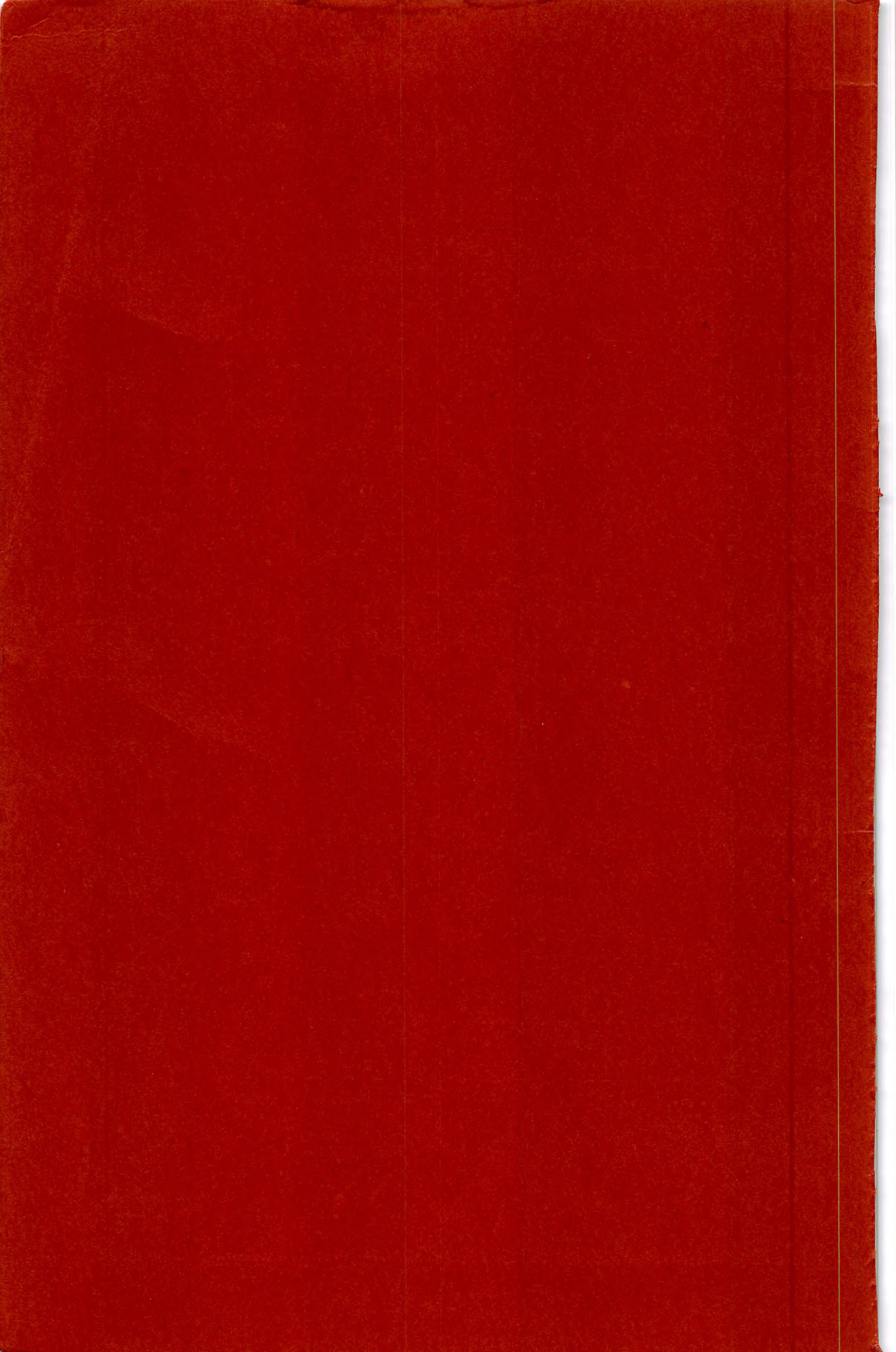


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Holy Mother

Amiya Corbin

Swami Vivekananda says, "It is the knowledge of the *spirit* of the scriptures alone that constitutes the true religious teacher." It must therefore follow that only those who are absolutely pure and sinless can have the power to transmit that knowledge to another. Such were the great teachers of men who have gone before and who are still worshipped by the world today, and such an one was the Holy Mother whose coming in our time has already left its indelible imprint in the religious history of all time. Indeed, it may well be said, without bias, that the Holy Mother stands out as one of the rarest examples of the true *Guru*, or teacher, the world has ever known. And for this reason. Unlike those others whose lives were totally unencumbered by any material responsibilities and domestic cares, the earlier years of the Holy Mother's life as a spiritual teacher were fraught with extreme material uncertainty, while the entire period of her ministry was lived against a background of intense domestic disharmony. Not only this, she too took upon herself the sins of others, and by so doing suffered vicariously for all those who came to her for spiritual guidance.

Just as the conditions necessary for the true teacher are spotless purity and knowledge of God, so the conditions necessary for the taught are "purity, a real thirst after knowledge, obedience, and perseverance." And rightly so, for the relationship between the teacher and the disciple is of the most intimate and sacred. True, it is a relationship of the spirit, but it is also a relationship wherein the teacher takes the karmas of the disciple. As the Holy Mother herself once said: "It is extremely difficult to be a guru. The power of the guru is transmitted to the disciple through the mantram, or sacred word, and that is why, at the time of initiation, the guru takes the effects of the good and bad karmas of the disciple. By so doing, he suffers greatly from physical afflictions. On the other hand, however, a good disciple can help the teacher; everything depends on the tendencies of the mind."

Yet, knowing this, the Holy Mother never questioned the worthiness or unworthiness of the disciple, and there were very few instances where she was known to refuse initiation. Her heart

was open to all, even to the most depraved, and whatever the consequences were, she took them willingly. Once she admitted: "There is no sin left undone by some of those who come to me, but the moment they address me as 'Mother' I forget everything else and give them perhaps more than they deserve. Yet, who else will carry their burdens and bear their afflictions?"

In this connection an interesting story can be told of a young college student named Binode, whom M., the writer of the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, took to meet the Master at Dakshineswar. Shortly after his meeting with Sri Ramakrishna Binode joined the theatre and soon achieved great fame as an actor. But, like many of the theatre people of that time, he became an inveterate drunkard, and M. and his friends lost sight of him, excepting Swami Saradanada, whom Binode had nicknamed 'Pal' and with whom he still kept in touch. After many years of prodigal living he became completely destitute.

Long after the passing away of the Master, when the Holy Mother was staying at Calcutta, Binode went to her house to see Swami Saradananda who was occupying the ground floor apartments. It was about eleven o'clock at night when the Swami was awakened by a loud knocking at the window, and the sound of his name being called. Fearing the noise would disturb the Mother, he whispered to the other Swami who was with him: "That is Binode outside, but I am not going to answer or let him in. In his drunken condition he will disturb the Mother." When Binode realized that no one would let him in, he went away. A few nights later he came again, but since the hour of his coming was even later, the Swami still refused to let him in. But this time Binode would not be ignored. Drunk though he was, he called out in a loud voice: "Wake up, Mother, your son has come!" Then, in a voice still beautiful, he began to sing:

Awake, O Merciful Mother!
 Open the door of my lowly heart.
 It is dark outside, and your face is hidden!
 While you hide yourself in bliss within,
 Your weary son remains outside —
 Ever calling 'Mother, Mother!'
 Awake, O Merciful Mother, and let him in!

Even as he sang the first lines of the song, those who listened

below heard the venetian blinds of the Mother's window being raised, and, before the last lines had died away, they heard the window being opened. Looking out, they saw Binode standing and gazing up at the window, saying: "So, at last you are awake, Mother, hearing the cry of your son! Please accept my salutations." With that, he bowed so low in drunken obeisance that he toppled over into the street. As he picked himself up, he again began to sing:

Hold the Mother tenderly,
 Hold Her within your heart!
 O my mind, let only *me* see Her —
 O let not another behold Her!

Then, remembering Swami Saradananda, and still feeling angry toward him, he added as a parting shot: "Let not even my Pal see You!"

Once again he came, and once again the Mother was awakened and stood at the window and listened while he sang. By this time some of her devotees began to protest, saying that Binode should be stopped since his coming always disturbed her rest. But this the Mother would not allow. "He is a great devotee," she told them; "just see what tremendous devotion he has to the Divine Mother, even in his drunkenness. I cannot sleep when he calls for me!"

Shortly after this, Binode fell ill and died. He died in ecstasy, and when the news and manner of his death was reported to the Mother she said: "Why should he not die in ecstasy? He is a child of the Master, and now, soiled though he is, the Lord has lifted him up and taken him on His lap."

It was given to very few to fully know the Holy Mother during her lifetime. How many could guess the greatness she kept so well hidden beneath that humble guise? In earlier years Sri Ramakrishna had recognized her and worshipped her as the manifestation of the Divine Mother of the universe, and it was evident by her attitude toward Binode and by the chance remarks she sometimes inadvertently made that she herself was well aware of her true nature, as when she admitted that the Master had left her on the earth to reveal the Motherhood of God. But only very rarely did she exercise her divine power in her daily life. One occasion stands out in particular.

At one time during her lonely stay at Kamarpukur she was attacked by a man named Harish who had lost his mind over the death of his wife. Speaking of the incident later, the Mother said: "Just as I was about to enter the house Harish began to chase me. There was no one else around, and I did not know what to do nor where to go. In desperation I ran behind the barn, but he came right after me. After running around the barn for six or seven times I became utterly exhausted. Just as I was about to fall down, my whole being was suddenly filled with a Divine Strength. Before I realized what had happened I had turned around and knocked the man down. Then I held him by force until he gasped for breath."

As a general rule, whenever anyone would ask the Mother who she really was, she would simply smile and change the subject. Once, however, when a monastic disciple remarked that, having known her it would be easier to understand and respect the various goddesses, she said: "And why not? They are all parts of myself!"

Humility was her fairest ornament. One day Yogin was teasing her about her disciples, and said: "Just look at the Master's disciples Mother, how great they are! Each one of them is a spiritual giant, and yet look at yours!" And the Mother replied, half in jest and half in earnest: "Yes indeed, the Master did take only the best; and with what care he selected them! But to me he has left all this small fry, coming by the hundreds, like ants! You must never compare my disciples with his!" Yet, before these same illumined "spiritual giants" the Mother stood revealed in all her greatness. *They* knew who She was, and before her they bowed down in reverent awe. One of them, Swami Premananda, once admitted: "We send to the Holy Mother the poison we cannot take ourselves. She gives refuge to everybody and accepts the sins of all."

Towards the latter part of her life, when she became more widely known and sought after, the Mother would sit for hours at a time where those who wished could touch her feet and receive her blessings. Because of the utter purity of her life, her entire being was extremely sensitive to anything impure, therefore the effects of the strain of long sitting and the reaction to the touch of many who came to her must have been extremely trying. There were instances when her very feet would instinctively shrink back

from the touch of some, as if by reflex action. On one such occasion, when Yogin caught her washing her feet over and over again, she tried to explain, saying: "O Yogin, how can I explain these things! The touch of some of these people refreshes me wonderfully, while the touch of others gives me such a burning sensation. It feels like the sting of a wasp, and only the cool water of the Ganges can relieve it!" But to those devotees who were receptive, the very touch of those blessed feet brought a definite sense of upliftment. As one said, who had experienced it, "When I touched the Mother's feet I felt as if an electric current had passed from her feet to my fingers, charging my whole being, as it were, by its tremendous power!"

Once when the Holy Mother was staying at her village home at Jayrambati, a disciple returned to the house after a brief absence and found her lying on a straw mat outside her room. In answer to her surprised questioning the Mother said: "An elderly man came to see me and wanted to touch my feet, but I went at once to my room and sat on the couch. Even so, he followed me, and insisted, though I protested and shrank away from him. Ever since then I have been suffering excruciating pain."

Yet, in spite of her sufferings and the many annoyances she had to put up with, so great was her love that she warned her disciples and friends never to speak of her difficulties to her faithful guardian, Swami Saradananda, because she feared he would stop people from coming to her. She remembered the time when she was recovering from an attack of malaria at Jayrambati, and a devotee had come from a distant village to see her, and how Swami Saradananda had given instructions that no one was to approach her until she had completely recovered. This had led to an argument when the visitor had arrived, and she herself had gone to the door to find out what the disturbance was about. When she discovered that the Swami had prohibited all visitors, she had said sharply: "And who is Sarat to prohibit? For this I am come!"

Yet there were times when, in her childlike simplicity, she would seek the Swami's permission before taking a definite step. At one time when she was recuperating after a severe illness, a young Parsi came from a great way off to ask her blessing. Seeing him, the Mother turned to a disciple and said: "Shall I initiate him?" The disciple objected saying, "How can you, in your pre-

sent condition? Besides, what would Swami Saradananda say?" Whereupon the Mother sent the disciple to the Swami to ask his advice. His reply was: "What can I do? If the Mother wants a Parsi disciple, let her have one! It's no use trying to go against her wishes." Which indeed was true, for, by the time the disciple returned, arrangements for initiation had already been made.

Even the Holy Mother could not entirely escape the fanatical importunities of those whose zeal too often exceed their reason. Two occasions stand out in particular. One day, just as she was finishing the noonday worship, a stranger came towards her with a bunch of flowers in his hand. She at once went to her room, and, wrapping herself in a large sheet from head to foot, sat on the edge of her couch. The stranger placed the flowers at her feet, and then, after saluting her, seated himself directly in front of her and began to do his breathing exercises. It was a very hot day, and as the exercises continued, the poor Mother grew hotter and hotter, and more and more uncomfortable. Yet, because she never spoke directly to any male stranger, and because all the other members of the household were busy about their duties, she had no recourse but to sit in solitary silence and discomfort, until, after a long time, Golap came in and saw the situation. Angrily she turned on the stranger, saying: "You fool! Have you no sense at all? Can't you see that the Mother is hot and tired? What do you suppose she is, a wooden statue which you hope to bring to life by your breathing exercises?"

On another occasion a stranger came to prostrate before the Mother. As he knelt down he banged his head with such force on her foot that she cried out in pain. When asked why he dared to do such a thing, he admitted that he did it purposely so that the Mother might always remember him.

But the Mother never forgot her children. Their names she might forget, but it is certain that not one who sought shelter in that great heart was ever lost or forgotten. At one time one of her disciples protested against her great liberality, saying: "Mother, you give initiation to so many people! A guru is supposed to look after the welfare of the disciple, but how is it possible for you to remember so many!" And the Mother replied: "My child, the Master never restricted me, and, since he guided me in so many other ways could he not have instructed me in this matter also?"

The responsibility of my disciples I give to the Lord. Every day I pray, 'O Lord, look after them wherever they are.' Besides, the mantrams I give were given to me by the Master and through them one is bound to attain perfection."

So great was the Mother's own faith in the power of the mantram, that, right up to the very last days of her life she would repeat the names of God thousands of times a day, for those of her children whom she knew did little or nothing for themselves. Throughout her life she never allowed herself more than four hours rest at night, and towards the end she begrudged even that much as a waste of time. "They ask me to rest and sleep," she would say, "but how can I rest when I know that the whole world is suffering? Whoever comes to me with a yearning heart I shall save. I know I can help mankind by making *Japam*."

The spiritual practice the Holy Mother most insisted upon was Japam, the repetition of the name of God as instructed by the guru. The efficacy of the practice she exemplified in her own life by her absolute faith in the power of the mantrams the Master had given her. These she passed on to any who asked, with never a thought of the possible consequences. Neither time, nor place, nor circumstance mattered — whether it happened to be the compound of a railway station or the middle of a meadow, she did not care; and she asked for nothing in return. The homage and adoration she received from her devotees and friends meant nothing to her. She had come to serve, and this she did to the end of her days. Her greatest joy was to cook for her children, and whenever they came to see her at her remote village home she would treat them as her very own, so that they also felt that she was truly their Mother. Many a time when a devotee would turn to catch a last glimpse of her face as he went away, he would see her standing by her cottage door gazing after him with tear-dimmed eyes.

To those she initiated she said: "I have given you the name of the Lord. Repeat it always, for through it you will achieve everything. But repetition must be accompanied by concentration; you may repeat the mantram all day long, but if the mind is unsteady it will avail little. Even so, do it, whether the mind is concentrated or not; constant practice of Japam and meditation on its meaning will make the mind one-pointed. The whole purpose of Japam is to purify the mind and direct it towards God. Everything else

will come in time. The words of the Master are *true*. Be devoted to him, take refuge in him. It is enough if you remember that there is someone, either Father or Mother who is always protecting you." Again and again She insisted: "Practice Japam regularly, for none can tell the auspicious moment when the Lord will come!"

Once, in a highly exalted mood she said: "I see that the whole world belongs to the Lord. All beings are His children and He has to look after them. Never forget that if you truly yearn for Him, you will surely find Him. He is the 'wish-yielding tree.' Sri Krishna says in the Gita, 'When goodness grows weak, when evil increases, I make myself a body. In every age I come back to deliver the holy, to destroy the sin of the sinner, to establish righteousness.' That is why I can see no end to the Master's suffering. But who can understand this?" And a disciple said: "Well, Mother, if that is so, it means you also, for you and the Master are not separate!" "O no, my child, do not say that," replied the Mother quickly. "Don't you know that I am his hand-maiden? I am the machine, he is the operator; I am the house, he is the dweller within the house. I do whatever he makes me do. The Lord is everything; there is none beside. Who can wipe away the tears of the world? Who can understand man's suffering? None but He! Do you know, I *see* that it is the Lord who has become everything. Wherever my eyes fall, I see Him. That is why it seems to me that it is the Lord who is suffering rather than man! One day Radhu was about to kill an ant, but as I looked at it I saw, not the ant, but the Lord Himself! I saw his eyes, his face, his feet, and I thought to myself, 'verily, all creatures belong to the Lord.' Alas, how little I am doing; how few I am able to save! Would that I could save the whole world."

And it was because of this deep desire to help mankind that she worked so hard and so selflessly. In her lifetime devotees of the West as well as of the East bowed down before her, and by her touch were sanctified. And now, even though the body has been laid aside, the spirit still lives, and, until the last soul is freed from the bondages of misery, that brooding heart will yearn and wait. For, even while she lived among them, those who knew her and loved her most were ever conscious of her infinite compassion and eternal patience.

In the Society of the Holy

Swami Omkareswarananda

It was the evening of March 14, 1916, the day following the public celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday. Swami Premananda and Swami Akhandananda, disciples of the Master, were seated on a bench on the eastern verandah of the Belur Monastery, overlooking the Ganges. Several other Swamis and young Brahmacharis were seated on a bench nearby. Presently Swami Achalananda, who was one of the group, addressed Swami Premananda:

"Revered Sir, please tell us something about Sri Ramakrishna. To hear of him directly from you is far more inspiring and uplifting than to read of him and his teachings in the Gospel."

"Very little of the Master's teachings is recorded in the Gospel," replied the Swami. "There is too much repetition. M. used to visit the Master occasionally and would note down his teachings as he heard them. But Sri Ramakrishna taught his disciples differently, according to their different temperaments and their capacity of understanding. His teachings to the monastic disciples were given in private. As soon as the householder disciples would leave the room he would get up and lock the door and then speak to us living words of renunciation. He would try to impress upon our young minds the emptiness and vanity of worldly enjoyments. In his great mercy he would point out to us how dry and hot the world is — like a desert, and how, like a mirage, it burns the heart but never slakes the thirst. He taught us how to discriminate and analyze the body of man, made up as it is of flesh, blood and bones, etc., so that our minds would not run after the enjoyments of the flesh. He would tell us of the great power of the all-bewitching *maya*, and how man, forgetting his divine heritage, fell ever and again into her clutches. Deep down within his heart man knows full well that there is no lasting happiness to be found in the mad pursuit of worldly enjoyments, and yet, like the camel who chews thorny bushes even while his mouth bleeds, man still stirs up his lust for enjoyment even while he suffers. To satisfy his lust man needs gold. Lust and gold! These are the chains that drag a man down to the pit of worldliness. He alone soars high who shakes himself free of these chains. He who renounces sexual appetites —

not only outwardly, but also the cravings of the mind — he it is who has renounced all worldly pleasures. He alone is a man of true renunciation. Renunciation is not in the garb of a monk, nor is it in the renunciation of fish and meat.

“Spiritual aspirants of many different sects would come to visit Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar, and all of them found great satisfaction in talking to him. To each he was able to show the way to further progress along his own particular path, so that each thought that the Master was a perfected soul of his own particular sect. They could not know that Sri Ramakrishna was as broad as the sky and as deep as the ocean, and thoroughly acquainted with all the different sects and paths. For he had followed them each in turn, and by each path he had reached the one and the same goal.

“Never forget that the ideal of life is to realize God, to gain his vision. You have renounced the world to reach that goal. Struggle hard to grow love and devotion to Him and attain Him. He is the very life of our life, the soul of our soul. He is the Lord of our heart, He is our very own. Yearn for Him with a longing heart. How blessed you are that you have the privilege of serving and associating with such ever-free souls as Swami Brahmananda and others who were the associates of God incarnate! Do not neglect this opportunity. You are men! Be gods! Teach others by the examples of your own lives.”

Swami Premananda remained silent for a while, then continued:

“I see very clearly that, after we are gone, multitudes will come to learn from you young men.”

A young Swami: “But, revered Sir, how can that be? If multitudes are to come, they should come while you are still living.”

Swami Premananda replied: “Do not think that you are any less great than us! You have received the grace of the Holy Mother. Do you think we have become great just because people have come to take the dust of our feet? No! We first saw Sri Ramakrishna and then renounced the world; you are great indeed because you have renounced the world without seeing him!”

Young Swami: “But revered Sir, Sri Ramakrishna made you great.”

Swami Premananda: “No! Sri Ramakrishna did not make us great; he made us ‘no-bodies.’ You also have to become ‘no-bodies.’ Wipe out all vanity and all ego sense. Sri Ramakrishna used to

say, 'When the ego dies, all troubles cease.' 'Not I, not I, but Thou, O Lord.' Look at the life of Nag Mahasoy! There was not the least trace of ego in him. G. C. Ghosh used to say, 'Maya tried to bind Nag Mahasoy and Vivekananda in her net, but Nag Mahasoy became smaller than the smallest, so that maya's net could not hold him, and Vivekananda grew bigger and bigger; he became one with the Infinite, and the net was too small to bind him.'

"Do you know of what this net of maya is comprised? Sense objects, lust, gold, name, fame, ego, vanity, selfishness and so on. With all these maya binds the mind of man. Come out of this net, and the mind will run straight to God. All bondage is in the mind. All freedom is in the mind.

"The worldly man is drunk with the objects of sense, with name, with fame, with lust, with gold. Be you also drunk, but be drunk with selfless works, with love of God, with ecstasy, with samadhi!"

Swami Brahmananda now came and sat silently beside Swami Premananda. Swami Shivananda followed and sat on a bench facing them. Many young Swamis and Brahmacharis — about sixty altogether, came and sat around the Swamis. In the presence of Swami Brahmananda, the spiritual son and most beloved disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, the minds of all were filled with joy; they became lost in contemplation. Stillness reigned within their hearts; all nature seemed to stand still, while the Ganges flowed silently by.

Some time passed in that great silence, until, after a while, it was broken by a remark about the well-known Shankara Monastery at Puri and the abbots connected with it. Then, as the conversation drifted from one subject to another, Swami Brahmananda said: "Once, when I was at Puri I met a holy man whose name was Ranga Swami. He was about ninety-five years old, and a man of great renunciation. He was always drunk with the love of God. He would eat only that which had first been offered in the temple. At one time he was very ill, and I wanted to give him some medicine, but he refused to take it. Knowing his habit I arranged with the priest of the temple to offer some milk to the Deity, and with that I mixed the medicine which the Swami took as sacramental food."

Swami Shivananda broke in: "I also knew that man! He went to Puri when he was fifteen years old, and lived continually in the temple for eighty years!"

In the course of conversation a well-known writer and preacher was mentioned.

Swami Shivananda: "But what can he know about religion? He is steeped in worldliness. He who does not live the life of renunciation cannot be a teacher. Dispassion is the first principle of spiritual life. A man of learning may write books or give lectures, but if he has no dispassion in his heart, and if he does not practice what he teaches, his words cannot be effective, for they have no power behind them. They merely create a momentary sensation.

"The other day I learned that a certain preacher of the Brahmo Samaj was complaining that more people were coming to the Belur Math and fewer to the Brahmo Samaj, and that someone had suggested that they introduce a girls' choir to attract the people. When the revered Shivanath Shastri heard this he remarked that if the Brahmos would incorporate into their lives more of the dispassion and renunciation of the monks of the Belur Math, they too would attract people."

Swami Brahmananda: "Shivanath Shastri is a sincere soul, and has a great regard for truth. He is earnest in his desire to realize God. He is living now at Bhubaneswar and is practicing spiritual disciplines. He already has some inner awakening. After all, he had the blessed good fortune to associate with our Master. Bijoy Goswami was another great spiritual leader in the Brahmo Samaj, and it was a great loss to them when he left it."

Swami Shivananda: "One day Swamiji, Swami Akhandanda and I were travelling on the river Ganges. Swamiji was speaking very highly of Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore, when all at once we noticed the Maharshi's yacht at some distance from us. We approached nearer to pay our respects to the Maharshi, who, when he learned that we were disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, seemed very happy to meet us, and repeatedly remarked: 'Ah! how great is the love of Sri Ramakrishna! How great is his devotion!' The Maharshi then asked Swamiji to recite some passages from the Upanishads, which he did. After listening for some time he said, 'I understand and appreciate the devotional passages in the Upanishads; I do not care for the non-dualistic ideas.'"

After listening to the discussions for some time, Swami Premananda remarked: "When Shivanath Shastri or some other of the learned members of the Brahmo Samaj would visit Sri Rama-

krishna, he would sometimes become just like a little child and ask them: 'Is my condition really like that of one who is mad? Tell me, have I gone crazy, thinking of God?' And indeed, there were some who really did think that our Master was a mad man!"

Swami Brahmananda: "Only a jeweler can know the value of a jewel. There was once a poor man who found a diamond. He had no idea of its value, so he took it to the vegetable market to have it appraised. The vegetable man looked at it, and then offered him five cents worth of vegetables for it, but the poor man thought it was worth twenty cents worth of vegetables. Upon being refused, he took it to a rice merchant who offered him one bag of rice, but he wanted four bags. Next he went to a goldsmith, and he was offered one hundred rupees. This offer aroused the greed in the poor man, and he began to realize that the diamond was really valuable, so he took it to a jeweler who offered him twenty thousand rupees. Even this did not satisfy him, so he took it to the finest jeweler in the city. As soon as the jeweler saw it he realized its real worth and immediately offered him a million rupees. And that is how it goes. A holy man is judged according to the worth and capacity of the appraiser. By some Sri Ramakrishna was regarded as a holy man, by others as a perfected soul or as a great devotee of God. Some regarded him as a mad man, while still others as an incarnation of God."

Further Reflections on Progress

Aldous Huxley

Continuing the discussion which was begun in the last issue of 'Vedanta and the West,' I shall try, in the present article, to throw some light on the idea of progress in its relation to man's Final End, the realization that 'thou art That.' Seen from the standpoint of the Perennial Philosophy, biological progress is a heritable advance in the quality and extent of consciousness. In the course of terrestrial evolution life has developed awareness, and in man, the highest product of that evolution, awareness has reached the point where any given individual can, (if he so desires, knows how and is prepared to fulfil certain conditions) open himself up to the unitive knowledge of spiritual reality. Biological evolution does not of itself lead automatically to this unitive knowledge. It leads merely to the possibility of such a knowledge. And it leads to this possibility through the development of free will and self-consciousness. But free will and self-consciousness are the root of specifically human ignorance and wrong-doing. The faculties that make the unitive knowledge of reality possible are the very faculties that tempt human beings to indulge in that literally insane and diabolic conduct of which man, alone of all the animals, is capable. This is a world in which nobody ever gets anything for nothing. The capacity to go higher is purchased at the expense of being able to fall lower. Only an angel of light can become the Prince of Darkness. On the lower levels of evolutionary development there is no voluntary ignorance or deliberate evil-doing; but, for that very reason, there is also no enlightenment. That is why, in spite of Buchenwald and Hiroshima, we have to give thanks for having achieved a human birth.

Any creature which lives according to instinct lives in a state of what may be called animal grace. It does, not its will, but the will of God-in-Nature. Man does not live by instinct; his patterns of behavior are not inborn, but acquired. He is at liberty, within the restraints imposed by society and his own habits of thought, to choose the better or the worse, the moral and intellectual means to the Final End or the moral and intellectual means to self-destruction. "Not my will, but Thine, be done." This is the essence of

all religion. Free will is given that self-will may be annihilated in the spiritual equivalent of instinct. Biological progress is a straight line; but the spiritual progress which we are at liberty to superimpose on the human end-product of biological progress rises in a spiral towards a point corresponding to, but incommensurably far above, the position of the animal that lives according to instinct, or the will of God-in-Nature.

Specifically human progress in happiness, virtue and creativeness is valuable, in the last analysis, as a condition of spiritual advance towards man's Final End. Hunger, privation and misery; covetousness, hatred, anger and lust; hide-bound stupidity and insensitiveness — all these are obstacles in the way of spiritual advance. At the same time it should not be forgotten that if happiness, morals and creativeness are treated as ends in themselves instead of means to a further End, they can become obstacles to spiritual advance no less serious, in their way, than wretchedness, vice and conventionality. Enlightenment is not to be achieved by the person whose aim in life is to 'have a good time,' to the puritan worshipper of repressive morality for its own sake, or to the aesthete who lives for the creation or appreciation of formal beauty. Idolatry is always fatal; and even the highest human goods cease to be goods if they are worshipped for their own sake and not used, as they are intended to be used, for the achievement of an ultimate good that transcends them.

We now come to progress in relation to the spiritual life — in relation, that is to say, to the conscious pursuit of man's Final End. Significant in this context is the Buddha's remark that he who says he is an *arhat* thereby proclaims that he is not an *arhat*. In other words, it is fatal to boast of achievement or to take satisfaction in an experience which, if it genuinely partakes of enlightenment, is a product of grace rather than of the personal effort. Progress in spirituality brings contrition as well as joy. The enlightenment is experienced as joy; but this bright bliss illuminates all that, within the self, remains unenlightened, dispelling our normal blind complacency in regard to faults and shortcomings and causing us to regret not merely what we are, but even the very fact of our separate individuality. In total and uninterrupted enlightenment there can be nothing but the love, joy and peace which are the fruits of the spirit; but on the way to that consummation contrition must

alternate with bliss, and progress can be measured by the nature of that which is repented — sins, imperfections and finally our own individualized existence.

Side by side with genuine progress in spirituality is an illusory progress through experiences which are thought to be apprehensions of the ultimate reality, but which are in fact nothing of the kind. These experiences belong to one or other of two main classes. In the first class we find those emotional intoxications induced by focusing devotion upon a figment of the imagination — for example, the mental image of some divine person. Certain classes of spiritual exercises, such as those devised by St. Ignatius Loyola, exist solely for the purpose of training the imaginative powers and of arousing intense emotions in relation to the fantasies thus deliberately conjured up. Genuine mystics, such as St. John of the Cross or the author of "The Cloud of Unknowing," insist that it is, in the very nature of things, impossible to come to a realization of ultimate reality by the cultivation of the fancy and the feelings; for the fancy and the feelings belong to the separate ego, whereas the immanent and transcendent Godhead can only be realized when the separate ego has been stilled and put aside, when an empty space has been created in the mind so as to make room, as it were, for the Atman-Brahman. The ecstasy of fancy-begotten emotions is entirely different from unitive knowledge of the divine Ground.

The illusory experiences of the second class are those induced by a form of self-hypnosis. Great stress is laid in many of the Mahayana sutras on the necessity of avoiding the false *samadhi* of the *sravakas* and the *Pratyeka-Buddhas*. This is a negative condition, an absence of consciousness rather than its transfiguration. The world is escaped; it is not seen anew *sub specie aeternitatis*. "If the doors of perception were cleansed," wrote Blake, "the world would appear as it is, infinite and holy." But in this false *samadhi* there is no cleansing of perception; there is merely a turning away, a temporary abolition of perception. This is a reversion towards the condition of inanimate matter, not a progress towards the Final End of unitive knowledge of the divine reality within the soul and in and beyond the world.

Some Thoughts on Education

Guido Ferrando

That our present system of education, here in America and in the Western world, is, to say the least, unsatisfactory, is a statement which very few people would dare to deny. Today we are passing through the most tragic crisis in the history of mankind; the world is in a state of utmost confusion; our whole social life seems to be crumbling to pieces; nations are rent by internal dissensions and economical and racial struggles; families are disintegrating, while our highest moral and spiritual values are questioned and challenged. There is no doubt that our schools are responsible, to a great measure, for this sad state of affairs; they have taught, more or less intelligently, facts and theories to our boys and girls, but they have not educated them, they have not developed harmoniously their whole nature. They have failed in their mission, and today our children are growing up in an atmosphere of mistrust, of fear, of tragic competitions, without any guiding principles, without any clear understanding of the essential problems of life.

In the last forty years many attempts have been made to bring our schools up to date, to render them more efficient, more scientific, according to a mechanical conception of life based on the marvelous discoveries of science and the ever growing complexity of our economic and social structure. At the same time, education, or rather instruction, was being made compulsory for all up to a certain age, and higher education was being offered, free in many cases, to an increasing number of boys and girls. Thus schools became more and more standardized and vocational. New methods were experimented, especially in the elementary grades, following the pedagogical ideas of this or that well known teacher; but, though some of the ideas were good, the results were not what parents and teachers had expected. All these new theories and methods failed to give very good results, not because, as many people believe, they were not well applied, but because they were mere palliatives; they did not go to the root of the evil.

Let us look at the problem in relation to our way of living, here in America, because, if it is true that the school helps to shape

our life, it is equally true that external circumstances, traditions, religious beliefs, and political and economic conditions, greatly influence the school and determine its nature and its aims. There is a continual action and reaction between the school and society, just as there is between the inner and the outer life of each individual being. Now, our age is preeminently mechanical; it is an age profoundly influenced, one might say revolutionized, by scientific inventions which have given to machines a most important place in our domestic and social life. It is also an age of speed, of rush, of terrific competition, which leaves no time for leisure, for the training of our higher emotions, for concentration and meditation. We live almost completely in an outer world of vulgar facts and sensations, and we crave for amusements which tend to excite our senses and stultify our minds. Rich in material comforts, spiritually we are paupers. We are afraid to be alone with ourselves; we cannot bear silence and solitude, because we are empty within; and we are in continual need to create artificial stimuli from without, to fill this inner emptiness. In short, ours is a materialistic age; we possess an abundance of technical knowledge, but we know very little about ourselves and we are not interested in spiritual values. There is a conflict in our nature due to a complete lack of balance and of harmony between the mind and the heart, the will and the emotions, which is the main cause of the evils that torment and disrupt our individual and our social life. Our system of education does nothing to resolve this conflict which is in each of us, and which we, consciously or unconsciously, project into the outer world where it creates far greater struggles, tragic confusion and destructive wars. This conflict can be solved only if we have a deep understanding of human nature and a sound philosophy of life, which will enable us to see clearly the goal toward which we must direct our efforts. "American democracy," as a well known educator, Howard Brinton, points out in his admirable book on *Quaker Education in Theory and Practice*, "presents no philosophy of life sufficiently fundamental to enable popular education to define its goal and develop its method. Democracy, in its present secular form, does not deal with all of life, nor with ultimate questions." Even the best educators seem to have only limited aims which, though good in themselves, are of no great value, just because they do not touch the fundamental problem of how to make

life harmonious and beautiful, a true expression of the spiritual man. Moreover, it is not enough to say, for instance, that the goal of education is to make a man a good citizen, or to make him successful, since we have first to decide by what standard we judge a citizen good, and a life successful. And when we try to fix a universal standard, we find that it is an impossible task in a society like ours which is always fluctuating, has no accepted tradition, no true religious foundation, no high spiritual ideals. Therefore education in America is pragmatic. This has been openly admitted by the Educational Policies Committee which, in a widely used and favorably reviewed book *The Purpose of Education in American Democracy* makes the following statement: "The general end of education in America at the present time, is the fullest possible development of the individual in the framework of the present industrialized democratic society." The end is a "socially desirable way of living"; and: "the choice of this way of living is primarily determined by the prevailing scale of social and personal value." "Thus," I am quoting again from Mr. Brinton, "the goal of education is determined by the scale of values which prevails at the moment. Man, according to such views, is part of the flux of life to which he adjusts himself as best he can by experimentation. If moral rules are nothing more than the generalizations out of immediate experience, they have no permanence or validity. A student in his school community may discover that dishonesty does not pay, and later, on new experiences in a larger community, he may have to alter his point of view." With very few exceptions, all schools in America, whether public or private, aim at giving boys and girls the necessary tools to acquire success and be socially efficient. Success is measured generally by material standards, and since education reflects the ideals of our industrial age, schools are looked upon as factories, in which teachers are the technically specialized employees, teaching is the processing of raw material, and pupils are the product. Social efficiency depends on the ability to play a distinguished role in the economic, political and religious life of the country; that is, on being a good mixer, pliable, ready to compromise and able to express in a pleasing manner the common feelings, opinions and ideals of the majority. So we seem to be moving in a vicious circle; our industrial and materialistic society shapes the schools, which in their turn, prepare boys and girls to fit into this

type of society, in which shrewdness is more valuable than character, technical skill is more important than speculative mind, and wealth and power are the measure of human greatness.

Since this competitive world of ours has brought us to the verge of utter destruction, and is unable to give peace, justice, order and material security to the suffering people, it is evident that it needs to be changed. The change may come suddenly and violently through a revolution, which, being destructive, must always be followed by a long and often dangerous period of reconstruction; or may come more slowly and more organically through a better education and a deeper understanding. Today education no longer takes place only in the family, in the school and in the religious congregation; the newspapers, the radio, and the movies play a very important part in the shaping of the ideas and the emotions of the masses. We all know how much, these powerful instruments of good and evil, need to be improved and changed in our country; their influence has been, and is, more pernicious than beneficial, because their aim is not to educate, but to make money. The great majority of radio programs: sensational stories of crime and adventure, vulgar and sensual music; the immense number of cheap weekly and monthly papers and magazines appealing to the purely sexual and animal life and emotions of the readers; the incredibly artificial and fundamentally immoral Hollywood films, are the sad expression of the low moral, intellectual and emotional standard of the present generation. Here again we are in a vicious circle; many artists and writers admit that they are prostituting themselves, but their justification is that they give to the public what the public wants, and that, if they tried to serve a higher ideal of art, they would have no recognition and no success; which is unfortunately true. So the press, the radio and the movies, corrupt, instead of educating; they standardize the mind and the emotions of the people whose material life is standardized by mass production and by a marvelous system of advertising. This process of standardization and stultification begins at an early age, as soon as the child learns how to read. His education is started with the "Comics" which, varied in subject, but similar in stupidity, have a circulation of millions and millions of copies. The "Comics" are meant for the child, but older boys and girls read them, and many times the whole family shares this apparently innocent but in reality harmful plea-

sure of following the fantastic adventures of some fantastic human or animal being, whom we are asked to admire for his shrewdness or his physical strength. The stories are so childish that they do not require any effort of mind to be understood; they do not even stir our imagination; the hero always conquers through his cleverness or his brutal force, and never because he is honest, just or pious; might is right. It is tragic to see how the Comics fill a void in the lives of millions of Americans. There was a similar void in the German people; a comic character filled it, and the stupidity of the masses transformed him into a hero who became their idol, their Fuhrer and led them to complete disaster.

The Churches seem to have lost in this period of crisis and transition, their spiritual leadership and much of their prestige, probably because they are not independent, are tied up with worldly interests and are opposed, through their natural conservatism, to any radical changes. The family, as an institution apparently is falling to pieces; there seems to be very little understanding and very little harmony between children and parents; and the latter, having almost no influence on the former after they have reached their teen age, gladly turn them over to the school for their education.

So it is the school, I believe, that must play the most important part in educating rightly the new generation and in preparing a better society. But how can the school, which, as we have seen, is the expression of our materialistic and mechanical society, change radically enough to start the building of a new type of social life, based not on competition, but on cooperation, not on personal success and selfish power but on the realization of the profound unity of life? Evidently, we cannot change our educational system all of a sudden, by the touch of a magical wand. We, and by "we" I mean all the people who are sincerely interested in education and realize the urgent necessity of changing our school system, we must first of all get a clear idea of what education should be, and then start with small experimental schools, trying to work out this idea. We must proceed without fear and without haste, knowing that we will make mistakes and that we can profit by them, and being ready to better and modify our plan, which should not be rigid, but flexible, subject to change, within certain limits and according to circumstances. There are some points, I believe, which should

be agreed upon, and accepted as the foundation of the new school. One of them is that education does not consist mainly in developing the intellect and the will of the pupils, but in bringing out harmoniously all their nature; it does not consist only in imparting facts and dates and in explaining theorems and scientific formulas, but even more in training the pupil to use his mind, so that he may truly understand, and not simply accept and memorize, what he is being taught in the class-room. Here the ancient wisdom of the Eastern world, of India and China, can be of help to us. The Indian and Chinese teachers saw clearly that the *mediate* knowledge one acquires in the school, is of no value if it does not lead to the *immediate* knowledge of our own self, to the understanding of life as the expression of a universal Spirit of which we are a conscious part. They knew, what science is forced to admit today, that our phenomenal world is not reality; it is only the interpretation or creation of our perceptive mind. They also knew that our logical intelligence is only an instrument which we can use to explain this material, illusory world of phenomena, but which will never lead us to the real; and they knew that there is a higher form of intelligence which expresses itself through our imagination, and even more through our heart. Love is the highest form of understanding; without love we cannot really know anything or anybody; even the scientists achieve their marvelous results through the love of their subject, which illumines and inspires their minds. Only Love which is not an emotion, but a purification of our animal nature and an illumination of our mind, can lift the veil of illusion and bring us in touch with reality. This profound truth should be instilled in the minds of the pupils since an early age; and we should try to keep alive in them the sense of wonder which is the child's most precious gift and the means of appreciating the infinite beauty of our world; and at the same time we should develop in their hearts the feeling of reverence, so sadly lacking in our present system of education, and so essential for a true understanding of life. Boys and girls should not become arid and dry and look upon life as a matter of fact; they should be taught to look at the infinitely small and at the infinitely great in such a way as to stir their imagination, and make them realize in a vivid manner the awful mystery of creation and urge them to ask themselves: "What

am I? What is life?" From that moment on their real education will begin.

Another fundamental point is the understanding of the nature of teaching; teaching is not a profession, but a mission. Here again the Indians, with their wonderful conception of the Guru, the teacher, can be of help to us. The real teacher is a second father to the pupil; he is a creative artist who moulds the soul of the child, brings out all that is good in it, and eliminates all that is bad. The teacher can have only a limited number of pupils, so that he may know them well and be in constant touch with them. He must be free from economical worries and have complete liberty in the fulfilment of his great task. We must always remember that it is the teacher that makes the school; the pedagogic theories are secondary. So the most important thing is to find the good teacher, the educator. In every community there are always a few men and women who are born for this mission and would be glad to dedicate themselves to it, if they were encouraged and given a sufficient moral and financial support. There is no hope for a better school until society changes its attitude toward the teachers. Today they are not only shamefully underpaid, but they are not honored, respected and protected as they should be. Our people must be made to realize the supreme importance of the function of the teacher, and give him not one of the lowest, but one of the highest, if not the highest, standing in our social life. Then, many potentially good educators who are now, for economic and moral reasons, attracted toward other fields of human activity, would willingly dedicate themselves to this most arduous task of educating, and would bring new life to the schools and through them, to the whole nation.

Other points should be studied in connection with this great problem of reforming our schools, but, since they are more controversial, they cannot be discussed in this short article, whose aim is to call the attention of intelligent people to the deficiency of our present educational system, and at the same time to put forward certain fundamental ideas on the meaning and goal of human education.

Walt Whitman on Learning and Wisdom

Dorothy F. Mercer

"Have we not darken'd and dazed ourselves with books long enough?"

And since all who win Krishna must cross the sea of illusion, to call attention away from the inner and essential begets a reliance upon the outward and non-essential, upon the illusion. In this way it may be said that learning defeats its own end since the written word stands between man and the real nature of the universe. Man finds value in the word or symbol in place of in the thing symbolized; he imagines learning in itself to be important rather than the object for which the learning is acquired. Consequently, *Leaves of Grass* is a screed against scholars. Whitman considers that the meaning of a particular poem has little value when one is able to "possess the origin of all poems." Since one may "filter" poems from oneself, it is a waste of time to "look through the eyes of the dead." "Do not 'feed on the spectres in books,' or 'take things at second or third hand; filter them from yourself,'" he admonishes.

In truth, there is more than loss of time, thinks Whitman, in "practising so long to learn to read"; there is a positive danger. Books daze the reader; they darken his mind thereby precluding the unleashing of his entire power. More, through their darkening strength they present an erroneous idea of the real nature of the universe as well as presenting a barrier to ultimate reality: through learning men are entangled more deeply in the forest of ignorance; they forget that "education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man" not of a perfection that comes to him through phenomena; they forget all politics and civilizations "exurged" from them. One must have more than book learning be it ever so profound; one must have "passage to more than India," sound "below the Sanskrit and the Vedas," according to *Leaves of Grass*, if one wishes to have his full force loosened.

In other words, one must have his whole energy focused to attain wisdom; for wisdom is not a matter of information; information is gained from phenomena, and phenomena are deceptive, illusive; and more, they scatter man's power in place of concen-

trating it. Wisdom, one might say, is a personal matter since it cannot be tested in schools or transmitted from one to another. It is not a matter of accumulated learning that depends on phenomena, but of inner attitude that depends on spiritual knowledge. And because of this it cannot be objectively proved. "Wisdom is of the Soul," as Whitman says, "is not susceptible of proof, is its own proof."

This explains, it seems to me, Whitman's antipathetic attitude towards learning, such an antipathetic attitude that one of his most favorable critics said of him, "He was without the discipline of education and underrated or ignored its value." From the viewpoint of the Vedanta Whitman was not without the discipline of education; he was above the discipline of education; education was beneath him: he had realized all knowledge, for he had penetrated maya. What is the value of a "well in overflowed lands?"

The Vedantin likewise has little use for education. Scholarship does not give that resolute thought which is fit for divine meditation. In fact, it is not only negative in its power to reveal ultimate reality but it is also dangerous; for those who have it think they have the total truth thereby precluding any effort toward attaining that high concentration which is necessary for liberation. Words are like shadows standing between unwary man and his soul; the farther he penetrates, the darker the shadows fall until night settles. Moreover, the Vedas and their knowledge have no value for the man who has gained supreme knowledge; they are like a "well in overflowed lands."

And further, even though a man may not lose sight of the ultimate purpose in learning, still he should not so distract his mind; all his powers should be fixed and focused. It is a sign of unintelligence, lack of discrimination, to waste time concentrating on particular bits of objective information when one may concentrate on that knowledge which is all revealing. Gaining salvation is hard enough at best without adding any unnecessary burden, and learning is an unnecessary burden. So Krishna tells Arjuna:

"And when your mind shall leave behind
 Confused delusions vain,
 Then scriptures — present and to-be —
 Will fill you with disdain.
 "When once your mind, to scriptures blind,

Stands firm and fixed within
 Pure concentration, you attain
 The perfect discipline."

Master and Disciple

George Sandwich

The Disciple.

Master, how may the mind devise
 The road to freedom? You are wise,
 A chemist of the soul's essay
 Of work or love or wisdom's way
 Or contemplation. Should the will
 As in a crucible, distil
 All these or one or other? Sure
 In essence must the heart be pure;
 Yet even so rare is the light
 Revealed to him who redes aright,
 Even if duly dedicate
 To meditation, early, late
 And unattached, without desire.
 A Saint sometime is wrapt in fire,
 But, consciousness returning, mute,
 Aware yet of the Absolute;
 Or as Saint Paul, whom Christ assigned
 A gopeller, was stricken blind.
 Can Heaven a messenger afford
 To a simple man who loves the Lord
 Or Lady Mother or the One,
 The Mystic Love, the Noumenon
 In nature immanent, as some
 By beauty may be overcome?
 Can such a lover, devotee
 Be wrapt in Bliss, as well as he
 Who stillness needs to point the way?
 Can love and work fuse the allay,

Or possible intelligence
 Transmute to gold the lead of sense?

The Master.

My son, there's truth in your alloy,
 Yet sacrifice of self, ere joy
 Or freedom follow, there must be,
 The elixir of true alchemy.
 Yet, while the East may equal rate
 Both love and work, to meditate
 Is more Himalayan a path
 O'er virgin rock and aftermath,
 Where fallen tree and bush bestrew
 The jungle – found by but a few;
 The forest of monasticism
 Be their's, untouchable by schism.
 Some wisdom try, but intellect
 Bars oft the pathway, to direct
 A pilgrim to a well worn track,
 The relative, to turn him back.
 Another way is called Good Deed,
 Yet only if a man pay heed
 His work be selfless, nor return
 Be covet, else no briars burn;
 For on this path the thickets lie,
 The trailings of activity
 That turn a hatchet-blade aside;
 Attachment clings here, no less pride;
 And squandered time gives no release,
 No silence for essential peace.

My son, you ask if The One, adored
 By some as Mother, some as Lord
 Appear in vision to bring ease
 To the strivings of the devotees.
 Christ said the pure in heart see God;
 So love is a pathway to be trod,
 For in the heart The Lord has sown
 The Spirit of Love; yet men disown

This power that He to all entrusts,
 And blindfold by the self or lusts
 Bethink them sinners: yet the sin
 Is to deny The Lord within,
 For they are but his instruments;
 Nor know they that the world of sense
 Is as a clouding of the sky
 To veil the sun's reality.
 Supreme is God's high mystery;
 Initiates declare that He
 Is formless and has form, and shows
 Himself in Oneness, or to those
 Of Love's way as the Incarnate One
 Of any faith, as Christ the Son;
 Or even, as holy Saints rehearse,
 The Mother of the universe,
 Whom Ramakrishna once adored,
 Or Bernadette, the child of Lourdes.
 And there are ways He may devise
 To gather souls through nature's guise,
 For He in Heavenly Joy and prone
 To laugh with man; not man alone
 Holds humour in monopoly.
 He shows himself in poetry
 And pictures; music he endows
 With radiance. His Nature flows
 Through mammal, fish and bird and tree,
 Through flower, rock, unfathomed sea,
 While science poses, man disputes
 The nature of His Attributes.

The Disciple.

Man says, if God were Love, that He
 Would ne'er have given humanity
 A mingled cup of grief and joy
 But bliss, like gold without alloy.

The Master.

The Christ was born on earth as he

And suffered death's humility,
 A spotless Sacrifice, His Cross
 A crucible indeed. No dross
 Was there. In truth the dust, the mire
 Is of man's making, man's desire,
 Exploiting others for his ends.
 It is for him to make amends,
 Not God, who gives the breath of life
 To man for love and not for strife.

In brief, in answer to your quest,
 Whate'er the course, the manifest
 Needs clear the vessel, to be free
 To reach its port, its destiny.
 Surrendered self brings joy and hope,
 And sorrow takes its proper scope.
 The effort due from every man,
 Yet unattached, is his to plan
 In ways and means; the right to ends
 On God's Almighty will depends.
 Endeavor e'er should take its stance
 Yet always yield if arrogance
 Intrude, or lustful fire and greed,
 In conflict with the Spirit's need.
 And if the wrestle be intense
 Of Spirit with the world of sense,
 Dwell not in thought upon the sin
 But where the Kingdom lies within.
 So have no fear and work for love,
 And commune with the Power above,
 Letting the little self be lost
 As a drop is one with the Ocean-host;
 Thus gaining in humility
 The sooner will the Soul be free.

A Prayer

From the Svetasvatara Upanishad

O Lord, thou art without form, and yet, together with maya – for what purpose, who can say? – thou bringest forth many forms, and having brought them forth thou withdrawest them into thyself. Fill thou our minds with thoughts of thee!

Thou art the fire, thou art the sun,
 Thou art the air, thou art the moon,
 Thou art the starry firmament,
 Thou art Brahman Supreme.
 Thou art the waters – thou, the creator of all.

Thou art woman, thou art man,
 Thou art the youth, thou art the maiden,
 Thou art the old man tottering with his staff;
 Thou art born with faces everywhere.

Thou art the dark butterfly,
 Thou art the green parrot with red eyes,
 Thou art the thunder cloud, the seasons, the oceans.
 Without beginning art thou,
 Beyond time, beyond space.
 Thou art he from whom sprang the three worlds.

Maya is thy divine consort, united with thee. Thou art her master, her ruler. Red, white, and black is she, each color a guna; and many are her children, and forms and objects of nature, in every way like to herself. Thou, spirit in flesh, forgetful of thy true nature, for a time remainest joined to maya, but at last, parting from her, thou regainest thyself.

Like two birds of beautiful, golden plumage, inseparable companions – thou the immortal Brahman, and thou the individual man, two beings yet the same – are perched on the branches of the self-same tree. As man, thou dost taste the sweet and bitter fruits of the tree; as Brahman, ruler of maya, thou remainest invisible, calmly observing.

Forgetting his oneness with thee, bewildered by his weakness, man is filled with sorrow. But let him recognize thee as his own

Self, O worshipful Lord, and behold thy glory, his sorrow shall be turned to joy.

Thou art the changeless — supreme and pure. In thee dwell the gods. Thou art the source of all scriptures — but what shall these profit a man if he recite them with his lips and know not thee in his heart? To him who knows thee comes fullness, and to him alone.

Thou art lord of maya — man her slave. By her hast thou brought forth the universe. The source of all scriptures art thou, and the source of all religions. The universe of name and form is thy maya; thou, great God, her lord — wherever the eye falls, thou fillest every form.

One thou art, and one only.
 Born in many wombs,
 Thou hast become many:
 Unto thee all return.
 Thou, Lord God, bestowest all blessings,
 Thou the light, thou the adorable one.
 Whosoever finds thee
 Finds infinite peace.

Thou art Lord God of all gods —
 All the worlds rest in thee;
 Thou art ruler of the beasts,
 Two-footed, four-footed;
 Our heart's worship be thine!
 Thou art the blissful Lord,
 Subtler than the subtlest.
 In thee alone is there peace.

Thou, sole guardian of the universe,
 Thou, lord of all,
 Hidest thyself in the hearts of thy creatures.
 Gods and seers become one with thee.
 Those who know thee burst the bonds of death.

Of all religions thou art the source.
 The light of thy knowledge shining,
 There is nor day nor night,
 Nor being nor non-being —
 Thou alone art.

