

A
REAL MAHATMA.

A PERSONAL STUDY

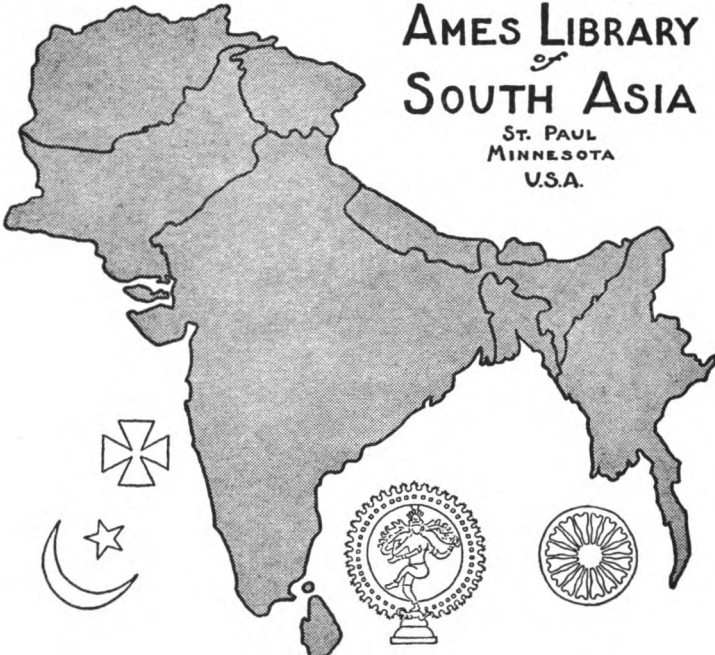
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T. C. CRAWFORD.

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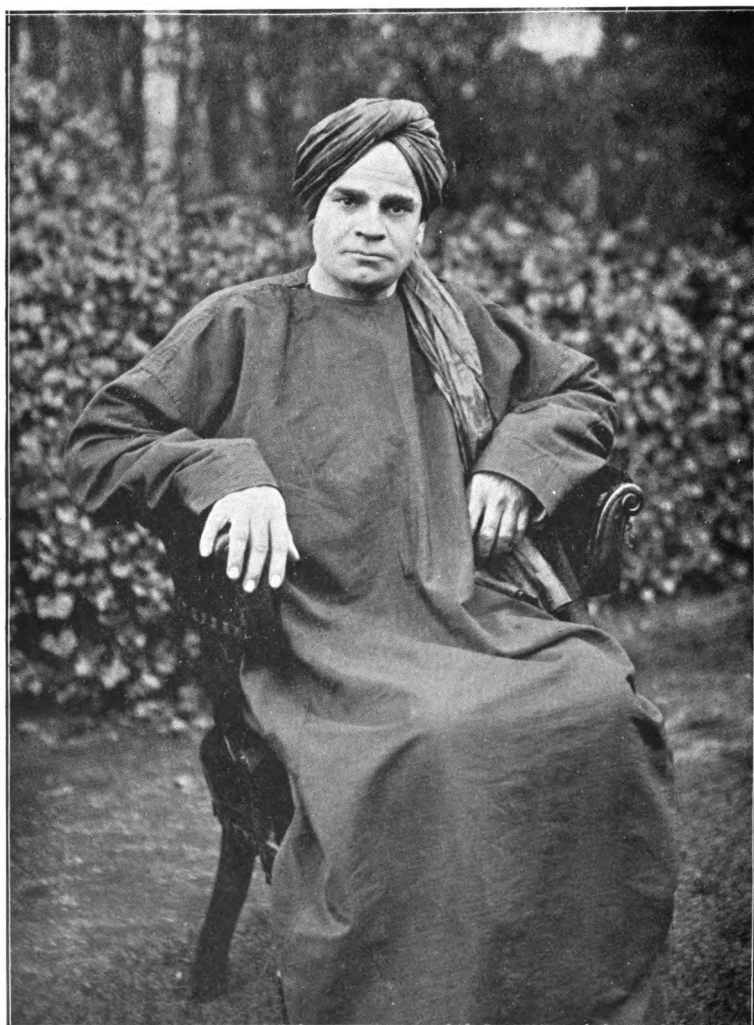
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A REAL MAHATMA.

I.

“MAHATMA” is an Indian term signifying “wise man.” It is also employed as a name for a spiritual teacher. In literature the Mahatma nearly always appears as a magician. It is possible that the Theosophists are responsible in a certain degree for giving this character to the Indian teachers of the Vedanta Philosophy. In the formation of the Theosophist circles throughout the world, much emphasis has been given to alleged communications from mysterious Mahatmas living in secluded regions of the Himalayas. I believe that these claims may have had no other basis than the pretensions of Madame Blavatsky, the founder of the creed. The real Mahatma is accessible to everyone. He does not deal in mysteries, and makes no claim to perform miracles.

In the neighbourhood of the Himalayas there is a forest of great beauty, where students of Yoga go for the purpose of contemplation, in accordance with the methods prescribed in the Vedanta philosophy. Among these students from time to time are developed high teachers. They are never many in number. These Mahatmas are particularly to be distinguished by their purity of life, their great simplicity, their honesty, and their kindness. They are above all creeds, and are superior to all religious dogmas. They believe they have solved the riddle of the universe. They live in reality in the other world. This world has become foreign to them. Their lives are so simple, so open, so free from mystery, that one is given unusual opportunities for judging of them.

It can be said generally of the Mahatma that he has no sympathy with any form of dogmatic religion. The Mahatmas of India never enter the temples, and oppose all the excesses of asceticism indulged in by fanatics. They do not approve of the exercise of occult powers that are invariably developed by those who follow the path of Yoga, or control of the mind, and so direct the student from the ultimate goal of freedom from rebirth in this world of delusion and sorrow.

The workers of miracles in India who are described from time to time by trustworthy observers, do not belong to the higher class of teachers, who search for truth alone.

These teachers of truth never seek students. Those who come to them are given very simple lessons. They are not asked to accept any new code or faith. They are not asked to change their habits of life. It is the theory and practice of the Mahatmas to give such a lesson in mind control as will teach one day by day to see clearly, spiritually, and then inspiration comes. He who learns to properly control his mind so as to develop the divine within, becomes pure, and so ultimately reaches the Highest, when he is not born again. To enter this path, and to be able to follow it, requires a teacher or a Mahatma. Such teachings are given without fee to those who are deemed fit students, viz.: those who seek truth through no motives of idle curiosity. Such teachers hold that no student can ever become a real believer in spiritual things through the words or the experience of others. It is through the discovery of the divine within himself that real knowledge comes. Those who do not know this higher self are called ignorant. Those who do, are wise. So when, in the Vedanta philosophy, you read of the wise man, you read of him who knows all things through the All Knowledge of his Higher Self.

It has been my fortunate privilege to meet and know

one of the most conspicuous of the Mahatmas of India. He is called the Tiger Mahatma, on account of his energy and force of character. He is known as Mahatma Agamya Guru Paramahansa. He has visited England twice. Once he came during the closing days of Professor Max Müller's life, on a visit to that great exponent of Indian Philosophy and Eastern religions. The Mahatma came to him introduced by high authorities in Bombay, and he made such an impression on Professor Müller that he was given a chapter in the *Life and Letters*. In this work the great scholar is quoted as saying that he is the one Hindoo saint whom he has known. This Mahatma again visited England in 1903, coming back from a visit to Japan. It was during this second English visit that I was received by him, and through his kindness was given some insight concerning the philosophy taught by him. I shall give at the outset my first impressions, which were more or less superficial. To this I add a resumé of the early conversations. Following this prelude are the formal questions to which he has dictated formal answers.

The object of this article is to present questions, representing those which would be suggested by the Western mind, and to which this Master has given replies. The thought of this article was suggested by a recent publication in London, authorized by the Tiger Mahatma, called "Sri Brahma Dhara"—"Shower from the Highest,"—printed by Luzac & Co., Oriental publishers, in London. This publication gives, in the form of questions and answers, a brief but clear outline of the Vedanta Philosophy, as brought up to date. But as the questions were suggested by the same mind that gave the answers, I have had the temerity to think that the Western mind might find it easier to understand this most difficult philosophy if the same mind would give the answers to questions formulated from the Western standpoint.

The Mahatma is a Yogin who has developed his full powers by the practice of Yoga, and Yoga—as defined by

him—means the absolute control of the vibrations of the mind. In plain English, the student is taught to so control his mind that it shall not fluctuate from topic to topic, but can during a fixed period of one, two, three, or four hours be absolutely confined to one subject or to an absolute point of negation. By such practice the mind becomes clarified, and the divine element which dwells in every man is strengthened ; and so, in proportion as the mind is controlled, it becomes pure and subject to true inspiration. The student who follows the pathway of Yoga mind-control, in time develops wonderful powers. According to the doctrine of Yoga, mind controls everything. This entire universe is the creation of mind, and so far as the divine part of us is concerned this world is wholly an illusion. The teachers of Yoga say that when the mind becomes absolutely under control, then these inherent powers of the mind become developed, so that one is given great occult gifts. These gifts lie at the basis of all the stories of miracles which are to be found in all religions. The student of Yoga who is led to stop in his onward march of development by giving too much importance to these occult powers, loses and retrogrades. It is for this reason that the Mahatma about whom I am writing was always very careful to disclaim any working of miracles.

On this he said : “ The Mahatmas do not work so-called miracles. Not a word of such pretensions can be found in any of their writings or teachings. We do not send our spirits away from our bodies, because we cannot. Spirits cannot move in that independent way. You may think you trace a movement of spirit, but it is pure illusion. Spirit is like the light that shines in the water. The water moves and the light appears to dance, although it is steady and at rest.”

“ Then if you deny the movement of the spirit of the living, what do you say as to the possibility of the return of the spirit of the dead ? ”

“It never returns as spirit. It cannot. If it is a perfected spirit, it returns to the Divine Spirit from whence it came; if imperfect it returns to this world only to enter some body at its birth.”

The Master has absolute control of his physical body through his mind. In speaking of the power of the mind, he said: “All of the world is but a drop, and the mind in comparison is an ocean. The mind controls all things and creates all things, and so the control of my body, which many think is wonderful, is nothing. It is what any one could learn if he wished to take the time and trouble necessary to acquire such knowledge.”

This control of his body has been shown in numerous experiments submitted to physicians in America and in England. The Mahatma has the power of instantly checking his pulse and heart action, so that no known medical means can discover in his body a trace of life. He can remain in this condition for an indefinite period, returning to animation at will. This seeming miracle he declares, however, to be no miracle whatsoever, but only the exercise of a hidden power belonging to every man. This experiment was made once for Prof. Max Müller. I asked the Mahatma if there was any danger connected with the experiment, for when life has apparently disappeared, may not the soul take flight and refuse to return? Where is the soul when life is apparently so suspended? He said in reply to this that there was absolutely no danger in the experiment. The soul remained within a single atom of the body with the last breath, and in this infinitesimal spot rested the centre of life, to be resumed when so directed.

To some other questions concerning the teachings and claims of certain Western Theosophical Societies, he said: “All lies, lies, told for the purpose of making money. Wherever you see certain societies, or so-called teachers, asking money for their publications, or admission fees to their lecture halls, you may at once set them down

as liars. No true teacher of our philosophy ever accepts money for his teachings."

In appearance he gives the impression the reverse of asceticism. He is tall, well built, and has the look of a very well-fed man, although he eats only once a day, a meal of bread and curried vegetables. Physically he appears to have the strength of an athlete in full training. He fairly radiates vitality. Although he is sixty years old, he shows no sign of advancing age. His teeth are white and firm, his form erect, and his step as he walks is that of a young active man. In the Himalayas he has often made long journeys, walking twelve hours a day, averaging fifty miles, a record for the youngest and strongest.

Let me picture him as I first saw him in the cold cheerless double bedroom of a Maida Vale lodging-house. It was a cold winter morning, with glacial fog outside that curdled the marrow of one's bones. Meeting by an appointment made with his Secretary, who is also his cook, I was shown into the one room—the shelter of the two men, Mahatma and follower—where I found the Brahmin Teacher seated in a wicker garden chair in front of a dead grate, with the window open behind him. One ordinarily associates the East Indian with the thought of tropical climes and of a great susceptibility to cold. Yet here sat a pure East Indian calm and tranquil, apparently most comfortable, in an atmosphere so cold that I was obliged to keep on my overcoat during the visit.

My host's dark, sternly characteristic face was set off by a very fine and beautifully wound yellow-white turban. The face, deeply pitted with small-pox, in repose was very stern, but a pair of bright sparkling black eyes, gleaming with a keen humour, modified the sternness, and in talking the changing expression of his eyes gave the idea of a man of the world rather than that of a high priest. He wore a long dark blue garment devoid of ornament, that fitted with military exactness the upper part of his figure, falling

in loose skirt form to his well-made feet, upon which he wore low white cloth shoes. The skirt hitched up in the posture of sitting showed grey silk stockings and the sturdy shaped ankles of a noted pedestrian. In every move the Mahatma showed signs of his high birth and breeding. His hands were long, slim, beautifully cared for, and were most eloquent and graceful exponents of his spoken words. He had the ease and simple dignity of a great personage. Over his face played many expressions as he talked. When silent his countenance was as cold and unresponsive as a bronze mask.

Turning abruptly upon me without prelude of small talk he said: "What do you want? Do you come here to learn how to make money? Do you seek from me jewels, fine diamonds, rubies, and pearls?"

I learned afterwards that this was a test question of the Mahatma to a casual visitor. If he replied too eagerly "Yes," then the Mahatma would take a curious delight in explaining that the jewels he had to offer were the shining ones of truth and knowledge. He laughed as he described the indifference of many curiosity callers after learning the character of these jewels.

My first visit led to others, and then I established a relationship with the Mahatma that in time gave me more than one view of this many-sided man. The most curious characteristic of his personal attitude towards the world was his cheerful indifference. He never seeks to make proselytes. He never refused to reply to any request for help or information concerning his beliefs, but he seeks to advise no one. You could go his way or not, as it best pleased you. It was nothing to him apparently.

He says that all the Western people are mad. He thinks that they are monkey-minded, that they have no continuity of purpose, that they are unhappy through their having built up for themselves a life composed almost entirely of artificial wants. Our love of ornaments,

luxuries, and excessive eagerness to acquire money, makes him consider the Western people very inferior. He is very fair-minded, however, and lays the basis of the claim of superiority for his people wholly upon the spiritual side. On the material side he readily concedes the immense superiority of the Western civilization. But the very success of this materialism is degrading to the spiritual side. His contemptuous picture of the rich man, the great millionaire, who is still striving for more millions, was given with the most graphic touch and sweep of Oriental colour. All of these inequalities and exaggerations will be corrected in future lives. The extremely avaricious rich man, who has never given way to a feeling of kindness or the desire to better his fellow-creatures, must, according to the Teacher, pass upon his death into the body of some animal, whose nature is most nearly akin. Some men will become monkeys, some will become swine, some—through excessive fear and timidity—will become birds, and some sluggish, dull, profoundly cold and ignorant natures will find upon their deaths their souls locked up in stones for many millions of years. The Mahatma says that Americans are even more mad than the English, and that the great millionaires of the United States who give away such great sums of money to universities and to charitable institutions, do not give these sums of money through love for their fellow-creatures, but rather through fear, and so these apparently good actions will have no influence upon their fate in the future. The Western civilization is in a state of progression, and some day will be developed on its spiritual side, and then the whole world will be at peace and rest.

The Mahatma never touches money. He will accept nothing for his teachings. He travels only when he is asked to come by someone who is interested in his teachings, and then his Secretary accepts from the person so inviting him only the money necessary to pay the actual expenses of the journey. The moderation

of these expenses of this spiritual leader is extreme. The modesty of his demands can only be appreciated when it is known that he has millions of followers in India, and from this host of followers he could have untold amounts of money should he so desire. Neither he nor his Secretary eat English food, or food prepared by English hands. The Secretary and cook prepares once each day in the room over a little modest oil lamp a single dish of curried vegetables spiced with hot peppers. Their bread is also prepared and cooked by his own hands. The snowy white teeth of the Mahatma and his powerful physique indicate that there is no lack of nourishment for his great frame. His look of vigor and concentrated force give one an idea of strength and vitality rarely seen in a young man. He sleeps from four to six hours a day, but very lightly. In speaking of his personal habits he said, "I sleep a dog's sleep, very light, and easily awakened." In India he lives out of doors and sleeps on the ground. There he wears no turban, his head is shaved, and his feet are bare. If the night is cool when he is sleeping on the ground he buries himself in the sand, and covers himself over with it. He gives one to understand that sand makes a delicious bed, but all of the sensation or pleasure of happiness is found in the mind. In speaking of beds and their luxuries he said: "You often find in the silkiest beds, rocks, if the rocks of pain and suffering are in your mind; while in India I have seen the humblest man worn out by toil sleep sweetly upon actual rocks, which were to him as soft as silk."

He says that he is living his last incarnation, and when he gives his body to earth that his soul will become an ecstatic and very joyous atom quivering in the all-pervading divine life of the universe. He has reached what he calls the highest standpoint of spiritual philosophy. His subjective vision is so cultivated that he sees the other

worlds, which to him have become a certainty of all spiritual knowledge. So great has this power grown within him that he can exercise his body through spiritual means. He will sit motionless for hours at a time while every muscle of his physical body is being vigorously exercised through the mind.

He is essentially an aristocrat in that he has no belief in the equality of men. Within lies the equality of all souls. Through inequality of development there exists throughout the world only inequality. All things of value, like jewels, are limited in their number. The wise men are always few in number.

He has outgrown all religions, all superstitions, and all prejudices; although he is one of the heads of the Brahman caste, and observes all its regulations and conditions on account of its influence on his followers, yet he regards caste as the idlest of superstitions, and to it attaches no personal value. Religions have their value in controlling people who are immaturely developed on the spiritual side. People who do not possess the knowledge of this, which enables them to acquire self-control, he calls wild people. Religions come along, to shut up these wild people in mental prisons and to hold them from doing harm. He comes now as the Prophet of the higher philosophy, which is to unlock the door of these prisons and to free the minds of men from all superstitions. To do this he does not expect any fanatical movement, nor to establish an order which shall be dominated by any fanatic. He hopes to establish in England and America at first a few disciples for the promulgation of the Oriental Philosophies of the higher grade. The teachings of Buddha, Christ, and Mahomet he puts upon the same plane, as embodying the teachings suitable to the intelligence of wild people who needed restraint. To preserve from them only the doctrine of love for one's fellow-creatures is all that is valuable.

To the question of how he could show there was a future life, he replied that there was no way to prove a future existence from the material standpoint, yet this proof was very simple, and one that was open to everyone. Let the most prejudiced scientist come to him, or to any one of the leading Indian teachers, and he could be speedily taught how to see things from the subjective side of his being. The subjective vision is the only true one; the material vision has before it nothing but illusions. Until a man was cultivated subjectively he could not understand this, and there would be no way of explaining to him, because the terms to be employed are far beyond his comprehension, as would be metaphysics to a child just beginning the alphabet. To meet this, the scientists now investigating this question could send one of their most intelligent, least prejudiced members to India; there let him sit down and develop through the subjective side of his nature the evidence to be so obtained. This, then, could be added to the chain of evidence they are seeking to establish to prove the theory of a future existence.

Upon another visit, I asked him: "How would you answer the question 'Is there a God'?"

To which he replied: "The word is a very puzzling thing, because nowadays the name of God is distributed among the ignorant people, and all those who believe in God, believe in Him according to the traditions of their own faith. But the existence of God is true, which is explained by the light of reason. If you will go to a religious people they will give you God according to their version. In India the people give dresses to their Gods in the Temples; but in India the people wear many kinds of dresses, so in different parts of the country you will see the dress of God different, according to their version. So that is the idea of man, imagination; they have imagined, they have not seen. The real existence can be perceived through the light of reason. To one who has perfect

reason I can show that God at once. If a man asks what is the proof of God, I say, 'Give up the word God, and see what I show you. You show me the nature of the questioner and questions. No mind without body can question; the mind is a fickle object. If you say soul, soul is a ray of light and cannot question. But what is that in which one realizes happiness, and what is that in which one realizes his own questions? As a man puts a lot of questions he perceives the word of his question, and then he is cautious in that egotism. Tell me the nature of that consciousness, I will show you God.'"

"What is your idea of the way a man surrounded by the environments of modern life should live to secure happiness?"

"Well, there are two sides—mortal happiness and immortal happiness. If you ask about mortal happiness, then at first you should try to understand what mortal happiness is. For example, take a man who has never seen an electric lamp, and that lamp is brought into his room, and he is crying to see that lamp: 'Where is that lamp? Where can I find that lamp? What is that lamp? I am very anxious to know'; and the lamp is near him all the time. When somebody shows him the lamp he says, 'Oh, this is the lamp, I am sorry I wasted my time.' Then he is satisfied. Another example: The musk deer two or three times in a week becomes mad on account of the strong scent, good scent, which is from his musk, and wanders here and there to leave the scent; you see what the animal is suffering, and he does not know that he himself is the source of that. In the same way you must know what the nature of happiness is. If you say material things, it is quite nonsense. A man sees the beauty of things, but that beauty is not seen by the blind man; thus it is true that the pleasure with that beauty lies in the force of eyes. If not, the blind man would be able to feel that later. The same applies to sound, smell, taste, and touch. Substantial things in this world are not

the sources of pleasure. The stream of pleasure flows through your organs of senses, but if you want pleasures you must confine yourself to the force of sense, then you will be conscious only of that force. At that time you will feel the five kinds of pleasures in the forces of the five organs of senses; but if you want to enjoy the happiness higher than those forces, then you must fix your mind on the whole of the senses, which is Mind. Fix your attention to the whole force, which is Mind, then you will confine yourself to the atom of mind. You will then be satisfied that mind is the cause of happiness. Through the subjective health of mind you will be able to realize subjects. If you will stand on the summit of knowledge you will be able to see the horizontal space of nature on all sides; then you will be conscious of such a pleasure of countless worlds. But there is one fact, and that is that the pleasure is illusive. If you want to enjoy the primary happiness, then you must sleep through that force and follow it, as you follow the world in your sleep. You follow the force above that stage, and see the eternal life in all bliss. There it is all ecstasy. There is no anxiety; there is no mind; there is no illusion. Only the vision of eternal life will be plain; you will be eternally conscious of that eternal life."

"What proof can you give of the re-incarnation theory? The other night in speaking of re-incarnation you said certain people became monkeys, animals, birds, etc., and even stones. How do you know that?"

"I did not say so. I said many people are beasts in human form. By body they are men, and by mind they have the qualities of animals or birds. For example: Go into the streets of drunkards and see what kind of men they are. You will see that animals are better than these lives. So how can they become men after their death, when in the present life they are animals? The difference is in the bodies and not nature of minds. The nature of minds is the same in men as in animals, birds, etc. Again,

you say about the soul in your body, the light of soul is a burning light, and in the soul the light is as in fire ; fire covered with ashes ; so there is no difference between nature of minds, soul, and the force, only the difference between the bodies ; so it is clear proof according to their ideas that they must get their place on the point of death, then on the point of death they cannot get human ideas when they are beasts in the present life. They will get the result according to the beast idea. When they are so much degraded by the power of mind or intellect, then they must be incarnated according to their stage."

"What is the purpose of creation? Why should there be this evolution?"

"This, your question, I can solve, and I solve now, in one second, but I must give detail to make it clear. You say that the creation existed. What is the cause of creation? I say this is quite plain, that the world exists in your dream ; that is the cause of that illusion. Who is the creator? What is the cause of that involution and evolution, and what is the space where that world exists? All these things which you call the world exist only in the scope of minds. You cannot understand the condition of anybody in the dream, but you can understand when you wake up. If you are to understand the condition of wakefulness of this body, then you must try to lay the origin of this world, which is a wonderful existence, because of that part of his manifestation of eternal bliss ; so that when the primordial force faces you, you will be on the summit of better knowledge, then you will understand all these things easily, and while your mind will be absorbed in the highest you will attain nothing, only bliss."

"What is your idea of Christ?"

"There are three kinds of prophets, and force belongs to the prophet creation. Force of prophet exists in the primordial force, so that when the majority of the ignorant people commits more and more sin on earth, then the earth bears a burden, and afterwards the burden reaches the pipe

of nature, and through it comes the original force to some prophet raised up to teach them. Those prophets take their birth on earth, and they are given, according to their stages, some miracles, because there are three kinds of prophets, the excellent, middle, and lower. Some prophets have middle miracles, some excellent, and some lower miracles. Therefore, with the fear of miracles they bind the wandering creatures in religion. At first somebody should be sent to bind them, then they will get their desire, so the duties of prophets are to bind them. Prophets are not common souls, they are pure souls. The prophets must do their work and go to the original force. But some thousands or millions of years hereafter they will enter that stage of the highest. So Christ was one of the prophets, his object was good, and he was not a common soul, he was a pure soul. It was good what he did at that time, but the superstition is created by the foolish students, because it is quite plain, anyone can understand, that the students misunderstand when the teacher begins to explain some high subjects ; then if that understanding will not be removed, all the mistakes will go on ; so you know very well what was the condition of those Christians at the time of Christ. I should not ask you ; you can read from history. Their condition was like unto some tribes you can see in the woods at this time. I don't blame the teacher on account of superstition, but it is the mistake of the unfit students. Otherwise the prophets are pure souls."

Just before the Mahatma's departure for India he was asked, "Do you intend to found a school in England or in any of the Western countries for the teaching of your Philosophy ?"

To this he replied : "No ; I want to do good only to others. I don't want to be the founder of any society ; I must give light to all creations, I don't want to mix with creations. I don't want to give my lectures in the houses of creations, because I am afraid if I found such things,

then these students who don't understand my perfect signs will make some mistakes. Those mistakes will create superstitions, then my name will be spoiled, so I don't want to found Societies like the Societies I see in the Western civilization."

"But I understood you to say a few minutes ago that you had not found fit students in England?"

"I say there are three grades of students, excellent, middle, and lower. I cannot say that the excellent student is in England. I want to make all the students lower students of qualification, then he will have middle qualification, then excellent."

"Then you have found some students in the lower qualification?"

"I have found some students, and I have put them on the right way to go, and I have taken the burden on myself to help them if they require it from me. I am ready to discuss such questions. I want to do good to other people, because my mind is so that the good of others is my lifework."

"Then you believe more in the work of individual students than of societies?"

"In our philosophy association does all things. Good association makes a man good, and bad association makes a man bad. So if there is the association of right men, or truth-seekers, and they all want to reach the truth, then I light their faculty, and if they are to create some superstition or mistakes, then it is not my object. I don't want to be a founder of any sect; if I did so, I would found a great religion in India according to their ideas, but I don't want to do so. I want to teach the truth. I am the teacher of the truth-seekers, I am not the teacher of the gossips' mistakes or the curiosity creators."

II.

After he returned to India a number of formal questions were written out and sent to him. These are the Western questions to which I have made allusion above. They are given below.

Question : How could you prove to a non-believer the existence of God ?

Answer : The changeableness of existence proves the unchangeableness, the mortality of existence proves the immortality, the finiteness of existence proves infiniteness, etc. When our consciousness shows us there is opposition in two things, then we can accept the premise that immortal existence is the opposite of mortal existence. On the other hand, a non-believer in the existence of God is in a state of ignorance when he has not endeavoured to reach by realization the Ultimate Source of all Sources, for in this world everything knowable has its source, must have its source, or root from which it flows. The source of object is mind, and the source of mind is Maya, then it logically follows that there must be a cause for Maya. In order to realize the Ultimate Source of all sources, methods whereby mental vibration can be modified or made to cease must be practised when the stage of stability or equilibrium is attained. Only those who have by long scientific practice achieved such results can possibly teach and instruct on how such stages can be arrived at. The stage of stability is the divine stage. Phenomena-seekers, or occult students of theory only, making no practical endeavours by means of Yoga exercises to realize and understand the subtler stages beyond physical existence, can never grasp the reality of Divine Existence and consciousness.

Q. : How could you prove to a non-believer the existence of the Soul ?

A.: The man who has not completely purified the mind through the practices adopted by the real Yogins of India will rarely be able to understand the subtle things, and consequently he must remain an unbeliever of all subtle things. If a teacher will give the subtle definition, and the student has not that stability of mind necessary for the consideration of such subjects, he will not be able to grasp the subtleties either practically or theoretically, and all endeavours to prove so subtle a matter as the existence of the Soul will be quite useless. A man is not expected to understand such subjects as Algebra or Mathematics, neither will he understand metaphysical analysis, nor the definition of pure reason, unless his mind has been accustomed to study or meditate on such difficult subjects. How, then, will he prove the existence of his subjective life and understand the existence of the Soul without study, the use of his deductive reasoning faculties, and, above all, without a practice of mental control. Only when the mind is trained to become perfectly stable will the subjective existence be the real existence, and the life of the physical senses the unreal. Without soul there would be no consciousness, and without consciousness no thought, and without thought no possibility of physical existence. In short, when a man experiences the rise of ideas in the mind, then in that phenomenon there are two forces, one which conveys a sense of motion or moving from one place to another, and this is the portion of Maya or Mind; the other is a sort of knowledge which discriminates on the result, and this latter force is the power of Soul.

Q.: How could you prove to an ignorant mind the truth of Re-incarnation?

A.: Different men in this world meet the different kinds of happiness and the different kinds of pains which are all the results of certain actions. For example, one child is born in a house where he will meet all sufferings, and another child is born in a house where

he will meet liberty and happiness. These two kinds of experiences cannot be the result of present actions, since none have yet been committed by them; they are therefore the results of previous actions. Again, we must notice that no actions can be performed without a body or physical medium, so it logically follows that they must have been possessed of a physical vehicle before their present birth. Every tradition says, and all believe, that pains and pleasures are the results of sins and virtues, and pleasure and pain are impossible to feel without a body, or through the medium of consciousness whereby these effects express themselves. Therefore, in previous births, when they committed sins or performed virtuous actions, in every case body was necessary and was present. Through these premises, and the impossibility to conceive of an effect without a cause, man must believe that his present body is the outcome of previous causes or previous existences. In order to realise such things as re-incarnation by other means than those of reason and argument, the student must endeavour by Yoga practices to acquire stability of mind, when he will see all things. Bodily re-incarnation is the change of bodies, and the change of things is the re-incarnation of things, and the change of knowledge is the re-incarnation of knowledge.

Q.: How would you make known to the doubter the difference between the world of Unreality and that of Reality?

A.: Through the forgetfulness of object, reach at the source which lies behind object, when you will perceive the difference between reality and unreality. All stages where changeableness exists are the unreal ones; and absence of dual knowledge or belief in separateness is Reality, which is the Unlimited Space of highest consciousness of all Ecstasy. When such a reality is perceived and attained, then is the student conscious of all hidden things and mysteries, otherwise vain chattering

on the part of ignorant theorists will only foster doubts, and increase the unreality. Mere talking cannot procure knowledge and satisfaction to a man ; only practical endeavours can enable him to realize such ideas. Unless the proof of such knowledge is practically attempted, and the idea embodied applied to the daily life, the individual will ever fail to attain the Highest, and this in spite of many births and lives.

Q.: If this world is one of illusion and unreality, why should we attempt to do good? Why should we attempt to do anything if everything is an illusion?

You made a number of suggestions during your visit to England for the education of the people in the direction of your philosophy. Why should this be done if every act of man in this world is based on illusion and can lead to nothing?

A.: In the question upon illusion, all things except the Highest, the Source, are illusive in nature. That being the case, your question itself is illusion. The mystery of illusion you will be able to understand when you can soar above the stage of illusion ; and in the region of illusion you will ever meet doubts and perplexities. But you should understand that the illusion is destroyed by illusion, and that illusion is fostered by illusion, as the iron is bruised through iron. There are two extremes of illusion, the pure and the impure. The former leads the illusive atom to the Highest, the latter leading the illusive atom to all lower stages of delusion, perplexities, and troubles. If a man's conduct prepares himself to go to mortal stage, he will do all things under the control of egotism, desire, and other bad emotions connected with objects. If, however, he is eager to obtain truth and realize the Highest, he should try to get command over mind, egotism, desire, and similar forces of Maya.

Q.: In your book "Sri Brahma Dhara" you say that this world is a dream in the consciousness of the Highest—the ebullition of an atom in the mind of the Infinite.

Do you mean by this that the entire system of the Universe, the millions of suns following established law, the enormous distances between these visible and ordinary objects, are equally figments of illusion ?

From the most distant point of the universe visible to the telescope, light, travelling at the rate of 180,000 miles per second, takes 1,000 years to come to this planet. This I mention only to indicate the enormous vision which has been built up by our scientific people living in this world. They have found the law which governs the movements of these vast systems of worlds. Turning from this vast realm, they have through the microscope discovered in the tiniest drop of water creatures of life also governed by law. Modern science seems to the average inhabitants of the world of illusion to have found out many wonderful things which appear to be based upon truth. Can dreams, illusions, be found which obey a fixed and unchanging law ?

Where is the boundary-line between the truth which is outlined—the beautiful laws of matter, the absolute fixed rules of life—and the life of what you call Reality ?

A. : This sixth question shows the complete ignorance of the materialist in his knowledge concerning the Highest. I will answer this question by giving an example as follows:—One man says, “I have seen a plain in my dream surrounded by big mountains, on the south of ice, on the north they were of fire, and I saw armies fighting together ; on one side the combatants were headless and armless, yet they shot cleverly. Opposite them the opponents were men possessed of four heads each man, yet they were not so well able to shoot as the others. A shot struck me and I thought I died, and then after a period I came to life again and fled away. One month I was on a journey, then I reached the shores of a great sea, where I made myself a hut, lived one hundred years, and brought up a family of children. After this I thought that I became a king of that country, and that a Yogin came to see me and showed me a process of Yoga, and

then my body died and I began to see the countless suns, stars, and moons, but I could not find any light. Then I awoke!" See what these experiences were. They were illusions, the phenomena of mind, of finite mind; and this universe with its infinite duration are the phenomena of Infinite Mind. It is very difficult for a man in a dream to realize that he *is* dreaming; also, he does not realize that he is living in a strange way or doing ridiculous things, or acting contrary to law and custom. All matters are then to him quite real and serious. Only when he wakes to his usual state of consciousness does he become aware of the absurdity of his experience and realize the shortness of time which has elapsed in his sleep state, and the unstableness of his mind therein. In the same way, when you are in ignorance of the Highest, and only conscious of the objective world, you are in a dream and you cannot perceive the absurdity or madness of your life in the physical world. Neither can you sweep away the mountains of doubt until you rise to a perception of the stage above Maya, which is your true self. In that stage of Realization beyond Maya you yourself will see the world as a vague presentment, and what seemed matters of infinite duration will then appear as things of a moment. The countless things of the world are the countless attributes of Maya, and Maya is a blissful wave in the consciousness of the Highest; such activity will therefore possess some portions of the beauty and love of its source. Love of the whole is pure love, but love of fragmentary things creates ignorance. Moral conceptions of time and space are entirely illusionary conceptions based on finite thoughts and ideas.

Q.: In everything that you have written, everything that you have spoken or taught, you teach clearly the power of Love throughout the universe. If it is Love that controls, how is it that evil is allowed to exist?

In what you teach you say that Pain alone leads one

back to the Highest, and that we are *misled* by love of pleasure and sensuous enjoyments to go further and further away from our true land of birth, and to plunge deeper and deeper in the meshes and entanglements of our foreign surroundings. But why should this be so? Why should people not have a natural disposition to turn to the Highest? Why should it need the whip of Pain if Love controls? Why should there be misfortunes and sorrow and misery solely for the purpose of educating the spirit to turn to the Highest? Why should it ever have been sent away from the Highest? What is the basic object of the dream of Maya? Most dreams of poor finite beings are worthless trash, and mean nothing. Is this magnificent, stately dream of existence as we now know it, also worthless?

A. : Regarding the various ideas incorporated in this question, a philosophical definition of what is commonly understood by Divine Love must be given. The Primordial force of love is the reflection of its own Bliss, and this reflection creates that universe of phenomenal activity through a correlation of spontaneous vibrations known as Maya. Through this vibration a prismatic effect is obtained of this reflection of bliss, and from fragmentary sections of the whole. In short, the reflection of the Highest Bliss is Maya or manifestation of Love. The reflection of the consciousness of that Bliss or Divine Selfness is the Primordial Soul. Again, Vibration is set up, and this primordial whole is split up into varieties and fragments. In the absence of the knowledge of the Highest, the love of mortal things, the attraction towards ephemeral pleasures, creates such illusion that the mind becomes finally unable to perceive the true from the false. Consequently, in the Absence of Truth and right knowledge all endeavours on the part of the individual lead to evils, and when a man pursues such evils he meets the pain, and his desires are then checked, and a reverse process commences which turns the mind gradually back

to the Highest. Physical or bodily pain may not always turn the man back in the right direction, but the intrusion of pain in the mental existence does produce a result which conduces to restore to the man his desire for truth. Pain and Evil are the natural concomitants of error and illusion, but they cease to be regarded as evils when understood as necessary for the full recognition and realization of the Greatest Good. Waking, dreaming, and sleeping are the forces of Maya, so they alternately work in that region, and the vision of the Source of Maya is a most magnificent spectacle in which Maya is a blissful bubble, and that stage cannot be described in language. But the fit student possessing excellent merits can understand this stage through the help of those highest teachers who are able to define these lofty stages clearly, and have practical command over Maya.

Q. : Who is the individual who becomes better or worse according to his mode of life? You say in each man resides the *Atman* or Higher Self, who is sinless, incapable of impure thought, and is in himself a part of the Highest. The individual gains reward by the acquirement of wisdom, and he is punished for his ignorance. It is even said in Bhavagad Gita that there are people whose lives are so evil that they are punished without hope of forgiveness, and that they never reach the Highest. What, then, becomes of the Higher Self in that individual? Is he punished as well?

A. : *Mind* becomes worse through the greater weight of vibration, while decrease of that vibration lightens it. According, therefore, to the increase or decrease of mental vibration mind is styled pure or impure. The Soul must therefore be wise or ignorant, according to the predominant quality of the mind. Beyond the stage of Mind and Soul is the condition of *Atman*. *Atma* must not be spoken of as being "in" or "out," but must be regarded as unlimited consciousness of unlimited space and all-permeating. Space in the body is called bodily space, but is not separate

from all-pervading space, for space permeates every atom. Vibrations and their effects are the cause of error and ignorance, and absence of vibration or mental fluctuations enables the rise of wisdom. The mind in which the vibration is in maximum swing becomes a victim to the countless forces of desire for objects, and its ignorance of the Highest will occasion sinful actions; therefore the Jivanmukta says to his disciples, "Reach up to my Eternity, otherwise you will not be able to protect the mind against the assaults of evil." In order to reach that eternity the suppression of fickle vibrations is essential, or the desire for mortal objects will mislead.

Q.: I have never understood you to advocate the doctrine of Endless Punishment. I have heard you speak of punishment when the spirit returns to beasts, birds, and even stones. But where is the punishment of such a return, even to the lowest form of life, unless the individual, as we know him, is conscious of such punishment?

A.: Regarding the question of Punishment, there can be *no cessation* to actions good or bad, virtues or evils, punishments or rewards, *until* the individual realizes his Eternal Self by forgetting dual existence. Again, the student must first understand what is the force which is the means of punishment, and what is the force which occasions reward in the body. The force of deliberation (Vichara) makes the mind stable, contented, calm, and all-virtuous, then mind shines in the body like the sun; but when the clouds of desire begin to envelop the thinking force, then the beauty of mind is veiled. So a man is responsible for his own sins, which bring their own punishment, and those sins arise through the desire for merely mortal things. Let a man, however, suppress desires, and discriminate between right and wrong, and he will ultimately enjoy the Highest Good. There is no force of discrimination in the minds of beasts, birds, stones, therefore these creations can never acquire the pleasures of calmness or mental stability.

The term *Eternity* expresses only the stage of the Highest, and when applied to the phenomenal world of manifestation is only relative. All of those souls who have failed to realize their Eternal Self, and are in the lower stages of desire and ignorance, remain in the forces of Maya till the destruction of the world. In a state of abeyance, or like seed that has to be sown, they will remain to await a renewal of Maya's activities and commence a further round of evolution.

Q.: In all punishment one has to consider only the individual who merits the punishment. Ultimately, what becomes of him? Is he merged into the Higher Self, and that Higher Self into the Highest of all? That is understandable; but I do not understand what becomes of the Higher Self when the individual is being punished by falling into a lower condition of existence?

A.: Those souls whose actions are punishable move incessantly in the revolving evolution of births and births, and such incessant activities must be inevitably carried on until such time arrives when they desire to meditate on the Highest. Until such stage is reached their minds are misled by the magics of the Magician Maya. Every existence is bound up in three stages or conditions related to actions; the past, present, and future. When a man suffers or enjoys, then that is the result of the actions of the past and present stages, and in the future he has to suffer or enjoy according to the condition of his actions in the present stage.

Q.: What explanation have you to make of the re-incarnation of lives into those of children who die in the first stages of their existence? Out of every 1,000 children born, 175 die in the first year. Only 25 per cent. of those born reach the age of five. Is it a punishment or a reward for outgoing spirits to be re-born into such existences, and what possible effect could such re-birth have upon their future?

A.: The souls that commit great cruelties, having never-

theless some virtues of human existence, come into human birth and die in youth, then take their birth according to their action in the lower creations—animals, etc. The existence of such creations as beasts, birds, and stones, is the condition blind of pleasure, and when there is no consciousness of pleasure then there can be no consciousness of pain either ; but all have life, and according to the force of life their existence may be considered dull and restricted, which is a great punishment. When consciousness has turned into the condition of non-consciousness, and after a certain period of dormant existence, they change again to painful creations of every kind. This law of nature is fixed in the origin. If you will reach the Original Force of Evolution, or stand on the summit of knowledge beyond the forces of Evolution, you will perceive these laws easily to your satisfaction, otherwise you cannot be proof against the assaults of doubt.

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