all our spiritual theories to a minimum, in order that we might think more, and, better than that, live more; for it is the living which increases our value in the life of practical wisdom. People grow tired of being told with empty words to be good, to do this or that. Children sometimes have a great revulsion from this sort of instruction, and they are right. It is not what we teach them orally, it is what we are, and the atmosphere we create that count. This I believe more and more as time goes on. All that we may say, all the philosophies we may pronounce, the theories we may carry as a load on our shoulders, ethically, morally,

intellectually, and even religiously, none of these things have any redeeming power in our life or in the lives of others. The thing is, to hold to the one, single, definite, spiritual fact that we radiate light only as we possess it. A man whose life has been given expression through love, through service, through fineness of feeling, his words will scatter perfume.

You may think all this is but an ethereal, sentimental point of view. "What we want," you may say, "is something practical like business or mining." It is very much like that. In mining, you dig, you venture, you risk your life, because you know there is a treasure to be gained. Same way with the man who is bent on finding this more subtle treasure. He also ventures. Why then should he not achieve the practical results; why should he not come out from his search saying, "I have found! I have seen! My whole life is transformed!"

Never think that you are too old to do this. Do not set any time limits. These are all self-created limitations. God has not erected any such boundary lines, and you can emancipate your thought from them now, instantly, if you will. They may come back again, however; they may return if you are not watchful—we have formed such rigid habits—and when this happens you will cry: "I have lost it—I have lost my beautiful experience!" You have not lost it, only it has become covered over by your mental accumulations. Why not get rid of some of these, as you do when you clean house. An intelligent person does that. Instead of clinging to what is old, useless and non-essential, he throws it away, he burns it up, because he knows that such things breed germs of corruption.

How wonderful it would be in this world of ours if we could really become practical in spiritual things!—not what

we think should be practical, but what Christ thought was practical, what Lord Buddha thought was practical; not according to the method of some so-called teacher who says, "Here, if you will pay me so much, I will show you the Light of the universe;" but by following the Great Light which points the way—by listening to the One Voice ever sounding its call in our heart: "Be thou quickened. Let thy thoughts go no more astray. Thou hast suffered; thou hast toiled; thou hast brought sickness upon thyself—not merely on thy physical being, but sickness of the mind which is harder to overcome. Now be thou healed—be thou baptized in the water of life itself."

Spiritual, Divine Influx is a very definite thing. It transforms our life: the old is no more, it is reborn. Some of the great mystic souls how they have burst forth in song after that divine touch, in beautiful mystic expression: "All my wretchedness is gone! I am healed; I am sated; I am made anew!" Same way will it be with us: we shall be incapable of doing certain things that we did before—fretting, doubting, complaining, being fearful of ourselves and others. We wrong ourselves when we are afraid of ourselves—afraid to unveil our face and look upon what we have held and cherished as our Ideal; and we wrong our Ideal when we say, as many people do: "I have sinned; my life has been a failure. I cannot go and pray before God." By our own preconceived ideas and persistent effort we have created the illusion that God is unforgiving—that One whom we speak of as all-loving, all-beneficent! Do you call this a practical way of salvation? Do you call it religion? Rather must we forget all these ideas of fear and failure and let our life be altogether re-moulded. It is like making a new mould, and pouring ourselves into it—our thought, our life, our whole being—so that we may be re-formed, rebuilt with

Divine Essence. Christ is the mould, and all Christ-like spirits. Remember this thought; it is good and very practical. It will take from you all misgiving that you will have to leave anything behind. One of the arguments people bring is: "Suppose we have this tremendous Divine Influx—suppose we become maddened by it, intoxicated by it, permeated through and through—what is going to happen to the other interests in our life?"

Thinking of God, thinking of Truth will never rob us of anything that is essential to our real happiness. "The infinite power of the Spirit brought to bear upon matter evolves material development, made to act upon thought evolves intellectuality, and made to act upon Itself makes of man a god. Manifest the Divinity within you and everything will be harmoniously arranged around it." These are the words of Swami Vivekananda, and do they not bring assurance? Thinking, praying, meditating, how essential these are for our self-preservation, yet we are afraid to give ourselves to them. All fears are untrue, of course, but this fear is most false, especially dangerous, because it weakens our very being. Are you afraid of having in abundance anything that is good? When you have found wealth do you not seek further wealth? Why then is it not practical, when you have a little inspiration, a little influx of the Divine, to seek more? You may feel that you do not need any more—you already have fulfillment. Then seek it for others—for this suffering, struggling, depressed world. Make it less depressed, make it less suffering. Do not say, "I cannot do it—it is not my mission. It is Christ's mission." Become a channel that Christ may work through you. That is the only thing a disciple can do, and any one who is not willing to do it should not seek to put his voice forward and say, "I am this!" or "I am that!" We are nothing until we

have made ourselves conscious channels for that Great Power. To my way of thinking there cannot be anything more practical in the field of religion and spirituality than this. It does not make any difference what you call yourself; let it be anything you like. Have your pet names, have your faith, only *be* it, so that whoever contacts you will feel your vibrant life and how it blends with his life. Whenever we touch the life of another we may bring new influx, sometimes even to a person who is dormant—overcome with heaviness, fear, and depression. If we approach such a one with divine and radiant thoughts and feelings, his condition often vanishes. It may be due to wrong thinking; it may be due to ignorance; nevertheless it exists, and nothing can really overcome it but the opposite state of mind.

Theories will not help. No one wants to hear us preach, except when with blending harmony we can give to people an interpretation of their own unspoken sentiments and unformed prayers. Then they will listen to us. Until we have come, however, to a definite Self-expression, words are useless. In fact often they cause disturbance in the lives of others. Therefore, let us go deep down within ourselves, right to that Reservoir where there is nothing but immortality, eternity, strength, and plenitude—nothing but life—no idea of death, disease or anything that brings affliction—and into that Reservoir let us dip our cup, our vessel of life, its size depending upon the expansion of our soul. Let us do this, not just for ourselves, but in order that we may hand it on to others. We shall be amazed at the new life that will come to bless us. Instead of its being a narrow, useless state of being that we are afraid of losing every moment, it will become an expanded, magnified, beautiful consciousness, revived by the Divine Influx, refilling us and making us over with each breath. More and more we shall

believe in this, as we find its practical working out through every avenue of our body, mind, and soul. We shall cease to hold ourselves apart from that Infinite Source, but shall become definitely identified with It, and, through It, with the life of humanity. Only in this way can we minimize a little of the suffering of the world. It is a task we should all undertake, going step by step. There is nothing impossible for us to accomplish by means of our prayers, our thoughts, our daily actions.

In the depths of our being there are secret recesses which have been neglected, forgotten, overlaid; we must uncover these. There is an inner part of us that is starved because we have not given it food; we have fed only our outer part. This inner nature we must feed. We are apt to think in a casual way that that is God's responsibility. But should we not co-operate with Him, by thinking in a pure way, by carrying prayer and inspiration in our heart, that He may preserve us?

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The unstruck drum of Eternity is sounded within me; but my deaf ears cannot hear it. —*Kabir.*

Divine moment! when over the tempest-tost soul, as once over the wild-weltering chaos, it is spoken: *Let there be Light!* —*Carlyle.*

When things are hard for you, when your life has grown confused, and you fear that which awaits you, say to yourself: Come, now, I shall stop worrying about what will happen to me, and I shall love all those whom I meet by the way, and then let come what will. Only try to live thus, and you will see how everything will suddenly disentangle itself, and you will have nothing to fear. —*Tolstoy.*

# THE SOURCE OF POWER

*By Sister Devamata*

Around our little plot of life lies a boundless area of existence. To try to differentiate ourselves from that is as futile as to try to lift a wave from the sea. It slips through our fingers and trickles back into the vast stretch of waters from whence it came. We cannot live as independent self-sufficing units. We cannot insulate or isolate ourselves. We must live in the whole and partake of the whole.

This does not restrict or coerce us. It widens our area of activity and expands our consciousness. We are greater as part of a shoreless ocean than as a narrow bank-bound stream. The grandeur of the whole is our grandeur; the freedom of the whole makes us free.

This measureless realm of existence is undivided and homogeneous. It has but one Ruler. If there were more than one, there would be lack of co-ordination and the universe would be a chaos instead of a cosmos. Nor can this Ruler be a mere "blind force," as some scientists claim. Such an hypothesis does not account for the tenderness in the mother's kiss or for the sunset's ever-varying glory. The spontaneous impulse of the hero and the flash of inspiration of the genius find no place in it. The beauty of creation, its infinite variation, are not explained by it.

Beauty implies feeling, the play of imagination, the touch of a something pulsing and personal against a background of the impersonal and absolute. The products of a self-operating mechanism are hard and dry. They are accurate, but lifeless. They make no appeal to the esthetic sense. The finer sensibilities are left cold. There is no promise of surprise in them, whereas this universe offers endless surprises. It abounds in unsuspected loveliness and wonder.

Blind Force repeats itself over and over again. The Cosmic Power never does. It acts in conformity with the law, but It finds countless ways of applying it. There is no reiteration in Its achievement. It never makes two things identical. Perfect unity and infinite variety are the two poles of the axis on which the Cosmos turns. When we comply with the Cosmic Will and trust to Cosmic Wisdom, we need have no fear of either monotony or useless diffusion.

What is our relation to this Cosmic Power? Not that of subject to sovereign, but rather that of a tree to its root, a stream to its source. Cut the connection and the tree withers, the stream dries up. In the same way man grows inert and helpless when severed from his Source. As parts of the Whole, each one of us possesses a certain reserve of life-energy and power to do. It is this which deludes us. We call it ours and imagine we can draw on it as we please, but it fails us very soon and we find ourselves drained.

Our only hope of replenishment is through conscious connection with the central Source of supply. The cosmic connection is there and cannot be broken. We cannot be severed from Existence and still exist; but we must bring it into our consciousness. We must know it. A man may possess vast wealth, but if he is unaware of it, to all intents and purposes he is a pauper. So with us. Unless we are conscious of our oneness with the great Source of all things, we cannot derive full benefit from it. We may exist because of it; but our existence will not attain its fullest measure as long as we do not realize from whence we draw our life and power.

To link our consciousness with the Cosmic Source is not a difficult task. A single thought suffices to create a contact, prayer lengthens its duration, through devotion it grows continuous, and complete surrender makes it permanent. These are not four different methods, but merely cumula-

tive degrees of the same method. Prayer is reiterated thought, devotion is prayer in action, and surrender is the culminating out-flow of devotion. Beneath all, must lie a deep foundation of faith—unfaltering faith.

Without faith there is no achievement. The astronomer, as he keeps vigil before his telescope, believes implicitly in the orderly behaviour of the heavens; that stars can be trusted to move in their orbits, that light will travel at the same rate of speed, that suns and planets will obey the law. The engineer, when he computes the strength of his bridge, does not doubt the dependability of the truths of mathematics. The mathematician in his calculations trusts to the infallibility of the arithmetical tables. The farmer performs an act of faith when he sows his crop; the inventor when he conceives his invention. Mere living from day to day and hour to hour is a supreme declaration of faith.

We all possess faith, but with most of us it is narrow and personal. It should grow broad and cosmic. Now it hems us in and contracts us. We have faith in little things but show no confidence in the greater facts of existence. A small group of family and friends, the deceiving testimony of our senses, the passing word—to these we give credence; but higher wisdom, Divine justice, Divine power and strength, we take scant account of. Still less do we trust in the Source of our life; yet apart from that Source there can be neither security nor efficiency. We must cultivate a wider faith. We must learn to depend more on the Supreme Power. We must make more use of Divine guidance, Divine protection, Divine love and wisdom. They are there—to be taken or left as we choose.

The great Indian Teacher, Sri Ramakrishna, used to counsel his followers never to enter on any undertaking without the Divine commission, and the Psalmist implies the same

admonition when he says: "Except the Lord build the house, they that build labor in vain," or to translate into terms of modern mechanics—"Before you start your engine, turn on the power." Failure inheres in every task undertaken without turning on the power.

We belong, not to a small personal world, but to the universe; and we must take our place in it. We have, each one of us, a cosmic mission, a cosmic obligation. To fulfill these we must connect our consciousness with the Cosmic Power—Personal or Impersonal, with form or without, it matters not. The avenue of approach, the aspect of Cosmic Being we choose, are of secondary importance. The vital concern is to ally ourselves with the Source. When this union is established, we attain the highest efficiency and become invulnerable and invincible.

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The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue. —*David.*

Divinity hath surely touched my heart; I have possessed more joy than earth can lend. —*Bridges.*

"I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused;
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns
And the round ocean and the living air
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thoughts,
And rolls through all things."

—*Wordsworth.*

# DIVINE WISDOM

*By Michael de Molinos*

Divine wisdom is an intellectual and infused knowledge of the Divine perfections and things eternal which ought rather to be called *contemplation* than *speculation.* Science is acquired, and begets the knowledge of nature; wisdom is infused, and begets the knowledge of Divine goodness. . . . In a word, the men who are scientifical entertain themselves in the knowledge of the things of the world; and the wise live swallowed up in God Himself.

Reason enlightened in the wise is a high and simple elevation of spirit, whereby he sees with a clear and sharp sight all that is inferior to him, and what concerns his life and estate. This is that which renders the soul simple, illustrated, uniform, spiritual, and altogether introverted and abstracted from every created thing. This moves and draws away with a sweet violence the hearts of the humble and teachable, filling them with abundance of sweetness, peace, and pleasantness. Finally, the wise man says of it, that it brought him all good things at once. . . .

You must know that the greatest part of men live by opinion, and judge according to the deceivableness of imagination and sense; but the man who is wise judges of everything according to the real verity which is in it; whose business is to understand, conceive, penetrate into, and transcend every created being, even to himself.

It is a great property in a wise man to do much and say little. Wisdom is discovered in the works and words of the wise; because he, being absolute master of all his passions, motions, and affections, is known in all his doings, like a quiet and still water in which wisdom shines with clearness.

The understanding of mystical truths is secret and shut up from men who are purely scholastical, unless they be humble;

because it is the science of saints, and none know it but those who heartily love and seek their own contempt. Therefore, the souls, who, by embracing this means, get to be truly mystical and truly humble, dive even to the profoundest apprehensions of Divinity; and the more sensually men do live, according to flesh and blood, the greater distance are they at from this mystical science.

Ordinarily it is seen that in the man who hath much scholastical and speculative knowledge Divine wisdom doth not predominate; yet they make an admirable composition when they both meet together. The men of learning, who by God's mercy have attained to this mystic science, are worthy of veneration and praise in religion. . . .

The sermons of men of learning who lack the spirit, though they are made up of divers stories, elegant descriptions, acute discourses, and exquisite proofs, yet are by no means the word of God, but the word of men, plated over with false gold. These preachers spoil Christians, feeding them with wind and vanity; and so they are, both of them, void of God.

These teachers feed their hearers with the wind of hurtful subtleties, giving them stones instead of bread, leaves instead of fruit, and unsavoury earth mixed with poisoned honey instead of true food. These are they that hunt after honor, raising up an idol of reputation and applause, instead of seeking God's glory and the spiritual edification of men.

Those that preach with zeal and sincerity preach for God; those that preach without them, preach for themselves. Those that preach the word of God with spirit make it take impression in the heart; but those that preach it without spirit carry it no further than to the ear.

Perfection doth not consist in teaching it, but in doing it; because he is neither the greatest saint nor the wisest man that knows the truth most, but he that practises it.

It is a constant maxim that Divine wisdom begets humility; and that which is acquired by the learned begets pride.

Holiness does not consist in forming deep and subtle conceits of the knowledge and attributes of God, but in the love of God and in self-denial. Therefore it is more frequently observed that holiness is more amongst the simple and humble than among the learned. How many poor old women are there in the world who have little or nothing of human science, but are rich in the love of God! How many divines do we see that are over head and ears in their vain wisdom, and yet very bare in things of true light and charity!

Remember that it is always good to speak like one that learns, and not like one that knows. . . . Rare are the men who set a higher price upon hearing than speaking. But the wise and purely mystical man never speaks but when he cannot help it; nor doth he concern himself in anything but what belongs to his office, and then he carries himself with great prudence.

The spirit of Divine wisdom fills men with sweetness, governs them with courage, and enlightens those with excellence who are subject to its direction. Where the Divine spirit dwells there is always simplicity and a holy liberty. But craft and double-mindedness, fiction, artifices, policy, and worldly respects, are hell itself to wise and sincere men.

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You can take nothing greater to the heathen world than the impress and reflection of the Love of God upon your own character. That is the universal language. It will take you years to speak in Chinese, or in the dialects of India. From the day you land, that language of Love, understood by all, will be pouring forth its unconscious eloquence.

—*Henry Drummond.*

# "LITTLE BURNT-ALL-OVER"

*By Ernest Thompson Seton*

(It was the privilege of the acting editor of the "Message" to hear the following tale told with great dramatic fervor by Mr. Seton himself. At that time he stated that it was one of the most ancient of the North American Indian legends, having been current before the coming of the white man. Certainly it shows with great poignancy that the way to the cross is as old as man. We reprint it here, with the author's kind permission, from the Girl Scout magazine, "American Girl.")

Long before the white man came, there was an Indian village at the south end of Lake Otsego; and in it there dwelt a young brave with his wife and little daughter, their only child . . . (who) was well educated as her people understood it. She could make a fish-net; she could set it in the lake and catch an abundance of fish; she could split and dry them for winter use; she could gum and paddle a canoe; she could follow the broken twigs to where her father had killed a deer; she could skin it, cut it up, and bring it home; she could tan the hide into buckskin; she could make of it war coats and mocassins; she could embroider them with porcupine quills dyed red with miscawa and yellow with puccoon; she could make vessels of birch bark; she could keep the lodge in order; she could dance, she could sing, she knew the legends of her people; and, last of all, she was a good cook.

The child was very happy in her home life, and especially in the summer evenings when the mother would take her to sit on the western ridge and watch the wonder of the sunset. There with His power and glory before them, the mother would tell of the Great Spirit and of His unfailing care for all His children. . . .

As they sat one night there was a sunset of such splendor that both were hushed and awed. . . . Long they gazed in silence, then, as the brightness faded, there came on from the East a great veil of purple across the sky.

"What is that, mother?" said the child, as she looked.

"That, my child, is the purple robe of the Great Spirit."

Then, after a pause, the little one both childlike and womanlike said, "Mother, shall I ever have a purple robe?"

"Yes, my child, when your spirit is great, then indeed you shall have a purple robe."

As the color grew deeper and hid the light, the stars came out like points of white fire.

"What are those, mother?" she asked.

"Those, my little one, are the wampum beads on the robe of the Great Spirit."

She gazed for a little while, then girlike and lightly said, "Mother, shall I have wampum beads on my purple robe when it comes?"

"Yes," said the mother gravely, "I think you will have many, many big bright beads of wampum on your robe."

As the child pondered these sayings, the mother continued, "Listen dear one, *the voices* have made it plain to me that I am to be taken away from you very soon. You are going to be left alone, and such sorrows and trials will be yours as never woman of our people has known. . . . If you meet them in anger and rebellion, they will come again and again, till the hard lesson is learned, till you have met them in patience and silent fortitude; then indeed you shall overcome them, and you shall see them no more, except that each will become a bead of wampum upon your robe. And such honor and joy shall be yours as woman of our tribe never has known. . . ."

There were tears in the mother's eyes as she silently watched the last bars of splendor dying in the West. Both were silent for a long time, then they rose in the twilight, and went back to make ready the evening meal at the lodge.

Just a little while after this, the mother went out in her

canoe to haul the nets; the north wind rose suddenly on the long treacherous ice-cold lake, and the mother never came back.

Now the little girl was left with her father. After the first sharpness of their grief was passed, they settled down and were not uncomfortable, for the girl could do all things well. . . . But he was a young man. He did not wish to live alone. He desired a wife.

Now it chanced that in the village was a young widow who had two daughters. She was comely, and so the young warrior went to her and said: "Will you be my woman? I will be your man."

Then the widow said, "Yes." So they were married, and she came with her two daughters to live in the lodge of the hunter with his own little girl.

The child of the hunter was younger than either of the step-sisters . . . but the little one was a better cook than either of them, so they let her do the cooking. She could make better moccasins than they could, so they got her to make their moccasins. The step-sisters were not bad, only a little lazy; and having begun to give way to it, they became more lazy, and then unkind. The father did not see what was going on in his lodge; indeed he was much away, and the step-mother was careful, while he was at home, to keep him from seeing that his own child was little more than a drudge.

One day the father went with a great war party against the Hurons in Canada, and he never came back.

Now indeed the family was in a hard case, with their hunter gone and none near of kin to help them. One might have thought that the sorrows would have brought the family together in closer ties of real affection; but it had the opposite effect. They became bitter with each other, and es-

pecially with the little girl. . . . If she was at all slow, or did not please them, they thought little of beating her with a stick. Sometimes the handiest stick was one already burning in the fire . . . so that she was covered with little burns on her face, head, neck and arms; and from this she got the only name she ever heard now—little Burnt-all-over. Oftentimes she could not keep from screaming in pain, and the neighbors would come to ask what it was about. Then the cruel step-mother would say, "Oh, it's that little fool; she has no sense at all; she has fallen into the fire again. Look at her; she is a disgrace with all her little scarburns."

Sometimes the neighbors gave them a haunch of venison, but nearly all that they ate now was fish hard won by little Burnt-all-over from the lake, corn from a tiny patch, and berries and roots that she gathered in the woods. She knew nothing of kindness or joy. Her life was one long slavery. . . . She had but one solace in it all. At sundown she would sometimes slip away from the lodge, and sit on the ridge, as she used to sit with her mother, and watch the symbol of the Great Spirit go down in gold and glory, and remember that in that was proof that the brightness would come again. . . . This thought ever strengthened her, and she went back to her life of cruel drudgery, without complaint.

Four years went by. She was now sixteen, a marriageable woman, according to the way of her tribe. Her silent fortitude had filled her great eyes with a lustrous splendor, and her mouth, always beautiful, had now a gentleness and a strength that told of the tried and proven soul within. . . . But the sisters had eaten up their own beauty with their evil thoughts and repinings, and their girlish forms had grown gross with idleness. . . .

Then there came into the village a rumor that set them all astir with eager curiosity. It was said, yes openly told in council, that the King of the Snow Peaks was coming in all his power . . . on into their village to seek a wife. Then every marriageable woman, maid or widow, wondered what she might do to win for herself this coveted position, the honor of being wife to the greatest chief on earth. And many lay awake at night planning and hoping, and yet knowing nothing but the rumor. But one morning when they arose, behold, a wonderful sight! At the end of the lake was a new lodge that had not been there before. It was of great size and dazzling whiteness. Then it was whispered, "This surely is the lodge of the King of the Snow Peaks." Yes, everything seemed to say that that was the Great Chief's lodge.

Then the step-mother said to the eldest daughter, "Now is your chance." She took her to the spring where they made their toilets. They put on her all the best clothing they had. With the help of the young step-sister they hung on her dress all the elks' teeth and shell beads they could get. They greased her hair till it shone and painted her cheeks each with a large spot of red; then, on the parting of hair, the mother painted a bright red streak. Then she said, "Oh, my child, you are beautiful; if he sees you, you will surely win his heart."

So, full of hope and pride, the big fat daughter went round the lake to the big white lodge. On the doorflap she scratched with her long nail. . . . It was opened by an old, old woman with kind eyes and a wrinkled face. Then the girl said, "Mother, is this the lodge of the King of the Snow Peaks?"

"Yes, my child," was the answer. "This is my son's lodge."

"Is he in, mother?"

"No, my child, but he is coming. I expect him any moment; he is coming into this village to seek a wife; and that woman shall be his wife who first shall see him as he really is."

"What way does he come, mother?"

"Over those hills in the East, down that little trail," said the old woman.

"Mother, I am going to meet him."

"Go," said the mother.

Away went the girl, and as she began to climb the trail, she saw at the top against the sky a tall young hunter striding along. He had an eagle feather in his hair, and in one hand he carried the bow and arrow of a hunter, but in the other he had a thong by which he led two dogs. The girl gazed till he was so close that it was rude; then she slipped aside, and looked on the ground. As soon as he had passed she turned quickly to look, but he had disappeared. She ran quickly to the lodge, and when the old woman opened the flap she said, "Mother, I saw your son."

"Did you, and what did he look like?"

"Oh mother, a tall splendid young chief with an eagle feather in his hair that fluttered in the wind."

"What did he have in his hand, daughter?"

"The bow and arrows of a hunter."

"And in the other hand?"

"Why, mother, he had two great hunting dogs."

"What did he lead them with?"

"I think it was a rawhide thong, mother."

Then the old woman said, "No, that was not my son, you didn't see my son," and she flapped back the lodge flap.

Then the girl went away weeping bitterly, for she knew that she had failed. Her mother heard the story, and said,

"Well, it may be that this great honor is reserved for your sister." So the next morning they took the sister to the spring and put all the best clothes on her, and spangled her skirt with elks' teeth and shells. She was not gross and had not been so cruel. And the mother said, "My child, you are beautiful. If only he sees you, you are sure to win."

So the thin girl went forth even as her sister had done, was directed by the old woman, and, like her sister, beheld a splendid chief striding down the Eastern Hill. When she turned to look after him, he had disappeared, only the white lodge seemed to glow with a brighter light.

She ran to the lodge, and when the old woman came to the door, she said eagerly, "Mother, I saw your son. I saw the King of the Snow Peaks! . . . Oh, mother, a tall splendid war chief with three eagle feathers in his hair, and they waved in the wind as he strode along."

"What had he in his hand?"

"The bow and arrows of a hunter, mother."

"What in the other hand?"

"He was leading two great black hunting dogs, mother."

"What did he lead them with?"

"I think, mother, it was rawhide thong."

"What had he on his brow, daughter?"

"Mother, it was a wampum band. I noticed it carefully."

Then the old woman said gruffly and shortly: "No, it was not my son; you never saw my son at all," and she flapped the lodge flap on her face. . . .

So the mother and her two daughters wept together. . . . Little Burnt-all-over was there sewing. They did not want her to know, or to see their humiliation, so the mother said to her furiously, "Get out of this, you good-for-nothing!" and she reached for a big stick.

So the child escaped out of the lodge, and went up on

the ridge where alone she was at peace; and as she sat there, the sun went down in all the glory of the Great Spirit. And when the purple robe was drawn across, never before had it seemed so wonderful. . . . Thoughts of her mother came as blessing and strength, and her mother's last words of promise: "When you have overcome your sorrows, when your time of trial is past, such honor and joy shall be yours as never woman of our tribe has known." As she gazed, the purple robe seemed coming nearer, and then into her heart came the thought, "Maybe that time is now."

So she rose up in the morning before the others were astir, and went down to the spring. She had no paint to put on her face, but she washed it clean. She had no elks' teeth for her robe, but she had it neatly mended. She knew it would look better with shell dangles, but they had been taken from her. She looked about and gathered some white flowers, and made of them a border for the robe. Then she looked at herself in the spring, and knew that she needed more, so she made a white garland and put it round her head. Again she looked and thought she needed more, so she hung one flower on the end of each long braid of hair. She looked in the spring and knew that she was beautiful.

She went round to the Great White Lodge and timidly scratched with her finger nail. The flap was opened by the old woman with the wrinkled face and the kind eyes. Then Burnt-all-over said, "Mother, is this the lodge of the King of the Snow Peaks?"

"Yes, my child, this is my son's lodge. I am his Mother, Earth."

"Mother, is he in?"

"No, my little one, not yet; but I expect him very soon. . . ."

"Mother, which way does he come?"

"Over those eastern hills, little one, down the trail you see."

"Mother," she almost whispered, "may I go and meet him?"

"Yes, my child; go, and bless you!"

Away went little Burnt-all-over and began to climb the trail. Almost at once there was a blaze of light against the sky at the top, and down there came striding the most wonderful being she had ever seen or dreamed of, tall and manly; she knew it was he. Around his head were many eagle feathers shimmering against the sky, and she gazed at the weapons in his right hand, and the wonder across his brow, and the great hunting dogs that he led on his left. She gazed till he was so near that it was rude to stare, so she moved off into the bushes, and covered her face with her hands and waited. When she was sure he had passed, she turned slowly and with sinking heart to look after him. He was gone, but the white lodge shone with new splendor. She went quickly to it. The old woman came. Then she began eagerly, "Mother, I saw your son! Oh, mother, the tallest, most glorious-looking war chief I ever dreamed of. And round his head were what I thought were eagle feathers at first, then I looked and I knew they were the beams of the morning light."

"What did he have in his right hand, daughter?"

"Mother, he carried the lightning. I saw it red and crooked and forked and moving."

"And what in the other hand?"

"He was leading two great hunting dogs, mother, white and strong, and they had but one eye each, in the middle of their head. I have seen these dogs in the winter sky, mother, in the lull when the white wind makes ready in a storm."

"And what had he on his brow, my child?"

"The rainbow, mother, red, blue and yellow, and shining in splendor."

"With what did he lead the dogs?"

"He led them, mother, with a *beam of light.*"

"Come into the lodge, my little one, you have surely seen my son." She stepped aside. Then from the back of the lodge came the great Chief she had seen; in one hand he held a purple robe spangled with beads of shining wampum; the other hand he held out to her as he said: "My own little Burnt-all-over, I have been waiting for you. I have waited till your years of trial and burning were over; till you had overcome your sorrows with patient fortitude. I have come now to claim you as my bride. Here is the purple robe you have won, for your spirit is great. On it are the wampum beads of your victories. Come now and dwell with me forever in the honor and glory that are truly yours. Men know me as the King of the Day. You they shall know as the Queen of the Night; and when they see your beautiful face in the sky, wearing your purple robe, they shall indeed see the scars of your sorrows burning, but these shall in no wise mar your beauty, but be there forever to remind all those who see, that the way to perfect honor, glory and joy, is through the dark alley of sorrows overcome."

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Now thou knowest that there is no state of peace greater than that every man should love his brother; but if thou art free from sin of every kind but art at enmity with thy brother, thou art a stranger unto God.

—*The Instructions of Apa Pachomius.*

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There is no existence for the unreal and the real can never be non-existent. The seers of Truth know the nature and final ends of both. —*Bhagavad-Gita.*

# THE ONLY REMEDY

*From Spiritual Letters by Fenelon*

So long as we are centered in self, we shall be a prey to the contradiction, the wickedness, and injustice of men. Our temper brings us into collision with other tempers; our passions clash with those of our neighbors; our wishes are so many tender places open to the shafts of those around; our pride, which is incompatible with our neighbor's, rises like the waves of a stormy sea; everything rouses, attacks, rebuffs us. We are exposed on all sides by reason of the sensitiveness of passion and the jealousy of pride. No peace is to be looked for within when we are at the mercy of a mass of greedy, insatiable longings, and when we can never satisfy that "me" which is so keen and so touchy as to whatever concerns it. Hence in our dealings with others we are like a bed-ridden invalid, who cannot be touched anywhere without pain. A sickly self-love cannot be touched without screaming; the mere tip of a finger seems to scarify it. Then add to this the roughness of neighbors in their ignorance of self, their disgust at our infirmities (at the least as great as ours towards theirs), and you soon find all the children of Adam tormenting one another, each embittering the other's life. And this martyrdom of self-love you will find in every nation, every town, every community, every family, often between friends.

The only remedy is to renounce self. If we set aside—lose sight of—self, we shall have nothing to lose, to fear, or to consider; and then we shall find that true peace, which is given to "men of good will," i.e., those who have no will save God's, which has become theirs. Then men will not be able to harm us; they can no longer attack us through hopes or fears, for we shall be ready for everything, and refuse nothing. And this is to be inaccessible, invulnerable to the

enemy. Man can only do what God permits, and whatever God permits him to do against us becomes our will, because it is God's. So doing, we shall store our treasure so high that no human hand can reach to assail it. Our good name may be tarnished, but we consent, knowing that if God humbles us, it is good to be humbled. Friendship fails us: well it is because the One True Friend is jealous of all others, and sees fit to loosen our ties. We may be worried, inconvenienced, distressed; but it is God, and that is enough. We love the Hand which smites; there is peace beneath all our woes, a blessed peace. We will that which is, we desire nothing which is denied us; and the more absolute this self-renunciation, the deeper our peace. Any lingering wishes and clingings disturb it; if every bond were broken, our freedom would be boundless.

Let contempt, pain, death, overwhelm me, still I hear Jesus Christ saying, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." Powerless indeed are they; even though they can destroy life, their day is soon over! They can but break the earthen vessel, kill that which voluntarily dies daily. Anticipate somewhat the welcome deliverance, and then the soul will escape from their hands into the Bosom of God, where all is unchanging peace and rest.

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The good man has absolute Good, which like fire turns everything to its own nature, so that you cannot do him any harm. Or like the wounded oyster, he mends his shell with pearl. —*Emerson.*

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.*" —*Sainte Thérése of Lisieux.*

# FRAGMENTS

*From Empedocles*

Hardly can these things be seen by the eyes or heard by the ears of men, so hardly grasped by their mind! But, O ye gods, hallow these lips of mine and make a pure stream flow from them! . . .

For it cannot be that aught can arise from what in no way is, and it is impossible and unheard of that what *is* should perish; for it will always *be,* wherever one may keep putting it.

Come, hearken to my words, for learning addeth strength to thy mind. At one time things grew to be one alone out of many; and then again fell asunder so that there were many from the one—fire and water and earth and the endless height of the air; and, apart from these, baneful Strife, and in their midst Love.

Let thy mind's gaze rest upon her. It is she who awakeneth thoughts of love and fulfilleth the works of peace. . . .

When Strife had fallen to the lowest depth of the vortex, and Love had come to be the centre of the whirl, all things came together in Love so as to be one only.

But many things unmixed remained, alternating with the things that were mixed, as many as Strife retained in its grasp; for it had not yet retired altogether to the outermost boundaries of the circle.

But just in proportion as it was continuously rushing out, a gracious and divine impulse of blameless Love kept ever coming in.

And straightway things grew mortal that were wont to be immortal before, and things before unmixed were mixed. And from these, as they were mingled, the countless tribes of mortal creatures poured forth, fashioned in all manner of forms—a wonder to behold.

# REPORT

## CALIFORNIA

Boston and California both claimed Swami Paramananda's time during the month of March, but the major portion was allotted to Boston, the Swami returning to Ananda-Ashrama only toward the end of the month, in time for the Easter Services. While he was absent, the Ashrama as well as the Vedanta Centre of Los Angeles marked time, as it were, awaiting his coming. Sister Daya conducted all Services, which, owing to a summer-like sun, were several times held out-of-doors in "Nature's Sanctuary."

## BOSTON

The Vedanta Centre overflowed with life and activities during the Swami's short stay in Boston. On Sunday, the first of March, he celebrated the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna, giving two beautiful Services. The altar was decorated by the Swami's own hands; upon it rested a picture of the honored saint, enshrined in a red, white and golden bower of flowers. Many gathered together to pay their homage to this great Master Spirit and with what eagerness they listened to the Swami as he spoke, inspired by his deep reverence and feeling, on the life and influence of Sri Ramakrishna.

March fourteenth marked another big event. The Swami, in his spontaneous way often offers surprises to his community and friends. Suddenly he decided to celebrate the twenty-second anniversary of the Boston work. There was very little time for preparation, yet when that evening came friends, new and old, poured in large numbers into the Centre and animated the place with their living warmth. The Swami talked to them as he had never done before on the aims and ideals of his work, its past struggles and its future dreams, putting into every heart a new interest and fellowship and universal love. He also called upon several to say

a few words. Miss Katherine Sherwood, Mrs. Milliken, Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Burnham and Mr. Oulton paid their tribute of appreciation and thanksgiving to the Swami for his noble mission. Pride glowed in the faces of friends who had known the Swami for long years and had watched the work grow and the new friends and members listened with wonder and increasing hope about its big strides. The evening closed with refreshment and joyous exclamations rising unanimously from all.

Just before the Swami left for the West, he was privileged to entertain Dr. Kalidas Nag at the Boston Centre, prior to his departure for India. An impromptu reception was tendered him at the close of the regular Tuesday evening Class. The friends assembled in the Italian Room and listened with deep interest while Dr. Nag talked about India and answered questions.

Cohasset Ashrama, still in its winter wrap of snow, lured the Swami and his household on at least two occasions, and provided them with a glimpse of virginal loveliness, and a happy time before the big fireplace in the new building which was completed last Fall.

During the month of April, Miss Katherine Sherwood, who spent two years in India, will give a course of lectures, telling of the people, history, art and religion of India. This is owing to the requests of her many friends who heard her speak at the Women's City Club of Boston.

---

Charushila Devi, who assisted Swami Paramananda at the Boston Centre for two years, and who returned to India last October, has opened a branch of Ananda-Ashrama at Dacca, Bengal, India. A detailed account of her work will be included in the next Message.

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VOLUME XX NUMBER 5

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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

# Message of the East



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# Message of the East

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."
—*Ezekiel*
"Light shall come again from the East."
—*Tyndall*
Published Monthly except in August and September

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## THE DIVINE SONG

*From the Srimad-Bhagavad-Gita*

(Translation by Swami Paramananda)

THOU hast been mourning for those who should not be mourned for; . . . but the truly wise mourn not either for the dead or for the living. . . . . There is no existence for the unreal, and the real can never be non-existent. . . . Know that to be indestructible by which all this is pervaded. No one is ever able to destroy that Immutable.

These bodies are perishable; but the dwellers in these bodies are eternal, indestructible, and impenetrable.

He who considers this Self as a slayer or he who thinks that this Self is slain, neither of these knows the truth. For It does not slay, nor is It slain.

This Self is never born, nor does It die, nor after once having been, does It go into non-being. This Self is unborn, eternal, changeless, ancient. It is never destroyed even when the body is destroyed. . . .

As man casts off worn-out garments and puts on others which are new, similarly the embodied soul, casting off worn-out bodies, enters into others which are new.

Sword cannot pierce It (Self), fire cannot burn It, water cannot wet It, and air cannot dry It.

It cannot be pierced, nor burned, nor wet, nor dried. It is eternal, all-pervading, unchangeable, immovable, everlasting; . . . therefore knowing this to be so, thou shouldst not grieve.

# INVINCIBLE LIFE

*By Swami Paramananda*

(An extemporaneous address delivered over Radio KGFH, Glendale, California on Memorial Day, May 30th, 1927.)

Always there has hung over the heart of humanity the great uncertainty—what happens to a man after death? Human beings cannot accept the idea of annihilation, to which naturally their concept leads them when they see someone they love disappear from their sight into apparent oblivion;; so, as a result, they have discussed the question of the immortality of the soul and pondered over it throughout the ages, gradually, in this way, bringing about the evolution of idealism, religion, and all that is purest in the life of thought.

Some of you may perhaps know Sir Edwin Arnold's rendering of the Bhagavad-Gita—the Divine Song of the great Indo-Aryan sages—meaning literally the "Song of the Soul." He calls it the "Song Celestial," and in it are these lines:

Never the Spirit was born,
The Spirit shall cease to be never;
Never was time it was not—
End and beginning are dreams.
For birthless and deathless and changeless
Abideth the Spirit forever;
Death hath not changed It at all,
Dead though the house of It seems.

How this glorifies the thought of death, which now throws upon us such a weight of gloom, and how different a concept it gives of the nature of man's being! In one of Emerson's poems we find a similar idea expressed very beautifully. Emerson in great measure drew his inspiration from the Orient, although he gave no name to it. Truth is eternal; it is the common property of humanity and is not confined to any one creed or nation or race. This poem, which is called

"Brahma," begins as follows:

"If the red slayer think he slays,
Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep, and pass, and turn again."

Here is portrayed the indestructible quality of our true life, and what a tremendous vista it opens before us—a vista of responsibility, not the kind which burdens us with its heaviness, but the responsibility of making ourselves worthy of That One who has placed it upon us. Life is sacred, it is divine, and because it is divine, it is indestructible. When a man recognizes this, when he realizes that his little life is part of that Great Eternal Life, at once he becomes aware of his spiritual grandeur. The petty man ceases to be petty, the selfish man forgets his selfish instincts, the mortal awakens to his immortality, and is able to throw off disease and remove the sting of death.

Through strength we overcome weakness, and the greatest weakness that enters into our life is fear—fear of affliction, fear of loss, fear of death. If a man, however, has in the background of his consciousness the realization that his life is eternal, that today, tomorrow, yesterday, are but opportunities, points of experience in the passage of time, then all his fear melts away, and his sense of haste vanishes. For in our feverish haste often we feel that we must acquire our utmost during one lifetime, and that if we do not, all will be lost. This short-sightedness, this ignorance which seizes upon our mind and plays havoc with our life, is it not the curse of selfishness, and do not the truest philosophies that the world has known lay emphasis on the fact that we are a part of that great Indivisible, Indestructible Being, and that until we recognize our true birthright, until we realize our connection with that Being, we can have no freedom or salvation?

It is not by thinking of death man overcomes death, it is not by dwelling on disease that men conquers disease. Even physicians tell us that. Many scientists admit that so long as a man constantly dwells on the afflictions of his body, saturating his mind with the thought of sickness, till it becomes like an obsession, no medicine can cure him. The cure comes in the opposite way. Disease, suffering, misfortune, and all such things, can be done away with only by the Light of Wisdom, and this Light is the inherent property of the Soul. "Sword cannot pierce It (this Soul of man); fire cannot burn It; water cannot wet It; air cannot dry It. It is indestructible, invincible, everlasting!" At once you will say, "This cannot be so! Do we not feel it when we are burned? Are we not tremendously afflictd by all our material ailments?" If you really believe this, it only shows how little you know of your true nature. We are dwelling on the surface; we feel our wounds, our pains, our stings of jealousy and passion, because we are constantly revolving around the physical, and it is this consciousness of the physical that brings upon us our grief, our ailments, and the fear of death. Until we have the other picture clearly before us, the picture that has been portrayed by the Christ-Spirit, proving to us that our Soul is invincible—that no one can destroy it—we shall not know our true Light, our true heritage, and we shall be fearful in spite of all our doctrines and dogmas pertaining to immortality.

Man cannot live on words. He cannot be satisfied with mere cut-and dried theories: he wants something living. There is a living Soul residing within us, and this Soul must be known; it must be meditated upon; it must be realized. Yet how little time do we give to it! Whenever we are in trouble, we struggle to find outer remedies; we go forth to seek them. But do we ever look to that Kingdom within,

that Source of supply which resides in our inmost being, without which the body can do nothing? Every one who is harassed, tormented or doubtful, instead of scattering his forces, let him learn to enter the sanctuary of his own Soul, where nothing alien has any access. The sages and saints, the prophets and saviours of the world have all taught us the same thing, that we must learn the art of prayer, that we must learn to transcend body and bodily life at least once in a while.

Today—this Memorial Day—we are to remember those who have passed beyond, not because they are dead, but because they are living in another aspect of Reality. The question is, how close can we draw to that Reality? On this will rest the import of the day. It exists not merely that we may decorate the graves, but that we may decorate the memories which live and are ever going to live—like the Spirit Itself—unconquerable, indestructible. The body has a beginning: it is born and then it decays; but the Spirit, as we read in the Bhagavad-Gita, "is not born nor does It die." In this "Song of the Soul," a beautiful simile is given. It tells us that death is nothing more than changing our garment, that as a man casts away his worn-out garments because their usefulness is over, and puts on others which are new, similarly the Spirit casts off Its worn-out garment, the bodily life, and enters into another that is new.

Divine Song! It has given me the impetus to speak to you in this wise, reminding you and reminding myself that we must keep the Truth—the great undying Truth—the Eternal Principle—ever before our mind's eye in order that we may know our real Entity and not be overwhelmed with our apparent limitations. Herein lies the whole strength of man, without which he is frail and faltering, and powerless against the sting, the wound of death. As soon as we look

within and become aware of our divine heritage, our whole being expands with a new consciousness and we feel close to the heart of Divinity. Whatever we are called upon to do, we feel strong to do, and no longer fear we have so little that if we give of it we shall have nothing left for ourselves.

The humble heart is the strong heart. Sometimes we lift our head without humility, then even the most vigorous efforts we make lead us nowhere. But when from our inmost being rises the truly childlike prayer, and we feel that helplessness which teaches us to lean upon the One who is the Source of all strength, we find our real security. Whether we hold high positions or low ones, whether we are engaged in prayer or occupied with the natural round of duties, without this help we can accomplish nothing. This thought I give whenever I have the occasion, because it is true and fundamental. It is the great lesson we all need to learn.

Children of Light, walk in the Light;
Let all darkness vanish from your path!

The Soul, to my mind, symbolizes Light; and it is this Light which radiates in the flesh. So long as it shines within us, we shall be permeated with right energy, and the incentive to right action. When it is gone from us, our whole house becomes dark.

Once we realize our Soul nature, once we realize our inner depth—the One Divinity—our true birthright—our Father—our Mother—then, instead of conflict, instead of division, instead of discord and confusion, we find blending and abiding harmony. And in this realization lies the underlying unity of life, the fulfillment of the brotherhood of man.

---

He who has found both love and renunciation never descends to death. —*Kabir.*

## UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

You fear death, but stop to think what would happen to you if you had to live forever, such as you are. . . . If death be terrible, the cause of this is not in it but in us. The better a man is, the less he fears death. For the saint there is no death.

—*Tolstoy.*

Prajapati (the Lord of creatures) created the active senses. When they had been created they strove among themselves. Voice held: I shall speak; the eye held: I shall see; the ear held: I shall hear; and thus the other actions too, each according to its own act.

Death, having become weariness, took them and seized them. Having seized them, death held them back from their work. Therefore speech grows weary, the eye grows weary, the ear grows weary. But death did not seize the Central Breath. Then the others tried to know him, and said: Verily, he is the best of us, he who, whether moving or not, does not tire and does not perish.

—*Brishadaranyaka Upanishad.*

The eternal God is thy refuge; and underneath are the Everlasting Arms. —*Old Testament.*

The true past departs not. Nothing that was worthy in the past departs—no truth or goodness realized by man ever dies, or can die. —*Carlyle.*

I inhale the sweet breath that cometh forth from Thy mouth, I behold Thy beauty every day. It is my desire that . . . my limbs may be rejuvenated with life through love of Thee.

Give me Thy hands, holding Thy spirit, that I may receive it and live by it. Call upon my name to eternity and it shall never fail.

—*Prayer to Aton from the Coffin of Akhnaton.*

# PSALMS OF THE BUDDHIST SISTERS

*From the Pali Canon**

(Continued from the January Number)

### THE STORY OF PATACARA

She, too, was reborn when Padumuttara was Buddha, at Hanjsavati, in a clansman's family. One day she sat listening to the Master, and hearing him place a Bhikkhuni at top of those who were versed in the rules of the Order, she vowed that this rank should one day be hers.

After doing good all her life, and being reborn in heaven and on earth, she gained rebirth in the time when Kassapa was Buddha, as one of the seven Sisters, daughters of Kiki, King of Kasi. And for 20,000 years she lived a life of righteousness, and built a cell for the Order. While no Buddha lived on earth she dwelt in glory among the gods, and finally, in this Buddha era, was reborn in the Treasurer's house at Savatthi. Grown up, she formed an intimacy with one of the serving men of her house. When the parents fixed a day on which to give her hand to a youth of her own rank, she took a handful of baggage, and with her lover left the town by the chief gate and dwelt in a hamlet.

When the time for her confinement was near, she said: "Here there's none to take care of me; let us go home, husband." And he procrastinated, saying: "We'll go today; we'll go tomorrow," till she said: "The foolish fellow will never take me there"; and setting her affairs in order while he was out, she told her neighbors to say she had gone home, and set forth alone. When he came back and was told this, he exclaimed: "Through my doing a lady of rank is without protection," and hurrying after her, overtook her. Midway, the pains of birth came upon her, and after she was recovered, they turned back again to the hamlet.

*Translated and annotated by Mrs. Rhys Davids.

At the advent of a second child things happened just as before, with this difference: when midway,[1] the winds born of Karma blew upon her, a great storm broke over them, and she said, "Husband, find me a place out of the rain!" While he was cutting grass and sticks in the jungle, he cut a stake from a tree standing in an ant-hill. And a snake came from the ant-hill and bit him, so that he fell there and died. She, in great misery, and looking for his coming, while the two babies cried at the wind and the rain, placed them in her bosom, and, prone over them on the ground, spent the night thus. At dawn, bearing one babe at her breast, and saying to the other, "Come, dear, father has left thee," she went and found him seated, dead, near the ant-heap. "Oh!" she cried, "Through me my husband is dead," and wept and lamented all the night.

Now, from the rain, the river that lay across her path was swollen knee-deep, and she, being distraught and weak, could not cross the water with both babies. So she left the elder on the hither side, and crossed over with the other. Then she spread out a branch she had broken off, and laid the babe on her rolled head-cloth. But she was loath to leave the little creature, and turned round again and again to see him as she went down to the river.

Now, when she was half-way over, a hawk in the air took the babe for a piece of flesh, and though the mother, seeing him, clapped her hands, shouting, "Soo! Soo!" the hawk minded her not, because she was far from him, and caught the child up into the air. Then the elder, thinking the mother was shouting because of him, got flustered, and fell into the river; so she lost both, and came weeping to Savatthi. And meeting a man, she asked him: "Where do you dwell?"

And he said: "At Savatthi, dame."

[1] When the pains of childbirth set in.

"There is at Savatthi such and such a family in such and such a street. Know you them, friend?"

"I know them, dame; but ask not of them; ask somewhat else."

"I am not concerned with aught else. 'Tis about them I ask, friend."

"Dame, can you not take on yourself to tell? You saw how the god rained all last night?"

"I saw that, friend. On me he rained all night long. Why, I will tell you presently. But first do you tell me how it goes with that Treasurer's family."

"Dame, last night the house broke down and fell upon them, and they burned the Treasurer, his wife, and his son on one pyre. Dame, the smoke of it can be seen."

Thereat grief maddened her, so that she was not aware even of her clothing slipping off. Wailing in her woe—

"My children both are gone, and in the bush
Dead lies my husband; on one funeral bier
My mother, father, and my brother burn,"

she wandered around from that day forth in circles, and because her skirt-cloth fell from her, she was given the name "Cloak-walker." And people, seeing her, said: "Go, little mad woman!" And some threw refuse at her head, some sprinkled dust, some pelted her with clods.

The Master, seated in the Jeta Grove, in the midst of a great company, teaching the Dhamma, saw her wandering thus round and round, and contemplated the maturity of her knowledge. When she came towards the Vihara he also walked that way.

The congregation, seeing her, said: "Suffer not that little lunatic to come hither."

The Exalted One said: "Forbid her not," and standing near as she came round again, he said to her: "Sister, recover

thy presence of mind."[1]

She, by the sheer potency of the Buddha, regaining presence of mind, discerned her undressed plight, and shame and conscience arising, she fell crouching to earth. A man threw her his outer robe, and she put it round her, and drawing near to the Master worshipped at his feet, saying: "Lord, help me. One of my children a hawk hath taken, one is borne away by water; in the jungle my husband lies dead; my parents and my brother, killed by the over-thrown house, burn on one pyre." So she told him why she grieved.

The Master made her see, thus: "Patacara, think not thou art come to one able to become a help to thee. Just as now thou art shedding tears because of the death of children and the rest, so hast thou, in the unending round of life, been shedding tears, because of the death of children and the rest, more abundant than the waters of the four oceans:

Less are the waters of the oceans four
Than all the waste of waters shed in tears
By heart of man who mourneth touched by Ill.
Why waste thy life brooding in bitter woe?"

Thus, through the Master's words touching the way where no salvation lies, the grief in her became lighter to bear. Knowing this, he went on: "O Patacara, to one passing to another world, no child nor other kin is able to be a shelter or a hiding-place or a refuge. Not here, even, can they be such. Therefore, let whoso is wise purify his own conduct, and accomplish the Path leading even to Nirvana." Thus he taught her, and said:

"Sons are no shelter, nor father, nor any kinsfolk.
O'ertaken by death, for thee blood-bond is no refuge.
Discerning this truth, the wise man, well ordered by virtue,
Swiftly makes clear the road leading on to Nirvana."

[1] "Thy reason" would be more idiomatic in English.

When he had finished speaking, she was established in the fruit of a Stream-winner,[1] and asked for ordination. The Master led her to the Bhikkhunis, and let her be admitted.

She, exercising herself to reach the higher paths, took water one day in a bowl, and washing her feet, poured some of the water, which trickled but a little way and disappeared. She poured more, and it went farther. And the third time the water went yet farther before it disappeared. Taking this as her basis of thought, she pondered: "Even so do mortals die, either in childhood, or in middle age, or when old."

And the Master, seated in the "Fragrant Chamber," shed glory around, and appeared as if speaking before her, saying: "Even so, O Patacara, are all mortals liable to die; therefore is it better to have so lived as to see how the five khandhas[2] come and go, even were it but for one day—ay, but for one moment—than to live for a hundred years and not see that.

"The man who, living for an hundred years,
Beholdeth never how things rise and fall,
Had better live no longer than one day,
So, in that day, he see the flux of things."

And when he had finished, Patacara won Arahantship, together with thorough grasp of the Norm in letter and in spirit. Thereafter, reflecting on how she had attained while yet a student, and magnifying the event of this upward change, she exulted thus:

HER PSALM

With ploughshares ploughing up the fields, with seed
Sown in the breast of earth, men win their crops,
Enjoy their gains and nourish wife and child.

[1]The first of the four paths of salvation, Arahantship being the fourth.

[2]The five constituents making up a person under conditions of sense experience.

Why cannot I, whose life is pure, who seek
To do the Master's will, no sluggard am,
Nor puffed up, win to Nirvana's bliss?

One day, bathing my feet, I sit and watch
The water as it trickles down the slope.
Thereby I set my heart in steadfastness,
As one doth train a horse of noble breed.
Then going to my cell, I take my lamp,
And seated on my couch I watch the flame.
Grasping the pin, I pull the wick right down
Into the oil. . . .

Lo! the Nirvana of the little lamp!
Emancipation dawns! My heart is free!

### THE STORY OF CANDA

She, too, faring in former ages like the foregoing, was, in this Buddha-era born in a Brahmin village as the daughter of a Brahmin of whom nothing is known. From her childhood her family lost its possessions, and she grew up in wretched circumstances.

Now, in her home the snake-blast disease[1] broke out, and all her kinsfolk caught it, and died. She, being unable to support herself otherwise, went from house to house with a potsherd, maintaining herself by alms. One day she came to where Patacara had just finished her meal. The Bhikkhunis, seeing her wretched and overcome with hunger, received her with affectionate kindness in the pity they felt for her, and satisfied her with such food as they had. Gladdened by their virtuous conduct, she drew near to the Theri, saluted her, and sat down at one side while the Theri discoursed. She listened in delight, and, growing anxious concerning the round of life, renounced the world. Abiding in

[1] A mythical illness.

the Theri's admonition, she established insight, devoted to practice. Then, because of her resolve and of the maturity of her knowledge, she not long after won Arahantship, with thorough grasp of the Norm in the letter and the spirit. And, reflecting on her attainment, she exulted thus:

HER PSALM

Fallen on evil days was I of yore.
No husband had I, nor no child, no friends
Or kin—whence could I food or raiment find?
As beggars go, I took my bowl and staff,
And sought me alms, begging from house to house,
Sunburnt, frost-bitten, seven weary years.
Then came I where a woman Mendicant[1]
Shared with me food and drink, and welcomed me,
And said: "Come forth into our homeless life!"
In gracious pity did she let me come—
Patacara—and heard me take the vows.
And thenceforth words of wisdom and of power
She spake, and set before my face
The way of going to the Crown of Life.[2]
I heard her and I marked, and did her will.
Oh wise and clear Our Lady's homily!
The Threefold Wisdom have I gotten now.
From deadly drugs my heart is purified.

THE STORY OF PATACARA'S FIVE HUNDRED[3]

These too, having fared under former Buddhas as the foregoing Sisters, were, in this Buddha-era, reborn in some clansman's house in divers places, were married, and bore

[1]The charm of the poem lies in the poor woman, an involuntary beggar "in the world," "coming forth," a voluntary beggar into the higher Mendicancy, and from the dregs of living, reckoned by worldly standards, setting herself to win the cream of the life of the Mind.

[2]Lit., the thing of supreme import or advantage.

[3]Five hundred, and one or two more such "round numbers," are, in Pali, tantamount simply to our "dozens of them," "an hundredfold," and the like.

children, living domestic lives. And having wrought Karma such as would bring to pass such a result, they suffered bereavement in the death of a child. Then they found their way, overwhelmed with grief, to Patacara, and saluting her, and seated by her, told her the manner of their sorrow. The Sister, restraining their sorrow, spake thus:

The way by which men come we cannot know;
Nor can we see the path by which they go.
Why mournest then for him who came to thee,
Lamenting through thy tears: "My son! my son!"
Seeing thou knowest not the way he came,
Nor yet the manner of his leaving thee?
Weep not, for such is here the life of man.
Unask'd he came, unbidden went he hence.
Lo! ask thyself again whence came thy son
To bide on earth this little breathing space?
By one way came and by another gone,
As man to die, and pass to other births—
So hither and so hence—why would ye weep?[1]

They, hearing her doctrine, were filled with agitation, and, under the Theri, renounced the world. Exercising themselves henceforth in insight, their faculties growing ripe for emancipation, they soon became established in Arahantship, with thorough grasp of the Norm in form and in meaning. Thereafter, pondering on their attainment, they exulted in those words, "The way by which men come," adding

[1]The sharp contrast between this chant of consolation and that which any other religious anthology affords is sufficiently interesting. But if the burden of the chant, in its varied iteration, be imagined, not tripped off on the tongue of a cheerful critic or a disapproving other-believer, but uttered in grave, tender accents, coming from a heart that felt intensely, because it had so ached, and from a mind that understood and was therefore serene. . . . Even so might Bouguereau's "Vierge Consolatrice" speak, her great wise eyes looking forth over the anguished bereaved sister flung on her lap, while the dead child lies below at her feet.

thereto other verses, and repeating them in turn as follows:

THEIR PSALM

Lo! from my heart the hidden shaft is gone,
The shaft that nestled there she hath removed,
And that consuming grief for my dead child
Which poisoned all the life of me is dead.
Today my heart is healed, my yearning stayed.
Perfected the deliverance wrought in me.
Lo! I for refuge to the Buddha go—
The only wise—the Order and the Norm.

THE STORY OF VASITTHI

She, too, faring under former Buddhas like the foregoing, was, in this Buddha-era reborn in a clansman's family at Vesali. Her parents gave her in marriage to a clansman's son of equal rank, and she, bearing one son, lived happily with her husband. But when the child was able to run about, he died; and she was worn and maddened with grief. And while the relatives were administering healing to the husband, she, unknown to them, ran away raving, and wandered round and round till she came to Mithila. There she saw the Exalted One going down the next street, self-controlled, self-contained, master of his faculties. And at the sight of the wondrous Chief, and through the potency of the Buddha, she regained her normal mind from the frenzy that had befallen her. Then the Master taught her the Norm in outline, and in agitation she asked him that she might enter the Order, and by his command she was admitted. With ripening knowledge, she soon attained Arahantship. Reflecting on her attainment, she exulted thus:

HER PSALM

Now here, now there, lightheaded, crazed with grief,
Mourning my child, I wandered up and down,
Naked, unheeding, streaming hair unkempt,

Lodging in scourings of the streets, and where
The dead lay still, and by the chariot-roads—
So three years long I fared, starving, athirst.

And then at last I saw Him, as He went
Within that blessed city Mithila:
Great Tamer of untamed hearts, yea, Him,
The Very Buddha, Banisher of fear.
Came back my heart to me, my errant mind;
Forthwith to Him I went low worshipping;
And there, e'en at His feet I heard the Norm.
For of His great compassion on us all,
'Twas He who taught me, even GOTAMA.

I heeded all He said and left the world
And all its cares behind, and gave myself
To follow where He taught, and realize
Life in the Path to great good fortune bound.
Now all my sorrows are hewn down, cast out,
Uprooted, brought to utter end,
In that I now can grasp and understand
The base on which my miseries were built.

(*To be continued*)

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## WHITE VIOLETS

*By Amy Requa Russell*

Long ago Lord Buddha
Looked upon a lotus flower,
Rising tall and straight
From the mud and water of a stream.

Today you showed me violets
On a wild wet hillside—
Starlike, pale virginity
Against the sodden leaves.

# CONQUERING DEATH

*By Charushila Devi*

From the mouth of every saint and divine Incarnation who has manifested himself for us down through the ages, the same voice has sounded, to teach us, to guide us, to show us the way. And in order that we may not forget that the voice is one, let me give the words of some of these Holy Ones.

"Ye earth-born folk," runs an Egyptian teaching, "why have ye given up yourselves to death, while yet ye have the power of sharing deathlessness?"

From another source—Lord Buddha—we read: "Verily I say unto thee: The Blessed One has not come to teach death, but to teach life, and thou dost not discern the nature of living and dying."

In the Indo-Aryan scriptures the great Katha Upanishad declares: "This Self (the Immortal Spirit) is never born, nor does It die."

And then there is that most familiar saying of St. John: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

Even from the more remote past we catch the echo of the same deathless message:

"Hear ye, all ye children of the Immortal One!
I have known that indescribable, 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."

Great Souls, like the Buddha and the Christ, do not come to earth that their desires may be satisfied. They come, as the Divine Spirit, to be for us a model, an example. We,

on the other hand, seek mortal birth in order to fulfill our desires, and many opportunities are given us to do so. One little body, however, is not sufficient for complete fulfillment, so we take another body, and another; sometimes a better one, more attuned to our needs, but always a body in accord with our desires. If we long to be a great musician, for instance, and our human vehicle has not the subtle touch, naturally, as we grow more intense in our longing, when the time comes for us to take another body, it will be one that is more suitable in all its aspects—brain, mind, heart—more susceptible to the sound of music, to the understanding of it. For the same reason we see certain children growing up as criminals. Their tendencies show what kind of desires they have come into this world to fulfill. This does not mean that they have to follow these instincts. The mind can be changed; the consciousness can be transformed.

Every little particle of our body can be made over. Why not? When we find that we have something within that is poisonous, do we have to hold on to it? No; we can counteract it. If through our delusion, our ignorance, we have evolved a character that is not good for us, do we have to cling to it? No. If we have entangled ourselves in brambles, do we not release ourselves? Of course we do. Not in a moment, perhaps, but eventually. It is like a dancer: she twines a scarf around herself till she cannot move at all, then she unwinds it, and it drops off. So is our life. Just because for a long time we have chosen to be mortals; just because we have identified ourselves with this body and forgotten the soul, is no reason why we must go on doing so. The moment we know that we are mistaken, that we are not mortals, but children of immortal bliss, the moment we realize this, the delusion, the dream fades away, and we are free.

We *are* immortal! We are partakers of Eternal Life! We are going to live and not give in to the sorrow of death. What we call death is only a transformation. In winter the trees, to some people, seem to die. But are they really dead? They are not: the life force is in them to bring forth their flowers and fruit in the springtime. Science tells us that death is only the changing of one form into another, perhaps a grosser into a subtler, or a subtler into a grosser. The difference between science and religion is slight. They speak with the same tongue, and each in its own way tells us, "There is no death." It may seem fanciful to say this, but it is not a fancy. We are but dreaming that we are mortals. We have gradually evolved the consciousness that we must give up to death and sorrow, and now we cannot grasp the Truth when it comes to us. Always the question arises in our mind: "What becomes of our mortal part when we reach immortality?" We are afraid. We love this body; we love to live in mortal consciousness; we are seekers after pleasure, we crave for it. Intellectually we like to imagine that we have a yearning for the spiritual, but few of us possess intense faith. If we had real faith, we would be able to enter into the innermost depths of our being and realize our true Self, and when we know what we are, at once we lose our sense of mortality.

What becomes of our mortal part? What became of the shepherd boy who was really a prince when, after his father died, they sought him out and put him on the throne. Once he knew he was a king, where was the shepherd? And the lion who thought he was a sheep because he had been brought up among the flocks and had acquired their habits? When he was shown his reflection in the pool and knew at last his true character, what became of his sheep nature? There was no longer a shepherd boy and there was no long-

er a sheep. So is it with this mortal self, this body. We are immortal, but we cling to the illusion that we are of the earth.

When we read what Buddha said: "I come to bring life, not death," we think, "Buddha was a different kind of being. He was one of the saviours. We are ordinary people; we are not like him." Or when St. Paul exclaims: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" and other Great Ones cry out: "Hear ye, all ye children of the Immortal One!" we say, "It was easy for them to speak this way, but when we suffer the agony, the storm of life, how can we think we are immortal? How can we think when we lose a child in death that there is no death?" We can, however, all have Christ or Buddha consciousness. It is the true consciousness for humanity. The shepherd boy when he learned he was a king, lost the deluding idea that he was a shepherd. We can be like that. It is not so difficult. A mystic tells us: "One little step beyond myself was all." It is just like that with us; we are wound in the veil of Maya—illusion. All we have to do is to unwind ourselves and drop the veil. Do not think I am condemning the material world. One little step is all the difference there is between the material world and the spiritual, if we only know it. Material world is a manifestation of God. Through it we find God.

Let us be pure, spiritual, honest, truthful, loving. There is no death for us. Let us live in that realization like the princess Savitri in the legend, who conquered death by her power of love. When her prince Satyaban died, the King of Death, Yama, came to take him away from her. She, wise and illumined, convinced him that love is eternal and that for the soul there is no death. Yama, pleased with her depth of understanding and power of love, granted Satyaban the

boon of immortal life. What is the significance of this story? If we live a pure, spiritual life, we conquer death. In truth, there is nothing to conquer, there is no such thing as death, unless we identify ourselves with the passing, the dying side of life, and forget that part of our being which is undying. As we live in the consciousness of the immortal, we become immortal, but naturally we cannot evolve into it in a moment. In the same way that we have grown into the mortal conception, we have to grow into the realization of immortality. As we go on day by day holding the thought in our heart that we are children of immortal bliss, that we are not shepherd boys but kings, gradually we shall enter into the divine, the kingly state, and shall be undaunted by the threat of death.

Yet if it happens that, even holding to that thought every day, every moment of our life, we still are unable to realize our eternal nature, then there is but one thing left for us to do: gathering up our little self, let us plunge into the ocean of surrender, calling with the intensity of our fervent prayer:

*"O Lord, take me as I am! I am bound by the sense of mortality. ..Thou hast the power to release me—I cannot release myself. Take this body; place it where thou wilt, but make it a real instrument in Thy hand. Cleanse it, purify it, and fill it with Thy Divine wisdom, Thy Divine life. O Thou Father, Mother, Friend, Beloved, Saviour, Master, All-in-all—make me Thine in every thing!"*

At once we shall conquer death.

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All beings proceed from the same Spirit, which has different names, love, justice or wisdom, in its different manifestations, just as the ocean receives other names when it bathes other shores. —*Emerson.*

# THE SOUL'S HOMELAND

*From the Writings of Seneca*

The human soul is a great and noble thing; it permits of no limits except those which can be shared even by the gods. It does not consent to a lowly birthplace, like Ephesus or Alexander. The soul's homeland is the whole space that encircles the height and breadth of the firmament, the whole rounded dome within which lie land and sea, and where all the sentinel stars are taking their turn on duty.

Again, for the soul a narrow span of existence will not suffice. "All the years," says the soul, "are mine; no epoch is closed to great minds; all time is open for the progress of thought. When the day comes to separate the heavenly from its earthly blend, I shall leave the body where I found it, and shall of my own volition betake myself to the gods."

As the mother's womb holds us for months, making us ready for the existence into which we seem to be sent forth when at last we are fitted to draw breath and live in the open; just so, throughout infancy and old age, we are making ourselves ready for another birth.

Survey everything that lies about you as if it were luggage in a guest-chamber: you must travel on. Nature strips you as bare at your departure as at your entrance. What is more, you must throw away the major portion of that which you brought with you into life; you will be stripped of the very skin which covers you, of bones and sinews, the framework of these transitory parts.

That day which you fear as being the end of all things, is the birthday of your eternity.

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All our moments are alike in God's Hand, the hour of death as that of life. . . . Why are you afraid, O man of little faith? —*Fenelon.*

# ANANDA-ASHRAMA

*An Impression by Maud Keck*

*"The little soul starts with one great handicap against it;—it has first to carry its own body . . . and then fight!"*
*—Gilbert Murray*

Knowing that this was not just an ordinary journey, the soul looked about carefully before it started. But the body didn't know. It was tired for one thing; very tired of grief, of people, of problems, especially old problems that would not get themselves solved no matter how hard one tried. "But this is not a holiday," the soul said, "this is a spiritual experience." "I wonder?" said the body, for it was in a bad mood that morning. It had looked at the world too long, and though it saw great beauty of Nature everywhere, it saw little beauty of life and living. So the soul had a burden to carry, for the body was continually looking back at it to ask incredulously:

"Is the world—and life—no more than this? Is this . . . all?"

"I don't know," said the soul in some perplexity, "but that sounds superficial. Suppose we go to a place up in the hills—a Retreat—and find out?"

"A Retreat!" The body was instantly engrossed with the range of that word. Retreat is temporary withdrawal; it is an orderly march from one given point to another. It is retirement to privacy, seclusion, and solitude. It is also a recess, one of those rare and quiet intervals when the little soul turns inward—looks deeper—gathers its powers up for a swift onrush that sweeps it forward. It may have been preparing for this onrush for a long time, for that is how the soul grows.

"The place is called Ananda-Ashrama—a name like music. It means peace-retreat. The words have some other

meanings but that is enough, isn't it? Peace-Retreat"

"That is enough. It sounds like a call from far high places. Ananda-Ashrama—let us go there!"

It was a crystal-clear morning. The body climbing like a man spying out new country looked about carefully. If you have not seen Ananda-Ashrama, you must know that it lies up—far up—against the foothills of the Sierra Madre mountains, and they are thickly covered with wild growth that is spiked and feathery. At this time of year everything in flower carries the scent of wild things. The body saw how the winding hills went up in tiers—tier upon tier; it saw the great views—the vast distances being left behind in the valleys. And just ahead it saw a promontory standing out like the prow of a ship—from the shelving foothills. On it was built a large, rambling, many-windowed house, with wide porches, the wind blowing through them, and windows like eyes far down across the valley—as far as the sea.

Inside, there were cool, large rooms and many books and deep chairs to read them in, for the feel of rest was in that place. It had a message. "No matter who you are, Peace is here; no matter how far you may have come, Peace waits for you here!". . . . "And I believe you," said the body.

"I should like to go up higher," the soul insisted.

"But is there anything higher," and the body looked surprised, "than peace?"

"I don't know, but I have heard a bell and I should like to go."

The body might have liked to linger in the Guest House but dusk was coming on and any low soft bell at dusk had always made a profound appeal to the soul. . . . As if long ago, in some far away other-country it had followed, or been called by, soft-toned bells at dusk. So carrying the body with it, the soul began again to climb steadily higher. It

climbed along a narrow winding path between scented pine-trees. It mounted steps beside a ravine, it wound along under flowering acacias which smelt in the dusk, like golden honey. Its feet brushed purple violas growing trustfully beside the path. And far ahead, it saw other people climbing too. White-veiled Sisters leaving their cloisters and moving slowly and silently toward the great Temple set on a hill just where it catches the widest sweep of the valley. The Sisters kept ahead—far ahead—and in the dusk, with the scent of so many flowers from trees and shrubs filling the night air, their fluttering white veils might have been so many fluttering white butterflies winging on, and beckoning the soul on and up . . . up higher! The soul followed, for this was new country, and yet, far back in consciousness, it was old country. The soul had done all this before.

Lights burned in the Temple before the high altar; low prayers were intoned. There were long meditative silences, and then antiphonal responses by the devout white-veiled Sisters. Sanctity and peace were in all four corners of the Temple. The spirit of holiness was more tangible than the scent of incense. A new order of peace settled on the soul.

Going down hill to the Guest House and passing the many big trees where the birds were holding their evening Services, the soul marveled at the beauty of a world as radiant and new here at dusk as if it had just been born. Even the little soul had expanded, until now it felt big enough to hold a world, and knowing that life is something like a mirror which reflects what you are able to give back, the soul could hardly believe in all this beauty.

"Am I as beautiful as that? It isn't possible—is it?"

"Well, I have never seen you look like this before," the body said truthfully.

At night, in a high room with windows looking East and

looking South down on the twinkling lights of cities folded in among the hills, the body took one smiling, contented look around and went to sleep. But the soul stayed awake. It was listening. It had just discovered that every litle fold and hollow of the hills around the Guest House was filled with breezes moving quietly back and forth. They might have come from higher ground behind the Temple, for they were very cool and as tranquil as little breaths from Heaven. And they were saying something. In the same key, and at the same time, all of them were saying:

"Shanti—Shanti—Shanti. . . . Peace—Peace—Peace!"

## REPORT

### EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE

Thin white clouds veiled the sun at Ananda-Ashrama on the morning of Easter, 1931. At the dawn there had been splendid flushes of rose, but these all faded down to filmy vapors which refused to let a single beam shine through to mark the day. It was a disappointment—this persistent cloudiness—to the large concourse of early worshippers who sat facing the eastern sky; and naturally it was a disappointment to the Ashrama community. When Swami Paramananda took his place, however, beside the great flower-cross, bearing the sacred AUM, all this disappointment vanished, as with a few words he turned what had seemed a disadvantage into a blessing:

"You have come with great enthusiasm to greet the sun," said the Swami, "but do not be discouraged if you fail actually to behold that dazzling splendor. It is there, and it is a wonderful thing to know that it is there. Some of my community regretted that this morning should be cloudy when we have been having such beautiful sunrises. This is equally beautiful. It is ordained that we should greet the sun

in this aspect. The Lord comes to us in many ways, and man must be willing to receive Him, no matter how He comes; his heart must be open—doors and windows of his soul must be unlocked, unfastened, so that the Presence may enter him with Its healing balm."

Never before in the history of the Ashrama had so many assembled for this early Easter Service to listen to the Swami's message of new life, new hope, new love, and to sense, at his bidding, the stir of thoughts like the fluttering of the wings of birds:

"You know," he said, "the birds sometimes give a wonderful sense of rhythm, lightness, and music. As they rise up from the ground their wings flutter, and they float. Same way with the thoughts of men, the beautiful thoughts that come to us. They furnish us those wings with which we take our flight."

An especially happy note of universality was struck by the presence in the congregation of a contingent of Japanese, who accompanied a young Chinese woman, the adopted daughter of an American school teacher, for many years a friend of the work.

As is usual at Easter, both breakfast and luncheons were served at the Guest-House, for the benefit of those who cared to stay on for the morning Service at eleven, and the afternoon Service at three. Many availed themselves of the opportunity and added their quota to the large number who came for these later Services, held, not on Sunrise Terrace nor in the Temple, but under a large pergola, newly erected for the occasion, which faced the Temple portico where the Swami's chair had been placed with the flower-cross and the Shrine for a background. The occasion, the setting, the spirit conveyed by the Swami as he spoke on "Spiritual Resurrection" and "Soul's Triumph" left a memory of beauty and peace

in the hearts of those who had made the pilgrimage, as the sunset hour drew them home.

The following Sunday, April 12th, in the evening, after the customary eight o'clock Service at the city Centre, the Swami hurried over to be present at the dedication of the new Unity Truth Centre, where, at the invitation of its founders—Mr. and Mrs. Walter Raymond—he was to speak. The Swami has always had most happy contacts with this organization, so it was a pleasure for him to greet its members in their spacious new home, and to extend to them, an invitation to the birthday celebration of the Ananda-Ashrama, to be observed this year on Sunday, April 19th.

EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF ANANDA-ASHRAMA

On this day, the final event of importance marking the month of April at the Peace Retreat, the new pergola again gave shelter to a goodly gathering, who listened eagerly to the Swami as he addressed them on the "Source of Strength," the Source from which he has drawn to build the Ashrama. His hosts of the previous Sunday being present, the Swami called upon Mr. Raymond, who responded with a few gracious words of appreciation.

The day was one of sunshine; and Divine rhythm, a theme close to the Swami's heart, seemed to be expressed in all the birthday activities, right down to the tea which was served in the library, after the three o'clock Service, to all who cared to partake—in this case, the entire congregation.

On Wednesday, April 22nd, the Swami took train for Boston where he will remain probably throughout the spring and early summer. During his absence, all Services and Classes at the Ananda-Ashrama will be conducted by Sister Daya.

### VISIT TO SANTA BARBARA

One other event must be recorded before leaving April behind—the trip the Swami made to Santa Barbara on April 14th, where, as the guests of Mrs. Marion Craig Wentworth, he spoke in a private studio before a most appreciative and representative audience, his subject being "India's Contribution to the World Thought." "There is no one in America," said Mrs. Wentworth when introducing him, "who has so bridged the understanding between the East and the West as Swami Paramananda, teaching, as he has, the spirit of tolerance." The questions asked him at the close indicated the response his wider outlook had aroused in the hearts of his listeners, and on all sides was expressed the eager desire for more.

Before returning the hundred miles back to the Ashrama, the Swami and those who had accompanied him on his motor trip up the coast, were invited by Mrs. Wentworth to her apartment, where the gracious hostess herself, assisted by some friends, served a delicious buffet supper. The Swami in the past has given many Classes in Santa Barbara under Mrs. Wentworth's auspices, and it is his sincere desire to accept her invitation and speak there again after his return from Boston.

### BOSTON

Activities at the Boston Centre were faithfully carried on during the month of April by Srimati Gayatri Devi. There was marked increase in attendance during the month. Swami Paramananda returned to Boston in the last week of April and gave his first address on the last Tuesday, the 28th, before a large and appreciative audience who gathered to welcome him.

On the thirtieth, a special Hindu dinner was given and a

number of faithful friends of the work availed themselves of the opportunity to be present. Immediately after the dinner, Miss K. F. Sherwood showed a rare collection of pictures of Indian architecture in temples and caves, especially the beautiful carved temples of Ajanta and Ellora.

The principal interest of the evening was when Swami Paramanda told the audience about the newly-founded Ashrama which Charushila Devi has inaugurated recently for Indian women. There was great appreciation and enthusiasm expressed by the people as this new work forms a definite link with the Boston work where Charushila Devi spent two years and acted as assistant to Swami Paramananda.

### NEW ASHRAMA FOR INDIAN WOMAN

The news of happy surprise has come to us from India that Charushila Devi who returned to India last November after having worked under Swami Paramananda for over two years and a half, had just opened a branch centre in Dacca, East Bengal, of the Ananda-Ashrama in California. During her stay in America, as she lived at the Ashrama and at the Boston Centre, she was tremendously inspired with the scheme of a spiritual family living together and evolving their specific gifts through divergent lines of art, industry, music, literary work and spiritual inspiration. As she expressed her dreams of such an Ashrama, she found many yearning hearts responding and as an outcome, a new Ashrama is now in full swing under Charushila Devi's loving energetic and unfailing devotion.

A suitable home has been secured in Dacca with spacious grounds and already it is housing over thirty-six women of all stations and ages. Along with their secular and spiritual training, they are already being taught to express through their handiwork in practical way to make themselves self-

supporting. These Ashrama members are receiving regular orders for sewing, for making sweetmeats, matches, etc. One gentleman inspired by the earnestness of the institution has offered his voluntary services to teach the girls dyeing and calico printing which is now in style in India, and they are receiving orders from the community. A cutter has also come of his own accord and is rendering his faithful service. The members are taught various lines according to their inherent gifts. As some of the members have had no previous education teachers are also employed to give them elementary education.

The principal aim of the Ashrama is to teach every member the way of self-expression through avenues of spiritual, intellectual and practical training which makes for true character. It is hoped that some of the sisters who have been trained by Swami Paramananda for over twenty years will be sent to India to assist in certain lines of activity. Especially it is hoped that a health clinic can be established under an expert medically-trained supervisor.

This work definitely forms a bridge of understanding between India and America and we hope that through this nucleus there will be constant influx and interchange of devout souls between India and America. There is no question that work of this nature is greatly needed in India from every point of view. There is no doubt that such work will greatly help in a practical way towards the fulfillment of our larger ideals through practical avenues. We hope and pray that this noble venture of Charushila Devi will not lack for funds for its expansion. Those desirous of aiding this worthy cause can send their donations and love offerings to the Secretary of the Vedanta Centre, 32 Fenway, Boston. A donation however small will be of great help in carrying on this work in India and it will be gratefully received.

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VOLUME XX NUMBER 6

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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

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# Message of the East



OF THE
UNIVERSITY
OF

JUNE, 1931

## Power of Love and Prayer

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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

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## SUMMONS TO PRAYER

*Accadian Cuneiform Inscription*

PRAY, pray thou!
Before the couch, pray!
Before the throne, before the canopy!
Before the dawn's light, pray!

By the tablets and the books, pray!
By the hearth,
By the threshold,
At the rising of the sun,
At the setting of the sun, pray!

When thou comest out of the city,
and when thou goest into the city,
and when thou enterest into thy house, pray!
On the street, in the temple, on the road, pray!

# UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Let us invoke God Himself, not in mere form of words, but by elevating our souls to Him in prayer. And the only way truly to pray is to approach alone the One who is alone. To contemplate that One, we must withdraw into the inner soul, as into a temple, and be still.

—*Plotinus.*

It is not faith that calculates, that fears, that hesitates. When a child nestles itself in the bosom of its mother and feels itself absolutely secure, it does not ask itself whether the mother is strong enough to protect it or not.

—*M. K. Gandhi.*

Thou sweet Well for him that thirsteth in the wilderness; it is closed to him who speaketh; it is open to him who keepeth silence. When he who is silent cometh, lo, he findeth the Well!

—*From a Hymn to Thoth.*

Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet;
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands or feet.

—*Tennyson.*

The more one approacheth God, the more doth one's love towards Him increase. The more doth the river near the sea, the more it is subject to ebb and flow. The Ganges of Knowledge flowing in the soul of a wise man runneth only in one direction. To him, the whole universe is a dream. He always liveth in his own true Self. But the Ganges of Love in a devotee's heart runneth not in one direction. It hath its ebb and flow.

—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

As soon as man is at one with God . . . he will see prayer in all action.

—*Emerson.*

# POWER OF PRAYER

An Intimate Talk by Swami Paramananda

We cannot say that a prayer is greater or richer because it is an ancient Hindu prayer, a Hebrew prayer, a Christian prayer or a Mohammedan prayer. In fact, if our mind is really in tune with spiritual ardor, if our spirit is really exalted enough to say a prayer with spontaneity, we forget altogether the outer manner of prayer. We forget the forms, and ritualism, and even the words melt away leaving us alone with the reality of thoughts which form the basic principle of all true prayers. It has very little to do with dogma or creed or stamp of religious faiths. It is a divine impulse of the human heart which enables us to altogether transcend our self-limitations.

If we are not able to forget our outer surroundings and circumstances, we cannot commune with God. The mind cannot be conscious of Him and at the same time thinking on the outer terrestrial world. A rich man has to forget that he is rich, a poor man that he is poor, the sufferer must forget his suffering and the proud man must lay aside his cause for vanity, because all this can so completely sidetrack our mind that we are incapable of lifting our heart to God. It is not a question of forgetting any one thing of the world but all things that hold our mind in captivity to the flesh and all the attachment that we incur by our constant dwelling upon the passing vanities of the world.

So we are constantly reminded by the Christ-like spirits to be clean of heart that we may not carry aught in our mind that prevents our flight to the Divine. To do this we must wash ourselves, not only observing the outer cleanliness of washing hands and feet but our minds must be cleansed from all alien, unworthy and distracting thoughts and feelings. Some devout people form the definite habit,

after having observed physical cleanliness, of wearing a specific garment for their devotional exercises. This is but a symbol and a reminder for all truth-seeking aspirants that they may attire themselves with freshness of spirit before they venture the act of prayer, devotion and meditation.

In prayer, the main thing is feeling. Always remember when you pray really to pray from your hearts, and if you repeat a prayer, make its words your own. Never pray mechanically; there must be absolute harmony between inner feeling and outer utterance. Also we must have faith. As Christ said: "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." It will perhaps be objected that the prayer may not be answered. Of course it will be answered if we know how to pray. When we have learned to open our hearts they are bound to be filled.

"O Thou Supreme One, fill me with Thyself!" Try to realize the magnitude of this prayer. Instead of asking, "O Lord, remove my heartache, the ailments of my body, the pain of my limbs,"—and all the other countless things men set their hearts upon—ask for this one thing: "Fill me with Thyself!" Until we have come to this point we have not found our access into the real spirit of Truth. First seek ye the Truth, or God, or the Kingdom of Righteousness, or, as the Hindus and the Greeks have put it, "Know thy Self," and all other things shall be added unto you. Here is a thought not of one religion, one man, or one creed. It is a universal thought. "Fill me with Thyself! Then there can be no more emptiness." The mystic souls—those who have opened the lock of error with the key of love and have entered the inmost sanctuary—they can say, "Fill me with Thyself! It is my only prayer." They do not want to be filled with themselves—their notions, their imperfec-

tions, their likes and dislikes: they know there will be no rest for a soul who yields to these things, for they are endless. "Fill me with Thyself!" Pray in this way, with just that one clean-cut thought—and keep on praying. You will be charged with such spiritual fervor that there will be no more room for imperfections and afflictions. Self-inflicted afflictions most of them! We wound ourselves through the little self—wound of vanity, wound of hurt pride!—the little self pricks like a needle.

Be grateful for all experiences. You will grow stronger because of them. And know that I am not just repeating something read from a book—life teaches it. Often our hard experiences bring the most blessing. That is why mystic souls pray for them. Not that they want to be miserable; what they want is to prove their worth, their strength, their devotion. Devotion does not consist in words. It is noxious when a person comes and praises the lord merely with the lips. It means nothing. It is the action, the fervent spirit within, which counts, and we prove it through our life. How much we can all do! There is not anyone who is not gifted enough to serve. Service is the great purifier. Sometimes an hour of work, if you know how to do it properly, may give you two hours of meditation.

There are certain things we have to do to prepare for the moment of prayer. Just as in some countries they have the habit before worshipping of taking a bath, or washing the hands and feet, removing their shoes, so should we cleanse our body and mind before entering the Temple of the Lord, and mind is the more important. The point is, we should leave behind all that is unclean, all that is non-essential, all that does not belong in that holy atmosphere. Our whole being must be cleansed and in tune before we

can say the real prayer, the prayer that is potent, or enter into the meditation that will penetrate the heart of Divinity.

What is a clean mind? Apart from all ethical ideas, it is the mind that is resolute, not distressed or confused, the mind which does not have thoughts and feelings which cannot be assimilated—alien thoughts, or turbulent feelings.

How do we cleanse the mind? By mental control, by keeping our thoughts free of anything that is unkind, hard or harsh toward anyone. Thoughts that are harsh will harden our whole being. They are not delicate enough to offer before the altar. The mouth that utters words that are dissonant, rude or cruel, that mouth cannot pronounce the Name of God. Sri Ramakrishna used to give the illustration of an unprepared mind: You have a box of matches, and, carelessly, you leave it in the dampness, exposed to all kinds of weather. Naturally, when you strike the matches they will not light, and you throw them away in disgust. That is true also of this match of our mind. We expose it to the dampness, the sordidness of the world, and then we wonder why it is that we are not successful in our prayer and meditation, why we lack faith and ardor when others seem to have so much. There is no partiality. Every one has the same equipment. The breeze is blowing; the clever sailors know how to set their sail and benefit by it, while the careless ones do not.

"We lift our thought by constant devotion to our Ideal." We cannot, however, have this unwavering connection with the Divine Being or, as a matter of fact, with anything, unless we have tremendous feeling, devotion, love—call it what you will. We can perhaps by force fix our mind upon a point, an object or a person, but unless our concentration comes as the result of spontaneous unfold-

ment, we shall not be able to hold it there; it will break. Although there are many cut and dried rules for meditation, pure meditation comes as a flow of water—steady, clear and natural—from its source. Meditation in its purest form must be spontaneous.

Now, one of the things in our nature which parches this spiritual flow is egotism. Those who are filled with it, separate themselves from the God-influence. There is nothing which can so bar the Divine influx. It hardens one's life and has a very ill effect upon the whole nature. When we pass judgment, one upon another, when we are harsh and critical, our feelings all spring from one root—our egotistic sense. He whose heart is concentrated upon God is incapable of such things; so let no one ever be deluded on that score.

Our protection against all evil is the increasing consciousness of good—of God—of Truth—and we gain this not merely by sitting down and meditating, but by carrying our thought into the life of action. Let our hands be active but our hearts ever set on the Light. Nor does it matter how we express that Light, whether through the love of Beauty, the love of Truth, or the aspiration for higher things. The point is that it should ever dominate our spirit; then we need not be afraid of evil, because evil cannot touch us if we are armed with good.

This is the true freedom of the Spirit. Freedom of the Spirit is a very wonderful thing, and it is not given to us that we may slumber or become wayward: that is not freedom, it is slavery. It is given to us that our mind, rid of all bondage, may soar very high, above and beyond all that makes for sadness, sorrow and misunderstanding.

Think how close we constantly live to That which is so very sacred! Do you realize what such beauty of associa-

tion means—association with the pure, the God-like, in your sleeping, in your dreaming, in your waking states? It is through association that people's lives are often transformed. If we can make association with the high and holy our meditation, we shall contact the Spirit of holiness. If we can meditate on the beautiful and absorb it, our whole being will become beautiful.

Let us unmake all that is sordid and ugly within us. We can do it. The Light of the Soul sheds its radiance everywhere. Ugly things become lovely; the densest, darkest corners of human existence are illumined by that Light. Sometimes just a person's guileless, spontaneous smile can remove grief and despondency from a soul in such measure that it is almost equal to saving grace. Remember that. There is a trust placed upon us because of this Light that we carry. Many carry it unconsciously, it is true, and others turn their backs on it and think that they do not possess it, but it is owing to that Light that we live. Its manifestation comes, however, only when people are permeated with the real spirit of love. What a beautiful sense of peace descends upon us even when we think of these things, and if we can really make such thoughts our prayers, is there anything that can again overshadow us or overthrow us—any anxious cloud, or stormy wind? That is why it is so essential to be reminded of these great facts. For just as children many times in their great zeal would forget to eat or sleep or come home if their mother did not call them, so we would forget if that great Mother-Heart—the All-beneficent, All-loving One, who never is absent from us—did not call to us to remind us—even sometimes through pain—not to wander away from That which is our own Shelter, our true Abiding-place.

When a little child is molested or thwarted it goes to its

mother for help. Same way, if we have any sense of Divine relationship, we should turn to That One who is ever watchful of Her children. Let us awaken truer feelings in our heart, that we may contact that Spirit within, in our inmost sanctuary where no sound can disturb or turbulence distract us. For there, through prayer, we may know an unbroken, unshaken communion with that Infinite Being, and the joy that is born of surrender and pure understanding.

After all, prayer is really for those who have childlike hearts. How sweet it sounds when it comes from the lips of innocent babes! Whenever I repeat a prayer, always it brings me a picture of little children kneeling at the mother's feet—that guileless simplicity, that music unalloyed by material calculation.

Let us, at least in our hour of prayer, forget that we are grown-up people; let us lay aside all sense of "I" and "Mine," all self-importance, all notion that we are this or that, and become like little children, so that we may be conscious of the Presence of the Divine Parent, holding us like a mother, and laying Her beneficent hand over us. May we find our solace and spiritual refreshment in Her. For if we have faith, our prayer, meditation, and Divine contact must bring us rest and renewal. Spiritual power cannot fail to restore us; it brings healing to the body, health to the mind, and exuberance to the soul.

Often people ask if we believe in healing. Always there is healing wherever there is spiritual manifestation, though, of course, its application varies. There is no need for noise, glamour or speech as we touch these fundamental spiritual principles. Prayer is most effective when it is silent. Christ taught this. He told us to enter into our closet and pray. There is an open door through which we can pass

into that sanctuary. Once there, we can draw upon the Divine in such measure that our cup overflows, and that over-flowing life we can share with others.

Today I want you, every one, to remember your Divine birthright. I want you to think in the terms of the sages who have ever proclaimed: "The Spirit of man is pure, perfect, effulgent, untouched by sin and sorrow! It cannot be penetrated by the suffering of the world!" Think of this not only as an intellectual concept, but form an image in your heart of that perfect Being. He is the Light; He is the radiant Sun; He is all-consuming Fire—the altar-fire burning within us, consuming all our imperfections! Realizing this, how can there be any room for sorrow, grief, sickness, despondency, fear or any affliction? When we come to this state of consciousness, if our body is ill, there is healing; if the mind is afflicted, it is restored and our thoughts can ascend. We no longer think of ourselves as little fragments, weak, and cut off from the Whole, but as a living part of the Great Unit, the One Life.

Let us, then, with that wholeness of spirit, tune our hearts with equilibrium and rhythmic harmony, that our prayers may be in tune, our thoughts clear and definite, and our meditation pure, tranquil and transcendent.

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You complain that God does not hear prayers. Do you pray to Him as God or only as to an "agent" who is to satisfy desires? Are your prayers pure, disinterested? Prayers of love? Love is *ahetu*. Love seeks the Lord for His own sake, not the sake of success or satisfaction. Believe me, God listens to prayers of love. He becomes a Lover of His devotee. And when God Himself is a Lover, what is there He will deny?

—*T. L. Vaswani.*

# THE HOLY HOUR

*By Sister Devamata*

Quietude and fading light
Cover earth with misty veils
Of revery and dream.
Falling curtain of the night
Drops on meadow, shadowed dales,
Stretching road and purpling hill.
Song of birds and running stream
Grows faint and fainter still.
Words become unspoken prayer,
Seeing turns to deeper sight.
Heart in longing calls, aware
That hidden by the veil of night
A tender God of love is there,
Hearing each unuttered prayer.

# ILLNESS:
## ACCIDENTAL* AND INHERENT

*From the Yoga-Vasishtha-Maha-Ramayana*

Rama said: Tell me, O holy sage, how our health and sickness are connected with the organs and arteries of the body.

Vasishtha replied: Know, Rama, that uneasiness and sickness are both of them the cause of pain to the body. . . . It is ailing of the body that we call sickness, and it is the trouble of the mind that we term uneasiness. Both of them take their rise from our inordinate desires, and it is our ignorance of the nature of things alone that is the source of both. . . .

As the good or bad proclivities of men are the result of their actions in prior and present births, so the anxieties and

*That is, produced by an immediate external cause, which seems accidental.

diseases of the present state are the effects of the good and bad deeds both of this life and of the lives of the past.

I have told you, Rama, about the growth of disease and anxiety . . . now hear me tell you the mode of extirpating them from the human constitution.

There are two sorts of illness common to human nature, namely, the accidental and the inherent. The accidental rise from the occurrences of daily life; the inherent are what are inborn in our nature.

Our ordinary needs are removed by the attainment of the objects in want; and the diseases growing out of them are also removed (in the same way). But the inherent infirmities of one's disposition, being bred in the blood and bone, cannot be removed from the body without the knowledge of the soul; just as the error of the snake and the rope is removed only by examination of the rope. . . .

The non-essential or extrinsical diseases that are derived from without, are capable of being removed by the application of drugs; . . . as also by medicaments and treatments, according to the prescriptions of medical science and the practice of medical men.

You will know, Rama, the efficacy of baths and bathing in holy rivers, and are acquainted with the expiatory mantras and prescriptions of experienced practitioners; and as you have learned the medical Sastras, I have nothing further to direct you in this matter.

Rama rejoined: But tell me, sir, how the intrinsic causes produce the external diseases; and how are they removed by other remedies than those of medicinal drugs?

Vasishtha replied: The mind being disturbed by anxieties the body is disordered also in its functions, just as the man who is overtaken by anger loses the sight of whatever is present before his eyes. He loses sight of the broad way

before him, and takes a devious course of his own; like a stag pierced with arrows that flies from the beaten path and goes in amidst the thickets.

The spirit being troubled, the vital airs are disturbed and cause the breath to come out in fits and snatches, in the same way as the waters of a river being disturbed by a herd of elephants, rise above its channel and overflow its banks.

The vital airs, causing irregularity in the breath, derange the lungs and nerves, and all the veins and arteries of the body; just as misrule in the government puts the laws of the realm into disorder.

The irregular breathing unsettles the whole body by making the blood vessels empty and dry in some parts, and full and stout in others, resembling the empty and full-flowing channels of rivers.

The want of free breathing is attended both with indigestion and bad digestion of the food, and also evaporation of the chyle and blood that it produces. These defects in digestion bring forth a great many maladies in the system.

The vital breaths carry the essence of the food we take to the inferior organs, as the currents of a river carry the floating weeds down a stream.

The crude matter which remains in the intestines, for want of its assimilation into blood and circulation through the frame, becomes finally, because of this restraint in breathing, a source of multifarious maladies.

Thus it is that the perturbed states of the mind and spirit produce the diseases of the body, and are avoided or removed by the removal of mental anxiety. . . .

I have told you, Rama, that pious acts, holy service, virtuous deeds and religious observances serve (to do this) by freeing the mind from its impurities, as the gold is depurated by the touchstone.

The purity of the mind produces a delight in the body, in the same way as the full moon rising, spreads the gentle moon-beams upon earth. Because of this purity the vital airs breathe freely, and these, tending to help the digestive process in the stomach, produce nutrition for the body, and destroy the germs of disease.

## THE SOUL AND THE BODY

*From the Sanhedrin*

"The soul and the body can both escape punishment," said Antonius to Rabbi. "How! The body can say: The soul committed the sin, for see, ever since the soul left me, I have been lying in my tomb mute as a stone. And the soul can say: It was the body that committed the sin, for since I left it, I have been flying through space like a bird."

And Rabbi replied, "Let me tell you a parable. To what can this thing be compared? There was a king of flesh and blood who had a beautiful pleasure-garden, wherein grew the loveliest of early fruits. He put two keepers in the garden, and one of them was blind, the other paralytic. One day the paralytic said to his blind companion: 'I see some beautiful fruit; come, I will climb up on your shoulders; we will pluck the fruit and eat it!' And the paralytic climbed up on the shoulders of the blind man, and they plucked the fruit and ate it. After a few days the owner of the garden appeared, and asked: 'Where are my beautiful fruits?' And the paralytic replied: 'How can I have taken them, I who have no limbs?' And the blind man said: 'How can I have taken them, I who cannot see?' What did the king do? He put the paralytic on the shoulders of the blind man, and he punished them both together. Even so will the Holy One, blessed be He, seek out the soul, put it back in the body, and punish both of them together."

# MEDITATION and CONTEMPLATION

*By San Pedro de Alcantara*

**(A Spanish Franciscan monk of the 16th century, who re-established the strict rule of St. Francis in numerous religious houses which he founded throughout Spain. He was in close touch with the great Carmelite, Santa Teresa, and although a mystic and a strict ascetic, his life was outwardly active and useful. He was canonized in 1669.)**

Let the last and chiefest council be that we endeavor in this holy exercise to join meditation with contemplation, making the one a step by which we may rise to the other. Know, then, that the office of meditation is to consider studiously and attentively Divine things, passing from one to another, that the heart may be moved to feeling and emotion from them. It is as though one should strike a flint to draw a spark from it.

But contemplation is as though the spark were already struck—that is to say, that the feeling and emotion which were sought have been attained. The soul is enjoying repose and silence, not by many reasonings and speculations of the understanding, but simply by gazing at the Truth. . . . The one seeks, the other finds; the one chews its food; the other tastes it; the one reasons and considers; the other is content with nought but looking upon things, since already it has the taste and love for them. In short, the one is a means, the other an end; the one is a path and a movement, the other is the end of this path, and yet is movement. . . .

The end of the whole matter consists rather in love and the emotions of the will than in speculation of the understanding, when the will is taken and captured by this emotion. Therefore we should dispense with all reasonings and speculations of the understanding, in so far as we may, to the end that our soul, with all its strength, may be occupied in this one thing, and not disperse its strength by acts of the other powers. . . .

For at that time a man can put away all the imaginings that present themselves to him, hush the understanding, calm the memory, and fix it upon our Lord, considering how he is in His presence, and making now no speculations upon the secret things of God. Let him be content with the knowledge of Him which he has through faith, and apply his will and his love; for love alone embraces these, and in it is the fruit of all meditation. Scarcely is there anything which the understanding can know of God—only the will can greatly love Him.

Let a man imprison himself within his own self, in the centre of his soul, wherein is the image of God, and there let him wait upon Him, as one listens to another speaking from some high tower, or as though he had Him within his heart, and as if in all creation there were no other thing save God and his soul. Even himself should he forget, and that which he is doing, for, as one of the Fathers said, "That prayer is perfect, in which he who is praying remembers not that he is praying." . . .

And not at the end of the exercise alone, but also in the course of it, or in whatever part this spiritual slumber should overtake us, when the understanding of the will is, as it were, asleep, we should make this pause and enjoy this great benefit, and then return to our labor, having tasted and digested this one morsel. Just so the gardener, watering a patch of ground, after filling it with water, turns off the flow of the current and allows the water to soak in and disperse itself over the depths of the earth; when all that it has received is drained away, the gardener turns on the flow from the spring once more, that it may receive more and more, and be the better watered. But what the soul feels at such times as this, and what light, fullness, love and peace it receives cannot be expressed in words, for here is

that peace which passes all understanding, and that felicity which in this life can be attained.

Some few there are, so far captivated by the love of God, that hardly have they begun to think upon Him when immediately the memory of His dear Name melts all their being. And these have as small need of reasonings or meditations on loving Him, as a mother or a bride needs to make her feast upon the thought of her son or her lover, when men speak to her of him. And others, not only in the exercise of prayer, but apart from it, are so absorbed and immersed in God, that they forget all things—yea, even themselves—for Him.

## GLORY OF LOVE

*Inspirational Thoughts by Swami Paramananda*

"Though I speak with tongues of men and of angels and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal; and though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith so that I can remove mountains and have not love, I am nothing."

This confession of Paul of Tarsus is a universal outcry, true of all understanding, spiritual men. After we have exhausted the study of books and bibles, after we have reached the very limit of our individual venture to fathom the fathomless, eternal Truth, even after we have experienced in full measure all the glory of material life, our souls cry out: "What shall I do, where shall I go, how shall I fill this terrible emptiness of my soul? My achievement, my success, my possessions and all my material glories leave me unhappy and stranded. Again I hear the prophetic refrain, 'If I have not love I am nothing,' and my soul yearns with fresh longing to attain its glory."

Time has never succeeded in altering the glory of love. It is the one principle where the heart of mankind unites. It is the only altar where all pour their oblation with utter oblivion of difference of creed. For "God is love and love is God." Thus we find the heartbeats of all inspired poets, philosophers, mystics and prophets rhythmically touching upon this one great note of unchanging reality.

In Omar Khayyam we read:

Hearts with the light of love illumined well,
Whether in mosque or synagogue they dwell,
Have their names written in the book of love
Unvexed by hopes of heaven or fears of hell.

Pagodas, just as mosques, are homes of prayer,
'Tis prayer that church bells chime into the air,
Yea, Church and Kaabam, rosary and cross
Are all but divers tongues of world-wide prayer.

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

Modern or ancient, this note is struck by those who have ever found their access into the innermost sanctuary of life.

St. Kabir sings his ecstacy with exuberant madness and how refreshing it is to the spirit of man when he can find this contact even for a single moment. See with him and feel with his beating heart and hear his inmost secrets of God-communion.

The flute of the Infinite is played without ceasing, and
its sound is love:
When love renounces all limits, it reaches truth.
How widely the fragrance spreads! It has no end,
nothing stands in its way.

The form of this melody is bright like a million suns:
incomparably sounds the vina, the vina of the
notes of truth.
The lock of error shuts the gate, open it with the
key of love:
Thus, by opening the door, Thou shalt wake the
Beloved.
Kabir says: O Brother, do not pass by such good
fortune as this.

Sri Krishna, Christ and Buddha have taught little else but the glory of love.

Sri Krishna says:

"He who hates no creature and is friendly and compassionate to all, who is free from attachment and egotism, equal-minded in pleasure and pain, and forgiving,

"Who is ever content and meditative, self-subjugated and possessed with firm conviction, with mind and intellect dedicated to Me, he who is thus devoted to Me is dear to me.

"He who is free from all external dependence, pure, efficient, unattached, undisturbed, and has given up all (selfish) undertakings, he who is thus devoted to Me is dear to Me."

Christ says: "As the Father hath loved me so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love. This is my commandment that ye love one another as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you. These things I command you, that ye love one another."

Buddha says: "Let a man overcome anger by love. Let

him overcome evil by good, for hatred does not cease by hatred at any time. Hatred ceases by love. This is an old rule. Cleanse your heart of malice and cherish no hatred, not even against your enemies."

Our great Master, Sri Ramakrishna, expresses through his life and thought this eternal ideal so persistently that his outpouring and oblation of life make a bridge from the human to the Divine. His great spirit of renunciation enabled him to pour into the fire one by one, "Sin and merit, good and evil, happiness and unhappiness," and all the dual conditions of life, but he ever prayed to his Divine Mother: "Do Thou grant me pure love and unalloyed devotion. Here is sin and here is merit, take them both away from me, I lay them at Thy feet. Here is honor and dishonor, I want neither. Give me only pure devotion unto Thee. Here is wisdom and here is unwisdom, only give me unalloyed love for Thee."

Thus has man soared higher and higher until there is no distinction between good and evil, high or low, merit or demerit, but all is merged in the great and universal love which unites human and Divine together in one unbroken, blending harmony.

On a never-to-be-forgotten winter morn, some thirty years ago, the great Swami Vivekananda sat on the veranda of his monastery on the banks of Holy Ganges singing in his inimitable voice this age-long song of undying love, striking once more a note in accord with the refrain of Paul of Tarsus. The whole atmosphere was charged with the personality of the songster as he recited in the original Bengalee, a composition of his own:

"Listen, friend, I will speak my heart to thee,
I have found in my life this truth supreme,—
Buffeted by waves, in this whirl of life,

One ferry alone takes us over the sea.
Forms of worship, control of breath,
Science, philosophy, systems one and all,
Renunciation, possession, and the like,
All these are but delusions of the mind;—
Love, love, alone is the only one Treasure.

In Devas, beasts, birds, insects, and in worms,
This love dwells within the hearts of all.
Say, who else is the highest God of gods?
Say, who else moves the universe?
The mother dies for her young, the robber robs!
Both are but the impulse of the same love!

Let go your vain reliance on knowledge,
Let go your prayers, offerings and strength,
For love selfless is the only resource;
Lo, the insects teach,—embracing the flame.

The base insect's blind, by beauty charmed.
Thy soul is drunken with the wine of Love;
O thou Lover true, cast into the fire
All thy dross of self, thy mean selfishness.

Say,—comes happiness e'er to a beggar?
What good being object of charity?
Give, give, ne'er turn to ask in return,
Should there be wealth treasured in thy heart.

Aye, born heir to the Infinite thou art,
Within thy heart is the ocean of Love,
"Give," "Give all"—whoever asks return
His ocean full of gifts dwindles to a drop.

From highest Brahman to the insect small,
And to the very minutest atom,
Everywhere is the same God, the All-Love;

Friend, offer body, mind and soul at their feet.
Before thee are His manifold forms,
Rejecting them, where seekest thou for God?
Who loves all beings, without distinction,
He indeed is worshipping best his God."

Even now as I speak of this, I feel the spell of that enchanted hour. All was still for several long moments. As if each one was thrown into a depth where speech melted into deeper and ever deeper thoughts. In the hush of silence, there floated only one rhythmic note: "Love, love alone, the only one treasure."

When our hearts are baptized by the spirit of love then are we truly reborn, then and then alone are we possessed of all true gifts, both human and divine. When love becomes our sole mistress, our hands and feet, our mind and brain and all the faculties of our being are directed towards our highest destiny. Only thus when our hearts are fired with love can we pray the prayers which bring divine response and miracle of healing.

## REALISATION IN LOVE

*By Rabindranath Tagore*

(An Extract from Sadhana)

The human soul is on its journey from the law to love, from discipline to liberation, from the mortal plane to the spiritual. Buddha preached the discipline of self-restraint and moral life; it is a complete acceptance of law. But this bondage of law cannot be an end by itself; by mastering it thoroughly we acquire the means of getting beyond it. It is going back to Brahma, to the infinite love, which is manifesting itself through the finite forms of law. Buddha names it *Brahma-vihara,* the joy of living in Brahma. He who wants to reach this stage, according to Buddha, "Shall de-

ceive none, entertain no hatred for anybody, and never wish to injure through anger. He shall have measureless love for all creatures, even as a mother has for her only child, whom she protects with her own life. Up above, below, and all around him he shall extend his love, which is without bounds and obstacles, and which is free from all cruelty and antagonism. While standing, sitting, walking, lying down, till he fall asleep, he shall keep his mind active in this exercise of universal goodwill."

Want of love is a degree of callousness; for love is the perfection of consciousness. We do not love because we do not comprehend, or rather we do not comprehend because we do not love. For love is the ultimate meaning of everything around us. It is not a mere sentiment; it is truth; it is the joy that is at the root of all creation. It is the white light of pure consciousness that emanates from Brahma. So, to be one with this *sarvanubhuh*, this all-feeling being who is in the external sky, as well as in our inner soul, we must attain to that summit of consciousness, which is love: *Who could have breathed or moved if the sky were not filled with joy, with love?* It is through the heightening of our consciousness into love, and extending it all over the world, that we can attain *Brahma-vihara,* communion with this infinite joy.

Love spontaneously gives itself in endless gifts. But these gifts lose their fullest significance if through them we do not reach that love, which is the giver. To do that, we must have love in our own heart. He who has no love in him values the gifts of his lover only according to their usefulness. But utility is temporary and partial. It can never occupy our whole being; what is useful only touches us at the point where we have some want. When the want is satisfied, utility becomes a burden if it still persists. On

the other hand, a mere token is of permanent worth to us when we have love in our hearts. For it is not for any special use. It is an end in itself; it is for our whole being and therefore can never tire us.

## IS THERE A FUTURE LIFE?

*From the Writings of Leo Tolstoy*

"Do you believe in a future life?" he asked. "In a future life?" repeated Prince Andre: but Pierre gave him no time to answer, taking this repetition of his own words for a negation all the more readily because in earlier days he had known the prince's atheistical convictions.

"You say that you cannot see the Kingdom of goodness and truth on earth. Neither have I seen it, nor is it possible for any one to see it who looks upon this life as the sum and end of all. On the earth, that is to say, on this earth," (Pierre pointed to the fields) "there is no truth, all is falsehood and evil; but in the universe, in the whole universe, truth has its kingdom; and we who are now children of the earth are none the less children of the universe. Do not I feel in my soul that I am actually a member of this vast harmonious whole? Do not I feel that in this countless assemblage of beings, wherein the Divinity, the First Cause—or, however you may term it—is manifested, I make one link, one step between the lower beings and the higher? If I see, and clearly see, the ladder leading from plant to man, then why must I suppose that it breaks off at me, and does not lead on further and beyond? I feel not only that I cannot utterly perish, since nothing in the universe is annihilated, but that I always shall be and always was. I feel that besides me are spirits that live above me, and that in this universe there is truth."

"Yes, that is Herder's doctrine," said Prince André; "but

it is not that, my friend, that will convince me. Life and death—they are what convince a man. The sort of thing that convinces a man is when he sees a being dear to him, with whose life he has been intimately bound up, to whom he has done a wrong, and has wished to make atonement," (Prince André's voice trembled and he turned away) "and suddenly this being suffers, is tortured and ceases to be. Why? It cannot be that there is no answer. And I believe that there is one. That is what convinces a man. That is what has convinced me," said Prince André.

"Why, certainly, that is it," said Pierre; "is not that just what I was saying?"

"No. I only say that it is not arguments that convince one of the necessity of a future life, but the fact that one has been going through life in fond companionship with another, and suddenly that dear one vanishes *there, into the nowhere;* and you yourself are left on the brink of the chasm looking down into it. And I have looked."

"Well, and what then? You have known a There and a Someone. The *There* is the future life, the *Someone* is God."

Prince André did not reply. The carriage and horses had long been led out on to the further bank, and were already harnessed, the sun was half-sunken beneath the horizon, and the evening frost was beginning to incrust the little pools on the shore with starry crystals, while Pierre and André, to the astonishment of the servants, coachmen and ferry-men, still stood on the boat talking.

"If God and the future life exist, then truth and virtue exist; and man's highest happiness consists in striving for their attainment. One must live," said Pierre, "one must love, one must believe that we live not merely now on this patch of earth, but that we have lived and shall live eternally there in the universe." He pointed to the sky.

Prince André stood leaning on the rail of the ferry-boat and listening to Pierre. He never moved his eyes, but gazed at the red reflection of the sun in the dark blue flood. Pierre ceased speaking. All was silent. The ferry-boat lay drifted along the bank, and only the ripples of the current could be heard lapping feebly against its sides. Prince André fancied that this patter of the water babbled a refrain to Pierre's words: "That is sooth, accept it; that is sooth, accept it."

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# QUESTIONS ON REINCARNATION

(The following questions were answered by Swami Paramananda at the regular Tuesday evening class at the Chapel of the Vedanta Centre of Boston.)

Questions:

Is belief in reincarnation of Hindu or Chinese origin?

Is it mentioned in the Bhagavad-Gita?

Is it held by the majority or the minority of people living today?

Answers:

The idea of reincarnation is not peculiar to any particular race or people. It is one of those principles which is so closely related to reason and science that wherever people have tried to answer rationally the why and wherefore of certain apparent conditions in human life, they have been impelled to look into the past in order to find an adequate answer for the present existence. It is only in this light that we find definite reason for the inequalities and diversities which are the direct results produced by the individual's own thoughts and actions in this life, in the preceding life and in the life to come. Reincarnation is a moral law rather than a doctrine or tradition.

It is difficult to trace its origin. James Freeman Clarke makes reference to it thus in his "Ten Great Religions":

"It (reincarnation) was taught by three great religions, that of Egypt, of Brahmanism and of Buddhism; by Pythagoras, Empedocles and Plato among the Greek philosophers; by the Neo-Platonists, the Jewish Kabala, and by the Arab philosophers; by Origen and other church fathers; by the Gnostics, the Manichaeans, the Druids; and in recent times by Fourier and others."

In India the idea has been current from time immemorial and frequent references are found in the ancient classics, even those produced several thousand years before the Christian era. According to the testimony of some of the eminent historians, the idea of reincarnation was prevalent among the early church fathers. Mr. Walker in his book on reincarnation says: "It was an essential part of church philosophy for many centuries in the rank and file of Christian thought." Greek philosophers such as Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle make various references to it in their philosophical writings.

However, it remained for Buddhism to broadcast it throughout Ceylon, China, Japan, Thibet and Central Asia as well as to other parts of the world. Today, it has taken its place in all the thinking minds of the world particularly those of scientific men, although they may not designate their belief definitely as reincarnation. It is the only rational explanation of life and its evolution. Evolution presupposes involution. Something cannot come out of nothing. This thought alone opens a great vista into the endless past and gives us an outlook toward the future, ever increasing our desire for the goal of perfection.

Mr. Henry Ford's open declaration of his faith in reincarnation and his statement that it is directly responsible for his material success made a popular appeal to many people who immediately became interested in reincarnation from the view point of market value.

If individuals would study it with unbiased minds, laying aside all religious prejudices, it would help them to live their lives more intelligently and wisely. Its definite teaching is that something cannot evolve from nothing and that we only reap what we sow in the field of life through our thoughts, desires and actions. Thus it is, our aspirations and our self-determination can aid or hinder our destiny.

Reincarnation is mentioned frequently in the Bhagavad-Gita. In the fourth chapter, Sri Krishna, the Master of Wisdom, says to his disciple: "O Arjuna, both you and I have gone through many births. I know them all but thou knowest them not."

It is difficult to ascertain whether this belief is held by the majority or the minority of human beings as it is a subtle thought which influences many minds even though they may be scarcely conscious of it. In this age of inquiry, every rational mind is eager to find the direct answer to the meaning of life and reincarnation is therefore one of the vital questions confronting every living soul that is earnestly striving to find the Truth.

My own view on the matter is that our salvation does not depend upon whether we believe in reincarnation or not but it is undoubtedly one of those principles which explain life and its various gradations; it gives us understanding and often removes from our minds certain bitterness which we are inclined to feel toward unseen Providence because of apparent injustice and inequality imposed upon helpless human beings.

In the Bhagavad-Gita, we read, "The omnipotent Lord partakes neither of merit or demerit of any living creature. Wisdom is enshrouded by ignorance, thus mortals are deluded."

Understanding of the law of Karma (cause and effect),

pre-existence, and how our present thoughts and actions determine our future life will always prove of great help along the path of progress.

## REPORT

### Boston Friendship Tours

On the morning of May eleventh, the library of the Vedanta Centre became the meeting-place of an unusual and interesting group. It was the Association of the Friendship Tours of Boston consisting this time of Congregational ministers and their wives, who wanted Swami Paramananda to speak to them on "India and Her Contribution to World Thought." The President of the Association, the Rev. Mr. Jump, introduced the speaker in glowing terms of appreciation of his character and beautiful teaching of unity and universality, and spoke feelingly of the welcome they had always received on the various previous occasions when they were privileged to hear the Swami.

Swami Paramananda on rising greeted them with hearty welcome and expressed his deep appreciation of their sincere desire to know first-hand what was taking place among their neighbors through these frequent pilgrimages of friendly tours. First of all, he read a few excerpts from a pamphlet containing a report of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions in India. After he had finished his address, the President invited questions from the listeners which proved a very interesting part of the morning session, as they brought out the existing problems of India which involve not only the religious aspect but social and political situations of modern India; the possibility of the unification of Hindu and Mohammedan forces; the probable solution of the Caste System; the relationship be-

tween Hinduism and Theosophy; a comparison of the specific genius of East and West. One question was pertaining to the influence of Christianity in the Orient. Swami Paramananda specially laid emphasis upon the aspect of the universal Christ, not the dogmatic, nor the creed-bound Christ, but that Christ which represents the ideal which is neither confined by the boundary line of East or West, but the spiritual concept which heals the wounds of all bleeding souls and binds with understanding unity the hearts of humanity.

The Swami reminded his listeners that his mission which he has been carrying on faithfully in the Occident for the last twenty-five years was not merely to enhance any particular creed or dogma or to lay accent upon the supremacy of Hindu religion that it might supersede Christianity but to hold forth with staunchness the great ideal of unity and human fellowship which are the eternal precepts of Christ, Buddha and all kindred spiritual teachers of the world.

At the conclusion, one of the reverend gentlemen, who was deeply moved by the sentiments expressed, proposed a heartfelt vote of thanks which was given by the listeners. It was an occasion long to be remembered for it created a deep feeling of understanding unity between East and West in a most tangible and silent way.

### Boston Work

In spite of the lateness of the season the congregation at the Vedanta Centre of Boston has kept up remarkably well, as has been evidenced at the Sunday Morning and Evening Services throughout the month of May. A special interest has been manifested at the Tuesday Evening Classes which Swami Paramananda has made particularly helpful. During the month he spoke on the following:

"Ethics and Practice," "Controlling Our Mind," "Karma and Reincarnation," "Yoga of Self-Knowledge," and "Even-Mindedness." After the Talks, questions have been invited, and this aspect of the teaching has proved very practical and helpful to many.

### Vedanta Centre in Providence

On May twenty-seventh, Swami Paramananda, and some of the members of his household were invited to the new home of the Providence, R. I., Vedanta Centre which has recently been dedicated. Swami Akhilananda, head of this newly-established work, entertained his guests lavishly. The new Centre is beautiful and pleasing, especially the Chapel which is tastefully decorated. Tablets representing the great sayings of the world religions adorn the walls. It was indeed a deep gratification to the visiting Swami and his party to see all that Swami Akhilananda had achieved in such a short time. They expressed appreciation of the atmosphere he has been able to create which so truly represents the high ideals of India as expressed by our great Master, Sri Ramakrishna, and his disciple, Swami Vivekananda.

### California Ananda-Ashrama

The regular Services of the Ananda-Ashrama of La Crescenta have been carried on faithfully by Sister Daya. The attendance has kept up well, also the brothers and sisters of the Ashrama have carried on their specific duties, specially maintaining the standard of the Art Department which is now one of the most vital factors in Ashrama life.

Swami Paramananda hopes to be in California about the first of July and it is hoped that he will conduct his regular Summer School.

### Memorial Day at Cohasset

On Memorial Day, a group of devoted friends of the

Vedanta Centre of Boston chose to spend the afternoon quietly in the peace and seclusion of the Ashrama at Cohasset. The wooded groves of the retreat with their hush of silence offered everyone a nook for inner reflection. In the late afternoon, the musical chimes sounded softly to remind them that it was time to gather in Nature's Sanctuary where they found Swami Paramananda sitting cross-legged under the pine trees. The Service was informal and more in the nature of a spontaneous supplication than in the form of lecture and preaching. Again the listeners walked away from the Sanctuary, to roam through the Ashrama grounds, their thoughts turned within. Soon they were called to partake of a delicate supper prepared by their Hindu sister, Gayatri Devi. The culmination of the day came when everyone sat with the Swami on the rock in rapt silence at the sunset hour. It was not what was said or the lessons given, it was rather the impression, the beauty and the atmosphere which seemed to emanate from every corner of this beautiful peace retreat, which each one felt. Indeed everyone fell under its spell and carried away in their hearts the memory of that sacred and unforgettable hour.

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One of the most interesting facts we observe as we look over the files of the correspondence of our Publication Department, is its far-distant contact. During recent months, we have book orders from Australia, Santo Domingo, Trieste, Honolulu, Germany, Africa, South America, Alaska, Canada and practically every state in the Union. It is especially gratifying to know that although practically no advertising is done for the distribution of the literature, such response has come and to remind us that a sincere interest is felt in the hearts of true and yearning seekers after Truth, alike in different parts of the world.

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VOLUME XX NUMBER 7

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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

# Message of the East



OF THE
IVERSITY

JULY, 1931

## Kingdom of Pure Thought

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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

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## PAY HEED TO ALL

*By Swami Paramananda*

BROTHER, be kind to all,
Great or small,
Be what it may
Yet ever be kind to all!
Once a tiny song-bird called to me—
It called again and again with all its strength,
But I who was wrapped in thought
Paid no heed.
Was it not only the cry of a bird?
Can mind of man waste time on such?
It was only the cry of a bird,
Yet again and again I heard its note
As it called me in distress.
Then of a sudden I shuddered to think
Perchance when I pray and call to the great God
In deep distress,
He, too, may pass me by and pay no heed.
Alas! I realized
How oft we too pass by and turn deaf ears
To little ones in pain.
Shall we wonder then
If likewise God ignores our cry?

# UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

The body may be happy or miserable, but the true devotee is all the time rich in *spirit*—rich in Knowledge and in the love of the Lord. —*Sri Ramakrishna.*

Personality is not an accident. It is a reflection of intellect and of certain fine qualities of heart and mind, a totality of all we give to our fellow beings.

—*Rabbi Magnin.*

All knowledge depends upon calmness of mind.

—*Avadhuta Gita.*

Art thou willing to minister to thine own heart in its maladies? For, indeed, thou art bound to succour it, and seek help for it when harassed by passion, and to leave all else till that is done. —*St. Francis de Sales.*

If thou find a disputant while he is hot, get not into a passion with him. Thou hast the advantage if thou keep silence when he is uttering evil words. Despise him not because thou art not of the same opinion.

—*Precepts of Pta-hetep,* 3500 B.C.

Whosoever tolerates the subservience of great thoughts to small or selfish ideals; whosoever amidst things important either for his activity or his decision is moved by mean affectations and sordid interests, is not a superior man.

—*de Senancour.*

The virtuous retain in their mind the good done to them, whereas the evil they experienced drops from their mind, like water from a lotus petal. —*Jatakamala.*

The quiet and exalted thoughts of solitude.

—*Wordsworth.*

Be willing to approve yourself to yourself; be willing to appear beautiful in the sight of God; be desirous to converse in purity with your own pure mind and with God.

—*Epictetus.*

# KINGDOM OF PURE THOUGHT

*By Swami Paramananda*

Our thought travels faster than anything the genius of man has so far been able to invent. It is not only that thought possesses the greatest power of velocity but it is the most potent factor in our life and destiny. Every thought is a creator. It creates faster than our hands are capable of grasping implements. Therefore we cannot disregard it. Our happiness and our unhappiness depend in large measure upon what we think. Our flight to Heaven and our falling down into perdition are also largely due to our own thoughts. As the old proverb says: "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he." As a matter of fact, this saying is not peculiar to the Old Testament but its echo is to be found in all the great religions of the world. Patanjali, one of the greatest psychologists of ancient India proclaims: "Verily, man's attainment is precisely what his thoughts are." Here is a theme where all philosophy, ethics and religion are in accord.

All rational beings realize the influence of thought and recognize its merit, but alas, its practice can never be imposed upon us even by the greatest of teachers. We always think what is closest to our heart. In fact, our thoughts are always self-chosen. Actions sometimes can be imposed upon us by an outsider or by circumstance, but thoughts are always conceived by ourselves. Some may dispute this but in the light of understanding we cannot help but admit that no one can compel our mind to any line of thought unless we do so by our own voluntary or involuntary acceptance. Artificial attempts to practice ethics, moral codes and religious principles avail us little. There is no one who can force us to think on something contrary to our inclinations and desires. If it were possible for great men to change our

thought atmosphere we would all be filled with the noblest of idealism and our life would blossom forth with all the attributes of heaven and happiness. Indeed, then we would realize that there is a real kingdom where pure thoughts reign and bring before us in perfection and reality a veritable paradise of joy.

"If the thoughts of man were as fixed on Brahman (the Absolute) as they are on the things of the realm of sense, who would not then be free from bondage!" proclaim the Upanishads, the great Indo-Aryan books of wisdom.

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, think on these things." St. Paul tells us this. It was the way he appealed to his people. And if you sum up all the philosophy of good and evil, you will find that the responsibility falls on the individual; his moral status depends upon how much he is capable of dwelling on a certain line of thought.

"Make yourselves nests of pleasant thoughts," says John Ruskin. "None of us yet know, for none of us have been taught in early youth, what fairy palaces we may build of beautiful thoughts, free from all adversity."

Man can build for himself just such centres of happiness, and also he can bring hideous things into existence. It may seem incredible that anyone should create what is detrimental to his own well-being; yet we are continually doing this, unconsciously, sub-consciously, and sometimes consciously.

"It is the mind that makes one wise or ignorant, bound or emancipated. One is holy because of his mind, one is wicked because of his mind, one is a sinner because of his mind, and it is the mind that makes one virtuous. So he

whose mind is always fixed on God requires no other practices, devotion or spiritual exercise." These are the words of Sri Ramakrishna. A man thinking on holy things —on God, for instance, as he did—becomes like unto God. On the other hand, one who is aspiring, his aspiration can lift him to heaven, the Kingdom of Pure Thought — for heaven to me is primarily that—an atmosphere free from all confusion, discord, inharmony; and this can be accomplished right here and now if he has knowledge of the Law and the determination to fulfill it. Today, this moment, so completely can we remove from our horizon the things that frighten us, haunt us and rob us of our happiness that it will seem as if we had been lifted to another sphere. Think of the haunting fear some people have. There are those who are always imagining that someone is pursuing them or persecuting them, till it becomes like an obsession. Then there are others who are possessed by the idea that they are going to fail, that they cannot possibly succeed in anything. The result is that whatever they undertake they are defeated by their preconceived notion.

It is not where we are placed but what we carry with us that determines our happy or unhappy condition. A man may enter a very beautiful, clean, sweet room, and if he is not of the same nature, after he has breathed there for a few minutes the whole atmosphere will be defiled. One who is a heavy smoker, for instance, if he goes into a place that is kept fragrant, he will not have to be there five minutes before that fragrance is destroyed. He has not improved the air of that room and I do not think that the air of the room has improved him: he has merely given it his own atmosphere which is a strong one. You will pardon me for using this illustration, which is so familiar to us all. Sometimes we think if we could only have a fine home in

which to live, if we could be surrounded with lovely flowers and paintings, and have written before our eyes lofty texts to inspire us, it would be heaven. It would be heaven indeed if our nature coincided with all this, otherwise we would find ourselves very much out of place. In spite of our desires and imaginations we are unable to fit ourselves into certain environments, because we are not attuned to them, and we can become attuned only through our thoughts. Thought is the most potent factor in the life of every one, and the sooner we realize this, the sooner we give up the habit of complaint.

"The man who has no inner life is the slave of his surroundings, as the barometer is the obedient servant of the air at rest, and the weathercock the humble servant of the air in motion." Most of us will agree that what Amiel says here is true. Our cheerfulness depends so much on what we think the outside world should be; a little change of weather can upset us, a change of circumstance can almost crush us, and this depression comes upon us in spite of our philosophical grasp or all our intellectual concepts.

We must form the habit of thinking thoughts which are wholesome. Religion is the outcome of thought. That does not mean that it consists merely of the beautiful texts which are written in the Bibles: these become for us religion only as we think them, as we live them. Love will conquer! Practically all the great Scriptures have told us this in one form or another. It does conquer. It has been preached by men for thousands of years, more than that, it has been lived by men who have demonstrated that it conquers. Love excels everything that the physical force of the world can bring against it. The apparent power which man possesses through intrigue, though shrewdness, crumbles into nothing before the power of love. Love is the founda-

tion of Christ's teaching, it is the foundation of Lord Buddha's teaching; it withstands all conditions, because it is based on such a practical principle that every man can apply it in his own life.

"Hatred is never conquered by hatred; it is conquered by love." When a man first hears this he thinks about it, he weighs and measures it, and then he says he cannot put it into practice; he finds it is easier when someone strikes him to strike back. That is what an ordinary person does, who has no power to withstand the onslaught of angry emotions, of lower instincts. Later, when he becomes a little more developed, another thought enters into his soul: If I lose my temper I may make myself ridiculous. And as he grows ever more thoughtful and balanced, he gradually establishes himself in unshakable serenity. A serene mind is an admirable picture to keep before us. When we come in contact with one who is serene, we cannot fathom him, we cannot provoke him. Enemies of great men have often been angered because they cannot move them by their insults and abuse, or thwart them by their hateful attacks. People who are evil-minded have no fear of evil; they can easily fight a man who is their own kind.

Some of you may have been brought up with the idea that there is, figuratively speaking, a personal devil. I do not believe in it. We create our own devils by our thoughts and feelings. Often a belief in ghosts or evil spirits is planted in our mind during our infancy, perhaps by an ignorant nurse who thinks it nice to frighten a child so that he will not dare to go out in the dark. What an infection such early suggestions produce in the life of man—and there are few who are without them in one form or another—suggestions of fear, danger and doubt spreading their poison all about him. Why should we carry this weight in our

heart—our heart which should hold only thoughts of a productive nature? Leaving aside the idea of religion, of being good, of doing this or that whether we want to or not, think of the practical value in ridding ourselves of these negative conditions. Every man wants to accomplish something in this life which will be worthy of his being, and in order to bring this about he must exert that power which he possesses within himself. It will not help you to say, "My forefathers did so and so, they worked very hard and gained great wealth." What they did will not come to your rescue today. They may have lived in luxury, but that will not prevent your starving if you have done nothing to provide for yourself. The same thing that applies to the life of practical utility in the world applies to spiritual philosophy and the life of religion.

I do not believe in vague and visionary religion. If that kind of belief is a morbid satisfaction to you, I have no desire to disturb you in it, for sooner or later you will have to think for yourself and become convinced of what is real by living it. Whoever has this direct knowledge becomes invincible. You say you believe in the idealism of love; then carry it, like Gandhi!—I give you an immediate illustration—and no sword, no gun, no bomb, no air-raid, no prison, nothing will block your way. You may, perhaps, feel that you can manifest love so long as you are not molested. But if you really believe in the Christ principle, you are not going to abandon your conviction because someone who is un-Christlike strives to thwart your ideal. On the contrary, your fire should be rekindled, enhanced, your force doubled.

Often we give excuses for our failures: we would think nice thoughts if there were nice people around us; we would be harmonious if nobody did anything to break our harmony. Don't blame others—bless those people who seek to disturb

you, they are your friends because they give you the opportunity to establish yourself in rhythm. When people try to provoke envy in you, you can transcend it; no one can force you to be envious. If anyone strikes a discordant note and tries to make you hateful, refuse. By doing so you triumph, and at once you realize your worth. Such realization does not cause you to be egotistic; it only helps you to discover through your thought that whenever you are molested you have the power to withdraw into your own depths. Think of Christ. Did He not have provocation to be troubled and angry? Everything combined to overthrow Him, and what did He do? He did not make any preparation to defend Himself against His enemies. Rather He went off by Himself, alone. He withdrew even from the support of His few disciples. He wanted to commune with His own soul—His innermost being—to be re-established in the principle of life. Call it thought, call it prayer, call it meditation or devotion or anything you please, but this astounding fact remains that under pressure, if your life is dedicated, if it is focused on Something High, you will always rise to that high level, because these moments stimulate our finer thoughts. Also it is true that if we live in thoughts of the dust, of passing, insignificant, ignoble things, the hard moments will make us crumble.

There is such a thing as creating a kingdom within ourselves. It is this kingdom which the wise men seek, and they seek it far more ardently than the kingdom of the world, for they find that they dwell more safely there than in the houses and castles and beautiful buildings erected for their material comfort and protection. How wonderful to dwell in this inner kingdom! Whenever you have occasion to feel unhappy because of your surroundings, remember that you are not a weathercock, you are not a creature of

chance, a slave of circumstance, you were born with a Divine heritage which gives you the power to lift yourself above all conditions. If someone should look at you with a frown, that need not affect you; suppose a person abuses you, calls you a fool or any manner of name, your mind can help you to detach yourself so completely that these things will not touch you.

Here a doubt may enter your mind: would not such an attitude mean cowardice? Let me ask you this: when someone acts toward you as if he were insane, does it help matters for you to act in the same way? When the time comes you will have to decide for yourself, and you will have to decide very quickly; but you will do nothing you will regret if you keep your mind in a state of tranquility.

In all circumstances maintain your equilibrium. Sri Krishna, the Lord of Wisdom, gave this teaching to his disciple, and it is one of the greatest teachings that has ever been given to the world. He said to him: "Through the contact of the senses with sense objects all these feelings are produced—happiness and misery, pleasure and pain, praise and blame. Master these, my son, be unafflicted by them, because they are transitory; they come and go."

Let us take our own case. We meet someone who is pleasing to us, and we feel a thrill of real pleasure; again, under adverse conditions, we are thrown with a person who causes us pain. Contact brings and contact takes away. For this reason a man should not depend on these passing things; he should make himself independent of them. You may wonder how this can be done. Create a kingdom for yourself. Take your body as your dwelling-house. Poets and mystics have called it that; they have called it more—a temple, a sanctuary, a shrine. It is your own—your very own—your home; and you can keep it so fragrant, you can

keep it so beautiful and intact that nothing will be able to molest you. You are master within your own soul; but also it is true that if you fill it with thoughts that are alien or destructive, you can make of yourself such a slave that you will have no freedom there. Sitting down to rest, your mind will be harassed with countless impressions which have no value whatever—things you have seen in the street-car, in the market-place, or in your business office—things of chaotic nature—which will rise up and take possession of your own dwelling, so to speak. Therefore it is needful to keep order. It is not easy, however, to establish inner order by outer means. You can employ a servant to take care of your house, and with a little training he can learn to give a certain amount of attention to your desk; but, where is the servant that will keep your inner life in order? Who is there that can keep it clean and sweet and fragrant except yourself? Yet this very thing we often try to have done by proxy. There are people, for instance, who think that religion is a matter that the priest or the minister will take care of. This is a great error. Religion is the one thing that depends absolutely on our individual effort.

Our happiness is ours. We have a right to it, because we earn it. But let me tell you, my friends, it is not through straining or through study that we earn it. We earn it quite spontaneously, very much as a flower earns its perfume. A rose, if you manage to bring it to blossoming within your own room, will fill the whole place with its scent; likewise there are certain human beings who, no matter where they may be, seem to broadcast a fragrance. Wherever they go their very presence paves the way for happiness, harmony, beauty; and they bring this about without effort. You may think that it is because they have very special attributes, and that it was all pre-ordained and pre-

destined. They have the same kind of faculties that we are born with, but they put them to a different use.

The thing is, this human mind of ours can hold any type of thought that we desire it to hold; we can think of anything we want; the choice is ours. Yet how often we find that we are slaves of habit. Mental habits are very much like the habit people form of taking opium and other narcotics. Exactly when the hour strikes, the need is felt. If, however, there are habits of evil, there can also be beneficial ones. If you long to commune with your inner being, if you feel that you must have that contact, then learn to aspire for what is beautiful and spiritual till you have formed such a habit that you will be hungry and thirsty, will struggle and know no rest till you have attained it.

Oh, what a wonderful thing man is! He does not know it. He moves about begging, thinking somebody may give him a bit of help or a little inspiration, and never seeks the thing which is within himself. Yet until that opens for him there is no one who can help him. In India the word Guru means "one who dispels the darkness of the soul"; and there they have a saying that though we may have the grace of our Guru, though the Lord Himself may be gracious to us, yet without the grace of our own mind, we are ruined. All the prophecies of the ages, all the words of wisdom that have ever been uttered will be empty for us if we do not have that. One who lacks it, he will doubt the most holy of the holy; he will doubt the very presence of Divinity Itself. Seeing a Divine Light, he will say, "That must be hallucination, or some defect in my eyes." Having a thing of beauty right before him, he will turn his face away from it. Some question, some doubt will come and spoil his whole happiness. So you see, before we try to conquer

the world or hold the treasure of happiness, we must seek the full co-operation of our own mental faculties. It will pay us better than to be always seeking change of environment, change of circumstance, in the hope that by going from one place to another, from one condition to another, we may be able to avert the hideous complications which threaten us, and establish ourselves in some heavenly spot where we shall find that which we think will bring us the fullness of joy.

How little we can control in this universe—not even the mind of a two year old babe! But our own mind we can control. We can so train and purify it that no matter where life places us we shall be able to adjust ourselves. If we find ourselves in the midst of poverty, we shall know how to meet it; if we are surrounded by riches, we shall know how to make the best use of them; if by things of beauty, we shall have the discrimination to appreciate and be inspired by them; and even should we land on a dump-heap, we shall be able to illuminate it by the radiance of our soul-force. This is why the wise prefer to seek a kingdom in the realm of thought rather than to try to establish upon earth one that will be eternal and invulnerable.

When we pray before our altar often we feel tremendously uplifted, but when we are absent from it we do not have the same impetus. Kingdom of Pure Thought, however, is always with us, and once we have established ourselves in that beauty and rhythm, no matter where we are—at our office, walking, talking, traveling—everywhere—we have an inner refuge which nothing can take away.

Let us, therefore, aspire for this pure kingdom with our whole heart and soul, knowing, as we do, the great Principle of life: As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. And let us send out our earnest, genuine prayers for the good of

many and for the happiness of many, that we may become a living expression of that Infinite Power, and our thoughts, our aspirations, our whole being, grow so co-ordinated that He, the Most High, may find us fitting instruments for His love to flow through.

## RECTIFYING THE MIND

*From the Teachings of Confucius*

What is meant by "making the thoughts sincere" is the allowing no self-deception. . . . Therefore the superior man must be watchful over himself when he is alone.

There is no evil to which the mean man, dwelling retired, will not proceed, but when he sees a superior man he instantly tries to disguise himself, concealing his evil, and displaying what is good. The other beholds him, as if he saw his heart and reins: of what use is his disguise? This is an instance of the saying: "What truly is within will be manifested without." Therefore, the superior man must be watchful over himself when he is alone. . . .

Riches adorn a house, and virtue adorns the person. The mind is expanded, and the body is at ease. Therefore, the superior man must make his thoughts sincere.

What is meant by "The cultivation of the person depends on rectifying the mind," may be thus illustrated: If a man be under the influence of passion, he will be incorrect in his conduct. He will be the same if he is under the influence of terror, or under the influence of fond regard, or under that of sorrow and distress.

When the mind is not present, we look and do not see; we hear and do not understand; we eat and do not know the taste of what we eat.

This is what is meant by saying that the cultivation of the person depends on the rectifying of the mind.

# PETTY DISAGREEMENTS

*By Annie Payson Call*

I know two friends who have much in common, but whose separate lives before meeting had led along entirely different paths. To maintain a consistent friendship under these conditions is always difficult, and, if it can be done, is even more than worth while. I said "if it can be done." I might better say *when* it is done, for in the case of the friends whom I mentioned, it, so far, has certainly been a successful friendship.

These two intelligent people have a method, and by holding firmly and steadily to that method, each has found the best in the other, and each has been in the process of recognizing the worst, not in the other, but in himself. We may take it for granted that John *knows* the worst of James, and James of John; but in following this method, neither one dwells on the worst of the other, but only on the best, the understanding being that each will attend to getting free from his own worst, and that such a process is, if well done, naturally slow: "Here a little, there a little."

The method of my friends is that in the mind of each man it is held as a certainty that each wants the truth, and only the truth, and the search is, step by step, entirely sincere in looking for the truth. John is, by habit, quite willing that James should be true; James is willing and even anxious to find the truth in John's mind. Each one is an intelligent and unprejudiced searcher.

Both of these men have keen and well working minds. An argument may be interrupted often and remain unfinished, and many times it may be going on in silence for days, weeks, or months, to be taken up again, each getting the benefit of the other's thought which has been going on throughout all the time between the interruption and the

opportunity to renew the subject. There being no resistance in the mind of either man to the ideas expressed by the other, such an argument *can* go on in silence and really progress. Each man can come out on his own little hill, and when next they speak, the friends may find that they are on the same hill—sometimes to their surprise and sometimes not at all as a surprise.

The strength generated in this friendship, and the sincere and clean warmth and light, of course, brings with it a great power for use, and the habit of mind that is cultivated results in what might be called a human aroma which many other "humans" feel and enjoy, without in the least comprehending.

It goes, as of course, that each man *listens* respectfully to the other, and neither man works for his own way. In fact, the desire for the truth has grown so dominant now and so mutual that neither one cares in the least whether the truth is found in John or in James.

Contrast the above, please, with the petty arguments which are held over small questions and large, where no one listens, every one either speaks or desires to speak in defense of his own ideas, and each one is fiercely eager to prove himself to be right, and is full of resistance to what others would like to say, to prove every one else wrong.

Full of resistance, did I say? I might better—much better—say full of resentment, and then that resentment often grows to be hatred. The arguers cannot fight openly and scratch each others' eyes out: so many times they hold the resentment and dislike, or hate one another inside, and do not express it on the outside any more than they can help, because it would not be polite. Many people refuse to see how shallow merely outside politeness is, and with what rot it is stuffed. And whereas my friends who work to

find the truth are surrounded with a beautiful and attractive aroma, those who fight inside for their own way are apt to emit a very strong and poisonous odor. Of course it is a spiritual aroma, and a spiritual poisonous odor of which I speak, but often one's spiritual nose may be exquisitely keen—even in this material world.

A. "Is that vine on the fence a real English ivy?—Why, I believe it is."

B. "No, my dear, I have looked at it carefully—it is not English ivy at all—how could you think so?"

A. "I have studied the leaf of the English ivy often. I have spent weeks in England, you know, and I am quite certain now that I look at it more carefully that this *is* English ivy."

After these words, which are said with growing personal feeling, more arguments are exchanged, the human atmosphere tends to smell of brimstone and sulphur, and a quarrel ensues. The two snap back and forth and then one assumes a cold manner which the other reflects, and with the brimstone and sulphur there arises frigidity which continues throughout the walk, and, one thing leading to another, may continue for years, or for always.

How many of my readers, I wonder, will recall such petty arguments, perhaps when they themselves have taken part, and surely to which they have listened in others? How many—if stopping to think on themselves—will not recall more than one petty disagreement which has developed into dislike, and not seldom a fierce dislike?

There are many in this world now so full of prejudice and a *lust* to have their own way that they carry with them an atmosphere of such a positive belief in themselves and in their own opinions that you feel it in the air when they enter a room.

Children, and often very young children, have in them a tendency toward argument which at root is a tendency to get their own way. If they can be—as indeed we know they can be—trained and guided out of this, it will make them more useful, more alive to the truth, and happier for the rest of their lives. The difficulty in the way here is that the older people are inclined to stop a child's arguing because of the desire to argue themselves—or rather the desire to be right not for the sake of right, but for the sake of being right themselves.

With that desire strong in himself, a man will not cure his child of the selfish tendency—he will only force his child to repress it; and when the child matures, having heard his elders disagreeing and arguing each for his own opinion for all the early part of his life, and that same desire having been repressed in himself, the arguing comes rushing out like a rat from its trap. I might ask pardon for such an apparently invidious comparison, but indeed the habit of petty disagreement can truly be compared to vermin, and the increase of such a habit brings disease to the soul as the increase of vermin brings disease to the body.

Tolstoi illustrates quite clearly in some of his short stories how a petty disagreement and arguing from one side to the other, each wanting and working for his or her own way, can grow into a feud so full of bitter resentment that it finally results in disaster, and at times even in murder. Tolstoi knew and understood human nature with a gentleness and delicacy that made him an exquisitely clear glass and capable of reflecting the worst of the human together with its best.

The old hymn says with truth:

Little drops of water, little grains of sand
Make a mighty ocean, and a pleasant land.

But have we considered enough that when each drop of water is poisoned and each grain of sand is sharpened, the evil and the harm done grows in proportion?

We need the protection of such understanding, certainly, because by keeping intelligently clear of the evil, we open the way for God to send the good. God does His part always. It is for us to do our part in fulfilling conditions by a true obedience to law, in order that we may be ready to receive all that the Divine Power is waiting to give to us.

The "little grains" of petty disagreements and petty arguing can grow into a wall of human bitterness which in itself keeps out all truth. And, inversely, the intelligent casting out of such pettiness, and an open and sincere desire for the truth, can lead us on to a mountain from where the view grows clearer every day.

We can prove our true desire for the truth only by our daily intercourse with our fellow-men. We reach the best in a man not by combat with him, but by respectful listening with the belief that however it may appear, the other man *may* have the truth. It makes one smile with delight to imagine the result that could be achieved when human communication grows to that. And each one of us doing his part toward such a happy and intelligent state of affairs is more of a leaven toward the freedom of the whole than can be realized.

Even with such a quiet and open-minded habit of discussion, we must often wait in silence for our friend to recognize the truth in us or for us to recognize where we were wrong and our friend was right.

The love of truth for truth's sake brings with it a light which is marvellous in the way it gives a growing understanding of the details that cause an increasing clearness in the whole life.

# LET GOD WORK

*By Swami Vivekananda*

Our best work is done, our greatest influence is exerted when we are without thought of self. All great geniuses know this. Let us open ourselves to the one Divine Actor and let Him act, and do nothing ourselves.

"O Arjuna! I have no duty in the whole world," says Krishna. Be perfectly resigned, perfectly unconcerned; then alone can you do any true work. No eyes can see the real forces, we can only see the results. Put out self, lose it, forget it; just let God work, it is His business. We have nothing to do but stand aside and let God work. The more we go away, the more God comes in. Get rid of the little "I" and let only the great "I" live.

We are what our thoughts have made us, so take care of what you think. Words are secondary. Thoughts live, they travel far. Each thought we think is tinged with our own character, so that for the pure and holy man, even his jests or abuse will have the twist of his own love and purity and do good.

Desire nothing; think of God and look for no return; it is the desireless who bring results. . . . As soon as we say "I" we are humbugged all the time, and we call it "knowledge," but it is only going round and round like a bullock tied to a tree. The Lord has hidden Himself best and His work is best; so he who hides himself best, accomplishes most. Conquer *yourself* and the whole universe is yours. . . .

The adamantine wall that shuts us in is egoism; we refer everything to ourselves, thinking I do this, that and the other. Get rid of this puny "I"; kill this diabolism in us; "not I, but Thou," say it, feel it, live it. Until we give up the world manufactured by the ego never can we enter the

kingdom of heaven. None ever did; none ever will. To give up the world is to forget the ego, to know it not at all —living *in* the body, but not *of* it. . . .

Those who give themselves up to the Lord do more for the world than all the so-called workers. One man who has purified himself thoroughly accomplishes more than a regiment of preachers. *Out of purity and silence comes the word of power.*

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# RELIGION AND CULTURE

*By John Cowper Powys*

(Compiled from his book, "The Meaning of Culture," Published by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York.)

Every man and every woman has, consciously or unconsciously, some sort of patched-up, thrown-together philosophy of life, a concretion of accumulated reactions gathered round this nucleus of personality. What, however, denotes a cultured person is a conscious banking up of this philosophy of his own, its projection from disintegrating elements, the guiding of its channel-bed through jungles of brutality and stupidity.

A cultured person often finds it very difficult to explain what his philosophy is; but when he does manage to articulate it, you feel that this is what he has secretly and profoundly lived by for many a long year. One always feels that a merely educated man holds his philosophical views as if they were so many pennies in his pockets. They are separate from his life; whereas with a cultured man there is no gap or lacuna between his opinions and his life. Both are dominated by the same organic, inevitable fatality. They are *what he is.*

It is perhaps the most important moment of all, in the secret growth of our philosophy, when we first discover the

unbelievable power of the imaginative will in giving a heightened value to our days. To philosophize with the real wisdom of a serpent and the real harmlessness of the dove it is not necessary to exhaust one's brain upon riddles which are likely enough eternally insoluble. What is necessary, is to experiment with ordinary life; to adjust one's appreciative and analytical powers to all the natural human sensations which are evoked by the recurrences of the seasons, by birth and death, by good and evil, by all those little diurnal happenings which make up our life upon earth. It would indeed seem that all deep culture must supply itself with some constantly recurrent substitute for what is traditionally known as prayer; and, for the philosophic mind, nothing can serve this purpose but a lonely, wordless, one-sided dialogue with the mystery of mysteries.

The next rung, so to speak, in the philosophical ladder, is the recognition by the psyche of its own depth and its own powers. Isolated in its inviolable solitude, it finds within itself potencies of will and degrees of magnetic force such as it cannot measure or fathom. Among these forces is the power to regulate thought by the use of thought; in other words, to choose what thoughts shall be indulged in and what shall be dismissed. The discovery that the mind *can* regulate its thoughts, fostering some and dismissing others, is one of the most important stages in the art of self-culture. It is astonishing to note how little this art is practised among us Westerners. Indeed where our art of culture ought to begin is by taking those concentrated habits of mind which the Orient devotes to mysticism and applying them to rational and imaginaive life.

It is particularly difficult to analyse the relations between any intensive culture of one's ego and what is usually called religion, because, under certain conditions, culture actually

becomes a substitute for religion. Certainly it may be said that if culture can be sometimes a substitute for religion, any beautiful and nobly rounded-off practice of religion renders culture irrelevant. Religion in its most flexible form does for us, in fact, precisely what culture does; and if we have been given a comprehensive and imaginative faith, it does it far better. The whole purpose and end of culture is a thrilling happiness of a particular sort—of the sort, in fact, that is caused by a response to life made by a harmony of the intellect, the imagination, and the senses. If such a response is evoked by religion, where is the need of culture?

The inner life of the ego, as it half consciously, half unconsciously builds up its system of culture, craves, among its other responses, some response to the miraculous and supernatural. This, of course, does not imply any unyielding assurance that these things exist. It only implies that the organic totality of our nature must always reveal, or wilfully conceal, an instinctive longing for these things. But Evangelical religion as well as Natural religion has proved a veritable reservoir of living water for any spirit set upon acquiring a deep individual culture.

I shall be assured by both camps, in the bitter struggle that goes on still between faith and unfaith, that a cultured person can get nothing from religion unless he wholly believes, and nothing from reason unless he wholly disbelieves. It is not true. Culture is not culture unless it induces, and sustains when induced, the one type of mind in the world which will never assist, never even indirectly assist, at any kind of mental or moral tyranny. Culture aims at producing a free spirit, in the deepest sense: free, that is to say, from the fanaticisms of religion, from the fanaticisms of science, and from the fanaticisms of the mob. If ever a cultured person were in danger of being martyred for an

opinion, the only absolute opinion to which he could be forced to plead guilty would be the opinion that it is unpardonable to persecute any opinion.

Out of this complicated discussion, therefore, two points clearly emerge. First, that religion has kept clean and open, facing the unknown outer spaces, a postern window in the prison of the self which common sense might only too easily have allowed to get blurred or shut; and second, that by cultivating the ecstasy of love an emotional nervous vibration has been originated on this planet which not all the brutal lusts and inert malignancies which belong to our race can ever entirely destroy.

The open door into the unknown, the little crack in the starry walls of the world, which religious superstition has refused to close, remains one of the essential apertures out of the barred chambers of the human ego, through which our life gets the fresh, cool, calm air which it needs to breathe. One is lucky if there are other vent-holes besides this one; but this is something, and of a value that cannot be gainsaid.

Condemn religion as you please, it cannot be denied that it is within the circle of its consciousness that certain astonishing mental phenomena have appeared. In the sphere of what is called conversion alone, not to speak of calmer experiences, it has been amply shown, to the refutation of all cynical opinion, what the will can do, when dominated by this power, in changing the whole nervous system and transforming the unhappy into the happy. And it seems to be only religion that can do what religion does. The cult of the senses, their awakening and refinement, can bring and can be made to bring ever-increasing opportunities of delight; but there are few epicureans among us whose presence radiates unconquerable ecstasy!

It is true, we cannot deny, that to many intelligent minds religion is so involved with certain emotional and theological notions of God that it seems hopeless to get the good of it while we remain skeptical about these and even hostile to the very idea of them. But if our culture has, as in its nature it should have done, swept like an aeroplane over the centuries, and allowed the multifarious, shifting landscapes of God-worship to mingle and recede, to advance and retreat beneath the speed of our flight, while the terrestrial recurrent nights of complete darkness blotted them all out at times, we shall have learnt the trick of separating the ecstasies produced by certain mystical feelings in the presence of the great dogmas from any formal attempt to work up what is called faith, or to proclaim what is called belief.

Where religion is injurious to culture is where, through the medium of stupid exponents, it offers a heavy opaque conventional resistance to all passionate originality. But let youth remember—when its culture is threatened by religion—that no inquisition can reach to the thoughts of the brain. When confronted by the opposition of stupid relatives or unenlightened public opinion, keep your culture to yourself, till by practical activity you have won your freedom; or, if you are too weak ever to win your freedom, keep it forever to yourself! This rather sinister advice does not mean that you need ever betray your interior integrity. On the contrary, you protect it by the best method with which anything great and sacred is protected—namely, by silence. Nature herself works on this plan in her vast reservoirs of mysterious life.

One of the most obvious marks of uncultured people is their way of blurting out what they think to be their inmost life secrets to the first new-comer who is patient, kind or

inquisitive. Fight the world for others if you will; but the moment you begin fighting the world for your own most subtle ideas, your ideas will grow infected. The poison of angry, self-assertive controversy will enter into them; and even if you win, you will find your flag stained with the enemy's impure blood. Better than irony, with its pernicious after-taste, is a certain conscious transparency of natural simplicity towards life which even your cleverest enemies will find it hard to cope with. The most beautiful effect which religion has upon human character is just this very simplicity. Only very cultured persons possess, by a sort of grace of God, the power of being at once reserved and freely spontaneous. This is a supreme stroke of art; and it only comes to a person by a kind of heavenly luck.

One thing is certain. We cannot claim that Nature puts her seal of approval upon our culture until we can prove that it results in greater happiness for the individual who practises it. Far more insidious than most of us realize is the great taboo about this important subject lodged in the inmost arcana of consciousness today. Pleasure begins to take the place of happiness; and thus when at rare moments happiness does thrill us, the feeling is so exquisite that we are tempted to regard it as a divine interposition, miraculous, unearthly, not to be sought for by human methods. Such happiness is a totally different thing from what is called pleasure; for until the whole of our interior being gathers itself together, like the deep waters of a still lake, there is little hope that the magical picture of the world, purged of the horrors which we must acquire the art of forgetting, will mirror itself within us. Those ecstatic moments which we are now so impiously summoning up depend upon this "Mirror of the Psyche" being kept clear of disturbing ripples.

Continuity in one's interior life! That is the essence of the whole matter. Just as religious people kneel down by their bedside—and no custom could be wiser—morning and evening in the presence of their God, so we, devotees of a more secular cult, were well advised to treat each particular day as an astonishing miracle, never to be exactly repeated, from which something unique can be added to our shrine of memories. It is not that we need ask of these never-recurring days any startling or exciting occurrences. That cry is the tragic cry of youth's eternal restlessness. The more culture a person has managed to attain, the more independent he is of outward circumstance. A man or a woman can be confined to one remote village street; they can be bed-ridden at one village window; it will still remain that a passing cloud, a glow of sunlight, a few blown leaves, a little leaf mould in a flower-pot will be enough, as long as the mind that contemplates these things has been gathering for years with intense awareness the hoarded treasures of its memory. Memory remains forever the Mother of all the Muses; and in our response to Nature it is the accumulated memory of all past responses that gives weight and poignancy to what we feel at the moment. The difference between cultured people and uncultured people, in regard to their response to Nature, is that the former make a lot of a little, whereas the latter make little of a lot. What any close contact with Nature really does for a person's culture is to get culture itself into focus, so that no tricky affectations or mordid self-consciousnesses, no melodramatics with regard to art or with regard to one's own originality, spoil one's stark, simple, natural, proud-humble contentment at being exactly what Nature has made one to be.

There is also another very important effect upon one's culture that such closeness to Nature gives; and that is to

make one realize the value of a certain fundamental power possessed by the will. This power of the will is limited in its control over outward events; but it is almost unlimited in its control over the motions of one's own mind. It would seem that the grand master-effort of the will should be directed towards keeping clearly before one's consciousness the idea of a certain thrilling calm of mind. This is the consciousness that a state of ecstatic peace is the deepest secret of the universe at which we can arrive. If the will is stubbornly orientated towards such ecstasy, one's inner self does actually begin to grow happier and happier. Whether one is happy or unhappy comes more and more to be the one single issue over which one has a nearly complete control; and it becomes too, more and more emphatically, the only sure and certain help one can offer—except the magical power of love—to "the stream of tendency that makes for righteousness." The only two things that we finally come to distinguish from the rest as invariably resulting in good rather than evil are our own deep individual calm, obstinately preserved in spite of all blows of fate, and the sort of love for other individuals which is compatible with our leaving them alone. The love that interferes and knows not how to leave alone is alien to Nature's way.

Whether you are in love with the companion or with the companions of your life or whether these beings are merely affectionate friends or friendly acquaintances the whole essence of culture in its relation to them consists in self-control. Not to possess absolute self-control is either to be always an uncultivated barbarian or to be at moments simply a madman or a madwoman. Culture and self-control are synonymous terms—no refining of one's taste in aesthetics or in literature can palliate the enormity of being guilty of ungovernable anger.

Culture does not fail her idolators. One has only to watch the ecstatic absorption of any boy or girl reading a book in the midst of the city traffic; one has only to watch the entranced expressions on the faces of the devotees of some great musician as they lean forward in their balcony and forget everything that awaits them when it is over, forget even what continent or planet they inhabit, to become aware that culture has a power of enabling us to be happy in the only way wherein most human beings can be happy—in complete defiance of their surroundings. It is a great achievement to be able to walk about and enjoy yourself in the sweet air! It is a still greater achievement to enjoy yourself over some hideous, monotonous task, in an office, or a shop, or a factory, where you cannot walk about and where the air is anything but sweet. One thing certainly everyone has a right to be proud of; namely, the power of continuing to be happy under blow after blow of malignant fate, under insult after insult of brutal people. For most of us, the more intensely and obstinately we build up our inner life of sensations and ideas, the more difficult does it become to bear the impact of other personalities. The great thing is to practise a Lord Chesterfield-like courtesy towards everybody one encounters, especially towards those who are poorer, weaker, less lucky than oneself. This practice, this habitual ritual of consideration, is entirely within the power of the mind; whereas to feel love or tenderness or even pity implies a temper of spirit that one perhaps can never reach, or only reach after long practice of the outward gestures.

Culture demands that you should be good and humble, and free from the burden of possessions. Conceit seals up the exploring antennae of your free sensibility. Malice and hate distract you and waste your life energy. Possessions

make you a fussy super-cargo. Three men lack the porous skin through which the magic of the world can flow: the conceited man, the vindictive man, the rich man.

In relation to one's fellows, culture implies on earth-deep humility. Like that charity defined by St. Paul it is not puffed up. Culture does not show itself among men as something ponderous, majestic, pompous, imposing. It does not "show" itself at all! Like the *Tao,* so subtly described by the philosopher Kwang Tze three hundred years before Christ, it flows through the air, swims in the water, burrows in the earth, moves imperceptibly from mind to mind, and "by doing nothing does everything." It draws out others rather than asserts itself; it is a listener rather than a dogmatist, a peace-maker rather than a disputant. It has as much respect for the intelligence of women as for the peculiar intelligence of men. It uses the woman's mind as well as the man's mind in its perceptions of truth. And as for the truth which it pursues through all situations and through all obstacles with the flexible sinuosity of a serpent, it finds it forever in two places—in everything and everyone, and in nothing and no one.

Culture, as some of us have come to understand it, does not take up any dogmatic attitude with regard to the existence, or the non-existence, of God or of the gods. It recognizes irrational hopes and fears. It takes account of many rumors caught on passing winds, of many voices heard in solitary places, of many reef-bells over strange waters. It allows for queer second-thoughts and for startling, mysterious intimations that escape all logical capture. In its patient, slow, dreamy methods awaiting upon the motions of the spirit, culture comes to recognize that there are levels in human feeling that apparently belong to dimensions of existence beyond the chemistry, beyond the electric magnetism, of the whole stellar system.

# THE QUALITY OF BEING

*By Walt Whitman*

There is, in sanest hours, a consciousness, a thought that rises, independent, lifted out from all else, calm—like the stars—shining, eternal. This is the thought of identity—yours for you, whoever you are, as mine for me. Miracle of miracles, beyond statement, most spiritual and vaguest of earth's dreams, yet hardest basic fact, and only entrance to all facts. In such devout hours, in the midst of the significant wonders of heaven and earth, (significant only because of the Me in the centre) creeds, conventions fall away and become of no account before this simple idea. Under the luminousness of real vision, it alone takes possession, takes value. . . . The quality of Being, in the object's self, according to its own central idea and purpose, and of growing therefrom and thereto . . . is the lesson of Nature. . . .

The ripeness of Religion is doubtless to be looked for in this field of individuality, and is a result that no organization or church can ever achieve. As history is poorly retained by what the technists call history, and is not given out from their pages, except the learner has in himself the sense of the well-wrapt, never yet written, perhaps impossible to be written, history—so Religion, although casually arrested and, after a fashion, preserved in the churches and creeds, does not depend at all upon them, but is a part of the identified soul, which, when greatest, knows not Bibles in the old way, but in new ways—the identified soul, which can really confront Religion when it extricates itself entirely from the churches, and not before.

Personalism fuses this and favors it. I should say, indeed, that only in the perfect uncontamination and solitariness of individuality may the spirituality of Religion positively come forth at all. Only here, and on such terms, the meditation, the devout ecstasy, the soaring flight. Only

here, communion with the mysteries, the eternal problems, whence? whither? Alone, and identity, and the mood—and the soul emerges, and all statements, churches, sermons melt away like vapors. Alone, and silent thought and awe, and aspiration—and then the interior consciousness, like a hitherto unseen inscription in magic ink, beams out its wondrous lines to the sense. Bibles may convey, and priests expound, but it is exclusively for the noiseless operation of one's isolated Self to enter the pure ether of veneration, reach the divine levels, and commune with the unutterable.

## REPORT

On June 13th, Ananda-Ashrama at Cohasset, Massachusetts, celebrated its second anniversary. A large number of friends of the work gathered together to bring their good will for the occasion. Everywhere could be seen groups either walking or sitting under the pine trees, expressing their appreciation of the unusual little Peace Retreat. On the High Rock of the Ashrama, Swami Paramananda held the simple Service and prayer and spoke spontaneously in his own characteristic way, touching upon the significance of the day. The large living room of the new cottage was crowded with guests whom Gayatri Devi entertained with a sumptuous Hindu dinner, after which the Swami introduced various speakers to the audience. Among them were Dr. Thind, Mr. P. V. Bapat of India, Miss Katharine F. Sherwood and others. It was interesting to see how all the speakers centered upon the beautiful inscription engraved over the fireplace: "Thee I Love In All."

During Swami Paramananda's absence from Boston, the two Sunday Services, and the regular Tuesday evening study class will be conducted by Srimati Gayatri Devi. She will also conduct the Service on Saturday at Cohasset Ashrama.

We are glad to announce that the Swami, after a brief lecture tour through Cincinnati, Louisville and Kansas City will arrive at the Ananda-Ashrama, La Crescenta, California, July 12th and will take charge for the summer.

Due to lack of space in this issue we are unable to give any further report of the activities of the Centres.

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VOLUME XX NUMBER 8

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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

# Message of the East



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## Vision of Truth

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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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## THE SUPREME OBLATION

*From the "Imitation of Christ"*

WHAT ask I of thee more but that thou study to resign thyself unto Me entirely? What thing so ever thou givest Me else I care not for. For I demand not thy gifts but only thyself.

As nothing should suffice thee without Me, likewise nothing may please Me what soever thou shalt give if thou offer not thyself to Me.

Offer thee then; give thee wholly unto Me: and that oblation shall be acceptable. . . .

But and if thou rest in thyself and present thee not with good will unto Me, then there is no full oblation, neither entire perfect union between us. For the free oblation of thyself into the hands of Almighty God ought to go before all thy works, if thou wouldst obtain liberty and grace.

And the lack of this is the cause that so few folk be illumined and have inward liberty, for they cannot renounce themselves.

# UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

We do not need more material development; we need more spiritual development. We do not need more intellectual power, we need more moral power. We do not need more knowledge; we need more character. We do not need more government; we need more culture. We do not need more law; we need more religion. We do not need more of the things that are seen; we need more of the things that are unseen.

—*Calvin Coolidge.*

It is God who is the final reason for things.

—*Leibnitz.*

Thou shalt know thyself by this test: Art thou content to be nothing and know nothing? Then know God and thou wilt be. —*Anonymous.*

Let me dive into the ocean of my soul and fish for pearls in its depths, the pearls of Union and Ecstasy and Immortality. —*Sri Ananda-Acharya.*

It is not always necessary that Truth should be embodied. Enough if it will hover, spirit-like, around us and produce harmony; if it float through the air like the sweetly solemn chiming of a minster bell.

—*Goethe.*

Those who follow that part of themselves which is great are great; those who follow that part which is little are little men. —*Mencius.*

Go not abroad; retire into thyself, for truth dwells in the inner man. —*St. Augustine.*

Wise men have an inward sense of what is beautiful, and the highest wisdom is to trust this intuition and be guided by it. The answer to the last appeal of what is right lies within a man's own breast.

—*Aristotle.*

# VISION OF TRUTH

*By Swami Paramananda*

There is no conflict, no quarrel, no inharmony or dissension in true life, the one life, what we may call the larger or transcendental life. Whoever becomes direct possessor of that, such a person is blessed with vision, and not only with vision—he is blessed with a practical working hypothesis for the solution of every problem. In the midst of many he can still maintain his vision of the One; surrounded by conflicts, antagonistic environments, apparent difficulties, still he can hold fast to that one unbroken principle of harmony, without which life is bound to be chaotic. Whether we have much or little, whether we have acquired learning or are lacking in it, there is nothing that can remove this fundamental want from our life, save the clear open vision of Truth.

"Thee do I invoke, God, Truth, in whom and by whom and through whom are all things true which are true; God, Wisdom, in whom and by whom and through whom are all wise who are wise: God, true and perfect Life, in whom and by whom and through whom those live who do truly and perfectly live: God, Blessedness, in whom and by whom and through whom are all blessed who are blessed."

—*St. Augustine.*

We often ask for a standard of Truth; we say, "How shall we know such and such a thing is true?" We might just as well say, "How shall we know that it is light?" Light is self-revealing. When the dawn comes over the horizon, it needs no signal or heralding; it is self-evident. Same way it is with us when there is revelation of Truth. Truth is self-evident, therefore it is the strongest factor in our life; it destroys whatever weakness, whatever doubt,

whatever element of fear is within us, and all that makes for conflict. These vanish before it just as darkness vanishes before the day.

"God, Wisdom, in whom and by whom and through whom are all wise who are wise. . . ." A man may carry a light, but if he fails to carry it with understanding, it may merely seem a burden to him. The revelation of St. Augustine points out the way we may carry it with benefit to ourselves and to others.

"God, true and perfect Life, in whom and by whom and through whom those live who do truly and perfectly live . . ." How often we seek life apart from That. We desire to shun death, yet we run away from the very thing which would overcome it. We are like those fish which the fisherman catches in his net. When he spreads it, they think they are going to run away from it, and thus they become more and more entangled in its meshes. Having fear of death, in their fear they embrace death through their lack of understanding; and we are often like that. It is not that we lack an innate desire for expansion, larger understanding, greater happiness, unbroken peace, but we do not know the true way of attaining these, and we must find it. When I say that we must find the true way I do not mean it in any dogmatic sense. There are those who say, "My way is the only way." There is no one who can ever with real understanding make such a statement. Let me quote to you some beautiful thoughts from a mystical soul, Maximus Tyrius:

"Amid all the conflicts of opinions, there sounds through all the world one consenting law and idea: that there is one God, the King and Father of all; and there are many gods who are His children. . . . I do not blame the variety of representations; only let men understand there is but One Divine Nature. Let them love One in their thoughts."

How very true this is! Of course we can interpret it many ways; we can take it as referring to angels or superhuman beings. Why not? Among us there are God-like men; and what makes them God-like? Not any special gift denied to others; they have been blessed with such understanding that they can silence all that is disturbing within them—egotistic, inharmonious or arrogant—and let the God-power flow through them. If it can flow through one soul, it can flow through another. This is one of life's great revelations. The Christ Spirit, the Spirit of Buddha, and all those world-souls through whom the Universal Light shines forth, bring to us their example as their greatest gift. They show in a very definite way that what they have done we may also do for our ourselves. That is their message. Oftentimes, however, we are cowards; we do not know our innate strength, and this impedes our progress, bars our happiness. The very things we want we are not able to take because of our attitude.

Without doubt most men have naturally a reaching-out for that life which relates human beings—what we call the brotherhood of man. But this can be attained only when we recognize the one underlying Principle. We receive evidence of that oneness from every direction. Nature is constantly reminding us of the unity of life—the Great Immensity, the One Indivisible Spirit. God is reminding us through all things. One sun gives light to the whole world. There is no difference between the sun that shines in America and that which shines in England or France or Germany or even India. One sky covers all, providing one roof for the entire human family. The trouble is that we in our zeal, in our self-interest, think that we can divide and separate this wholeness and still be happy. The very idea causes unhappiness; it could not be otherwise. "The more the self, the

I, the me, the mine, that is, self-seeking and selfishness, abate in a man, the more doth God's I, that is, God Himself, increase in him."

Try to understand the import of this which comes to us from the German mystics. Men say, "I want religion for my safe-keeping. I need the protection of the Divine Being, because without it my life is not secure." To recognize our need for God in a casual, superficial way is one thing, to make room for Him in our heart is another. What do we do when some one sends us a delicate, beautiful gift? Our first idea is to prepare a place for it—some corner that is clean and fitting. And when a great guest comes, we make ready to receive him. Same way it is with the Divine Guest: He cannot come to us unless we ourselves prepare for Him.

We are our own enemies. The man who says, "I don't believe in anything, I have no interest in any one, I am only concerned with myself," makes it impossible for any higher power to manifest through him. Also we can be our best friends. All the great books, classics, Bibles of the world teach us this; and it is applicable along every line. Do we not see how in the life of business, for instance, a man's fear, suspicion, doubt, hold him back and bar his progress, while his nobler feelings and aspirations lift him way up and enable him to surmount all his difficulties. That which is true in ordinary life is equally true in the life of spiritual regeneration.

"The self, the I, the me, the mine"—that instinct so hideous which makes a man say, "I am so-and-so, I am important, I must have chief place,"—that instinct must be done away with, if we would know our true entity. Even in worldly society if a person asserts himself, strives for the first seat, the first morsel of food, everything first, we say this person lacks breeding, and very soon he finds himself un-

loved. If this attitude is a detriment in the world it is infinitely more so in the spiritual province. In the realm of Spirit there is no room for it at all. It shuts off the access, closes the very door to that realm. "Self-seeking and selfishness," the more these disappear in a man, "the more doth God's I, that is, God Himself, increase in him." You may wonder why with such a person everything is so shining, fortunate, blessed, secured, that whatever he does, whatever he says, whatever he undertakes simply blossoms forth. It is because he has the sustaining power. But why does he have it and some one else not? Because he always faces the light and walks with the light while another turns his back to it. These things are our own choice. Every man has his own free will; no one can force us.

It is man's egotism which betrays him. When we have accomplished something that has earned a little merit, instead of saying, "It is Thou, it is Thou, O Lord; Thou art the Doer!" we take upon ourselves the credit, often to our great detriment. We all know that simple saying, "Pride goeth before a fall." Extend it in every direction and you will find the reason for it. There is tremendous truth behind its psychology. When a man has done something good, as soon as he becomes conscious of himself as the doer, he cuts himself off from the Source of inspiration. And it is not only through the path of vanity that egotism is manifested: a man who has failed, if he takes that failure upon himself, saying, "What a mess I have made of things; my life is ruined! I am a fool! I am worthless!" that also is from ego. Egotism sometimes can take the form of self-pity and self-denunciation, and at other times it manifests as haughtiness, vanity and aggression.

We must understand the principle of spiritual living. The teaching is, "Not I, not I—not my will but Thine be done!"

and this we see illustrated in Christ's life, with which you are so familiar. Whenever He performed a miracle, instead of declaring His power with arrogant spirit, as He might have done, instead of demanding of the people that they give him some return in the form of worship, always He carried that utter lack of self—"Not I, not my will be done, but Thine!" A man may go forth to do, but if he does not recognize this great Principle, how can he acquire the merit that comes with the attainment?

"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 learned the lesson of complete self-abnegation and absolute forgetfulness of 'I,' 'me' and 'mine'." Sri Ramakrishna gives this from the heart of his own Divine realization. There is no exclusive feeling behind such consciousness; there is no monopoly over it. It is every man's birthright to enter that realm and draw from it in abundance. No one can hinder us from doing so except ourselves. We can block the channel of inspiration, and also we can open it wider and ever wider. Every day a new feeling of exaltation may come upon us, a fresh blessing, a greater sense of strength and wisdom. The flow is unending. We need never fear any lack. There is an inexhaustible supply. The great saints and sages are agreed upon this. You will see that I have given you sayings from many different sources—from Christian mystic, Hindu devotee and classic philosopher—and their combined wisdom all points to that one supreme truth of self-surrender, egolessness, because without it life does not become clean, sweet and pure. So long as there is that note of ego—that harsh, discordant note—sounding through us, we cannot have the sweet music of heaven, no matter how much we may think we long for it. Now and then, here and there, we catch a single note

of it, and are awakened; but again we lose it. What makes us lose it? The noise that comes from within. We all know how difficult it is to listen to a beautiful song or to words of import if some one is making a disturbance in the room. So if there is confusion in our mind and heart we cannot hear the subtle spiritual sounds. First of all we have to silence our turbulent egotism; then comes the revelation of our great, spiritual, divine nature.

It is for this reason that these practical souls whom I have quoted all place their accent on this one thing. I say "practical souls" because on the spiritual plane they are just as practical as you and I are on the material plane. Up to a certain point we know instinctively how to do things with our hands and feet. We are aware of hunger, of thirst, and of all our physical needs. Those, however, who have quickened their higher instincts, feel in equal measure, perhaps more keenly, the hunger and thirst of the soul. We starve our spiritual nature and do not think anything of it; we nurse that which seems real to us, our physical life, and neglect our higher need. But with these great souls their conception is different; they cannot live without the consciousness of that Infinite, All-abiding One.

All-abiding! How sweet and beneficent is this idea! Things are not abiding. Where can we find that which endures? Whenever through human friendship or in our personal relationships we touch this lasting quality, we feel secure. There is, however, only One in and through whom we may feel eternal security, and that is why the first and foremost duty of every life is to find that One who is abiding Love, abiding Wisdom, abiding Light—unfailing Wisdom, unfailing Light, unfailing Love. It never fails us, but we fail toward It. In dark hours when we need It most, instead of looking up to It, instead of discarding all the confusion of

life and clinging to That alone, we allow our mind to become enshrouded, and then we lose the vision. After that, from one blunder we go into another. There cannot be any blunder, however, or any confusion, once we have learned to keep the light of that Divine Principle steady before us; and here is where we enter the province of religion—the inward life.

Men talk of philosophy, they talk of creed—they quarrel and fight; but the real people, the people who are truly consecrated to spiritual interest, they seek to find the Essence, and having found it, they become like rocks—unshakable. Their faith and devotion are so great that even if they did not do anything with their hands and feet, they would be constantly shedding on the lives of men unbounded and abiding blessings, because it is the nature of life to give, it is the nature of love to love and to make others forget that there is anything but love.

Let us, therefore, go within and more within, and seek that which is our only safeguard—the Divine Principle—finding which, we shall know no lack. We do not have to seek far or long before we find It; It is like a brilliant light; It is like a fragrant flower, and though we may have covered It over with non-essential thoughts and feelings, we have the power to uncover It, to make It our own.

Let us lift our heart's prayers to That One who alone can grant us eternal safety and security; who can quicken in us wisdom, faith, love and all the Divine attributes, redeeming our life, transforming our character, and giving us fresh hope, new courage and loftier inspiration for our upbuilding.

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Cheerfulness of mind, kindliness, silence, self-control, purity of heart: these are called austerity of the mind.

—*Bhagavad-Gita.*

# IN THE HAND OF GOD

*From the Teachings of Amen-em-apt*

(Amen-em-apt was the Grain Scribe of Upper and Lower Egypt. He controlled the produce of the harvests and held as well other important posts. His precepts were written down probably in the first half of the period of the XVIIIth Dynasty or after 1555 B.C. The present rendering is taken from "Tongues of Fire," compiled by Grace H. Turnbull, and is after the translation by E. A. Wallis Budge.)

Put thyself for safekeeping into the hand of the God. Cast thyself into the two arms of the God. To thy silent meditations add prostrations on the ground.

Better the beggar in the hand of God than the rich at ease in a comfortable habitation.

I beseech thee to spread with the tongue the report of only that which is good upon the earth; as for reports of evil, hide them in thy bosom.

Do the thing that is right and thou wilt attain to a true state of being. If thou seest another stumble from time to time, go with him to enable him to continue on his way.

Bring not to an end in slumber the early hours of the day. Say not: Today is even as tomorrow morning! for tomorrow hath yet to come, today hath yet to pass away.

Accustom not thyself to lie in bed whilst the dawn is breaking in awful beauty. To what can the break of the day and the dawn be compared? The man who hath no knowledge of the dawn, to what can he be likened?

Whilst the God is employed in His works of beneficence, man indulgeth in slothfulness! On one hand the chatter of men, on the other the works that the God doth perform!

Be weighty in thy mind, consolidate thy heart, accustom not thyself to shape thy course by thy tongue. Though the tongue of a man be the steersman of the boat, it is the God of All who is the watcher in the bows.

Though a man mix the mud and straw, it is God who is the builder. It is He who throweth down, it is He who

buildeth up. It is He who maketh one man to oversee a thousand.

Man liveth his hour of life. Rejoice and be glad. It is God who maketh him to arrive in the other world; he is safe in the hands of God.

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# YOGA, THE WAY OF ATTAINMENT

*By Count Herman Keyserling*

(From "The Travel Diary of a Philosopher." Published by Harcourt Brace & Company, New York.)

How is it that the real meaning of Indian wisdom has been recognized so imperfectly in Europe in spite of the many learned works which have dealt with it? . . .

Indian philosophy—in so far as it may be described at all in this way—is, to go to the essential point at once, incomparable with ours, already because it is not based upon the work of thought. Think of the traditional Indian method of teaching as it is referred to every now and then in the Upanishads: if a pupil puts a question, the teacher does not answer him directly, but merely says: Come and live with me for ten years. And during these ten years he does not teach him as we understand it; he merely gives him a phrase to meditate. The disciple is not meant to think about it, to analyze it, to evolve, construct something out of it—he is to sink himself, as it were, into the phrase until it has taken complete possession of his soul. . . .

According to Indian conviction, Brahmavidya, the realization of being (the only one which is regarded as worthy to be striven for) is not attainable by the process of thinking. Thinking is believed to move in its original sphere, without ever leading beyond it. It is believed to be equally incapable of leading to metaphysical recognition as the senses. Just as no amount of development can lead the senses to per-

ceive thought, so no amount of thinking could lead to metaphysical realization. This can be attained only by the man who reaches a new level of consciousness. Metaphysical truth appears to this deeper state of consciousness as "given" in the same direct way as outer nature is given to the eye and the world of concepts to the intellect. Therefore, for purposes of study, it is not a question of the work of thought but of becoming profound in oneself: it is not a question of how to fathom reality by means of a given instrument, but of how to fashion a new and better one. The methods of study in India and among us, for purposes of gaining philosophic recognition, are therefore absolutely incomparable: we think, experiment, criticize, define; the Indian practises Yoga. . . .

The exemplary and eternally valuable quality in Indian philosophy is the spirit of profundity from which it emanates. All its manifestations can be imagined in a more perfect form. I do not believe that one can penetrate into being more deeply; it seems to me that the extremest profundity has been attained here. The Indians have overcome the static concept of truth and replaced it by a dynamic one which transfigures its meaning. We too will do this sooner or later. We too will realize one day that recognition of being cannot be attained even by the most far-reaching perfection of our conceptual apparatus, not by the most exhaustive exploration of our consciousness as it is, but only by the acquisition of a new and higher form of consciousness. Man must rise above his secular instrument for recognition; . . . his consciousness must, instead of cleaving to the surface, learn to reflect the spirit of profundity which is the primary cause of his being. This higher development has begun in India; hence the miracle of India's recognition of being and its wisdom of life. It is for us to continue.

The fact that the wise men, to whose intuitions everything valuable in Indian metaphysics is traceable, have attained to that most desirable and profound layer of consciousness, is admittedly due to Yoga practice. It signifies the practical foundation-stone of all Indian wisdom. Whereas we base all our hopes on genius, they expect most things from training.—The other day a Hindu said to me: "That you need great minds in order to discover truth is a sign how uncultured you are; you are dependent upon extraordinary accidents. Truth, after all, is there, to be found by everybody, it is contained in the smallest phenomenon; after sufficient training every one can perceive it. What supreme irony that you, the impatient ones, must wait for the birth of an unusual individual in order to become conscious of something which is a matter of course (for every truth is a matter of course)."—The Hindu is undoubtedly right in principle. Our dependence on talent is somewhat mortifying. But is it possible to escape from it? That it is possible is proved by the mere existence of the marvel of Indian wisdom. Insofar as its originators are known, we are not concerned with great minds in our sense of the word. It is possible to draw conclusions concerning the quality of a genius, his originality, his potentiality, the wealth of his talents, with great certainty from his style and tone: I do not know of one in the whole of Indian history, with the single exception of Buddha, who could be regarded in the Western sense as a great mind; I cannot think of one Indian philosopher who could bear even an approximate comparison with our great thinkers. Sankara, Vyara, as well as Ramanuja were, at most, philosophers of the second rank. And yet many of the profoundest cases of insight come from them and not from the Rishis of antiquity; and Indian wisdom is the profoundest which exists. I am not

asserting something which cannot be proved; the further we get, the more closely do we approach to the views of the Indians. Psychological research confirms, step by step, the assertions contained, in no matter how insufficient a theoretical setting, within the old Indian science of the soul. Again and again the results of philosophical criticism agree with the mythically cloaked intuitions of the old Rishis; and with Bergson even metaphysics have turned in the direction in which India has marched from the beginning. For his metaphysics resemble no one's else more than they do that of the Indian Asvagosha.

India owes its recognition admittedly to the training according to the Yoga system. Its underlying idea is the following: by heightening his power of concentration man gains possession of an instrument of immense power. If he controls this instrument perfectly it is possible for him to enter into direct contact with any object in the world, to act at a distance, to create like a god, to attain whatever he wishes. He has to direct his concentrated attention only towards one point, and he then knows everything concerning it. He need only turn to a problem to understand and solve it. The perfect Yogi is said not to require any material tools to be effective in the world, no scientific apparatus in order to attain to recognition; he is capable of everything, and can experience everything directly.

It is a matter of indifference whether there has ever been a perfect Yogi. The essential decisive factor is . . . the obvious correctness of the principle of Yoga theory, the way in which it does justice to all proven facts of experience, and the inner probability of the most extraordinary phenomena which are described as attainable. Undoubtedly the power of concentration is the real propelling power of the whole of our psychic mechanism. Nothing heightens

our capacity for performance as much as its increase; every success, no matter in what domain, can be traced back to the intelligent exploitation of this power. No obstacle can resist permanently an exceptional power of will, that is to say, one which has been concentrated to the utmost; concentrated attention forces every problem sooner or later to reveal all of its aspects which are capable of recognition by a specific nature. Yoga philosophy asserts that a sufficiently high degree of concentration takes the place of natural talents. . . .

All heightened and highest expressions of life represent an equal number of effects of concentration, which inevitably conditions profundity. The sense in which it renders men profound depends upon the spirit and the purpose in and for which it is practised; it benefits every conceivable form of culture. But, of course, the man who is concerned with spiritual realization and with sanctification will always have to emulate the Indian. So will the artist bent on creating works of the same spiritual significance as the Indians have created, and their greater pupils in the Far East. We are already tolerably aware of the fact that, in spiritual expressive value, our art is below that of the ancient cultures of the East; and we also know that this is, somehow or other, connected with the non-naturalism of their art. But most people are not clear in their minds as to the real nature of Eastern art; they cannot possibly be, for otherwise they would not fall into the error of comparing Buddhist with Greek art. . . . The significance of Eastern art is totally different from that of the West, and its forms are appropriate means of expression only for its own. . . . In order to be able to express soul directly, the visible form would have to be a direct expression of the soul, and would therefore have to be based upon a different concentration from

that of reason. To concentrate themselves in this sense is a thing which the artists of the West have never known how to do.

That is just what the East succeeded in doing, thanks to which they have produced works by the side of which we have nothing to offer. From the point of view of reason, no work of the East is a match for the art of Greece, but they cannot be judged from the point of view of reason. They spring from the same depth of life only as poetry and music do in our case, and thus every means of gauging appears to be altered. . . . Again and again I must think of the dancing Siva in the museum of Madras: this many-armed, anatomically impossible bronze realizes a possibility which no Greek has ever allowed us to suspect. . . . How is such a creation arrived at? Only by the realization of the God within us, and by the ability to re-create this immediate inner experience as immediately in terms of visibility. The artists of the East have accomplished this apparently impossible task. And they have succeeded in doing so by virtue of what I have been writing about: their culture of concentration. We know little or nothing of the great artists of Hindustan. But we know of those of China and Japan, their heirs, that they were all Yogis, that they saw the only path to art in Yoga. They did, of course, in their first student years, draw after nature with the most earnest perseverance, in order to become the complete masters of their means of expression; but they regarded this merely as a preliminary. For them the essential was the problem of absorption. They became absorbed in themselves, or in a waterfall, a landscape, a human face, according to what they wished to represent, until they had become one with their object, and then they created it from within, unconcerned by all outer forms.

It is said of Li Lung-Mien, the master of the Sung Dynasty, that his main occupation did not consist in work but in meditating by the side of the mountain-slopes, or near the brooks. Lao-tse was once asked by the emperor to paint a certain landscape. He returned without sketches or studies and replied to surprised questioning: "I have brought nature back in my heart." Kuo-Hsi teaches, in his writings concerning landscape painting: "The artist must, above all, enter into spiritual relation with the hills and rivers which he wishes to paint."

Inner collectedness seemed to these artists to be more important than external training. And, surely, the completely "inward" individual stands above reason, for its laws live within his mind; he does not need to obey them any more, just as he who knows is beyond good and evil. As his knowledge unconsciously controls all his activity, thus the knowledge of the artist-Yogi directs unfailingly even the most capricious delineation. The rhythm of the Far Eastern drawing is not of rational origin; it is an inner rhythm, like that of music. If one compares the design of Leonardo or Durer with it, one sees at once what the difference consists in: the one is the outcome of the concentration of reason which necessarily leads to the discovery of objective rules; the other is the product of pure self-realization, pure subjectivity condensed into form.

Thus the East has succeeded in what has never yet been reached in the West: the visible representation of the Divine as such. I know nothing more grand in this world than the figure of Buddha; it is an absolutely perfect embodiment of spirtuality in the visible domain. And this is not owing to the expression of calm, of soulfulness and inwardness which it bears, but it is due to the figure in itself, independent of all concurrence with corresponding phenomena in nature.

# THE GARDEN WITHIN

*By Faith Green*

Deep within one's being lies the Garden of Vision—the Garden of Reality. A quiet place, filled with fragrance, with light. Filled with beauty, to know whose meaning is to know all.

No storms enter that Garden, only the wind of the Spirit breathes through it—peace, peace, peace. And there flows the river of Life, clear shining, undivided into the many, still one with its source.

The way to that inner Garden may be overgrown, untrodden by our feet. Yet the Garden is always there, hushed, fair and sweet. And there in the Garden dwells He whose name is Truth. Serene He sits in the stillness, and we who enter to sit at His feet must be quiet too. In silence is the teaching given, in silence it must be heard.

"Master," I said, "tell me of life—the meaning of this earth life of ours, and whither we are going."
But the Master said to me, "What does it mean to you?"
"I do not know," I said.
Then said the Master, "Go, and look around you, and come back and tell me what you see."

I went out of the Garden and looked around. Then I went back to the Garden.
"What did you see?" asked the Master.
"Everywhere I saw people climbing, carrying a burden on their shoulders," I said.
"What did you think?" asked the Master.
I said, "This is what I thought:

"Life is a spiritual adventure. All that is asked of us is to live up to the highest good we know. That requires effort, and effort brings strength.

"When you reach the hilltop of the highest good you know today, you find a new height in view, and you climb again, with greater power.

"So you climb (by living it) to the peak of the highest good you know, gaining a new vision of higher peaks beyond. The view around you broadens, and looking down you see all things in true relation to each other—not one thing at a time giving false proportion, as when standing on a level, the small because of its nearness blotting out the great.

"Out of the valley, where the shadows loom larger than the reality, into the high, clear air of spiritual perception. Each day greater strength from the upward pull of the day before, a broader vision and a glimpse of higher peaks beyond, until there comes a time when the peak of the Ultimate stands before you, high above the shadows, wholly bathed in light."

"Where did you look?" asked the Master.
"Everywhere," I said.
"Outside?" He asked.
"Yes," I said.
"Inside?" He asked.
"No," I said.
"Go and look," said the Master.

So I stayed in the Garden, and looked, and came back to the Master.
"What did you see?" He asked.
"I saw a flower," I said.
"What did it mean?" asked the Master. But I did not know.
"Tell me what the flower meant," I begged.

But the Master did not speak. He sat very still, looking into a reality I could not see, and I sat looking at Him.

All around was the growing life of the Garden, and the sounds of life, but He was still. So I sat quietly too, and looked into His eyes and saw the flower that I had seen in the Garden. Then I knew.

Once I thought this life a spiritual adventure. Each day the soul climbing new heights, gaining strength from effort, each day the greater height giving vision of new heights beyond.

But of what avail the effort, the reaching of the topmost peak, if one has carried upon the shoulders the burden of the self!

Now I know it is a growth, a manifestation of life within. A bursting of the seed, leaving behind the outgrown sheath of self; a pushing up through the earth-weight into light and air; the unfolding leaf and bud.

Rooted in the soil, nourished by earth elements for its growth, but drawn upward by the power of the sun. Life force within, life force without—but two streams from one source.

Growth, upward growth, the manifestation of the expanding life within, through the outward changes, heat and cold, darkness and light, storm and sunny peace, days of flood and days of drought, they also but diverse manifestations of the One. Then the unfolding blossom, the perfume, the golden heart.

What then—the withering, the bearing of fruit, the seeds of lives to be perfected like its own. Or crushed or broken before the perfected whole, cut back to the root, to be drawn upward again into the light. No annihilation, no ceasing to be—life, always life—and one day the day of attainment.

There are many seasons of flowering, but what of the time when there is no more withering, no more bearing of fruit?

There comes a moment when a perfect blossom is wholly opened to the light. In that moment of attainment a vibration of perfected beauty is released. Who knows to what far shore it will reach, into what chord of harmony it will be drawn; to what new picture it will lend its color, put to what new uses of the Spirit.

In that moment the soul goes forward, to be wrapped in that new robe of beauty. The time of earth flowering is past.

A strange way the Master has of teaching—never telling me, always saying "go and look," and asking me what I see and what it means. And when I only see and do not understand, not telling me then, only sitting still and letting me look through His eyes, until I see and know.

## THE WORDLESS TEACHING

*By L. Adams Beck*

From "The Splendour of Asia", pub. by Dodd, Mead and Company, N. Y.

There is a knowledge veiled in excess of light which dazzles the eyes to blindness. Let words be few. Let good deeds be many. He understands it for whom it passes thought. Who thinks of it can never know it. And if it could be told in words it would not be the Truth. . . .

For once in early days, the Blessed One sat high among his own upon the Peak of Vultures, and there came before his quiet feet a Shining One and laid there a golden flower, praying that he would speak and in sweet speech instruct them of the innermost of the Peace.

The Blessed One received the golden flower within his hand and sat in utter calm but spoke no word and all the Assembly mused what this might mean, and, musing, could not know. But, at long last, Kassapa the Great smiled, also in silence, and the Blessed One said softly:

"I hold within my heart the Treasure of the Law, the wondrous knowledge that is the Peace. This have I given to Kassapa wordless, and wordless he has seen and known."

So passes the vision from heart to heart. But words cannot tell it to the brain.

## THE SONG OF THE NAUTCH GIRL

*From the Life of the Swami Vivekananda*

[In April 1891, Swami Vivekananda, who was at that time leading the life of the wandering Sannyasin or monk over the length and breadth of India, came in touch with the Maharajah of Khetri. Destiny put it in his way to contact the Maharajah's secretary, who, deeply impressed with the Swami's spiritual power, urged him to come to the royal palace. The Swami consented to go in two days' time. The Maharajah, however, was so eager for the meeting that he did not wish to wait, and said, "I will go myself and see him!" On hearing this, the monk went instantly to the palace.]

When he arrived, His Highness warmly welcomed him, and after the usual formalities, asked him:

"Swamiji, what is life?" The monk replied:

"Sire, life is that tendency in a being toward unfoldment and development under circumstances tending to press it down." The Swami's own life was one of hardship and renunciation, and so he put a world of feeling into what he spoke. Impressed, the Maharajah next asked:

"Well, Swamiji, what then is education?" And the immediate response came:

"Sire, I should say education is the nervous association of certain ideas." And he went on to explain the statement, saying that not until ideas had been made instincts could they be reckoned as real and vital possessions of con-

sciousness. Then he narrated the life of Ramakrishna to the Maharajah, who sat listening to him eagerly and attentively, his soul wrapt in a flame of burning passion for truth as he heard the words of spiritual nectar fall from the Swami's lips. He told the Prince how perfect was his Master's education of the soul in the matter of renunciation of lust and gold, how the simple touch of a coin to his body, even when he was asleep, would bring on a painful contortion of his physical self; how he looked upon every woman as the Mother indeed; how his whole life was a deification of human personality, and was an example and an incentive to men, in the purification of the contents of their individual selves. "His whole life," said the Swami, "was a manifestation of purity, an education for the perfection of the highest consciousness of man."

For days the Maharajah listened to the monk's words of wisdom, and then, having become devotedly attached to him, he said, "Swamiji, do come with me to my State! You will live with me there, and I shall serve you with my whole heart." The Swami reflected for a moment and said, "Very well, Maharajah, I shall be glad to accompany you."

Several days after, the Prince and his retinue left the beautiful Mount Abu and journeyed by train to Jeypore, the Swami joining him as promised. From Jeypore to Khetri, the distance of ninety miles was done in a state carriage. On the way, the Prince spent his time in the company of the Swami, asking him questions, and hearing his answers. Thus the Maharajah asked:

"Swamiji, what is Truth?" And the monk replied:

"Truth, Maharajah, is One and Absolute; man travels constantly toward it, from truth to truth and not from error to truth." And then he went on amplifying his meaning, pointing out how all forms of knowledge and experience and

all forms of worship and of thought are paths toward the summit of the Mountain of Truth. He showed how the true monk and the true householder could attain the same Truth through separate paths. Never in his life had the Maharajah met a man or a Sannyasin of this type. He was delighted with his company.

On reaching Khetri, the Swami, after some days, initiated the Prince as a disciple. And what a wonderful disciple he became! Still are there memories of him, kneeling in reverence before the Swami Vivekananda; and the Swami in his turn, knowing the depth and the sincerity of the man, loved him dearly and expected much of him in the way of advancing the well-being of the country. . . .

The Swami passed many weeks with the Maharajah, studying, teaching, and living the spiritual life. Though in a palace, he nevertheless lived as the monk that he was, constantly communing with his soul and with his Master, and ever watchful of the guidance of the Mother.

At the palace he became acquainted with Pandit Narayandas, who was the foremost Sanskrit grammarian of his time in Rajputana. Believing this to be a great opportunity, the Swami decided to study the Mahabhashyam, which is Patanjali's great commentary on the Sutras of Panini. The Pandit was pleased to teach the monk, and even after the first day he remarked: "Swamiji, it is very difficult to get a student like you!"

One day it happened that the Pandit, who had given a long lesson on the day previous, questioned the Swami about the subject taught. To his surprise, the monk quoted verbatim the whole day's task from memory, adding his own comments to the topic of thought. After a time, the Pandit, seeing that his pupil often raised questions and getting no satisfactory replies from him, solved them himself, said,

"Swamiji, there is nothing more to teach you. I have taught you all that I know, and you have absorbed it." And so the Swami, saluting the Pandit respectfully, thanked him for the kindness he had shown him, and became himself, in many respects, the teacher to the Pandit.

The palace halls of the Khetri court became filled frequently with eminent persons who came to pay their respects to the Swami. Some of them were Pandits, and some others were learned both in Eastern and Western philosophy, and they regarded him as their Guru.

On a certain occasion, the Maharajah, entering the room which the Swami occupied, found him turning the pages of a book rather casually, seeming to read here and there, and yet deeply absorbed. He asked:

"Swamiji, how can you read so quickly?" The reply came:

"Your Highness, when a boy first begins to read, he spells each letter of a word twice or thrice in his mind before he pronounces it. His attention is confined to each single letter of a word; but as he learns more, he does not look at each letter but at a word as a word, and conceives the meaning at once. And gradually, as one advances more and more, and has perfect concentration on the subject one is reading, one can take in a whole sentence without difficulty. Again, if this power of grasping at once the import of a sentence be greatly developed, one may read even paragraph by paragraph at a glance, the mind absorbing instinctively the actual elements and the essence of the author's thought. It all depends upon practice, unbroken Brahmacharyam,* and the concentration of the mind. Any one may try, and the same experience will come to him."

It so happened that on one occasion the Maharajah asked the Swami:

*A life of absolute continence.

"Swamiji, what is Law?" Without a moment's hesitation, he exclaimed:

"Law is altogether internal. It does not exist outside; it is a phenomenon of intelligence and experience. It is the mind which classifies sense observations and moulds them into laws. The order of experience is always internal. Apart from the impression received from the sense organs and the reaction of intelligence upon these in an orderly and consecutive manner, there is no law. The scientists say that it is all homogeneous substance and homogeneous vibration. Experience and its classification are internal phenomena. Thus Law itself is intelligent and is born in absolute intelligence."

Following upon this statement, the Swami spoke of the Sankhya philosophy and showed how the modern science corroborated its conclusions. He then influenced the Maharajah to take an active interest in scientific study, urging upon him the need which is India's in the way of scientific training and research. With this purpose, he ordered some science primers for the Maharajah, and, later on, even some scientific instruments of a simple order, and himself began to teach his royal pupil.

No words can paint the devotion of the Maharajah to his Guru. So great was his reverence for him that, at dead of night, he would rise from his bed and serve him, rubbing his feet gently, while the Swami lay asleep. On the first accasion, the Swami awoke after a time and was surprised to find the Maharajah serving him in this manner. But the Prince protested, saying, "Swamiji, I am your disciple, and you should not deprive me of this privilege." And in the daytime too, he would go to serve the monk thus, even before the eyes of his whole court, and in spite of the repeated protestations of the Swami the Prince would wait upon him in a score of ways. But Swamiji did not allow him to do

so before others, saying that it would lower the dignity of the Maharajah in the eyes of his subjects. . . .

But let it not be thought that the Swami spent the whole of his time in the palace. He was often at the houses of the poorer class of his devotees. The whole town of Khetri was enamoured of the Swami, and he treated the least of his admirers with the same love and affection as he treated the Maharajah. He was loved by many who regarded him as the Master Himself, of whom he so often spoke to them.

One evening, in this summer time, the Maharajah and a few of his more intimate friends were seated in the beautiful gardens of the palace, enjoying the coolness of the evening air. In an adjoining hall, a group of nautch-girls were playing softly upon the *vina,* accompanied by other musical instruments. It was a perfect night, cool, and lustrous with stars. The Maharajah, feeling lonely, went into the hall and sent his private secretary to call his Guru. The Swami came from his meditation and seating himself near the Prince held discourse on religious matters. Presently, the Maharajah ordered a nautch-girl to sing. Whilst her voice rose in song, the Swami, who never was present where women sang, rose and was about to leave, when the Prince pressed him very hard to remain, saying, "Swamiji, do hear her sing! Her songs will arouse only the best sentiments in you!" Not knowing what else to do, he obeyed, thinking he might just hear one song and then go away. And then, on the evening air and to the accompaniment of music, whilst all about was silence, the girl's voice ascended, bearing the burden of a song of that great Vaishnava saint, Suradas, the words of which, as translated by the Swami himself, are—

"O Lord, look not upon my evil qualities!
Thy Name, O Lord, is Same-sightedness,
Make of us both the same Brahman!

One piece of iron is in the Image in the Temple,
And another, the knife in the hand of the butcher,
But when they touch the philosopher's stone
Both alike turn to gold!

So, Lord, look not upon my evil qualities!
Thy Name, O Lord, is Same-sightedness,
Make of us both the same Brahman.

One drop of water is in the sacred Jumna,
And another is foul in the ditch by the roadside,
But when they fall into the Ganges
Both alike become holy.

So, Lord, look not upon my evil qualities!
Thy Name, O Lord, is Same-sightedness,
Make of us both the same Brahman!"

These beautiful words . . . were from the mouth of a woman who lived life as it came, but who sang putting her whole soul, as it were, into its contents. The Swami was amazed. . . . He himself has said: "Hearing this song I thought: Is this my Sannyas? I am a Sannyasin, and yet I had in me the sense of distinction between myself and this woman!" And over the face of the Swami hovered a great radiance in that night when the nautch-girl sang. He appeared like a Knower of Brahman. All distinctions of sex had fallen off, and even as his Master had seen the Divine in those whom the world calls the lowest, so also did the Swami see it. For the woman had sung with such tenderness and with such depth of feeling that the words entered into his soul like fire, and verily he perceived that "All this is One." And from that day he called this woman "Mother!" and she, coming to know him, addressed him as her son. . . . Thus by that song the Highest Truth was made manifest to the wonder-stricken monk.

# REPORT

## THE VEDANTA CENTRE OF BOSTON

The activities of the Vedanta Centre of Boston during the summer months have been carried on by Srimati Gayatri Devi of India. In spite of extreme warm weather, the attendance has been remarkably good. Many close friends of the work have visited the Centre and availed themselves of the Sunday and Tuesday Services.

The Cohasset Ashrama has drawn friends old and new for rest and peace. Apart from the regular Saturday afternoon Service, a large number have taken advantage of the Ashrama Guest Houses and spent their vacation and weekends there, enjoying the serene and peaceful atmosphere of this unique retreat so close to the metropolis of Boston.

## LECTURE TOUR

Swami Paramananda, on his way to the Pacific Coast, stopped in Cincinnati and spoke in the Florentine Room of the Gibson Hotel on July 5th, where he was accorded a very hearty and enthusiastic welcome.

The Swami also stopped in Louisville, Kentucky, for two days and lectured at the Louisville Truth Centre where a large gathering assembled to hear him. It was indeed gratifying to all his friends and they were genuinely surprised to see such public response at that time of the year.

Next he made a brief stop in Kansas City, Missouri. In the afternoon, at the home of a friend, he spoke to an intimate group, and in the evening he gave a public lecture at the Missouri Athletic Club. The hall was over-crowded with eager listeners. It is the Swami's intention to give a longer time to all these places on his return trip to Boston.

## ANANDA-ASHRAMA

Immediately after his arrival in California, Swami Paramananda resumed his regular activities at the Ananda-

Ashrama, giving two public Services every Sunday, and on Thursday evening a Service in the Temple patio. Here also the attendance has been unabated.

### MOON-LIGHT SERVICES

The special moonlight Services have drawn large numbers from Los Angeles, Pasadena, Hollywood, Glendale, and even from the beach cities. On some Thursday evenings the Ashrama road is literally lighted up with automobile headlights in a perfect stream, and it is an inspiring experience to partake of this special Service held under the star-lit canopy of the Ashrama hill-top.

### DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

During the past months many distinguished visitors have made their pilgrimage to the Ashrama, many of them staying at the Ashrama Guest-House for a period of rest and refreshment. Among these were Prof. James B. Pratt and his wife who are en route to India where, for some months, they will contribute their services to Dr. Rabindranath Tagore's University at Bolpur. Prof. Pratt is an Orientalist of note, being widely known for his exhaustive study of Buddhism, especially in its Mahayana aspects, while Mrs. Pratt is a linguist of the first order.

Among other guests, Dr. Latham True and Mrs. True of Palo Alto, California, remained two weeks at the Ashrama. Dr. True is an accomplished musician, and during his visit played the organ on several occasions for the Services.

Swami Akhilananda, head of the Vedanta Centre of Providence, visited the Ananda-Ashrama with several of his friends, after an absence of near four years.

### RADIO TALK

Swami Paramananda was invited by Radio KNX, Paramount Studio, to give an inspirational talk on the morning of July 29th. These Radio talks which the Swami gives

from time to time are especially appreciated by a vast number of people who are unable to come up to the Ashrama.

### HOLLYWOOD BRANCH CENTRE

On July 31st, Swami Paramananda was invited to dedicate a most attractive Garden Sanctuary created by Mrs. Vina Hagerty, at 1957 Rodney Drive, Los Angeles. This the hostess offered to the Swami for the holding of Classes, and also set aside a room in her charming home for a Reading-room and Library of the Vedanta Ananda-Ashrama, in this way establishing a branch centre of the work. A large number of friends were present at the opening and expressed great satisfaction in having such a centre in the heart of Hollywood. Every Friday night since then the Swami has given talks on practical themes, such as "How to Overcome Fear," "How to Meet all Problems with Even Tenor," "Power of Faith," etc. It is gratifying to see how the attendance has kept up at these meetings.

### RECEPTION

On the evening of August 18th, a reception was accorded Miss Katherine F. Sherwood, of Boston, who has been affiliated with the Boston work for a period of over two decades, and who has just returned from a trip to India. She charmed the guests by relating to them her experiences in India in a simple, spontaneous manner, and, at the close of the evening, showed a collection of remarkable pictures of various outstanding monuments of India's culture.

### NEW ASHRAMA FOR WOMEN IN INDIA

The welcome news comes that Srimati Charu Shila Devi has made wonderful progress with her new undertaking—an Ashrama for women at Dacca, India. In the next MESSAGE OF THE EAST we hope to give salient extracts from some of her letters, describing the growth of her undertaking in the face of tremendous obstacles.

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VOLUME XX NUMBER 9

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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

# Message of the East



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## Thanksgiving

Issued by

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"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."
—*Ezekiel*
"Light shall come again from the East."
—*Tyndall*
Published Monthly except in August and September

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## HYMN TO AHURA MAZDA

*From the Avesta*

I ANNOUNCE and will complete my worship of Ahura Mazda, the Creator, the radiant and glorious, the greatest and the best, the most beautiful, the wisest, the most firm; who attaineth His ends the most infallibly, because of His Righteous Order; to Him who disposeth our minds aright, who sendeth afar His joy-creating grace; who made us and fashioned us, hath nourished and protected us, who is the most bounteous Spirit!

I announce and complete my worship of Good Thought, of Righteousness the Best, of Sovereignty which is to be desired, of Piety the Bountiful, and of universal Weal and Immortality.

And I announce and complete my worship of these places and these lands, these pastures and these abodes with their springs of water, and of these plants and of this earth and yonder heaven, and of the holy wind, and of the sun, moon and stars—the eternal stars without beginning, self-disposing; and of all the holy creatures of the Holy Spirit.

If I have by thought, word or deed offended Thee, whether by act of will, or without intent, I earnestly atone for this by praise to Thee.

# UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

—*Psalms of David.*

Somewhere (I wish I knew where, and I wish I knew from whose lips) I once found this immortal sentence: "A woman went through the streets of Alexandria, bearing a jar of water and a lighted torch, and crying aloud, 'With this torch I will burn up Heaven, and with this water I will put out Hell, that God may be loved for Himself alone'."

—*Helen Hunt Jackson.*

Trust to Love; it takes all but it gives all. It leaves nothing in the heart but itself. —*Fènelon.*

And the land did tremble with gladness,
Ay, and with words of grateful praise,
Honoring the Maker of all things,
The mysterious One,
The God of Thunder,
Wakonda.

—*From Omaha Indian Ritual.*

Be thankful for the least gift, so shalt thou be meet to receive greater.

—*Thomas à Kempis.*

Bringer of food! Great Lord of provisions! Creator of all good things! Lord of terrors and of chiefest joys! All are combined in Him.

—*Egyptian Wisdom.*

He who giveth life, He who giveth strength, whose bidding the bright gods revere;
Whose shadow is immortality, whose shadow is likewise death.
Who is the god to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?

—*Rig Veda.*

# THANKSGIVING

*By Swami Paramananda*

(An Address delivered at the Temple of the Universal Spirit, Ananda-Ashrama, La Crescenta, California, on Thanksgiving Day, 1930.)

The feast of Thanksgiving is a universal feast. Its origin is the spontaneous gratitude expressed to the Giver of all good things, although the Supreme Being demands nothing from us and there is nothing that we can bring before Him that is not already His. Also where can we find a worthy gift to lay before His altar? Yet the heart of man forgets all these rational details and out of the depth of his feeling he brings his harvest before the One who has made all things possible unto him. It is not only an American custom observed by the early forefathers who were inspired thus to observe a day of thanksgiving to offer their prayers to God, but as far back as we can go into the development of human history, we find traces of the selfsame expression. Man, looking at the richness of his harvest, out of exuberant gladness and gratitude of his heart fell on his knees to offer his humble oblation to the Giver. It is a most beautiful and spontaneous social and spiritual custom combined together.

In India we find this custom observed in different parts under different names. In Bengal it is called *Navanna* which literally means the Feast of the New Rice. After the offering is made to God and His blessing invoked, then are friends and relatives invited to enjoy the blessing. In other words in a practical way it is observed first to recognize the Great Father who makes all things possible unto us, without whose grace we cannot reap any bounteous harvest. He showers upon us the blessing of the rain, He protects us from the ravages of devastation, and the One who thus protects us and gives us our bread, should we not first remember Him, offer Him our supplication, before we partake of what He gives

us? Does it not become richer when we thus consecrate our thoughts, elevate our mind with the spiritual recognition and then share our bounty with all who are our brethren? To my mind the feast of Thanksgiving teaches us profound spiritual lessons of devotion to God and selfless service to man, always with the heart of understanding thankfulness to the Giver.

I am reminded at this moment of the significant ancient sayings of Lord Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gita: He who enjoys the objects given by the gods without offering to them, he is indeed a thief. The righteous, eating the remnants of Yajna (sacrifice), become free from all sins; but the unrighteous, who cook for themselves, eat sin. There can be only one interpretation of this saying, that those who live with the thought of their own self-gratification, never stopping for a moment to lift their thoughts to the One who has given all, they deprive themselves of the richer blessing of abiding happiness. Even in this life we enjoy our blessing but in small measure when we rush after it with feverish selfishness for our personal gratification. The man who pauses to think of the Giver and offer Him his recognition, and the man who pauses again to share his blessings with those who surround him, he is indeed doubly blessed. He has really learned the meaning, the joy, the abounding blessing of the God of Thanksgiving. His days are richer not merely because he has acquired material possessions, but because his days are never without the radiant sun, the spirit of God and Divinity.

Indeed there is very little that we can offer to Him unless it be enriched by our inner spirit of devotion, of thoughts, of fragrance, of feeling, and these are the things which make our gift worthy and acceptable to Him who is all love. As it is again in the Bhagavad-Gita: He who, with devotion

offereth to Me a leaf, a flower, a fruit and water, that love-offering I accept, made by the pure-hearted. Whatever thou doest, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou offerest as oblation, whatever thou givest and the austerities thou performest, O son of Kunti, do that as an offering to Me.

To sum up the whole matter: life cannot be enjoyed in full measure until we realize the Source of our existence. Can a man attain true excellence, can he receive real bounty and blessing without thinking of that One who is the Bestower? Herein lies the idea back of the custom of Thanksgiving. It should not be just a matter of custom, however. If we could observe it every day, carrying that realization into all our rejoicing and feasting, how beautiful it would be. In the Bhagavad-Gita we are told that he who cooks for himself lives in sin, sensuality and sorrow. For this reason, in India, the practical aspect of religion forbids a man to touch food before he has offered it to the One who has made it possible for him to obtain it. It is the same here when you say grace. These things are not superstition; by means of them, logic, rationalism and the delicate flowers of spiritual feeling are interwoven. Every thought that we think, every bit of fruit gathered by us from the harvest field of life in the name of that One who has given it to us, makes our life more bounteous and more blessed.

O man, never forget through Whose grace everything comes to you! You may ask, "What have I to be thankful for?" For your very life itself. Life is the most sacred thing that can be bestowed upon us. Can we not look back to opportunities that have been given—memories which overwhelm us—and say, "Lord, I thank Thee. It was Thou who gavest this opportunity, and through Thy grace it was possible for me to carry my resolution into fruition." What richness comes upon us with this consciousness. How mel-

low, how beautiful it seems. If we compare it with the state of mind of the man who boasts, I have done this and that, I have accomplished such and such things, we shall see the difference. Always it is the life of spirituality, whichever way we view it, that brings the fulness of joy.

I have spoken of the Navanna, the Festival of New Rice, which they observe in India. At that time, all that is gathered is brought before the altar, after which it is shared with friends. No man would think of beginning the feast himself. First one family invites the rest of the community, and then, on the next auspicious day, another family does so. I remember from my childhood how sweet this custom seemed to me. You may say that it is only a social custom. But if we bring God into it, surely we are better for it, our homes are more harmonious, our happiness fuller, and our life's surety is enhanced because of it.

How wonderful it would be if man refused to walk on the path of life without first having secured an understanding of existence, without first fastening his inner being to the very Root from which he draws strength and sustenance for himself and others. The spirit of Thanksgiving is just this. As I understand it, your forefathers first offered their thanks and prayers to the Giver, to the One who makes everything possible, and then had their feast. All feasting should be that way. Man cannot enjoy the blessings of life till he has learned to make his offering to that Supreme. Here an intellectual person may say, "God does not need me." Of course He does not, but we need Him every step of the way. Do not think that we are making the Lord richer by observing this day, it is we who are made richer. When we kneel before the altar and pray, it is not that we are filling a gap which exists in the heart of the Infinite, we are filling the gap which separates us from that Infinite Spirit, and

we are filling it through our life's dedication. Therefore today let us come before the altar with a definite glowing feeling. Have we not all some reason to be thankful? Only one who is self-deluded, arrogant, harsh, whose mind has been altogether twisted, would fail to recognize his debt and cut himself off from the Source of his being.

Perhaps you will feel that you cannot offer thanks; you have lost too much, you have suffered too greatly. Even in the midst of tragedy, however, if we look deep enough we can perceive that One who rescues us from tragedy, the blessing of whose Presence makes us forget that there has been any tragedy. There is nothing that can compare with this understanding—nothing. It unites us with our Maker, our God, our Origin—however we care to think of Him.

Today of all days, which we have set aside and marked with the name of Thanksgiving, to whom shall we turn with thankfulness if not to that One from whom flows our life, our intelligence, our strength—everything that we call our own, and all that lies in store for us? As we bow our head and heart with humility, there will come a mellowness of spirit which will do away with all harshness, egotistic feeling, bitterness and despair. When I say "bow our head and heart" I do not mean that we should follow any ritual. We must approach that Infinite Being each in his own way. This is merely an occasion when we can turn to Him, and every man, woman and child, every living creature, has the power to make it a noxious unproductive occasion or one that is as beautiful and fragrant as a garden.

There may be those who will try to persuade you that selfish people are the most happy. Selfish people are not happy. They run after the shadows of happiness. Not only are they not happy themselves, but they play havoc with the life of humanity. One who is unhappy and restless, he satur-

ates the whole atmosphere with that feeling. We can never feel restless when we know that our safety is secured by that Unalterable Love, whom we call our Father, our Mother, our Friend, our Protector; therefore we must foster this consciousness. Just as we water a little plant day after day and keep it protected, placing a hedge around it so that nothing may destroy it, same way we bring into fruition the life which is within every one of us.

The measure of blessing is not in the bounty of the world. I think you all know this in the heart of your hearts. "What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?" How often we cry, "I would give anything to have happiness and peace!" Without God's grace we can have nothing. Think of these things. Even if your heart is sad because of some conditions, you can say, "I am not going to carry a sad countenance, I am going to make my life a glorious one, for it is His life that we bring unto Him. And the only way we can bring that life to him anew, with fresh sense of dedication, is to bring it without the weight of gloom, without any thought of our defects and failures, but fragrant with the blessings we have gathered from His hand.

I give these thoughts that you may make your own prayers, that you may weave your own garment, so to speak, out of the bounty of your harvest, and that you may bring it as an offering without any suggestion from anyone as to how that offering should be made. It is not by ritual that we cause our gift to be acceptable to the One who sees our heart; rather it is by our simple, direct, spontaneous outpouring of child-like devotion. In that spirit, let us bring our life and all the fruition of our life unto Him who sees our inmost being, knows our inmost thoughts, and hears our unspoken words, that we may feel blessed today on this occasion of Thanksgiving.

# THE QUEST OF HAPPINESS

*By Will Durant, Ph.D.*

(An excerpt from his work "Mansions of Philosophy," published by Simon and Schuster, Inc., New York.)

Let philosophy concede . . . that not in philosophy but in life man must find his keenest satisfaction. . . . Happiness is unconscious because it comes only when we are natural; if we stop to analyze it, it disappears, because it is unnatural to stop and analyze. If the intellect contributes to happiness it must be not as a primary source, but as the medium of co-ordination, the instrument whereon we evoke a harmony of desire. In this sense it may be an indispensable aid; for of what use will it be to gain all our ends if our desires cancel one another into a sad futility?

It is a truth which every man must learn; and though thinking comes hard to him, he resorts to it now and then. He acquires at last the art of order, as societies learn it in their growth; he perceives that he must range his desires in a hierarchy of discipline, lest the trivial should frustrate the great; he arrives in the end at something of that total view in which all wisdom lies, and so much of beauty and good. He comes to see the small as small and the large as large, sometimes before it is too late. He does not fret so readily when he cannot have his way, for he knows that his own desire is but one impulse in that great composition of forces which moves the world.

Wisdom is a light, and not a fire; it illuminates the way, but it does not warm the heart, nor stir the soul to action. It is (with all reverence to its majesty) a negative thing where happiness is concerned; it can shield us from suffering but it cannot inspire us to ecstasy. Like the demon of Socrates it can forbid, but it cannot command; it can keep us from falling, but it cannot make us fly. . . .

Nevertheless, since suffering is real, ever near us, and nearest to those whose souls are the highest and the best, wisdom is a precious thing, a guide and friend whose counsel keeps many pangs away. Here is misfortune; perhaps, says wisdom, some boon lurks in it; look within and see. . . . Look into your past and see how many good things have come to you wrapped in a cover of evil.

To philosophers all things are boons, for they know how to find some use and good in every turn of circumstance. The wise man not only sees the good in ill fortune, but he tries to feel his good fortune as keenly when it comes, as he feels the blows which impinge upon him yearly. A fool is conscious of his disappointments only; when things turn out well he takes their kindness as his due, and never thrills with gratitude. If some splendid bit of luck has fallen to you, recall it every day that it lasts, and utter your thanksgiving aloud, that it may fill your own ears with gladness. Consider how many villainies you have perpetrated, and for which the world has not punished you. Consider how often tolerant circumstance has failed to take advantage of your stupidity or your negligence to destroy you. Cast up your demerits and deserts, and see if your reward is unfair. Perhaps, as Carlyle said, you deserve to be hanged and quartered and should hold yourself lucky if you are only shot.

Do not require too much of the universe; there are other demands made upon it which may conflict with yours. You are a part of a whole, and every other part will expect you to remember it. Ask too much and it shall not be given you; knock too loudly and it shall not be opened unto you; seek impatiently and you shall not find. Do not call the world names because it has other designs than yours; perhaps if you could see the entirety you would perceive, like Job, that the order of the planets is more important than your sores. Say

to yourself what the old Aztec priests said to every infant at its birth: "You are born into a world of suffering; suffer, then, and hold your peace." If we do not make our own woe very audible, after a while we shall not hear it ourselves.

Cultivate your garden. Do not place your happiness in distant lands or in grandly-imagined tasks; do well what you can do, until you can do greater things as well. Happiness is not geographical; if you are unhappy, do not think that you will find happiness in travel, unless you can leave yourself at home. The modern soul seems never happy where it is, nor in what it is doing; unknown places seem always lovelier, and unknown tasks must surely be easier! It is a romantic dream, from whose waking we shall pass into unreasoning bitterness. For pessimism is only the obverse of romanticism, the morning after imagination.

And while you cultivate your garden, prepare a harvest for the mind. Do not depend upon teachers to educate you; they are only educating themselves through the errors they make in teaching you. Follow your own bent, pursue your curiosity bravely, express yourself, make your own harmony. Happiness does not come from imitation or conformity—though a clever man will pretend to conform, and will cover his heresies with a hundred courtesies. In the end, education, like happiness, is individual, and must come to us from life and from ourselves. There is no way; each pilgrim must make his own path. "Happiness," said Chamfort, "is not easily won; it is hard to find it in ourselves, and impossible to find it elsewhere."

Each age, like every individual, has its own characteristic intoxication; we must seek in each decade the joys natural to our years. If play is the effervescence of childhood, and love is the wine of youth, the solace of age is understanding. If you would be content in age, be wise with Solon and

learn something every day. Education is not a task, it is a lifelong happiness, an ennobling intimacy with great men, an unhurried excursion into all realms of loveliness and wisdom. If in youth we fell in love with beauty, in maturity we can make friends with genius. A hundred philosophers await us in the Country of the Mind; a hundred poets sing there, a thousand artists carve and build and paint; statesmen hold quiet discourse on large affairs, and saints speak a word for kindness; wise teachers will teach in those eternal valleys of delight, and fair women, there, are always fair, and need not lose their beauty to be great. What a gift it is, this heritage of mankind to men, this Eldorado opening its gates and bidding us enter and possess!

Let us enter. We need only clear our minds and cleanse our hearts, and that great company will welcome us, and pass on their lore to us as graciously as ancient sages loved to instruct youth. When meanness is gone from us, and we have learned to honor truth even when it leans away from our desire, we shall be fit pupils for Aristotle and Spinoza, for Whitman and Euripides, for Phidias and Leonardo, for Nietzsche and Christ. We cannot live long in that celestial realm of all genius without becoming a little finer than we were. And though we shall not find there the poignant delirium of youth, we shall know a lasting, gentle happiness, a profound delight which time cannot take from us until it takes all.

Let the children play; their noise conceals the music of eternal life. Let the young men love; we shall not be stern with them. In our hearts we too are in the game, and it is our lips that give or feel the kiss. Through understanding we are of every age, and no joy is alien to us. And when childhood is tired, and youth is sad, we shall hold out our arms to them, and bid them come with us and sit at the feet of Plato, in the City of God.

# MOTHER OF ETERNAL SANCTITY

*Told According to the Ramayana*

*by Gayatri Devi*

(To catch the living spirit of an immortal legend is a rare achievement, but this is what we feel Srimati Gayatri Devi has done in her "Mother of Eternal Sanctity," appearing in this issue of the "Message of the East." To read her words is to be transformed into a child of India, listening breathless at its mother's knee, and it is also to catch the rhythm of Truth which underlies the greater part of India's imaginings. It is Srimati's intention to re-tell in future numbers of the "Message" more of these classical tales, which have thrilled the Hindu heart for countless centuries.—Editor's Note.)

Across the vast and golden soil of Hindustan flows many a river, carrying away to the ocean the sins and sorrows, the ills and burdens of all India's mortal sons.

Among these streams of living water there is One, most sacred and beautiful, whom you know as Ganges; but we, children of India, call her Mother, Ganga-Mai, or Ma-Ganga.

The mothers and grandmothers have sung to us her glory, at the dawn of our life when the flowers and birds, the earth and the brook, speak our own language, and the evening stars beckon to us from their mysterious world.

Lying close to a warm, protecting bosom, the child hears the sound of Ma-Ganga's footsteps tinkling the stones, and listens with delight to Her song of ceaseless journey. He can see with his eyes the sun-god adorning Her with his crown of gold; again, when the Spirit of Night touches all eyes with his magic wand of sleep, the Moon stealthily comes and plunges his head in the soft bosom of the River-Queen and the restless breeze plays with Her rippling locks.

You say this is a fairy tale? Come with me and ask the child.

Once on earth there ruled a king, named Sagara, mighty and prosperous; but his heart was heavy with grief because he had no sons. Would his clan become extinct? Would there be none to mention his great name in the world?

The king offered many oblations to the gods, laid rich gifts upon the altar, gave to the poor and needy out of his abundance, with one hope, that the grace of the heavenly beings and the good-will of the people might bring him an heir, but all was fruitless.

So, one day, as if hearing an inner voice, he renounced his kingdom, left his queens, and went into the forest to invoke, ceaselessly, the Great God, Shiva, whose power can perform all miracles.

Years and years passed by, but no answer came. Nevertheless, the king practised more austerities and prayed with greater intensity, day and night.

At last, Shiva, the Dweller of the Mountain, awoke from His dream of the Absolute and came down to Sagara, whose determined ardor had touched His compassionate heart.

The king asked as his boon that he might be blessed with the gift of a son.

The Lord smiled graciously and said:

"Thou shalt have sixty thousand sons, but they shall be shortlived," and He vanished.

King Sagara returned to his two queens, Sumati and Keshini, who also had spent their years in prayer and were now beside themselves with joy over the great news.

In due time, Sumati brought forth a child, radiant as a ray of the morning sun. The king called the prince, Asamanja, the unparalleled.

When Keshini's turn came, she gave birth to no human child but to an immense pumpkin. This made King Sagara very angry as he thought that the God Shiva had deceived him. Desiring to put an end to such folly, he picked up the pumpkin and dashed it to pieces. Out from it fell his sixty thousand sons, small, like mustard seeds.

As time went on, they grew to be so cruel and tyrannical

that wherever the princes went they brought terror and oppression. From every corner of the kingdom arose a piteous cry for mercy and help.

Now, it happened, the king was ambitious and desired great glory and might for his sons, so he prepared for the great *Ashvamedha Yagna,* which, when rightly performed, brings the fulfillment of all wishes. It is a magnificent ceremony with altar fire and costly offerings and gifts, and requires a beautiful horse. Sagara gave his sixty thousand sons charge of this very precious creature.

From the world above, Indra, the King of Heaven, knowing the intention of the king, decided to interfere, that no greater power might be granted to the wicked sixty thousand. So, in the dead of night, he stole the horse and searched everywhere in heaven and earth for a safe place in which to hide the animal. Finally, he came to the Netherworld where Kapila, a great sage, sat wrapped in meditation. Indra tied the horse to a tree, and Kapila, lost in prayer, knew nothing of his coming.

When Sagara discovered the horse was stolen, he sent his sixty thousand sons in all directions to seek for it and bring it back. They looked everywhere, trampling the earth with their proud feet, and disturbing the peace of heaven, but found no sign of the horse.

Then they decided to dig. As they dug and dug, they went down to the Nether-world and suddenly saw the horse in the distance, sheltered in the peaceful retreat of Kapila.

Unmindful of the meditating sage or the surrounding quiet, they cheered and hailed in joy, and one of them, the most irreverent, touched the shoulder of Kapila with the rough edge of his axe. The sage opened his eyes and found the thoughtless princes laughing shamelessly. One fiery glance flashed from his long closed eyes, and in a moment

Sagara's sixty thousand sons were burned to ashes.

There they lay in unbroken slumber while the king waited in vain for their return with the horse.

Being unable to finish his *Yagna* (ritualistic worship), Sagara sent his grandson, Angshuman, to search for his uncles.

The young prince travelled on every road, even those that reached the hiddenmost parts of heaven and earth, and finding no trace of the king's sons or the horse, he began his journey toward the Nether-world.

When he approached the eastern gate, he saw a beautiful blue elephant holding the earth on his trunk. He greeted the beast and asked him if he had seen the horse or his sixty thousand uncles, the sons of Sagara. The elephant advised him to go to the North. On the northern gate, Angshuman found a majestic white elephant and was told by him to go to the West, and there he saw a third elephant. This one, regal, stately, and red in color, sent the prince where sage Kapila sat unconscious of aught that was going on about him.

Angshuman waited in silent patience till Kapila, sensing the presence of the prince, disturbed his meditation, and kindly spoke to him.

"Hast thou seen the sixty thousand sons of King Sagara, O Reverend One?" Angshuman asked.

The sage told him it was his righteous wrath that had caused their destruction.

Angshuman, now pleading, begged Kapila to redeem his uncles by the power of his sanctity. The sage, tender and compassionate, humbly admitted that such a miracle lay beyond his power. The prince then asked him if he knew of any possible means by which his unfortunate and accursed clan might be redeemed.

Kapila said, "Yes, there is a way. When Ganga of Heaven

descends upon earth, She will wash away the sins of Sagara's sons and redeem them."

"Ganga? Tell me, Sire! Who is Ganga, and how can She be brought to our world?"

Kapila answered, "Dost thou not know what all the gods and mortals must know? Ganga is the 'love-stream' of Lord Vishnu's heart."

The sage continued:

"One day in Goloka, Blessed Hari (Lord Vishnu) and his consort, Lakshmi, were sitting in repose when Shiva, ever intoxicated with the love of God, came to see the Lord, and filled the sky of heaven with His song of ecstasy. Vishnu listened breathlessly to the nectar of His devotee's song, and His heart, deeply touched by Shiva's passionate love, melted away with compassion and tenderness. Out of this sacred heart, melting with unearthly feeling and joy, was born the ethereal stream, Ganga, (One-who-is-Born-of-Song).

"Brahma, the Creator, brought His Kamandalu (the vessel which contains the water used in worship) and saved the living Water, so there, for ages and ages, Mother Ganga slumbered in unbroken silence."

Kapila's face glowed with a beatific resplendence as he spoke of this heavenly marvel, as if, with closed eyes, he saw the play of the Divine Beings in the mirror of his tranquil soul. Angshuman listened, awe-struck, spellbound. Was he also dreaming?

The voice of the sage entered his ears again: "O Angshuman, Ma-Ganga will be sent to earth by the Great One only when a soul, purified by the fire of life-long prayer and consecration, unmoved by all trials and tests, worthy and blessed, will win Her for the salvation of the mortal world. Her presence will remove and sanctify all men's sins, and nothing but Her waters will redeem thy clan."

Angshuman made his obeisance to Kapila and went on his way. On his ruffled mind danced, hand in hand, doubt and hope, ambition and despair, courage and fear. Who is the great hero whose strength of holiness and might of prayer will bring Heaven's Ganga to earth? Will it be Angshuman? Has he earned the right to such a glorious task? Will he fail if entrusted with such a mighty mission?

On his return, he told King Sagara all he had seen and heard, and asked permission to give his life to prayer.

Sagara, old and heartbroken at the calamity that had overtaken his sons, pondered a while, and said:

"My days on this earth are numbered; let them be spent in the worship of the gods that they may have mercy on my accursed clan. Thou art young, my grandson, rule thou my kingdom."

So saying, the courageous king again retired to the forest life. After a long, long time, when he died, Ganga was still in Heaven confined in the Vessel of Brahma.

Angshuman ruled his grandfather's kingdom, ever hearing the silent call of Divine Ganga. When his son, Dilipa, became fit to reign, Angshuman, in his turn, broke all earthly ties. For many years he meditated in one posture, undisturbed. Yearning prayer, austere practices, supplications and oblations filled his long life, but nothing moved the hearts of the gods.

The failure of Sagara and Angshuman only served to inflame the heroic spirit of Dilipa. From his childhood, he had heard of his unfortunate forefathers and the Blessed Ganga, and had aspired to be the saviour of his clan. Young and beautiful, he renounced all the world's glory in the prime of his radiant life, and bereft of all but his indomitable will and ever increasing hope and faith, he went away to the woods.

Prayers rose from his heart like incense, day and night, consuming his youth and beauty. Time moved rapidly on, but even Dilipa's whole life sacrificed in the fire of renunciation and austerity could not meet the demands of the gods. Alas! Mother did not come.

Dilipa passed away without leaving an heir, and now there remained no one to strive for the attainment of Ganga for mankind.

The gods of Heaven saw this and became thoughtful, as it was destined that Ma-Ganga should come to earth. They consulted together and decided to perform a miracle, and for that purpose sent Lord Shiva to the world. He went at once to the widowed queen of Dilipa, who, happy at the sight of the Great God, laid aside her grief and served Him with humble devotion.

Mahadeva (Lord Shiva) gave her this boon: "Blessed art thou, O Queen, for through my grace thou shalt be the mother of a great son who will save his clan by bringing Ganga from Heaven."

In time, Bhagirath, the Chosen-of-the-Gods, opened his eyes to the light of day and cried so loudly that the whole world knew the Great Redeemer was born, and it rejoiced.

The proud and glorified mother's joy mingled with tears, as her eyes penetrated the veil of the future. Who knew when the mighty call would come which would take Bhagirath from her and send him on his perilous quest? Oh, if only Mother Ganga were not so far; not so difficult to obtain!

The child, Bhagirath, grew as the moon waxes, from day to day, in divine loveliness, and became possessed of supernatural strength and energy. When he was five years old, the queen sent him to the illumined teacher, Bashista, whose holy influence could mould her son's young life and lead his mind toward things eternal.

One day, Bhagirath was playing with his young companions, who asked him his father's name. Because he was unable to tell them, they mocked him. The little prince came home wounded at the insult and asked the queen who his father was. The mother comforted him and said:

"My son, thou art born through the grace of Lord Shiva for a great mission. Thy ancestors, the sixty thousand sons of King Sagara, were destroyed by the sage Kapila, and already three generations have given their lives to redeem the accursed ones. In Heaven there is Ma-Ganga, whose sacred waters alone can wash away their sins. When thou bringest Her upon earth, thy clan will be redeemed."

The little hero danced and danced in rapture as he said:

"Dear Mother, give me thy blessing and let me go forth without delay."

The queen drew her little boy close to her heart and spoke thus:

"Bhagirath, thou art too young. Thou knowest not what mountain-like hindrances lie in thy way. Mother Ganga is the Cherished-of-the-Gods and thou needest offer thine all to win their grace. Be patient, my son, till thy hour cometh."

The child became thoughtful, and wisely said:

"Be not anxious, my mother, thy Bhagirath is the son of a Kshatriya. With thy protecting love as my armor, what danger or difficulty can daunt me? The hour hath come. I hear Ma-Ganga whispering in the depth of my soul. I shall go to the gods. I shall win Ganga for my forefathers' salvation. The Heavenly Beings will not be able to deny my prayer."

The queen's heart was bleeding with the pang of separation; yet bravely and silently she asked the Great Beings to shield her son and grant him victory. Bhagirath, alone, strong as a lion, went away to the forest to begin his life of renuncia-

tion and constant watchfulness. For many, many years, he neither touched food nor slept, but invoked Indra with such potent prayers that at last the King of Heaven could stay away no longer. Touched by Bhagirath's brave perseverance and super-human courage, He said to him:

"Who art thou that so movest my heart with thy unwavering devotion? I have come to offer a boon."

Bhagirath said: "If Thou art pleased with me, O Lord, then grant that Ma-Ganga may descend upon earth and sanctify my ancestors who lie in ashes."

Indra answered: "I have no power to grant thee such a boon. Go to Lord Shiva and take shelter in Him."

Bhagirath then went to Mt. Kailash, the seat of Mahesha (Lord Shiva), and there, surrounded on all sides by eternal snows, he sat, exposed, heedless of the sun and the rain, the wind and the storm, and practised severe austerities. The merciless hand of Nature beat against him and wasted away his beautiful, young body, but Bhagirath remained in the fortress of silence, motionless, and oblivious to outer conditions. Years and years slipped away while, heroic and fearless, Bhagirath yearningly waited at the closed gate of Shiva's World-of-Changeless-Meditation.

At last, the Lord awoke from His Samadhi, feeling a strong pull upon His ever tender heart, and came to see His irresistable devotee. He benignly smiled upon Bhagirath, the Spirit of His own Divine grace, and offered a boon.

Bhagirath asked for the one object of his soul's hunger, which had become an unquenchable passion during long years of vigilance and hardship:

"Send Ma-Ganga down, O Compassionate One, that She may redeem the sinful world!"

But it did not lie in the power of the Great God Shiva to fulfill Bhagirath's desire; therefore he sent him to Lord Vishnu.

Bhagirath now went to Goloka (Lord Vishnu's world) more determined than ever to accomplish his life's mission. He kindled anew the flame of his faith, hope, and meditation.

Time sped swiftly through countless seasons only to return again and stride faster into the spaces of Eternity. Spring wove around him its garland of flowers; Winter played his cruel game upon his emaciated body; Summer and Autumn both lingered at his door, but Bhagirath with closed eyes only continued to call and call upon the Lord.

The gods of heaven watched over him in awe and wonder, and the mortals prayed ardently for the fruition of his noble aim. The Three Worlds had never known such a mighty, indomitable soul!

But where, where was Vishnu? Did He not hear and answer His worshipper's stirring appeal which swept heaven and earth? Indeed He did. He came at the moment when Bhagirath had given his all, and lay prostrate to offer his last breath.

Vishnu spoke: "Arise, O my brave hero, I have come to thee."

Bhagirath cried: "O Most Merciful One, only this Thy poor servant asketh—give me Ma-Ganga for the redemption of the world. I have come for Her and if Thou deniest my prayer, I shall forsake life now at Thy feet."

Vishnu, who had ever waited for this hour, said to him: "Thou art, O Bhagirath, worthy indeed of Heaven's Blessed Stream. Come with me. Ganga is with Brahma. Let us go to Him."

While they were on their way, the Divine Magician (Hari) by His power stole all the waters of Brahma's abode.

They reached Brahma-loka and the Creator received the Lord reverently, and went to bring water with which to wash His Beloved's feet. To His utmost surprise, He found

every vessel empty, so He brought His Kamandalu and poured the long preserved Waters over Vishnu's Blessed feet.

Mother Ganga now stood before Vishnu, holy and sanctified, and Bhagirath worshipped Her incomparable Beauty.

Vishnu addressed Ganga:

"Go forth upon earth, O Ganga, and let Thy waters wash away the stains of the world. Mortals will be freed from sin by plunging into Thy stream, and Thou shalt purify whatever Thou touchest with Thy holy sanctity. Henceforth, all shall call Thee blessed, eternally."

Mother Ganga, weeping, said:

"O Lord, Thou sayest men may defile my sacredness by casting their sins into my waters. How shall I carry this unclean burden? Who shall redeem me?"

"Be not grieved, O Ganga," replied Vishnu, "My worshippers and devotees will also come to Thee, and in embracing their pure lives Thou wilt find comfort and salvation."

The Lord gave Bhagirath His conch with which to proclaim through the Three Worlds the descent of Ma-Ganga upon earth. The eager world trembled with joy. All the inhabitants of Heaven came to bathe in the Sacred Stream before Ganga departed forever. The Heavenly Beings blessed Bhagirath, saying:

"O King, thou art glorified today, for through thee the world will be saved."

Now the journey began. Bhagirath led the way blowing his conch and riding in the chariot of Brahma, and Ma-Ganga followed.

From the abode of Brahma, Ganga descended upon Mt. Sumeru, in whose thousand peaks and caverns Mother travelled for twelve years, and finally lost Her way.

Bhagirath, bewildered at losing sight of Ganga, cried aloud:

"Ma-Ganga, where art Thou? Thou camest down from heaven to redeem the earth. Do not allow Thyself to be captured by this mighty mountain. Come! The world is waiting!"

The answer came:

"Son, I have lost my way and find no open road for my course. Go to Heaven and ask Lord Indra to send His elephant, Airavata. With his four tusks he can cleave the mountain and release me."

Bhagirath went again to seek the favor of the King of Heaven. The generous god himself came down, riding on his celestial elephant, but suddenly pride took possession of the great beast, and he said to Bhagirath:

"I will only help Ganga if she will consent to become my hand-maiden and serve me."

How could Bhagirath bring such humiliating tidings to Holy Mother? He felt troubled and unhappy, and tears flowed from his eyes.

He returned to Mt. Sumeru silently, with his head bowed low, and stood before Ganga.

Mother spoke:

"Do I see tears in thine eyes, Bhagirath? Tell me, why? Hast thou failed to bring the elephant that thou grievest?"

The king replied:

"O Ma-Ganga, I dare not utter what I have heard with my ears. Thou art worthy of reverence."

But Ganga insisted and Bhagirath told Her of the arrogant demand of Airavata. Smiling, the Mother told Bhagirath to go back to the elephant and bid him come to Her.

"I shall accept his offer," she said, "if he can withstand only two and one-half of my ripples."

Airavata came, trampling haughtily, and with his tusks made four gorges through Mt. Sumeru, and Ganga flowed

through them in a swift, rushing torrent. The elephant almost perished as he stood against the swift current. In deep fear and humility, he begged forgiveness of the Great Mother.

From Sumeru, Bhagirath led Ganga to Mt. Kailash, and as She came nearer and nearer, the earth began to shake with the motion of Her rapid approach. Mother, well aware that Her torrential currents were capable of sweeping away the world, hesitated, and finally paused. Bhagirath looked back and, seeing Ganga standing still, spoke thus:

"O Ganga, why, why art Thou lingering?"

Ma-Ganga said:

"Mother-earth is unable to support me, and is afraid of destruction. If only Lord Shiva will come to my aid, I can safely descend upon earth. Go to Him, Bhagirath, and tell Him my difficulty."

Lord Shiva, the Great God, felt blessed at the honor of holding Mother upon His head. He sat, firm and unshakable, on Mt. Kailash with His matted locks outspread, and lost Himself in meditation while Ma-Ganga flowed into His hair. The fascinating locks of the God, Shiva, cast such a spell upon Ma-Ganga that for many years she remained in their secret depths and sang softly.

Bhagirath patiently waited and waited for the Mother.

At last Ganga confessed that the Lord had captivated Her and She could not leave Him.

Bhagirath daringly awoke Shiva from His Silence, and asked Him to free the River Queen.

Then Mahesha with His own hands cleft His locks, whereupon Mother ran rapidly to the plains below, lying prostrate to await Her coming.

In the place where Shivas' hand released Ganga now stands Haridvar, the Gate of the Lord. There, countless pilgrims bathe in Ganga's waters that they may feel the healing touch

of the Holy One upon their bodies.

Now Mother moved on again till She came to Prayaga (Allahabad). The lovely land opened its heart and received Ganga's footprints, thus becoming sacred ground.

The river Jumna, had flowed by Ma-Ganga's side, longing for Her embrace. At Prayaga she poured her all into Mother's bosom, and remained with Her forever. River Sarasvati also came dancing from the South and lost herself in the arms of Ganga and Jumna.

From that point Ganga travelled to Kashi (Benares), where She paused for a night to rest, and all the country round became hallowed by Her presence.

From above a Voice was heard:

"O Holy Ganga, Thy waters shall wash this city through endless time, and whosoever will lay his head upon Thy heart and breathe his last in this land, that one shall come to Me."

Since then, Benares has been the chosen altar of Mother and Her Lord, Shiva.

Ganga, strengthened and inspired by Heaven's words, started on Her way again. Her beneficence illumined all quarters She touched, and everywhere silent voices of thankfulness filled the air. The lotus bloomed as She smiled, and the glance of Her eyes veiled even the glory of myriad suns and stars.

There was a sage named Jahnu, seated in meditation in his hermitage. He watched Ganga approach, and fearing Her mighty flood might wash away his Tapovana (retreat) drank Her waters in one breath.

Bhagirath, looking back to gaze on the loveliness of Mother's face, was surprised to find She had disappeared. He searched for Her and went back to the place where Jahnumuni was contemplating under a tree. Bhagirath dis-

turbed the sage to ask if he had seen Mother Ganga. Jahnu indignantly replied:

"What right has Ganga to destroy my peaceful hermitage? I have swallowed Her and shall keep Her captive as long as I desire."

Bhagirath eagerly explained to the sage that Ganga had come from Heaven to save his clan and, without Her, the world would be deprived of all sanctity.

Softened by the king's gentle manner of speaking, Jahnu said:

"Holy Ganges will be desecrated if She comes out through my mouth; I shall part my knee and release Her."

Through the sage's knee, the Heavenly Mother reappeared in all Her rhythm and grace, and flowed on again.

From Jahnu, Ganga received the name Jahnavi, known to all India's sons and daughters. She is also called Padmavati, and always Bhagirathi, beloved of Bhagirath.

Ganga had travelled far; had redeemed countless sinners whose bones and ashes found rest in Her waters. Now, she grew tired, Her steps began to falter, and the journey seemed endless. She spoke to Bhagirath:

"How far wilt thou take me, O Bhagirath? I have moved through aeons. Where lie thy sixty thousand ancestors?"

Bhagirath, full of gratitude to the Wondrous Mother, answered tenderly:

"Not far, dear Mother, we are approaching the Nether-world."

At last, they reached their destination. Bhagirath's heart leaped with joy. The gracious Ganga had come to earth and his task was finished.

He showed Ganga the place where his sixty thousand ancestors lay in the dust. Mother became hundred-streamed, and with Her all-conquering sanctity washed and purified the ashes of Her sinful sons.

Bhagirath saw his clan rise to Heaven, shedding upon him its blessing.

The king now plunged into Ganga's Holy Waters and, with his heart overflowing with peace, thanked the gods and worshipped the Glorious Mother while Heaven showered upon him its rain of flowers and voices sang: "Glory to Mother Ganga and blessed be King Bhagirath!"

Bhagirath's worn and weary body became revived and radiant again. Mother gave him new life, and said:

"O my beloved son, go thou to thy kingdom and reign in might and victory, and allow me to go to my ocean."

So, Ganga walked alone till She came to the Great Sea, and vanished in His infinite breast.

Where Ganga is united with the Ocean, there lies the meeting-place of the soul with the One, the greatest of all pilgrimages.

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## AN INDIAN ANANDA-ASHRAMA

We take pleasure in giving below an extract of the announcement issued by Srimati Charu Shila Devi concerning the Ashrama for women and girls which she has just opened at Dacca, Bengal, India, with the Ramakrishna Mission as its background and Swami Paramananda as its Founder and Head. We also give portions of letters recently received from her.

Anyone feeling the call to add his mite to her slender reserve may send his contribution to

ANANDA-ASHRAMA DACCA

Dear Sisters and Brothers in India and Abroad:

On the 20th of February, 1931, an Ashrama was opened in Dacca for women of all standing—literate, illiterate, married, unmarried or widows, with no limitation of caste or creed, girls bred and brought up in comfort, also for girls

who are helpless with nothing and nobody in this world. Our aspiration is to find a loving shelter for them all, to mould the character, to increase the strength of mind, to expand the intellect and to make them stand on their own feet.

The Ashrama is based on lines of "Plain living and high thinking," so every unnecessary detail has been rejected from this home.

The Ashrama Shrine is a place where people of every Faith may feel spiritual aspiration, its motto being "Truth is one; men call It by various names," from the Rig Veda.

At present the Ashrama is holding thirty inmates, married, unmarried, and widows of all age and standing, all of whom are dependent on the Ashrama for their maintenance with the exception of two girls paying four rupees each and four others giving a little as love-offering, whenever and whatever they can.

In addition to every other expense a house rent of Rs. 50 is to be paid every month.

To make the girls self-supporting the Ashrama is giving different kinds of vocational training:

Tailoring in a scientific method, a tailor comes three times a week; the expense of his pay is borne by the Institution.

Dyeing and calico printing are much in demand, so this Institution is training girls in these lines also.

Matches are one of the indispensable things of every day life. The Ashrama inmates are becoming efficient in every little detail of this industry.

Ashrama sweets are greatly liked by the public. The girls are learning to prepare wholesome delicacies, minutely observing sanitary principles. The public pays the same price for these pure things as they would for ordinary market sweets which may not be as fresh and clean. In this way a paying business may be started even on a small capital.

The Ashrama School where girls are learning English, Mathematics, Bengali, History, and Geography, sits from 9 A. M. to 11 A. M. A well-known musician of this city comes regularly to coach the girls in music, taking nothing in return.

Two other departments, one for babies and another for old incapable women, are absolutely necessary. Without any arrangement for babies we cannot take in helpless widows with children. Also it is necessary that the girls should be trained in nursing and bringing up children.

Hoping that the inspiration has flashed into other hearts as well as ours, we, with humble entreaty, crave the good-will and co-operation of every citizen of the world—we beg them to realize that our working capacity lies in their joining hands and hearts with us for this great cause. Any kind of love-offering will be accepted with hearty thanks. Orders for printed saris, curtains, tablecloths, tray-covers, etc., matches, or any kind of ready made garment will be gladly supplied. With unflinching faith and hopeful heart we now close this appeal.

Dated Dacca Ever at the service of the Lord,
*the 7th of May*, 1931 *Charushila Devi*

Extracts From Letters

The money has come at a most opportune time. It has given me a little breathing space. I came with great hope that the work would be financed from here; but it has to be recognized that this is a very bad year. Even the merchants and Zamindars, they have not food to eat. The only people who have to eat are the servants of the government. . . .

Those girls who have come here to us are all of good families, but most of them are without any education. Poverty and helplessness—it is as if these things have robbed the humanity in them, but now on every face we see a smile.

Many people remark about the happiness that the girls of the Ashrama exhibit in their countenance, and even if they do not get to eat they will be healthy. . . .

We have organized the Educational Department a little more wholly. Seven different classes we have opened already. Many girls from outside come. . . . In the children's class we shall take also boys. We shall gradually have to remove this terrible barrier of sex division—a great impediment. . . .

I want to give you all the details. We all rise at five o'clock. The girls clean the whole building, wash and sweep; then they cook, cut vegetables, prepare spices and wash the dishes. At 6.30 to 7 we have our worship. After worship we make a class as you do at the Ashrama. I read from the Book of Daily Thoughts and Prayers, translating it for them, and from the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna. Whatever comes spontaneously I speak to them. At about 7:30 we have our breakfast. Then they study for about an hour, after which they go to their specific duties—making matches or whatever is laid out for them. At 10:30 we make the offering in the Shrine and at 12 o'clock the school begins and continues for three hours. From 4 to 6 they have the lesson from the tailor or singing lesson from the singing master, and on the days they are free they do sewing. At 6 o'clock we have our meal. After our meal we take a little walk in the garden or have a little game or recreation. We have our Arati (evening worship) about 9 o'clock. After Arati they study, and at about 10 we all retire. . . .

Please do not think I am overworking. I am not working for anything else except just to serve my ideal and that kind of work always brings new life. In reality, I alone have to supervise the kitchen and the store-room; beginning from this work I have to interview people who come to see the Ashrama, and to arrange everything of the different depart-

ments. Recently a Baptist missionary and some men and women came; they were looking for a house. The gardener told them this house was rented and they went away; but they wanted to increase the rent. The landlord was not able to resist the temptation, and he brought them one day. With a smile on my face I showed them the whole house; then I told them that we are all engaged in the same work in the Lord's service; that our work is really one; therefore we should have understanding love between ourselves, and co-operation. Then they said they would not take that house even if he removed us from the place. And not only that, they have tried to have affiliation. They invited us to tea one day. Two or three times they have called on me. When they come they always want to see the Shrine. This is indeed the Lord's glory!

The whole Bengal is flooded this year. You cannot imagine the terrible conditions of the people—homeless, without any food for days, without anything but rags on. Relief committees have been formed and the volunteers are working hard in the affected areas; but they seem so few in proportion to the suffering millions! We too are collecting clothes and saris, rice, money, whatever we can get. A few times they have been sent through the Ramakrishna Mission Branch in Dacca and also we are ready to go and look after the sick when it will be necessary, I told them. It will be a blessing if we are able to do something. It will be a blessing to these girls who never have known what loving service is and what joy it can give.

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Swami Paramananda is now in Boston and expects to return to California before Thanksgiving. Owing to lack of space, our usual report is omitted, but a full account will appear in the next issue.

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VOLUME XX NUMBER 10

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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

# Message of the East

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## Universal Christ

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*
Published Monthly except in August and September

Vol. XX December, 1931 No. 10

## PRAYER

*By Swami Paramananda*

LET us, as we close our year's work, look up to Him, and lay at the feet of our Ideal the fruit of our thought, the flowers of our aspiration and ardour; that we may make the altar before which we pray fragrant, beautiful and abundant; that our thoughts may go high; that our mind may become constant, and our whole being pulsate with rhythm, with strength, with faith and with true feeling.

O Thou Infinite Being! Thou art our tender Mother, our protecting Father, Giver of all blessings, Giver of all joy, Giver of all strength and understanding.

Make us true; make us staunch; make us noble and selfless for Thy service.

O Thou All-compassionate Being! Grant unto us Thy loving and abiding protection, and keep us ever and ever in peace.

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

# UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

—*St. John.*

Why should there be such sorrowful contention? You honor what we honor, both alike: then we are brothers as concerns religion.

—*Fo-sho-hing-tsans-king.*

The important thing, it seems to me, is that the believers in Christianity, as its Founder did, should forget hair-splittings, all details of theology and all divisions into creeds. Christ made Christianity, man makes the creeds.

—*Thomas A. Edison.*

Love is where the glory falls
On Thy face—on convent walls
Or on tavern floors, the same
Unextinguishable flame.
Where the turbaned anchorite
Chanteth Allah day and night,
Church bells ring the call to prayer
And the Cross of Christ is there.

—*Halfiz.*

Could the poet say of Athens, Thou lovely city of Cecrops; and shalt thou not say of the world, Thou lovely city of God?

—*Marcus Aurelius.*

Divinity consists in use and practice, not in speculation.

—*Martin Luther.*

The things that have eternal values belong to all humanity and to all times.

—*Rabindranath Tagore.*

# UNIVERSAL CHRIST

*By Swami Paramananda*

(An Address delivered in the Temple of the Universal Spirit, Ananda-Ashrama, La Crescenta, California.)

Speaking on the theme of "Universal Christ," I shall have to draw before you those thoughts, ideas and ideals which are pronounced not from the levels of dogmatic religion but from the sphere and height of consciousness which only recognize unity of life and its purpose. There are certain great and fundamental principles which stand as the corner-stone of eternal religion which has very little to do with the creeds and politics of religion. They only stand for one thing and one alone,—to bring human hearts before the altar of God, emancipating their souls from the fetters of disbelief and false conceptions and giving them their birthright—God union. What I am reflecting in my heart now is nothing novel or peculiar. It rather coincides with all the thought pregnant with universal and ageless wisdom, with that consciousness which has formed the bedrock of all true spiritual realization from eternity.

"Christ is not less than love, simplicity, patience, purity; in short all that He Himself is; and the Devil is nothing but that which draws us away from these ideas." I am glad to have come upon this wonderful saying of a mystic as it gives a picture free of dogmatic bias. It lays emphasis upon those principles which are universally recognized to be high and true attributes of holy life. When, in the course of our spiritual venture, we are able to release our feet from the fetters of beliefs and traditions, we find ourselves lifted up to a sphere where Truth alone shines with its effulgent glory.

There are three great sayings I want to share with you. They are from three different sources and periods of history, yet unless we give each its separate label, putting one ut-

terance under the name of one great teacher, another under another, it will be most difficult for us to separate them; their message is one of such blending harmony and so true, that no man who has any aspiration in his heart can reject it. The first is from Buddha the Compassionate. "You must so adjust your heart that you long for the welfare of your enemies." Whether or not you are an admirer of the Buddha, you will have to confess that the undertone and overtone of these words mingle perfectly with the injunction of the Christ: "Bless them that curse you, pray for them that despitefully use you." Then compare these both with the teaching of Lao-Tze, the Chinese Master: "To the good I would be good; to those who are not good I would also be good in order to make them so," and find, if you can, any difference in the spirit.

Universal Christ is not the dogmatic concept of Christ. It is the concept of one who is a follower of the eternal Christ principle. That one may be a man whom you choose to ignore and whom you do not recognize as a Christian. But it is the life itself which bears witness to a man's spiritual standard and his assimilation of Truth; it is by that alone we justify our position. Only by living can we prove our place in the world of religion or the world of men. There is no other way. As a matter of fact, our outer life with its activities is not apart from our spiritual interests; nor should it be. The principles proclaimed by the voice of Truth in ancient times and by those who are fortunate enough to come into harmonious contact with that Spirit today, these principles have power to blend the inner and the outer, the everyday life of man with the ideals he holds for brotherhood and a larger unity. Unity! This is the theme which interests me most—unity from every aspect. Man must have a practical working hypothesis for his thoughts and aspira-

tions. There is nothing intricate or complex in this. On the contrary, it is very simple. It does not require of us that we change our religion. A Christian does not have to become a Hindu, or a Hindu a Christian; Buddhist and Mohammedan need not alter their faiths. All that is required is that we follow the one basic Principle.

"Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Here is a promise uttered by the Christ. Not only by the Christ! It is a promise uttered by all Christ-Spirits. Whenever a man strikes the note of Truth, whether he does it knowingly or unknowingly, he produces universal harmony, he speaks a language which every one understands, benefitting not only his immediate surrounding, but rousing the spirit of man everywhere. He accomplishes a universal good.

"Brethren! Meet together; talk together; let your minds apprehend alike, common be your prayer; common be your purpose; common be your desires; united be your hearts; united be your intentions, so that there may be a thorough union among you." Wherefrom do you suppose this originates? Does it not sound very much like a modern expression of prayer? Is there anything in it that we cannot understand—any expression that is not thoroughly comprehensive and in accordance with what we believe to be true? It is a prayer, or a thought, transmitted from the Rig Veda, one of the most ancient Scriptures of the world, and was given many centuries ago—thousands of years ago. Truth can never be labeled, Truth can never be confined to any age or area, to any dogma or doctrine, or to any nation. It fills the need of the universe.

From the past another injunction comes to us which could be followed with benefit today: "Brethren, go ye forth for the good of many, for the happiness of many, out of com-

passion for the world." This was the injunction given by the Buddha to his missionaries when he sent them forth. How like Christ it sounds—the loving, universal Spirit, pulsating with the desire to help and never to hinder; to understand, to keep close to the heart of mankind, without ever injuring anyone! There are many in India who give wonderful interpretations of the Christ Ideal, but who do not call themselves Christian. Mahatma Gandhi, for instance, is a living embodiment of the Christ's teaching of love and non-resistance, yet by birth and faith he is a Hindu. What is there in a name? It is in the life that we find the revelation. Jalalu'd-Din Rumi, the great Sufi mystic-poet was not a Christian, yet he wrote:

"In each human spirit is a Christ concealed,
To be helped or hindered, to be hurt or healed.
If from any human soul you lift the veil,
You will find a Christ there hidden without fail."

At once this opens up a wider vista; not Christ in Christians, not Christ in certain chosen souls, but in every human soul a Christ concealed—the Christ Spirit—universal love, wisdom and light—the Spirit of eternity, the Spirit that is invincible, the Spirit that knows no boundary lines. Did not Jesus say that the Sun, the eternal Sun, shines upon all, even upon sinners? How He tried and tried to persuade his followers, and in fact everyone whom he contacted, to lay aside their tendency to partition off, to cling to dogma and the crust of materialism—how he pleaded with them to forget their divisions and cultivate another point of view, one of unity, healing and love.

Cruelty, persecution, dogmatism, even narrowness and intolerance, what have these to do with the Christ message? Can you show me in the New Testament any verse where

we are asked to take vengeance? No, you cannot. It would be opposed to the Christ Ideal. Is there any passage which encourages a vindictive or unloving spirit, which tells us that so long as we follow a certain creed or cult, no matter what we do it will be forgiven us? No, there is not. We would indeed make a caricature of God if we could bribe Him in this way. We would create a world so small that we would not care to live in it. We would push out the spirit of Christ altogether—His meaning and mission—and by doing so, all that is good in humanity would likewise be banished. Here, again, it is the universal Christ that I mean.

God is one; Truth is one. To find the Christ Spirit we do not have to go anywhere but within our own soul. Just as we cannot partition off the sky overhead, so we cannot partition off the Spirit of Divinity. This is the basis principle which we must follow if we would bring about unity in life. It is the fundamental thought in all religions. Doctrines, dogmas, outer observance of rituals and forms, and the altars we may erect in one way or another—these are but varied expressions of this truth. We must not have any denunciation for them—what may mean a great deal to one man may not mean anything to another; nor, on the other hand, should we depend merely on material expressions. We must try to reach the heart, the essence. I am reminded of a parable prevalent in India. Once there was a diciple who was very anxious to follow his master in everything. Now when we seek to pattern our life after the life of a great man, the first thing we do is to try to imitate him. We copy the way he eats; we copy his dress, his speech and his actions. It is not so difficult to follow the outer actions, but that within which inspires him is not so easily imitated. There is where we blunder. So it was that this disciple did just as his teacher did in all outer things, hoping thus to become like him.

Now his master used to meditate at certain times, and it happened that at those hours a cat often would come and prove a disturbing element. The wise man was annoyed, but being self-controlled and compassionate, he did no harm to the cat either by throwing things at it or chasing it; all he did was to confine it in the next room till his meditation was over. The disciple observed this and went out immediately to look for a cat, in order that he might do as his master had done. After his master's death, tying the cat in the adjoining room became a fundamental part of his religious ritual.

No doubt this seems to us merely a humorous story, but as we analyze, I think we shall find that we do very much the same sort of thing with our observance of the outer forms of religion—the letter rather than the spirit. The letter often killeth the spirit. Those who cling to the external seldom care to draw close to the essence. They are afraid. There is, however, no element of fear in the Christ Spirit. It is only when men are not willing to harmonize their life with that Spirit that they are afraid. They create dual conditions, war and intolerance, and in this way constantly impair their own happiness and progress. Therefore my appeal is for living the life. The Christ principle signifies just that. Religion is being and becoming. To understand its spirit, to understand the Spirit of God, is to grasp the great basic reality of one Supreme, all-abiding, all-mighty Father of all and Source of everything.

From the India of centuries ago a very majestic saying comes down to us. "He (that infinite Power) is One without a second—only One!" How strange to hear men of different faith claiming, "My religion is the only religion, my God the only true God." God is almighty, He is infinite, He is all-loving. How can there be more than one infinite

Spirit? How can there be more than one religion? All these fictitious differences which we create come through our lack of understanding, lack of comprehension. Through them we give a death blow to our own deeper realization. Christ calls upon us to live the life. He tells us: "Not those who merely call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and 'Master, Master,' shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but those who do the Will of My Father." There is a tremendous difference between the man who has this living quality and the one who only recites texts. The man who lives the life finds a closeness, a kinship with all other men and with the Divine. Lessing gives an illustration of this universal aspect in his "Nathan the Wise." One of the characters says to the Jew, "Nathan, sure you are a Christian, by Heaven you are! None better ever breathed!" And Nathan replies, "That which makes me a Christian in your eyes makes you a Jew in mine."

No man has ever been able to build up a home, a country, an empire or any lasting happiness through wrong understanding, aggression or irreligion. These may seem to triumph, but the success is only for a moment, it does not endure. The Christ-Spirit alone endures. Love ever conquers. "Love will conquer all your ills; love will heal your wounds." This is the eternal Voice—the Voice of the universal Christ, telling us where we shall find the fulfillment of religion. Let me quote again those words which I gave at the beginning: "Christ is not less than love, simplicity, patience, purity, in short all that He Himself is." You can search anywhere you want—in ancient philosophies and religions, as well as in the more modern expressions—and always you will find that wherever there speaks the voice of Truth, it lays emphasis on these principles. A man who absorbs them becomes like unto Christ.

What is the best missionary work that you and I can do

for our faith, whatever that faith may be? It is not our words that are going to convince anyone, nor can we impose on another anything that will be of lasting quality; we must express through our life. Life and life alone can convey. A man may talk about brotherhood, Christianity, Buddhism or any other ideal, but if he fails to manifest love, if he strikes a discordant note, there will be no strength in his message. To my mind, the whole of Christ's teaching was sustained by His life. If he had failed once, if he had forgotten for one moment that even the men who were persecuting Him were part of the Divine plan, He would not have been Christ. And Lord Buddha—when he was confronted by the robbers, if he had failed to remember his great mission, if he had felt any fear, he would have been destroyed by the force of evil.

We need courage, and courage comes only through deep conviction, through our reliance upon Truth, our kinship, our affiliation with it. When once we have created that direct connection, we are not afraid. So was Buddha not afraid.

This state of fearlessness is not confined to mere physical valor or mental courage only. It is rather the expression of that innate faith in the undying principle of Truth which alone can place us above all material impediments. As the light of Truth shines in our hearts freely and fully, the confusions of material life become less and less until they fade away altogether leaving us free of fear and misgiving.

It may be difficult for us to believe such things, because we have learned to disbelieve in everything; we have created about us an almost impenetrable material crust. But there comes an awakening: we begin to perceive our inner goal, we touch the heart of religion and find our consolation there. In the heart of religion there is always blending harmony.

One whose inner being is quickened with the spirit of love is a true missionary of God, even though he may work silently. The greatest Christians often are those who are silent, who live following the injunction given by the Christ: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." Long before Christ, however, the same ideal was applied in India and elsewhere. Truth is Truth. Do you suppose that God forgets His children at any time? It is not merely clinging to a particular name or form that gives us power to glorify the great Principle. There are wonderful things that are done outside of any form or creed. Whether he is from the East or from the West, from the South or from the North, a man who walks on the path of God comes unto God, and finds his union with the entire humanity.

Dr. Minot Savage, one of your Christian ministers, has given a definition so expressive of these ideas and ideals, that I can find nothing better to quote to you as I close than these thoughts of his. They voice that which I feel in my inmost core.

"Shall we say, then, that there were no Christians before Christ, and that there are no Christians outside of what we call Christendom? Augustine was wiser than that. He refers somewhere to that which has always been in the world from the beginning, and which, in these latter days, we have come to call Christian. So Augustine, the old Church Father and theologian, recognized that what we regarded as important and essential in Christianity was older than what had gone by that name. . . . The ideal man is the man who loves, and the man who knows how to apply his love power and impetus in such a way as to help, save, transform, develop and glorify mankind, . . . and I think the man who embodies these three things is a Christian, whatever he believes else."

# THOUGHTS ON LOVE AND UNITY

*By Leo Tolstoy*

(Selected from Tolstoy's "Reading for Every Day," as published for the first time in English by Dr. John Haynes Holmes in his magazine, "Unity," Chicago, Ill.)

Ever more and more the consciousness of the unity of all men is being spread abroad in mankind.

Men say that God dwells in heaven, they call Him the Heavenly King, and they also say that He lives in man. "Is there no God in you?" people say to a man when he does wrong. And this is right. What we call God we see both in the heavens and in every man. If we look at the sky on a winter night, we see stars, stars—star beyond star, without end. And when we consider that each of those stars is many, many times greater than the earth on which we live; that beyond the stars we see there are hundreds, thousands, millions of stars like them or greater; and that there is no end to the stars or to the heavens—we understand there is something we cannot grasp. And this something that we cannot grasp, we call God.

When we look into ourselves, we see what we call our self, our own soul. This soul can neither be touched, nor heard, nor seen, nor understood, but we know it better than anything else, and through it we know all that exists. And that which is incomprehensible but all-comprehending in our own soul, we also call God.

So that we know God outside ourselves, in the physical infinity that we see round us, as well as in the spiritual infinity that we feel in our own souls.

Remember always that in every man dwells that very God that dwells in you. . . . Only converse with a man, look deep into his eyes, and you will feel that you are akin to him; that, as it were, you knew him before, long ago. Why

is this? Because that by which you live is one and the same in you and in him and in all men. However bad, however disgusting a man may be in our eyes, we must think and say, . . . "In him dwells the same spirit that dwells in me." We should seek in every man what unites us with him, and not what separates us from him.

The consciousness of our own unity, flowing from the consciousness of a single, divine principle in all, gives men supreme welfare, both the inward, personal and the outward, social welfare; therefore all is evil that hinders this unity, and all is good that furthers it.

We do not know, we cannot know in what the common welfare consists, but we know very well that the attainment of this common welfare is possible only through the fulfillment by each of that eternal law of good which is revealed to every man, both in human wisdom and in his own heart.

Man lives by the spirit and not by the body. If he knows this and places his life not in the body, but in the spirit, though you put him in chains, behind iron bars, he will always be free. . . . By our bodies we are separate from all living beings, but by the spirit we are bound up with them.

All our ills arise from forgetting God dwells in us and from selling Him for the mess of pottage of physical pleasures. . . . In order to dwell in love with all men, one must not hold dear the felicities of the body, which many people cannot have at the same time, but one must place his life in the spiritual, in that which all men can have at the same time. . . . We are angry with people only when we live in the body and not in the soul. The soul is one and the same in all people. How can it be angry with itself? You think that he with whom you are angry is your enemy, but your chief enemy is that anger of yours toward your

brother, which has settled down into your heart. And therefore, make peace as soon as possible with this enemy, stifle in yourself this feeling which tortures you.

When Socrates, the Sage, was asked where he was born, he replied, "On earth." When they asked him to what State he belonged, he replied, "To the Universal State."

These words are great; . . . each man must remember that earthly boundaries and diverse powers are human matters, and that before God we are all dwellers on one and the same earth, living under the supreme power, not of men, but of the Law of God.

When Christ was asked, "What is the Law?" he answered once, "Lo, God and your neighbor." Another time he said, "As ye would that men should do unto you, do ye likewise unto them. In this is all the Law." Buddha and Confucius said the same thing. . . . In order to understand Christ's teaching of the salvation of life, we must first of all understand what has been said by all the prophets, by Solomon, by Buddha, and by all the sages of the world, concerning the personal life of man.

There is no life without sacrifice. All life is the sacrifice of the physical to the spiritual. The only truly joyful task of life is to let your soul grow; but for the growth of the soul renunciation of self is necessary. Begin renunciation in small things, then you will be able to renounce in great ones.

Consciousness of the unity of our being with all others is manifested in us through love. Love is the widening of life. The more we love, the wider, the fuller and the more joyous life becomes.

An Indian sage says, "As a mother watches over her only child, as she tends it, protects and brings it up; so, Everyman, should you raise up and train and protect in yourself that which is dearest of all in the world: love toward men

and all that lives. All faiths—Brahmin, Hebrew, Chinese, Christian, Mohammedan—teach this. And therefore the most necessary thing on earth is to learn to love.

In the world there is nothing dearer than the love of men. But the amazing thing is that to make people love you, you need not try to please them, you only need to concern yourself with drawing nearer to God. If you concern yourself only with coming nearer to God, without thinking of men, they will come to love you. But if you do not concern yourself with drawing nearer to God, no matter how much you try to please men, they will not love you.

Love of God is love turned toward itself—love of love. This love is supreme felicity. It does not admit the possibility of not loving any creature. So soon as you fail to love even one person, you lose love toward God and the felicity of this love.

Love—not love toward one particular person but the spiritual condition of readiness for love toward all—is the state in which alone we recognize the true spiritual essence of our soul.

As a candle only shines when the wax of which it is made is being spent, so life is only real when it is being spent for others.

You should train yourself so that when you meet with a man you will say to yourself, "I shall think only of him, and not of myself."

You toss about, you suffer, you seek happiness everywhere, when it is within you. Not in men's love for you, as it seems at first, but in your love for them.

If only all men desired simultaneously to live according to the Will of God, all life would be good. But all men do not yet desire this. Hence for the individuals who do desire it, life according to the Will of God does not come about of itself—they have to make an effort.

Man should not weary in efforts against all that screens love from view. But it often happens that for a long time a man cannot overcome sins, snares and superstitions, but falls from one into another; and he loses heart and despairs and ceases his efforts, often just at the time when it would have cost him only a little exertion to win his freedom. One should never weaken. The whole life of man lies in efforts toward the good. And in the effort lies the reward.

People say that you can put no trust in your own efforts, in yourself. This is untrue. . . . For every religious person, man is a living force, a divine spark, stored in the body and dwelling in it. God sent this particle of Himself into my body, with the hope that it should do His work. How can I fail to trust in it? . . .

The whole teaching of Christ is only a teaching of what a man should *do*: that he should not say, "Lord, Lord," but should fulfill the commandments, should be perfect as the Father is perfect, be merciful, be meek, be self-sacrificing. Who will do all this if man himself will not? And in order to do it he must have trust that he will do it.

Only that man can be humble who knows that God dwells in his soul. It makes no difference to such a man how people judge him. . . . Humility is the foundation of all, the foundation both of virtue and of reason.

There is not a single physical advantage,—strength, beauty, riches, rank—nor even a single good quality,—learning, education, even kindness—that is not destroyed and changed from an advantage and a good quality into a repulsive trait in the absence of humility. . . . I must believe that God's work is His work, and that it is being done and will be done even without me.

The more superior a man considers himself, the more easily he harbors ill-feeling toward others. The more humble a

man is, the kinder he is, and the less is he moved to anger.

A man who understands the meaning and mission of life cannot help feeling his equality and brotherhood not only with men of his own nation, but with men of all nations. Once you have freed yourself from exclusive love for self and for certain people, you will involuntarily merge in soul with your neighbors.

If only we kept strictly to the rule of uniting with every man on that about which we are agreed, and not demanding his agreement to that with which he disagrees; and if we asked him not to demand the same of us—we should never break Christ's chief commandment, that of unity. And without uttering the word "Christ," we should be far more Christian than if we had forced people by any means whatsoever to say that they believed in Christ and various dogmas in which they did not believe.

Neither splendid temples, nor golden ornaments, nor organs, nor singing are necessary to true faith. On the contrary, true faith always enters into the heart in quietness and solitude.

There is an Arabian legend that tells how Moses, wandering in the desert, overheard a shepherd praying to God. The shepherd prayed, "O Lord, if only I might draw near to Thee and become Thy servant. With what joy I would put on Thy shoes and wash Thy feet and kiss them, and comb out Thy hair, and wash Thy clothing for Thee, and clean Thy dwelling, and bring Thee milk from my herd. My heart longs after Thee." Moses, hearing these words, was angry at the shepherd, and said: "You are a blasphemer. God has no body. He needs neither clothing, nor dwelling, nor servant. You speak ill." And the shepherd was grieved, for he could not imagine God without a body and bodily needs. No more could he pray and serve God, and he fell into

despair. Then God said to Moses: "Why have you driven My true servant away from Me? Every man has his own thoughts and his own speech. What is bad for you is good for another. What is poison for you is sweet mead for another. Words mean nothing. I see the heart of him who turns to Me."

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## THE CHRISTMAS MIRACLE

*By William Norman Guthrie, D.D.*

Pray tell me, who is born of me
  New-got beyond all knowing?
Conceived of my soul's virginity?
  Breath of the wind's bestowing?
No alien hearsay, ancient art,
  But stark reality?
For all befell my leaping heart
  In a twinkle of lonely glee.
God, must not ever thine image so
  Shepherd and wise man hail,
And angels hymn,—despair aglow
  With faith too fair to fail?
Let glad and sad then cry forthwith:
  We have proof enough and to spare,
When living wonders are wrought of a myth
  Like snowflakes dancing in air—
Like magic forest lacing the pane,
  Like icicled thorn a-flare!
Shall stars in the dark their glory regain,
  And man no miracle dare.

# HAS MAN FREE WILL?

*By Sister Devamata*

Will is not the driving power in any action. Behind every act of volition stands a desire. It is desire which determines the force and direction of the will. If the desire is strong, it gives a swift, sweeping volitional impulse; if weak, the impulse is abortive and ineffective. Again, if the desire is sordid and selfish, an act of self-will results; if the desire is lofty and in rhythm with the universe, we have an expression of Cosmic will.

Midway between desire and will we find another factor, motive or intention. It is this element which lends moral color to the will. An action is ethical or unethical according to its motive. It is also this which leaves its stamp on the character. If the motive is a noble one, the character will be uplifted, however disastrous the outward action may appear to be. If the motive is ignoble, the character will be degraded, even though the outward success be dazzling. The human measure of failure and success is signally different from the Cosmic measure.

Thus we see that will must be always a subject-faculty, driven by desire, modified by motive. Our daily experience proves it. We set our will in one direction and at the moment of action it veers and carries us in the opposite direction—"The good we would we do not; the evil we would not, that we do," to quote from St. Paul. The reason for this is that we work on the will instead of on our desire. If we would remain secure and firm in our purpose, we must deal with the primary cause of action—not with the secondary cause. We must not set our will; we must transform our desires. We must alter our mental attitude, our outlook on the world and on life. We must acquire "a new heart and a new mind."

Desire can never be destroyed or eliminated. It is a primal element of man's nature, his prod to perfection, the impelling principle in all his evolution. He who does not desire to learn makes a poor scholar; and they climb slowly who have no longing to reach the heights. Without desire there is no growth or progress. When great teachers like Gautama Buddha, Lao Tzu and Pythagoras tell us to root out desire, they refer to selfish desire—that which seeks outlet in acts of self-will. Utter desirelessness is impossible on the human plane, because on this plane there is always lack somewhere, and lack induces desire. The state of total desirelessness can only be the outcome of union with the Ultimate. We attain it spontaneously when through this union we realize fullness or completion of being. The desirelessness preached to mankind by the Great Ones is a preparation for this higher state. It means loosening the ship from its moorings that it may sail out on vaster seas.

If we would have a well ordered will, we must give place in our mind to constructive desire only. Like all creative things desire is dual in nature. Baneful desires are as effective in dragging downward as noble desires are in uplifting. The will follows in either direction with equally ready obedience. Only when there is conflict of desires—a war between good and evil desires—does the will grow confused in its actions. We must cultivate the habit of right desire as we cultivate a taste for fine art or for the classics in literature and music. We do it in the same way—by contrast with that which awakens and nurtures such desire. We must read books which will stimulate our higher impulses; we must hear teaching which helps us to readjust our values and gives us a right sense of proportion, and we must seek companionship with those who exemplify some exalted ideal in their daily living. Above all, we must overcome the petty nervous

irritability we feel now when a desire is frustrated, and must learn to move in the serener atmosphere of lofty aspiration. This will not be difficult if we will but remember that we belong to the universe; it does not belong to us and it is not for us to try to force it into a mould of our making.

What frustrates our desires? Cosmic law. Thwarted desire means invariably that we have run counter to the legal code of the universe. Defeat inheres in the disobedient action. Those who disobey or defy the law are enmeshed in it. Law is a gaoler for the one who rebels against it; it does not exist for the man who swings with it. He who has no wish to steal has little consciousness of the laws against thievery. The defiant are ever bound; only the obedient go free. Every individual is free to choose whether or not he will observe the law, but he cannot force it to obey him.

Although will is subject to desire, it can be freed. Not, however, by striving to make acquaintance with all cosmic law and observing it; that would be too arduous a task. Will is freed by gathering up the multitude of our desires and merging them in one supreme desire to live and act in harmony with the Great Will of the universe. Then the last fetter of desire will fall, the bondage of our little will will break, and like an uncaged bird we shall mount on high, singing and winging our way through the heavens.

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I am the Origin of all, everything evolves from Me. Knowing this, the wise worship Me with loving ecstasy.

With their heart fixed on Me, with their life absorbed in Me, mutually enlightening one another, and perpetually singing My glory, they are contented and rejoiced.

To these ever steadfast and loving worshippers I give that Yoga of wisdom by which they come unto Me.

—*Bhagavad-Gita.*

# THE DHUNI FIRE

*From "The Life of the Swami Vivekananda."*

[Sri Ramakrishna, the great Hindu saint, passed out of this life on August 15th, 1886. After his passing, Norendra, afterwards the Swami Vivekananda, took the leadership of the group of young men disciples who had been gathered round the Master. Left desolate by his passing, yet purged and inflamed by his mighty spirit, they formed a small band that needed only consolidation to become a vital factor in the spiritual life of India and the world. This consolidation was accomplished at the little house in Baranagore, their first home, and the first monastery of the Order of Ramakrishna, which here came into being.

They had not been there long when, in the latter part of December, they received an invitation to visit the village of Antpur, and it was in the peace of this simple village that the kindled fires of their hearts burst into the white flame of complete renunciation. Strangely enough the occasion for this inner burning was itself a fire, a huge *dhuni* built in the compound, round which they had assembled. The hour of that gathering, unconsciously chosen by these young Hindu devotees, was typical of the universal spirit of their Master, who in his own being united every form of faith.]

It was late in the evening when the monks gathered together before the fire. Huge logs of wood were brought by them and ignited; and soon a raging flame burned upwards, making the darkness beautiful by contrast. And overhead was the canopy of the Indian night, and all around was the ineffable peace of the rural stillness.

The meditation began, continuing for a long time. Then a break was made and the Leader (Norendra) filled the Silence with the story of the Lord Jesus. From the very beginning, from the wondrous mystery of birth it commenced.

The monks were raised into beatitude with the Virgin Mary when the Saviour's coming was announced to Her, and with Her they sang in spirit the *Magnificat*. The monks lived with Jesus during the days of His childhood. They were with Him at the time He gathered His first disciples, and they adored Him even as they adored their own Master. The many points of similarity in thought and action as well as the relationship with the disciples, between Christ and Ramakrishna, forcibly brought to their minds the old days of ecstasy with their Master. The words of Christ the Redeemer rang upon their ears as familiar sayings. They wondered at His miracles and were lost with Him in the worlds of meditation. They saw His Triumph and Arrest, His Agony and Torture; they saw Him die while the earth was covered with darkness. They were present when the arisen Christ spoke and ate with the wonder-stricken disciples; they were present when in full view of all He ascended into Heaven. The Pentecostal Fire of the early Christians devoured their souls, and in the peace of the village of Antpur the names of Christ and Ramakrishna resounded on the midnight air.

And from this height of ecstasy, Norendra addressed the monks, charging them to become *themselves* Christs, to aid in the redemption of the world. They were to realize God and deny themselves even as the Lord Jesus had done. And standing there before the *dhuni,* with the flames lighting up their countenances and with the crackling wood alone disturbing the silence of their thought, they took the vows of eternal Sannyas (spiritual renunciation) before God and one another. The very air seemed to vibrate with their ecstatic fervor. And all through the night the Indian Sages kept the watch. And the watchword of the night and of their hearts was, "Realization through Renunciation."

Strangest of all, when the monks had reached the highest flights of soul, they suddenly remembered,—*it was Christmas Eve!*

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## THE VIGIL LIGHT

*By Julia P. Dabney*

Burn, little light,
Burn clear and bright;
Symbol of faith which glows serene
Through every circumstance or scene,
Through garish day or darkling night.—
Burn, little light!
Leap, little flame,
Ever the same!
Thy tiny flamelet doth unroll
A hieroglyphic of the soul
Forever worshipping His Name.—
Soar, little flame!

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For Gods' sake, my brethren, let us not, for the future, study to put the worst construction we can on one another's words or actions; but let us rather endeavor to make the best we can of them. Let us not try to magnify and aggravate the differences between us, but rather to make as little of them and to consider them with as much tenderness as possible. Let us not dispute which has already most or least Charity; but let us strive to see who shall hereafter, really and in fact, most abound in the practice of that Heavenly virtue both toward each other and toward all men.

—*Dr. Samuel Johnson.*

# NATHAN THE WISE

*Fragment of the Drama by Gotthold Lessing*

Act IV. Scene VII.

*Nathan and the Lay Brother.*

*Nathan.* (*to the Lay Brother*) Good brother, say what I
Can do for you.

*Lay Brother.* Not much—but oh, good Nathan, I rejoice
To see you still in health.

*Nathan.* You know me, then?

*Lay Brother.* Ay, that I do—who knows you not?—your
Name
Hath been impressed on many a needy palm,
And mine still bears its stamp these many years.

*Nathan.* (*feeling in his purse*) Well, brother, let me freshen
It a bit.

*Lay Brother.* Thanks; but 'twere robbery of poorer men.
I'll nought of you—but rather, by your leave, I now
Would freshen up *my* name a bit
Within your mind, since I too can lay claim
Once to have placed within your hand a thing
Of no mean worth.

*Nathan.* Forgive me—I must blush—
Name it, and, to atone my heedlessness,
Take from me now its value seven times told.

*Lay Brother.* Before all else, first hear how I myself
Only this very day was put in mind
Of that I pledged with you.

*Nathan.* You pledged with *me?*

*Lay Brother.* Not long ago I filled a hermit's cell
On Quarantana, nigh to Jericho,
When suddenly a band of Arab thieves
Pulled down my little chapel, razed my cell,
And dragged me off with them. By luck I fled,

And made my way unto the Patriarch here
To crave of him some other little spot
Where I in solitude might serve my God
Until a peaceful death might end my days.

*Nathan.* Brother, I burn to know the rest—be brief.
What was the pledge—the pledge you left with me?. . .

*Lay Brother.* I'm coming to it now. Some one, it seems,
This day has whispered in the Patriarch's ear,
That somewhere here there dwells a certain Jew
Who's bringing up a certain Christian child
As his own daughter—

*Nathan.* (*with alarm*). What!

*Lay Brother.* Nay, hear me out.
Well then, the Patriarch has commissioned me
Forthwith, if possible, to trace this Jew,
Since he is vehemently stirred with wrath
At such an outrage, which appears to him
The very sin against the Holy Ghost;
That is to say, the sin which, of all sins,
Is held by us to be the greatest sin,
Except that, God be thanked, we scarcely know
In what it specially consists. But now
My drowsy conscience suddenly awoke,
And it occurred to me that I myself
Not long ago had haply given rise
To this unpardonable, deadly sin.
Now tell me whether, eighteen years ago,
A certain squire confided to your hands
A tiny maid of but a few weeks old?

*Nathan.* How's this? Well, truly—ay, it is the fact.

*Lay Brother.* Nathan, look well on me. I was the squire!

*Nathan.* What! You?

*Lay Brother.* The knight from whom I brought the babe

Was one, von Filneck, if I do not err;
Ay, Wolf von Filneck.

*Nathan.* Yes, that was the name.

*Lay Brother.* It seems the mother had but lately died;
And then the knight had suddenly to flit,
Methinks to Gaza, where a mite like that
Could not go with him, so he bade me bear
The babe to you, and it was at Darún
I gave it to you.

*Nathan.* That is so indeed.

*Lay Brother.* 'Twere little wonder if my memory
Deceived me after such a lapse of time;
And then I've served so many valiant knights,
And this one truly all too short a time:
Soon after that he fell at Ascalon.
He was a kindly knight.

*Nathan.* Ay, that he was;
And one to whom I owed a world of thanks,
Since more than once he save me from the sword.

*Lay Brother.* If so, you must have been the more rejoiced
To be the guardian of his little girl.

*Nathan.* Ay, you may think it.

*Lay Brother.* Well, where is she now?
Surely she hath not died by any chance;
Oh, say not that she's dead—for if she lives,
And no one else be privy to her case,
All things may yet go well.

*Nathan.* Ha, think you so?

*Lay Brother.* Now mark me, Nathan, thus I look at things:
Whene'er I purpose to perform a deed
Good in itself, but bordering too close
On what is bad, I ever think it best
To leave the deed undone; since what is bad

Is always pretty palpable to us,
While what is good is seldom quite so plain.
Now it was natural enough that you,
To do your best in bringing up the child,
Should treat her as your daughter. Very well,
You did the thing in perfect faith and love,
And is it right that you should smart for this?
I ne'er can see the justice of the case.
I own your conduct had been more discreet
Had you employed some other hand to rear
This Christian infant as a Christian,
But, in that case, the daughter of your friend
Had lacked your love; and in their tender years
Children need love before all other things,
Were it no more than some dumb creature's love,
Ay, before Christianity itself;
Trust me, there's ever time enough for that;
And if the maid but grew before your eyes
Healthy and good, then in the eyes of God
She still remained as precious as before.
And was not Christianity itself
Built up in Jewry?—it hath vexed me oft,
And cost me many a bitter, bitter tear,
That Christians should so utterly forget
Their own Redeemer was himself a Jew.

*Nathan.* Good brother, you must be my advocate
When hatred and hypocrisy are roused
To hunt me down for such an act as mine;
Ah, such an act! You, brother, you alone
Shall know the facts; but they must die with you;
I've ne'er been tempted by a vain desire
To tell them to another man; to you,
And to your simple piety alone,

I tell them now, since none but such as you
Can rightly measure or can comprehend
What sort of deeds a man who loves his God
Can bring himself to do.
*Lay Brother.* You're deeply moved,
Ay, and your eyes are running o'er with tears!
*Nathan.* You brought the infant to me at Darún;
But then you could not know that, just before,
The Christians had slaughtered every Jew
Who dwelt in Gath—ay, massacred them all,
Sparing nor sex nor age—nor knew you then
That my poor wife and seven hopeful sons,
Whom I had sent for safety, I had thought,
To a dear brother's house, were burnt alive
Within its walls.
*Lay Brother.* Ah, great and righteous God!
*Nathan.* Just as you came I'd lain three days and nights
In dust and ashes bowed before the Lord;
I raved—I writhed—I wrangled with my God;
I wept, I cursed myself and all mankind,
And swore eternal and undying hate
To Christendom entire.
*Lay Brother.* I marvel not.
*Nathan.* But reason gradually came again,
And said with gentle voice: "God surely is,
And such was His inscrutable decree.
Now practise that which thou hast known so long,
To practise which is surely no more hard
Than 'tis to grasp it, if thou only wilt.
Stand up!"—I stood and called to God: "I will,
If Thou but help my will."—You lighted then
From off your horse, and handed me the child
Wrapped in your mantle. What you said to me,

What I replied, I have forgotten now;
This much alone I know—I took the babe,
I bore it to my couch—I kissed its cheek;
And then I fell upon my bended knees,
And, sobbing, cried aloud: "My God, of seven,
Here's one restored already!"

*Lay Brother.* Nathan, sure
You are a Christian, by Heaven you are!
None better ever breathed!

*Nathan.* Alack! alack!
That which makes me a Christian in your eyes
Makes you a Jew in mine.—Enough, enough!
Let us no longer but unman ourselves;
We now must act—and though a seven-fold love
Has knit my heart to this one stranger maid,
Although the very thought is death to me
That I may lose once more my seven sons
In losing her, yet, if it please the Lord
To claim her at my hands, I must obey.

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## THE LOVE OF A SAGE

*By Chuang-Tzu*

The true Sage, when in obscurity, causes those around him to forget their poverty. When in power, he causes princes to forget rank and emoluments, and to become as though of low estate. He rejoices exceedingly in all creation. He exults to see TAO diffused among his fellow-men, while suffering no loss himself.

Thus, although silent, he can instill peace; and by his mere presence cause men to be to each other as father and son. From his very return to passivity comes this active influence

for good. So widely does he differ in heart from ordinary men. . . .

The true Sage is free from all embarrassments. All things are to him as One. Yet he knows not that this is so. It is simply nature. In the midst of action he remains the same. He makes God his guide, and men make him theirs. He grieves that (worldly) wisdom carries one but a short distance, and at times comes altogether to a deadlock.

To a beauty, mankind is the mirror in which she sees herself. If no one tells her she is beautiful, she does not know that she is so. But whether she knows it or whether she does not know it, whether she hears it or whether she does not hear it, her (beauty) will never cease, neither will mankind cease to take pleasure therein. It is nature.

The love of a Sage for his fellows likewise finds expression among mankind. Were he not told so, he would not know that he loved his fellows. But whether he knows it or whether he does not know it, whether he hears it or whether he does not hear it, his love for his fellows is without end, and mankind ceases not to repose therein.

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## REPORT

### DIVINE MOTHER'S FESTIVAL IN BOSTON

On October 22d, Swami Paramananda gave a reception to a large number of friends in honor of the Divine Mother's Festival. Special interest was added to the occasion through the presence of Swami Akhilananda of Providence, Swami Nikhilananda recently arrived from India and Swami Devatmananda from New York. Mr. Hansen, Symphony violinist, entertained the audience with rare music.

### DINNER AT THE VEDANTA CENTRE

On the 19th of November, the Vedanta Centre was the scene of a very joyous occasion, when the Swami gave a dinner to a large number of friends. A delightful musical program was rendered by Mr. Pohle, Master Harold Hansen,

violinists, and Miss Florence Colby, the 'cellist. Srimati Gayatri Devi not only prepared the delicious Hindu dinner but also played on her *esraj* and sang. Swami Paramananda spoke and with great impressiveness conveyed to all the friends of the work the imminent need of their co-operation in securing adequate financial support in order that the Vedanta Centre may carry on its work successfully. Many out of spontaneous feeling and gratitude offered substantial material assistance that the burden might be lifted from the Swami's shoulders. The Swami made it very plain that it was an utter physical impossibility for him to carry all the responsibilities and details of both the Boston Centre and the Ashrama in California, unless people who valued the existence of the Boston work came forward with their material help. This aroused great enthusiasm and responses have come in steadily, but much more is required to meet the immediate obligation of the Centre.

COHASSET ASHRAMA

Autumn days in New England have their special beauty and allurement to the life of out-of-doors. This was specially true as week after week friends of the Boston work made their Saturday afternoon pilgrimage to this little peace retreat. The mild, balmy weather afforded opportunity for people to gather upon the Ashrama Rock wherefrom Swami Paramananda gave his simple spiritual message of beauty and inspiration.

CALIFORNIA ANANDA-ASHRAMA

Gratifying news has come to us that during Swami Paramananda's absence in the East all the Services held in the Temple of the Universal Spirit have been well attended and all have deeply appreciated the talks given by Sister Daya, also the Friday evening Classes at 1957 Rodney Drive, Hollywood.

Swami Paramananda will conduct all the Services and Classes at the Ashrama during the month of December.

IMPORTANT

This number of the MESSAGE OF THE EAST concludes the twentieth volume and we ask all its readers and friends to kindly renew their subscriptions promptly before the beginning of the New Year.

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