

VEDANTA

and the

WEST

JANUARY • FEBRUARY • 1950

The Upanishads

BREATH OF THE ETERNAL

A new translation, with an introduction, by Swami Prabhavananda and Frederick Manchester—published in two editions.

De Luxe: \$5.00

Regular: \$2.50

The Eternal Companion

New, Revised Edition.

\$2.50

The teachings of Swami Brahmananda, with a detailed and moving biographical essay by his disciple, Swami Prabhavananda. Brahmananda (1863—1922) was for many years the head of the Ramakrishna Order, and one of the saints of modern India. A book which can be lived by; a powerful daily inspiration to the life of prayer.

"They are like the greatest poetry in that the words are always so simple that anyone could have used them but they are so used as to carry a charge of meaning which is quite unanalysable and illuminating. When I read Brahmananda I don't remember a word he says but feel for some time after that finding God is obviously the only possible concern for a human life."—GERALD HEARD

Published by Vedanta Press



VEDANTA and the WEST

VEDANTA SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Issued bi-monthly. Publication office: 1946 Ivar Avenue, Los Angeles 28, California

50c a copy, \$3.00 a year

Copyright 1950, by Swami Prabhavananda

2 years — \$5.00

Editor: Swami Prabhavananda

Managing Editor: Sister Amiya

Vol. XIII

JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 1950

No. 1

C O N T E N T S

THE SPIRITUAL MESSAGE OF THE BHAGAVAD-GITA <i>Swami Aseshananda</i>	2
VEDANTA AND WESTERN HISTORY (II) <i>Gerald Heard</i>	7
YOGA APHORISMS OF PATANJALI <i>Swami Prabhavananda</i> <i>Christopher Isherwood</i>	11
FOREWORD TO AN ESSAY ON THE INDIAN PHILOSOPHY OF PEACE <i>Aldous Huxley</i>	16
THE IDEAL OF RENUNCIATION <i>Swami Prabhavananda</i>	19
FOREWORD TO A MAN OF GOD <i>Christopher Isherwood</i>	25
AN ACCLAMATION.....	27
JOSEPHINE MACLEOD (1858-1949) <i>Sister Amiya</i>	28

The Spiritual Message of the Bhagavad-Gita

Swami Asehananda

The Bhagavad-Gita is one of the most outstanding scriptures of the Hindus. It is placed on the same high altar of worship as is the Bible of the Christians and the Koran of the Muslims. It is revered by all denominations of the Hindus, irrespective of creed, caste, or province. It is the discourse of a perfect man to a dejected soul; it is an intimate talk to a troubled disciple by a loving teacher. It speaks of those human values which are of permanent and universal appeal.

By its own intrinsic merit the message of the Bhagavad-Gita has travelled far and wide; it has crossed oceans and scaled mountains. It has been translated from the original Sanskrit into almost all the languages of India, and into many of the more important languages of the West. As one reputed Western scholar — who had made a deep study of the Oriental classics — remarked: “The Gita is the most beautiful, nay, perhaps the only true philosophical song existing in any known tongue. Its popularity alone speaks for its profundity and proves that it contains the quintessence of all scriptures.”

One of the most prepossessing features of the Gita is the universality of its appeal. Its wonderful catholicity arrests the attention of all who read it. It belongs to no particular period or people. Its mission is to supplement rather than to supplant the faith of a devotee born in another creed. It tells us that there are as many paths leading to the supreme goal as there are different temperaments, and shows us that all who strive spiritually will reach the same destination no matter which path is followed, even as many rivers rising from different sources and following divergent paths all seek the sea and lose themselves in it. The message of the Gita is the message of fellowship between all faiths, and of an understanding between man and man in a spirit of true reverence and sympathy.

Another unique characteristic of the Gita is that it addresses itself to men of different moods and temperaments. Its language is simple. Its appeal is straightforward. It can serve as an inspiration to either monk or householder; to either a thinker or a man of action. Rightly has it been called the “Song Celestial,” containing as it does a music which thrills the listener with rapturous joy and brings solace to the heavy-laden heart. How many broken hearts has it healed, and

how many sinful souls has it reclaimed by its sweet and silent message! Even the most unworthy may find shelter in its embrace. None is doomed. None is given up as lost. Like a kind mother, it sees no fault; it never condemns. It is filled with an overwhelming compassion for all our human weaknesses:

Though a man be soiled
 With the sins of a lifetime,
 Let him but love me,
 Rightly resolved,
 In utter devotion:
 I see no sinner,
 That man is holy.
 Holiness soon
 Shall refashion his nature
 To peace eternal; . . .
 Of this be certain:
 The man that loves me,
 He shall not perish.

In life and in death, in youth and in age, in solitude and in company, the Gita has been a never-failing companion to millions of people down through the centuries. Its wonderful gospel has infused life into dead bones, faith into wavering minds, and love into dry hearts. It comes to our rescue "when other helpers fail and comforts flee."

Mahatma Gandhi, one of the greatest men of our age, would never let a day pass without a recital from the Gita. With preparation and with prayer, with mind alert, he would read the Gita, and from it he learned this simple lesson: If a man performs his duties and dedicates the fruit of his deeds to God, he attains purity of heart and achieves final liberation from the bondage of the flesh. In his reminiscences he writes: "When doubt haunts me, when disappointment stares me in the face, and when I see not one ray of light on the horizon, I turn to the Bhagavad-Gita and find a verse to comfort me and immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming sorrow. My life has been full of overwhelming tragedies, and if they have not left any visible effect on me I owe it to the reading of the Bhagavad-Gita."

Our frail human bark feels desolate when the storms of life blow hard upon it, and when the roaring waves of adversity threaten

to engulf it. For, in spite of material progress, our destiny is cast in a universe which is full of trouble, pain, and disappointment. The Psalmist calls it a vale of tears, wherein man comes weeping, and wherefrom he departs moaning. No doubt there are pleasures also, but, like lightning flashes, they merely serve to emphasize the darkness of our lives. In this travail of misery, is there then no hope for man? The Gita assures us that there is a God who cares, that He is a benign Providence extremely responsive to the least call of man, and that if a man will but go forward even one step toward God, God will advance ten steps toward him. Everything depends upon faith and self-surrender. The more one loves God, the more will God manifest Himself in one's heart. The breeze of God's grace is always blowing, but, like lazy sailors, instead of unfurling our sails to catch the breeze, we fritter away our time and energies in vain talk and fruitless discussion. We do not take advantage of the golden opportunity at hand. The end and aim of life is to know God, by knowing whom one knows all things.

A spiritual aspirant must meditate on God with undivided attention. In deep meditation all the functions of the senses come to a standstill. The outgoing tendencies of the mind are checked; it becomes steady — an unflickering flame. The man who practices meditation daily possesses a mind free from worldly desire, and a will which enables him to face calmly all the problems of life. Meditation has been prescribed as the most effective means of controlling the senses and purging the mind of all its dross. If meditation is practiced in the right manner it will lead the aspirant to the desired goal of Self-realization. "Then" as the Gita points out, "he knows that infinite happiness which can be realized by the purified heart but is beyond the grasp of the senses. He stands firm in this realization. Because of it, he can never again wander from the inmost truth of his being."

Now that he holds it
He knows that treasure
Above all others:
Faith so certain
Shall never be shaken
By heaviest sorrow.

Erudition, wealth, fame, or power will not save a man from the clutches of death. Nothing will accompany him on his journey to

the "back of beyond." The Lord alone can be his unailing companion and deliverer from the chain of birth and death. Without His blessings our individual efforts, no matter how strenuous, cannot achieve their highest goal. In the Upanishads we read: "Not by study, nor by intelligence, nor by much learning can the vision of God be attained, but by him alone whom the Lord chooses." This, however, does not mean that God is capricious or partial. Far from it. It means only that he is the searcher of every heart. He looks within and examines the inner motive of every man. He confers His grace on those that rely on Him and place absolute confidence in Him. From the insolent and the self-righteous He withdraws; to the yearning soul He comes quickly, bringing comfort and consolation.

A divine discontent is a most essential prerequisite for divine realization. The seekers after God must cry out with the poet:

"God, the One, the All of being, let me lose my life in Thine:
Let me be what Thou hast made me, humble quiver of Thy
flame.

Purge my self from self's pollution, turn it into life Divine,
Burn it till it dies triumphant in the firespring whence it came."

The feeling that one lacks devotion to God is a healthy sigh. Craving for mundane things is weakening, since it does not take us nearer to the goal; but craving for God is invigorating. The very name of God is a tower of strength and a perennial fountain of joy, but it must be uttered with transparent sincerity. Mechanical repetition, repetition without fervor, is but a vain mockery. The silent recital of the divine name is superior to noisy chantings devoid of any feeling. In order to draw His sympathy our hearts must melt and our meditations must be one-pointed. Many wonderful visions are sometimes experienced in the depths of contemplation; and such visions may come to the physically blind, even as mystic sounds may be heard by the physically deaf. Such extrasensory perceptions may serve as milestones on the way, but they do not represent the last stage of spiritual realization. The crown — the apex — of spiritual disciplines is reached when the separate individuality of the meditator is merged by supreme love and undifferentiated knowledge into the Being of the Absolute. Like the salt doll that became merged in the ocean, the seeker after God must lose all distinctive characteristics and become one in the all-comprehensive, blissful consciousness of the Eternal Spirit. When this experience comes it blasts all desires and

destroys all dualities. All miseries flee, and death is swallowed up in victory. The bonds of the heart are broken and all doubts are banished.

This state is described in the scriptures as *Jivanmukti* — perfection while living in the body. The liberated man is absolutely free from fear and false expectations. Having realized himself in all beings and all beings in himself he hates none. Having freed himself from the illusion of egocentric individuality, he works under the spell of universal love, and carries within himself at all times the knowledge of non-duality. By the birth of such a man — a man who has realized the immortality of his soul and its oneness with the universal spirit — his entire family becomes exalted. His mother is blessed, and the very earth is sanctified.

This is the state of enlightenment in Brahman:
 A man does not fall back from it
 Into delusion.
 Even at the moment of death
 He is alive in that enlightenment:
 Brahman and he are one.

*What availeth devotion, what penance, what fasting and worship,
 To him in whose heart there is worldly love?
 O man, apply thy heart to God;
 Thou shalt not attain Him by artifice.
 Put away covetousness and the example of others;
 Lay aside lust, wrath, and pride.
 Renounce honour, renounce boasting;
 Then the pride of your mind will be broken.
 For those who steal and devour:
 That plant will blossom again.
 If one pursues riches and worldly honour:
 That plant brings him again into the world.
 Give up lies, know them to be lies; this world is an illusion.
 For this cause do I speak, that you may find escape.*

—Kabir

Vedanta and Western History (II)

Gerald Heard

Dr. Heinrich Zimmer concludes his study 'Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilisation' with a charming fable. He tells of a Rabbi who dreamed a number of times that he must leave his own small house in the ghetto of Cracow and travel to Prague, for there on the bridge leading to the castle he would find a treasure. Finally the Rabbi agreed to obey his dream. Arriving at Prague and going to the bridge he found it guarded. So he waited for a long while. At last the captain of the bridge noticing the old man hanging about, spoke to him kindly, asking what he was waiting for. The Rabbi, being good to the point of ingenuousness told him. The captain however remained as friendly, indeed breaking into laughter and becoming confidential. 'Why,' he told the poor old pilgrim, 'I myself had a dream of just the same nonsensical sort, but, as you might say it was even more upside down! My dream told me to go to the house of an old Rabbi in Cracow in the ghetto there — and behind his stove I would find a treasure! You see what nonsense dreams are! There's no treasure on this bridge I can assure you. And you and I know that the last place in the world to find a treasure — this bridge would be better — would be the dwelling of a starving Rabbi in the Cracow ghetto.' The Rabbi bowed and said nothing more — for he had forgotten to tell his friend where he had come from. He returned back straightway to his home. He dug behind the stove and found a buried bag of gold coin.

Dr. Zimmer used this illustration to point out how much India can help the West. And that one of its main services is to send us back to our own branch of the great stream of the knowledge of God that has flowed down all the ages and through every land. True enough our own stream has for the last three hundred years been mainly underground but even then we may (as one may in New Mexico) trace where the water still runs, by the green tree that here and there breaks up and stands fresh among the dry stones of the old surface river-bed.

Many people are still inclined to think that spirituality has never been native or natural to the West. That however is not true and could only be advanced by one who was not interested in history.

Indeed we might say that till three or four centuries ago the West was as deeply interested in spirituality as the East. Sir William Flinders Petrie, the great Egyptologist, once remarked the East seems asleep to the West because when the East is awake the West is asleep. Perhaps we may try and make the definition more exact and say that when the West is looking outward at the apparent world the East is looking inward. Certainly, as Dr. Blakeney, the latest editor of Eckhart, has pointed out, today the far east — China — which he has lately been visiting — has become keenly contemptuous of the inner life, despises the Taoist mysticism and seeks in improving the environment by mechanical means, the only happiness of man. Certainly today we of the West are wearying of our effort to create happiness outside ourselves; and our basic science, Physics, is now tending to see the visible world as a projection of our minds or a selection made by them. Increasingly the philosophy of Science is returning to epistemology — the study of how our minds apprehend what they take to be objective. Nor need we think that we are being untrue to our past or taking to a metaphysic for which we have no gift or calling. The West till four centuries ago was not only as religious as the East but also as keenly interested not merely in the path of devotion but in that of spiritual knowledge. The History of the West in regard to pure Spirituality is not only interesting but instructive. The great issue of the worship of God with form or without form was worked out and disputed in the West and what is more, the spiritual have on the whole tended to be those who have worshipped God without form. The two sources of Western Religion are the Hebrew and the Greek. Both of these religious traditions when they rose to the point that they could become of use to a wide circle of their neighbors had found it necessary to dispense with forms: To Plato and Plotinus, to Hillel and to Philo, anthropomorphism was equally unhelpful. It was from this blend of Greek and Hebrew mysticism that there sprang up in Syria the teaching of the 'Dionysian' school, that via negativa which by a series of denials, flakes off all incrustation of image and leaves the mind with an essential apprehension. It is important to remember that though the Western world in the Fifth and Sixth century A.D. was sinking in cultural and mechanic skill, it was this very advanced spiritual teaching that took men's minds. The works of this strange 'Pseudipigraphist' first passed to Constantinople where they were approved

by a Church Council and thence into France. There they came into the hands of the great Irish scholar, Scotus Erigena, one of the few men of the West who then could translate Greek — in which the works were written. Erigena was such a passionate Advaitist that he is said to have been murdered by being stabbed to death with the pencils of his students — a martyr to Monism. The violent Iconoclastic controversy of the Eastern Church time and again gave the victory to those who would have no images of God and who felt that only in the worship of the imageless could Western Man be satisfied. The pure contemplatives of Ireland seem to have followed the same path. Only in India can an intensity of Contemplation equal to that of Ireland's be found for this fire of solitary contemplation burnt longer in the extreme western island than it did in the Egyptian desert. And throughout that tradition there is a passion for the formless, a drive toward the jnana contemplation which today we consider as specifically Eastern. So too with the great Rhineland mystics though they were probably revived in their interest in pure intellectual love of God by infiltrations from the East. In the monastic system, also, when the solitaries of Ireland (the culdees or lonely anchorites) began to be gathered into small groups, here too the worship of the formless, the jnana approach, is native and cultural to the far West. The first monasteries of Western Europe owe nearly everything to these Irish 'religious' and the evangelisation of central Europe is due largely to their efforts. Columbanus the great Celtic monk, lies buried at Bobbio in South Italy. It is against this pure and advanced form of religious life and thought that Benedict, the Italian, offers his more formal, organised, liturgical way. Pure mental prayer, contemplation, is to be secondary — and inessential — beside the reciting of the offices, the repetition of the psalter, the performance of the mass. Naturally this is the easier way, and may be the safer, and so it naturally won. But when the reaction came and these forms were challenged, because they were worshipped formally and not with real devotion and also because the reality which was claimed for them appeared to be superstitious — then the Church had nothing to oppose to the bleak critical puritanism. The mystic insight and practice whereby the consciousness may be changed had been neglected under the excuse of what was called liturgical piety — and the form, perfunctorily performed — an excuse for and not an aid to attention — appeared to be empty of content. Certain it is that

all forms do wear out. We can watch in the well-documented and dated history of the West how first in the 13th Century Motherhood is worshipped. As Henry Adams pointed out, throughout the whole of Chartres Cathedral there is in window and in stone only praise of the divine motherhood: the divine man dying on the Tree is lacking. Then a century after churches of St. Saviour are founded everywhere, the sacred body becomes worshipped (Corpus Christi), The Five Wounds and then the Sacred Heart. Until once more the Virgin begins to absorb devotion, is named as the sole channel of Grace and the cult of the sacred heart once confined to her divine son is now extended to her. And we must always remember that, as such shifts of the form of devotion take place, there is always danger — and this of course actually took place during the Protestant revolution — that with the form the spirit will be banished. The West is still little interested in true religion and pure spirituality today because the worship of God with form was challenged, and had exhausted the attention of devotees. The old forms became empty, no new forms took their place and the worship of God without form had not been inculcated or the method of such worship taught. True enough for a while Quakerism seemed as though it might be the jnana of the West or at least a devotion to the Formless. But the lack of method and of expert knowledge of the mystical approach and an increasing concern with social service drew off the minds of this small communion and the early promise was not fulfilled. Today however we are returning to our original interest in pure spirituality and it must be repeated that interest (as shown by our pure research in Science) tends to be toward jnana more than to devotion of the emotions. Those who wish for worship with forms and images can find it in the West in Roman Catholicism. But those who cannot obtain from the muliformity of Catholicism and its strong tendency to anthropomorphism the sense of the Presence of the Spaceless and Timeless Being are in need of a free but deep worship such as Vedanta can promise. Some further suggestions of this possible development will be made in a final article.

Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali

Swami Prabhavananda

Christopher Isherwood

34. *The mind may also be calmed by expulsion and retention of the breath.*

The word used here by Patanjali is *prana*. Prana actually means energy — the vital energy which we draw into ourselves from the surrounding universe. Since this energy is obtained primarily by breathing, we may translate prana as 'breath' in this particular context.

Later on, we shall learn more about the system of breathing exercises which was evolved by Patanjali and his followers. It is known as *pranayama*. But, without going into details, it is necessary to make two general observations here.

First, we must note that Patanjali sees control of the mind as a psycho-physical problem. In this he agrees with modern scientific thought. Studies of breathing have shown that the method of respiration affects the whole organism. Calmness can actually be induced by deep steady inhalations and exhalations. Mental disturbance and despondency are accompanied (as Patanjali notes in aphorism 31) by irregular breathing; rapid, shallow and uncontrolled.

Secondly, it must never be forgotten that pranayama is merely a physical means to a spiritual end. Many uninformed people imagine that Yoga is nothing but a system of breathing exercises and complicated postures — 'holding your breath and standing on your head.' Whereas, in fact, such exercises are only one of many techniques for gaining control of the mind. Like all other such techniques, they should only be employed by those whose aim is spiritual enlightenment. Others, who merely wish for a beautiful body and a prolongation of their youth, will find them effective, certainly, but also dangerous. Over-indulgence in breathing-exercises, just for the sake of the agreeable 'oxygen-jag' which they produce, may lead to hallucinations and, possibly, insanity. And, even at best, an excessive preoccupation with our physical appearance and well-being is obviously a distraction, causing us to forget, in silly vanity, our proper purpose.

35. *Those forms of concentration which result in extraordinary perceptions encourage perseverance of the mind.*

Because most of us are naturally skeptical, despite our affirmed 'beliefs', we need to be reassured that the powers of mind over matter really exist. Despite countless, well-documented experiments, carried out under the strictest laboratory conditions, we still smile apologetically when we speak of telepathy, pre-cognition, and the phenomena of mediumship. If we have studied the subject at all, we cannot exactly disbelieve that such things are possible, but still — they haven't happened to *us*. Until they do, the mind harbors its little germ of doubt.

Patanjali therefore recommends that we shall try to develop some 'extraordinary perceptions' for ourselves. We are told that if a man concentrates on the tip of his nose he will smell wonderful perfumes. If concentration is fixed on the tip of the tongue, a supernormal sense of taste will result; if on the palate, a supernormal sense of color; if on the middle of the tongue, a supernormal sense of touch; if on the root of the tongue, a supernormal sense of hearing. Such powers are of no value in themselves, but they at least serve to prove what can be done with the mind, just as acrobatic tricks in a gymnasium prove how powerful and flexible a trained human body can become. Thus we begin to understand that everything is possible to those who can concentrate, and so we are encouraged to persevere, to break through the barriers of ordinary sense-perception and to press forward fearlessly in our search for inner knowledge. The physical strength gained in a gymnasium can be used later for practical purposes. The mental strength gained through these exercises in concentration can be used for the most practical purpose of all; to unite ourselves with the Atman.

36. *Concentration may also be attained by fixing the mind upon the Inner Light, which is beyond sorrow.*

The ancient Yogis believed that there was an actual center of spiritual consciousness, called 'the lotus of the heart', situated between the abdomen and the thorax, which could be revealed in deep meditation. They claimed that it had the form of a lotus and that it shone with an inner light. It was said to be 'beyond sorrow', since those who saw it were filled with an extraordinary sense of peace and joy.

From the very earliest times, the masters of Yoga emphasized the importance of meditating upon this lotus. 'The supreme heaven shines in the lotus of the heart,' says the Kaivalya Upanishad: 'Those who struggle and aspire may enter there. Retire into solitude. Seat yourself on a clean spot in an erect posture, with the head and neck in a straight line. Control all sense-organs. Bow down in devotion to your teacher. Then enter the lotus of the heart and meditate there on the presence of Brahman — the pure, the infinite, the blissful.'

And in the Chandogya Upanishad we read: 'Within the city of Brahman, which is the body, there is the heart, and within the heart there is a little house. This house has the shape of a lotus, and within it dwells that which is to be sought after, inquired about, and realized.

What, then, is that which dwells within this little house, this lotus of the heart? What is it that must be sought after, inquired about, and realized?

Even so large as the universe outside is the universe within the lotus of the heart. Within it are heaven and earth, the sun, the moon, the lightning and all the stars. Whatever is in the macrocosm is in this microcosm also.

All things that exist, all beings and all desires, are in the city of Brahman; what, then, becomes of them when old age approaches and the body dissolves in death?

Though old age comes to the body, the lotus of the heart does not grow old. It does not die with the death of the body. The lotus of the heart, where Brahman resides in all his glory — that, and not the body, is the true city of Brahman. Brahman, dwelling therein, is untouched by any deed, ageless, deathless, free from grief, free from hunger and from thirst. His desires are right desires, and his desires are fulfilled.'

And in the Mundaka Upanishad: 'Within the lotus of the heart he dwells, where the nerves meet like the spokes of a wheel. Meditate upon him as OM, and you may easily cross the ocean of darkness. In the effulgent lotus of the heart dwells Brahman, passionless and indivisible. He is pure. He is the light of all lights. The knowers of Brahman attain him.'

This method of meditation is helpful, because it localises our image of the spiritual consciousness toward which we are struggling. If the body is thought of as a busy and noisy city, then we can imagine that, in the middle of this city, there is a little shrine, and that,

within this shrine, the Atman, our real nature, is present. No matter what is going on in the streets outside, we can always enter that shrine and worship. It is always open.

37. *Or by meditating on the heart of an illumined soul, that is free from passion.*

Let your mind dwell on some holy personality — a Buddha, a Christ, a Ramakrishna. Then concentrate upon his heart. Try to imagine how it must *feel* to be a great saint; pure and untroubled by sense-objects, a knower of Brahman. Try to feel that the saint's heart has become your heart, within your own body. Here, again, the localisation of the image will be found very helpful. Both Hindus and Christians practise this form of meditation — concentrating not only upon the heart but also, sometimes, upon the hands and the feet.

38. *Or by fixing the mind upon a dream-experience, or the experience of deep sleep.*

By 'a dream experience' Patanjali means a dream about a holy personality or a divine symbol. Such dreams can properly be called experiences, because they bring a sense of joy and revelation which remains with us after we have awoken. In the literature of Indian spirituality, we find many instances of devotees who dreamed that they received a mantram from some great teacher. Such a dream-mantram is regarded as being just as sacred as one which is given in the waking state, and the devotee who receives it will continue to use it and meditate upon it throughout the rest of his life.

Another method of calming the mind is to concentrate upon that sense of peaceful happiness with which we awake from deep dreamless sleep. According to Vedanta Philosophy, the Atman in man is covered by three layers or 'sheaths'. The outermost of these is the physical sheath, which is the layer of gross matter. Below this is the subtle sheath which is composed of the inner essence of things, and is the stuff of the spirit-world. Below this is the causal sheath, so-called because it is the web of our karma, the complex of cause-and-effect which makes our personalities and our lives what they are at any given moment. The causal sheath is the ego-sense which makes us see ourselves and the phenomena of the universe as separate entities. In the waking state, Vedanta tells us, all of these three sheaths come between us and the Atman, but in dreamless

sleep the two outer coverings are removed and only the causal sheath, the ego-sense, remains. It follows, therefore, that we are nearer to the Atman in dreamless sleep than in any other phase of our ordinary unspiritual lives; nearer — yet still so far, for what separates us is the toughest covering of the three, the basic layer of our ignorance, the lie of otherness. And this sheath can never be broken through by mere sleeping. We cannot hope to wake up one morning and find ourselves united with Reality. Nevertheless, some faint hint, some slight radiation of the joyful peace of the Atman *does* come through to us in this state, and remains with us when we return to waking consciousness. We should try to hold it and dwell within it. It is a foretaste of the bliss of perfect knowledge.

39. *Or by fixing the mind upon any divine form or symbol that appeals to one as good.*

One of the most attractive characteristics of Patanjali's philosophy is its breadth of vision, its universality. There is no attempt here to impose any particular cult upon the spiritual aspirant. God is within us, and it is by the light of His presence — no matter how dimly it shines through the layers of our ignorance — that we fashion our own pictures and symbols of goodness and project them upon the outside world. Every such picture, symbol or idea is holy, if it is conceived in sincerity. It may be crude and childish, it may not appeal to others; that is unimportant. All-important is our attitude towards it. Whatever we truly and purely worship, we make sacred.

Therefore, we should always feel reverence for the religions of others, and beware of bigotry. At the same time, however — as has been remarked in reference to aphorism 32 — we must limit ourselves to one way of seeking and keep to that; otherwise we shall waste all our energies in mere spiritual 'window-shopping'. We can find nothing in a shrine or a place of pilgrimage if we bring nothing into it, and we must never forget, in the external practice of a cult, that, though the Reality is everywhere, we can only make contact with it in our own hearts.

As the great Hindu saint Kabir says in one of his most famous poems: 'I laugh when I hear that the fish in the water is thirsty. You wander restlessly from forest to forest while the Reality is within your own dwelling. The truth is *here!* Go where you will — to Benares or to Mathura; until you have found God in your own soul, the whole world will seem meaningless to you.'

Foreword to *An Essay on the Indian Philosophy of Peace*

Aldous Huxley

There are no panaceas and no short cuts. Man is an amphibious being who lives simultaneously or successively in several universes — in the world of matter, the world of mind, the world of spirit; in the individual world and in the social world; in the home-made universe of his own artefacts, institutions and imaginings and in the given, the God-made universe of Nature and Grace. In the very nature of things none of the major problems confronting such a being can possibly be a simple problem. Those who seek simple solutions for complex problems may have the best of intentions; but unfortunately there is an original sin of the intellect as well as of the will. This original sin of the intellect is our habit of arbitrary over-simplification. Those who act without taking precautions against this vice of their intellectual nature doom themselves and their fellows to perpetual disappointment.

Let us consider a concrete example. How is mass violence to be avoided? How is peace to be preserved, extended and intensified? These problems are posed and must therefore be solved on all the levels of man's multiple existence. They are posed, and must be solved, on the political level; on the demographic level; on the levels of soil fertility and the production of food and raw materials; on the levels of industry and of distribution; on the ideological and religious levels; on the level of individual constitution, temperament and character. To attack the enemy on only a single front may be, like the charge of the Light Brigade, magnificent; but it is quite certain to be unsuccessful. The principal elements of our complex problem are these. First, some persons (the extreme somatotonics, in Sheldon's phraseology) are organically tough, aggressive, ruthless and power-loving. Second, the effective, although not yet the nominal, religion of the twentieth century is nationalistic idolatry. Monotheism, which never enjoyed more than a precarious existence, has everywhere been replaced by the worship of home-made local deities. Thus Judaism has now been reduced from the status of an universal religion to that of a purely tribal cult; Greek Orthodox Christianity has become

(along with Communism) the instrument of Slavic imperialism; and attempts are presently being made to use Roman Catholic and Protestant Christianity in the service of the Western nationalities. In a world whose religion is nationalistic idolatry and whose politics are based on sovereign separatism, congenitally aggressive individuals are exposed to the maximum of temptation. Insane ideas and a bad system give them golden opportunities for being unrestrainedly themselves. Conversely, unrestrained somatonia in high places results in a worsening of the political system and the propagation of a yet more lunatic religion. The third major element in our problem is the fact that the population of our planet is increasing much faster than presently available supplies of food and raw materials. Hunger is a principal cause of political revolution and, in a nationalistic context, of war. The political consequences of this pressure of population upon resources are aggravated by inefficient production and inequitable distribution; and the fact of these inefficiencies and inequities constitutes the fourth element in our problem. If we want peace, we must find means for attacking all these causes of mass violence simultaneously. The task, it is only too clear, is extremely difficult.

In the very interesting essay which follows Dr. Chakravarty expounds and discusses the Indian Philosophy of Peace. The great merit of this philosophy consists in the fact that it goes back to first principles. Peace, it insists, is more than a mere matter of political and economic arrangements. Because man stands on the border-line between the animal and the divine, the temporal and the eternal peace on earth possesses a cosmic significance. 'Tat tvan asi', thou art That; consequently every violent extinction of a human life has a transcendent and eternal significance. Moreover the Mind of the Universe is, among other things, the Peace that passes understanding. Man's final end is the realization that, in his essence, he is one with the universal Mind. But if he would realize his identity with the Peace that passes understanding, he must begin by living in the peace that does not pass understanding — peace between nations and groups, peace in personal relationships, peace within the divided and multiple personality. There are many excellent utilitarian reasons for refraining from violence; but the ultimate and completely cogent reason is metaphysical in its nature. This does not mean, of course, that an exclusive insistence on metaphysics will solve our problems. To have a good philosophy is indispensable. But so are many other

things. A good philosophy must be accompanied by good political institutions, good control of population, good agriculture, good soil conservation, good technology, good distribution of wealth, good occupational therapy for extreme somatotonics. In most parts of the world we find neither the physical nor the metaphysical conditions indispensable for peace. Even in India, where at least the metaphysical conditions used to exist, the traditional philosophy of peace is rapidly giving place to a philosophy of war. Nationalistic idolatry, with its practical corollaries — tanks, troops, planes and an enormous military budget — is now taking its place as the effective religion of the sub-continent. In a recent issue of 'Mother India' (September 17, 1949) one may read an article on 'The Grim Facts of the Kashmir Situation'. After setting forth these facts, the author asks, "What are we to do?" His answer to this question is as follows: "All that can be said is most aptly summed up in the words of Sardar Baldev Singh on August 28. After declaring that India meant ill to none and wanted an amicable settlement, he uttered a note of warning. 'I have heard it said by leaders of Pakistan that Kashmir is essential for the existence of Pakistan. There are some people in that country who even talk of settling the issue by force of arms. But if anyone feels one can gain anything by bluff or by threat of force, he is highly mistaken. . . . Our brave soldiers have fought under most difficult conditions and by their acts of bravery they have proved their mettle and saved the beautiful valley of Kashmir from destruction. I have not the least doubt that brave men and officers of our armed forces will add another glorious chapter to their brilliant record whenever they are called upon to do so.' " Alas, one seems to have heard this sort of thing before, and not from the lips of Buddha or Mahatma Gandhi. Significantly enough, the latter's body was borne to the pyre on a weapon carrier; soldiers lined the route of the funeral procession and fighter planes circled overhead. The last of the great exponents of India's traditional Philosophy of Peace was cremated with full military honors.

The Ideal of Renunciation

Swami Prabhavananda

There exist in the world today two extreme schools of thought regarding both the spiritual life and the worldly life. On the one hand there are those who totally deny the reality of the world; they say, "Brahman alone is real; everything else is unreal." And, because of their failure to understand the truth of this dictum, they try to run away from the world and its activities, and will resort to any means, even to the extreme measure of self-torture, in their attempt to overcome the passions of the flesh. On the other hand there are those who deny the existence of anything more real than this world as they know it, and their own relationship to it. To such people this life is the be-all and end-all of existence, and all the passions and desires of the flesh are for their pleasure and enjoyment. It is probable that this extreme view arose as a reaction to the former view — but both views are wrong. Each has missed the truth.

Before attempting to explain the true ideal of renunciation, which, sooner or later, every one of us must practice, it may be interesting to learn what the great teachers of every religion have taught regarding this subject. We are already familiar with the views of the Church, but if we turn to the teachings of Christ we shall find that he was one of the greatest exponents of renunciation. "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." "Lay not up for yourself treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven . . . For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." And did he not tell the rich young ruler who came to him asking what he should do to gain eternal life: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven"? In these, and in many other sayings of Jesus, we find the highest ideal of renunciation expressed in no uncertain terms.

In the teachings of Buddha we find the same ideal based upon the Four Noble Truths, which are: In the world there is suffering; there is a cause for this suffering; there is a way out of suffering, and there is a peace which follows freedom from suffering. If we would

tread the path that Buddha pointed out, we must first renounce the world. Again, in the Upanishads we read: "Not by wealth, nor by progeny, nor by much learning, but by renunciation alone can man attain immortal bliss."

In every great scripture we find this same emphasis. The Vedanta tells us that the first requisites for spiritual life are discrimination between the real and the unreal, between the eternal and the non-eternal; the understanding of the truth that God alone is real; and the giving up of all desires and cravings except the one desire to realize God.

Viewed superficially it would seem that these teachings tend to agree with that school of thought which seeks to run away from the world and its activities. But it is not so. Such extreme views have arisen out of a misunderstanding of the ideal. One is reminded of the man with the gnat on his nose. To rid himself of the gnat he shoots at it with a gun, and in so doing shoots himself also.

And yet the dilemma exists. We are ushered into this world; we are given life, and with it the desire to enjoy its attendant pleasures. For a while we are happy, but gradually there creeps in a feeling of dissatisfaction. The pleasures we once enjoyed lose their savor; they turn to ashes. And yet the hunger remains. For, deep within the recesses of man's heart, there is a hunger for eternal life and abiding happiness — a longing for a joy that knows no end. We are taught to "love not the world, neither the things that are in the world," and yet this world is all we know. Then what shall we do in such a dilemma? To run away and hide in a cave or a monastery does not solve the problem. For too often we see that while such people may become indifferent to the world, they become extremely self-centered, and love only themselves. The solution therefore lies, not in compromising the ideal, but in understanding its true meaning. Once, when Rama was a little boy he told his father that he wished to renounce the world. His father, being a king, had other plans for his son, but instead of arguing with the boy he sent for a renowned scholar named Vashishta to come and instruct him. When Vashishta asked Rama why he wanted to renounce the world he said: "I want to find God." "But," asked the sage, "can you tell me where God is not? Is he apart from the world that you wish to renounce it?"

In this simple illustration we find the whole truth. Unless we

can find the reality behind the appearance of this world we live in vain; our life and living have no purpose. Today you may think your goal in life is to attain this or that thing, and you may attain it, but still you have not attained the goal. Sri Ramakrishna expressed the truth of this when he said: "By adding many zeros together you gain nothing, they have no value. But place the unit one before the zeros and they immediately have value." Of itself the world has no value, no meaning. It is a shadow, and by clinging to the shadow we miss the substance. Behind this apparent life there is a deeper life; behind this seeming world there is a deeper reality; and life takes on new meaning, the world becomes more real for us, when we find the Reality behind the appearance — that Reality which is God.

At one time Sri Ramakrishna was accused of turning the heads of the young men who came to him, by teaching them the ideals of renunciation and thus making them unfit to take their place in the world. When Sri Ramakrishna heard about this he said: "By teaching them the true meaning and purpose of life I am preparing them to take their place in the world. But first let them develop devotion to God, let them gain self-control, and then let them go and live in the world. It is better that the boat should float on the water than that the water should get into the boat!" In other words, we must understand the ideal and purpose of life, for without this understanding none can truly live. If we wish to attain anything in life we have to set a definite goal, and if we analyze life we shall see that there is but one goal for all mankind — the realization of the truth of God. For in God alone is to be found the fulfillment of life.

What is it then that stands in the way of our realization of the goal? Is it something outside of ourselves? As we analyze life further we discover that the obstruction lies within ourselves. It is not the world, neither the things of the world; it is our own ignorance. Within us is the Atman, the very presence of God; he is the abiding happiness, the infinite wisdom and the eternal life we are all seeking. He is within and he is without, but instead of seeing that abiding Reality we see something else — we see the shadows. "I am the Atman, but I do not know that I am the Atman. I consider myself an individual being." This attitude arises from what is known philosophically as *ego* — the sense of individuality, of separateness from God. And out of this sense of separateness there arise two main desires — the desire to attach ourselves to the world and things which give

us pleasure, and the desire to avoid those things which give us pain. Thus we see that first there is ignorance, then that out of ignorance comes ego, which is the root cause of all attachments, aversions, and the clinging to life. When we can fully understand this truth we shall realize that the ideal is not renunciation of the world, but renunciation of the ego. As Sri Ramakrishna used to say: "When the ego dies, all troubles cease to exist."

There are two principal ways by which the ego may be renounced. One way is the path of analysis, or knowledge, and the other way is the path of love or devotion. He who chooses the path of knowledge must maintain a consciousness of his identity with the Atman. By analysis he must know: "I am not the body, nor the mind, nor the ego — I am beyond all these. I am the Atman — one with Brahman." Such a man, by constantly living in this consciousness, soon frees himself of all bodily desires. The activities of his body and mind will continue, but through them all he remains completely detached and unaffected. This path is, however, extremely difficult to follow, for as long as even the pangs of hunger and thirst affect him who attempts to follow it, he has not yet overcome the body-consciousness, and is therefore not yet ready to follow such a path. To illustrate his difficulties, Sri Ramakrishna used to say: "Suppose a man desires to reach the roof of his house, but instead of gradually ascending the staircase permits himself to be thrown up bodily. What happens? He reaches the roof no doubt, but his method of reaching it may cause him serious or even permanent injury."

For the average man the easiest path to follow is the path of devotion. We all have ego, and as long as we live on the plane of the senses we cannot free ourselves from it. Therefore we should try to merge the ego in the will of the Lord — the Atman within. We should surrender it completely to the Lord and let Him use it as an instrument, but in order to do this it is first necessary to learn to practice constant recollectedness of God. We are told that we must love God, but how is it possible to love someone whom we have not seen and do not know? This question arises in the mind of every aspirant, and the same answer is given by all the seers and lovers of God. They say: you do not know God now, but if you will think of Him, if you will fill your mind with the constant remembrance of Him, you will come to know He is Love; then that Love will grow in your own heart, until your very ego will become merged in It, and

you will cry out, "Not I! Not I! but Thou, O Lord!"

Then what follows? Out of this loving devotion to God there will come a normal and natural control of all the passions. For the more you advance toward God the less will be the strength of your cravings and desires for the objects of the world. The lower passions lose their power in the presence of something that is higher and greater. Thus we see that, no matter which path we may follow, we need not run away from the world and its activities. But one point the aspirant must always keep in mind: he must maintain constant remembrance of God.

Now again, as there are two main paths to follow in order to free ourselves from ego, so are there two distinct ways of life in which to practice the ideal of renunciation. They are the way of monasticism and the way of the householder. The difference between these two paths is that the monk owning nothing, being completely devoid of all worldly possessions, practices renunciation both inwardly and outwardly, whereas the householder practices only the inner renunciation. The householder may have great possessions — he may have wealth, a wife, children, and friends; but he remains unattached to them. Having overcome the ego of attachment, he has no sense of possession; he sees God in all things and all things as belonging to God. Nothing he owns belongs to him. His mind remains free and completely detached.

In this connection there arises the very fundamental question of sex and chastity. This is one of the most misunderstood problems of modern life. On the one hand, the Church still preaches that sex is sin and iniquity, and on the other hand modern psychology tells us that repression is bad and that expression is natural and therefore good. Repression is not control. Both attitudes are extreme and wrong, because neither understands the ideal. Every religion teaches us that sex must be controlled and ultimately overcome. Psychologically the sex energy has to be transmuted into spiritual energy. In the Sanskrit language there is the word *ojas*. There is no English equivalent for this, but it means that energy which accumulates in the brain of one who has completely conquered the sex impulse.

In the scriptures of ancient India we read of the ideal life of the householders. Their life was divided into four stages. The first stage was the student period, when the child was sent to an illumined teacher and remained under his supervision for several years. In

this holy association he was educated in the scriptures and in secular knowledge, and, most important of all, he was thoroughly trained in self-mastery and self-control. At the end of this student period he was free to choose which way of life he wished to follow, the way of monasticism or the way of the householder. If he chose to enter into married life, he did so with the understanding that marriage was not an institution for sexual license and selfishness but an institution in which he would find ample opportunity to practice self-control and unselfishness. Having passed through this second stage, he entered into a life of retirement from the world, and then, lastly, into the monastic life of complete renunciation.

But, no matter what stage we may have reached or what path we may be following, we must have that one positive ideal — the ideal of God. We must make Him the ideal, the way, and the end. As my master used to tell us, we must first hold on to the pillar, then we can spin around and around without fear. And so with life in the world. If we will but hold on to the pillar of God, there will be no mistakes in our lives, or, if there are mistakes, they will be corrected.

Without renunciation there is no peace. Be dispassionate. To find goodness and attain peace, give up everything for God. If he has the will, man can be dispassionate and realize God. Therefore, renounce all cravings and hold on tightly to Him.

Renunciation has nothing to do with the wearing of the religious habit. It is not for show. He alone is a real monk who has given himself up completely to God, keeping nothing for himself. "This body, this mind, this understanding — I offer everything to You. They are Yours. Make them Your instruments." Pray to Him unceasingly: "Lord, I do not know what is good or what is bad; I am yours, do with me as you please." Pray! Pray unceasingly. Let Him be your only refuge.

—Swami Brahmananda

Foreword to *A MAN OF GOD**

Christopher Isherwood

Here is the story of a saint. A 'natural' saint, one might call him. For, just as a few men in every age are born with a natural genius for science or the arts—a genius which manifests itself already in their earliest years—so also there are a few, a very few, who are born with spiritual genius. Swami Shivananda was one of those rare beings.

Mental conflict and struggle are, of course, inseparable from the practice of spiritual disciplines. The way to realization is always hard. Most men only achieve it after long periods of doubt and agony which are painful even when we merely read about them in a book. But when we read the life of a natural saint, a born spiritual genius, we can do so without pain, because the issue of his struggles seems certain even from the beginning. We know that he will win through.

Outwardly, Swami Shivananda led an intensely active life. As a young monk he travelled all over India. As an elderly man, he became the head of the Ramakrishna Order and was beset by the problems of a great and growing institution. Yet, inwardly, that life seems like a firm-set and abiding tower, based upon the rock of contemplation. The body wandered and wore itself out in service; the spirit remained calm and established. Very early it had found its timeless home, and there it always reposed.

This book is something more than the biography of an individual. It deals also with one of the most vital of all questions: the function of spiritual power within human society. When a great teacher, a Christ or a Ramakrishna, passes from the earth, he leaves behind him a group of followers who are determined to perpetuate the spirit of his teaching. Inevitably, this group forms itself into an order, a church, an organization. And here a danger arises. The teacher has proclaimed: 'My kingdom is not of this world.' But the church which embodies his teaching is a physical entity with members, buildings, funds and a position in time and space. As it grows, it acquires potential political influence. And there will be many who will say that it should use its influence in human affairs, that it should intervene—with the aid of human weapons, if necessary—to protect and enlarge itself, here, in the physical world.

This deadly fallacy—which has cost the lives of millions throughout history, and which must lead, in the end, to the distortion and prostitution of the teacher's original message—was recognized and rejected by Swami Shivananda. Warmly as he sympathized with India's struggle for political liberation, deeply as he felt for the sufferings of her masses, he knew that spiritual power is a universal function or it is nothing. It cannot be diverted to serve local political purposes, however admirable. It cannot be used to achieve material objectives. To his eternal honor, Swami Shivananda refused to exert the influence of the Ramakrishna Order in the sphere of politics, despite his admiration for Gandhi's Non-Cooperation Movement. Gandhi had his own place and duty in the scheme of things, and he fulfilled it gloriously. But the man of contemplation, the vehicle of spiritual power, has another place and a different kind of duty. Swami Shivananda did not forget the words of the Gita: 'The duty of another will bring you into great spiritual danger.'

If you visit one of those huge dams which control the outflow of a lake or a river, you can go down into the engine-room and see the turbines, supplying electricity to an entire countryside. It is very quiet down there. The turbines seem motionless and almost silent. And yet water is rushing through them at a hundred miles an hour—a terrific force which, if it were checked, would shatter the whole dam to pieces. The great saints are like that: calm, impersonal, holding back nothing for themselves, existing only to transmit the tremendous spiritual power which rushes through them and gives light to the surrounding world.

**By Swami Vividishananda—in the press.*

An Acclamation

O Ignorant poor man! what dost thou bear
 Locked up within the casket of thy breast?
 What jewels, and what riches hast thou there!
 What heavenly treasure in so weak a chest!
 Look in thy soul, and thou shalt beauties find,
 Like those which drowned Narcissus in the flood;
 Honour and pleasure both are in thy mind,
 And all that in the world is counted good.
 Think of her worth, and think that God did mean
 This worthy mind should worthy things embrace;
 Blot not her beauties with thy thoughts unclean,
 Nor her dishonour with thy passions base;
 Kill not her quickening power with surfeitings,
 Mar not her sense with sensuality;
 Cast not her serious wit on idle things:
 Make not her free-will, slave to vanity.
 And when thou think'st of her eternity,
 Think not that death against her nature is,
 Think it a birth; and when thou goest to die,
 Sing like a swan, as if thou went'st to bliss.
 And if thou, like a child, didst fear before,
 Being in the dark, where thou didst nothing see;
 Now I have brought thee torch-light, fear no more;
 Now, when thou diest, thou canst not hood-winked be.
 And thou, my soul, which turn'st thy curious eye,
 To view the beams of thine own form divine;
 Know, that thou canst know nothing perfectly,
 While thou art clouded with this flesh of mine.
 Take heed of over-weening, and compare
 Thy peacock's feet with thy gay peacock's train;
 Study the best, and highest things that are,
 But of thyself an humble thought retain.
 Cast down thy self, and only strive to raise
 The glory of thy Maker's sacred name;
 Use all thy powers that blessed power to praise,
 Which gives thee power to be, and use the same.

—Sir John Davies (1569-1626)

Josephine MacLeod (1858-1949)

Sister Amiya

In the early hours of the morning of October 15, 1949, there went out from among us one of the most influential and helpful friends the Ramakrishna Mission of India has ever found in the West; and the loss of such a friend will be keenly felt and sincerely mourned, not only by the members of the Mission, but also by her relatives, and by the many others who owe her so much.

After Swami Vivekananda came as an uninvited delegate to the World Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893 and presented the message of Vedanta to the western world, he remained in the United States as an invited guest of many people who had become interested in him and his teaching. Many among them were kindled by his flaming spirituality, and unselfishly supported him and those others who followed after him to continue the work he had started.

But there were also those who responded more to the dynamic quality of his personality than to the spiritual appeal of his message. Among these was Miss Josephine MacLeod, known as "Tantine" to all whom she loved and who loved her. "I was never a *disciple* of Vivekananda," she would say, "I was his *friend*! It was his strength, his great purity, and his love of freedom that I admired!" In a letter to a friend she once wrote: "The thing that held me in Swamiji was his *unlimitedness*. I could never touch the bottom — or top — or sides. The amazing size of him! Oh, such natures make one so free. It's the reaction on oneself that matters, really, isn't it? What one gets out of it. You ask if I am utterly secure in my grasp on the ultimate. Yes, utterly. It seems to be part and parcel of me. It is the Truth I saw in Swamiji that has set me free! One's faults seem so insignificant, why remember them when one has the ocean of Truth for a playground? It was to set me free that Swamiji came, that was as much a part of his mission as it was to give Renunciation to Nivedita. . . . I haven't any Renunciation, but I've freedom. Freedom to see and help India to grow — that's my job and how I *love it*. To see this group of fiery idealists burning new paths and outlets from this jungle called life. . . . I feel that Swamiji is a Rock for us to stand *upon*. That was his function in my life, not worship, nor glory, but a steadiness under one's feet for experiments! At last *I'm free*. . . ."

Between this young Swami and the older American woman there was a mutual recognition of purity and great strength, for it is well known that Swami Vivekananda held Tantine in the highest esteem, and relied greatly upon her judgment in many matters pertaining to the world and his work in it. "We had such fun!" she would say, "such fun!" and a faraway look would come into her eyes as she recalled again her remarkable relationship with that noble, majestic young monk who had come into her life for so brief a period more than fifty years ago.

Although their mortal relationship was terminated by the Swami's early death, the seed he sowed did not die, and Tantine lived on to foster its growth. She made his plans her own, and for the remainder of her life she fought valiantly against the many obstacles raised against their fulfillment, and won many a battle in the interest and for the permanent benefit of the Ramakrishna Mission which the Swami had founded and had struggled so hard to maintain.

For many years Tantine lived at the Belur Math, home of the Ramakrishna Mission, in the guest house she had helped to build. "It's so curious to feel free," she writes, "not needed any more in the West, but all my characteristics . . . in India. Of course it is very exhilarating, and of course I am better in health. To find an outlet for one's own nature is Heaven — don't you think so? I've a wise man-servant — Catholic — who seems to like my quick changeful life. It doesn't disconcert him as it does most people. With two new upper chambers of the guest house I am living in great luxury and space, quiet on this great river. I never dreamed of such luxury anywhere! The luxury of space — no furniture to take care of, no rugs, pictures, dishes — only a tea set. That impingement of things is gone! . . . Yet I am not alone! One doesn't have to leave the body to find heaven. . . ." And yet, from that haven of peace she travelled to all parts of Europe and America, sparing neither effort nor expense in helping to spread the ideals of her beloved Swamiji.

It was Tantine who influenced Romain Rolland to write his famous work *Prophets of New India*; it was Tantine who promoted and financed the publication of the three small volumes of Swami Vivekananda's writings on the four principal *Yogas*, as well as his *Inspired Talks*. It was because of her unflinching determination that

Swami Siddheswarananda was sent to France to continue the work started by Swami Yatiswarananda before the war, and already the activities of this one center near Paris are having a far-reaching influence throughout Europe.

Thus, in these and in countless other ways Miss MacLeod has done a great service to a great cause, and because of her unselfish generosity, her name will be forever engraved in the annals of the Ramakrishna Missions all over the world.

The most outstanding characteristic of this great woman was her tremendous will. Nothing on earth could conquer it. It was indomitable and inviolate. During the later years of her life she developed an extraordinary affection and esteem for Swami Prabhavananda and his work as founder and head of the Vedanta Society of Southern California. Although she lived alone in New York and enjoyed utter independence, Swami Prabhavananda and his center in Hollywood became to her an irresistible magnet, and, because her will could not withstand their drawing power, she came often to California, against the terrific odds of a long and trying journey and the feebleness of an aging body. Sometimes her visits were quite short, and again she would return to New York and the solitude of her own life.

These brief visits continued over a period of some years until, in the spring of 1949, she bought a one-way railway ticket and came to Hollywood to become a permanent member of Swami Prabhavananda's establishment. "I have come home to die," she told the Swami; but death was still some distance away — kept away it often seemed by that same will which would never admit defeat. It was but right and fitting that she should spend her last days in the "Vivekananda Home" and give the privilege of service to those who had dedicated their lives to the cause she had served so well.

Our sympathy goes out to all who loved her, and particularly to those unknown numbers who sought her help and depended upon her generosity. Always frugal to herself, she was ever prodigal to the needy, and none who asked of her were found wanting.

When at last death came to claim her, her work was finished, and she quietly yielded her hitherto unconquerable will to one stronger than her own. Indeed, her peaceful acceptance of that higher Will, and her quiet resignation to It, were in striking contrast to the turbulent spirit and unswerving self-assurance that had guided

her long life, and served to emphasize the unpredictability of that forceful character which Swami Vivekananda had admired and loved.

The following passage from a letter written by Swami Vivekananda to Miss MacLeod two years before his death serves to show, perhaps more clearly than anything else possibly could, the complete faith and trust the Swami had in Tantine's understanding of his true nature:

"I direct this to London. . . . Work is always difficult; pray for me, Joe, that my work stops for ever, and my whole soul be absorbed in Mother. Her work, She knows.

You must be glad to be in London once more — the old friends — give them all my love and gratitude.

I am well, very well mentally. I feel the rest of the soul more than that of the body. The battles are lost and won. I have bundled my things and am waiting for the Great Deliverer.

"Siva, O Siva, carry my boat to the other shore."

After all, Joe, I am only the boy who used to listen with rapt wonderment to the wonderful words of Ramakrishna under the banyan at Dakshineswar. That is my true nature; works and activities, doing good and so forth are all superimpositions. Now I again hear his voice; the same old voice thrilling my soul. Bonds are breaking — love dying, work becoming tasteless — the glamour is off life. Now only the voice of the Master calling. — 'I come, Lord, I come. Let the dead bury the dead. Follow thou me.' — 'I come, my beloved Lord, I come.'

Yes, I come. Nirvana is before me. I feel it at times, the same infinite ocean of peace, without a ripple, a breath.

I am glad I was born, glad I suffered so, glad I did make big blunders, glad to enter peace. I leave none bound, I take no bonds. Whether this body will fall and release me or I enter into freedom in the body, the old man is gone, gone for ever, never to come back again!

The guide, the Guru, the leader, the teacher, has passed away; the boy, the student, the servant, is left behind.

You understand why I do not want to meddle with — . Who am I to meddle with any, Joe? I have long given up my place as a leader, — I have no right to raise my voice. Since the beginning of this year, I have not dictated anything in India.

You know that. Many thanks for what you and Mrs. Bull have been to me in the past. All blessings follow you ever! The sweetest moments of my life have been when I was drifting; I am drifting again — with the bright warm sun o'er head and masses of vegetation around — and in the heat everything is so still, so calm — and I am drifting, languidly — in the warm heart of the river. I dare not make a splash with my hands or feet — for fear of breaking the wonderful stillness, stillness that makes you feel sure it is an illusion!

Behind my work was ambition, behind my love was personality, behind my purity was fear, behind my guidance the thirst for power. Now they are vanishing and I drift. I come, Mother, I come, in Thy warm bosom, floating wheresoever Thou takest me, in the voiceless, in the strange, in the wonderland, I come — a spectator, no more an actor.

Oh, it is so calm! My thoughts seem to come from a great, great distance in the interior of my own heart. They seem like faint, distant whispers. And peace is upon everything, sweet, sweet peace — like that one feels for a few moments just before falling into sleep, when things are seen and felt like shadows — without fear, without love, without emotion — peace that one feels alone, surrounded with statues and pictures. I come, Lord, I come.

The world is, but not beautiful nor ugly, but as sensations without exciting any emotion. Oh, Joe, the blessedness of it! Everything is good and beautiful; for things are all losing their relative proportions to me — my body among the first. Om That Existence!

I hope great things to come to you all in London and Paris. Fresh joy — fresh benefits to mind and body. . . .”

Much can be said and written about Tantine, and as the years go by there will come to light much that now lies hidden in the obscurity of her nearness. And it is the hope and intention of this magazine to gather from different sources reminiscences of this unique personality and publish them in its subsequent issues.

The Crest-Jewel of Discrimination

(VIVEKA-CHUDAMANI)

\$2.00

Translated by Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood.

"The *Crest Jewel of Discrimination* has, I should say, a double appeal. First, to the student, devotee or not, who does not read Sanscrit but would like to examine for himself, in an excellently clear, simple, and unscholastic version, one of Shankara's 'two major philosophical works.' And second, to the mystic devotee who would like to add to his spiritual aids a bubbling fountain of central sayings and exhortations — a fountain springing up pure and strong from the mind and heart of one of India's most renowned scholars and most revered saints."

FREDERICK MANCHESTER

The Wisdom of God

(SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM)

\$2.50

Stories of ancient India's saints, seers and philosopher-kings, including the life and teachings of Sri Krishna, "the Christ of India." This is a classic work of eternal truth and great literary beauty. Translated by Swami Prabhavananda.

"In which are enshrined the great truths concerning the nature of God and man, man's final end and the means whereby that end may be attained."
—ALDOUS HUXLEY

"A shockingly urgent message to mankind . . ."
—CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD

"It is a treasure of thought from which the entire world should profit."
—ROMAIN ROLLAND

"One of the supreme religious classics of the ages brilliantly translated. The author deserves and I am sure will have the gratitude of the English-speaking world."
—DANIEL A. POLING, *Christian Herald*

Published by Vedanta Press

