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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

The Message of the East

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JANUARY, 1921

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Swami Paramananda

of India in charge

THIRTEENTH SEASON — 1921

SUNDAY, 11 A. M. — SERVICE WITH ADDRESS

SUBJECTS

January 2nd *Buddha's Message to Mankind*
January 9th *Supernatural Powers*
January 16th *Practical Spirituality*
January 23rd *Life Hereafter*
January 30th *Higher Consciousness*

NEW YEAR GREETINGS

We send to all our friends and readers our most cordial greetings and best wishes for a very happy and peaceful New Year. We hope that during the coming months "The Message of the East" may prove to them a constant source of inspiration and helpfulness. We call upon all to work with us in our task of binding close the hearts of mankind in a truer spiritual fellowship.

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

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VOLUME X.

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THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

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

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

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SPIRITUAL COURAGE

By Swami Paramananda

If we can keep our spiritual vision always steadfastly focused, it becomes perfectly simple to go through any danger or difficulty with absolute fearlessness. It is because we are not able to hold this vision steadfastly in our consciousness that we have so many struggles. How can we make this vision unfaltering? There are moments in each one's life when God seems very near, when His protecting hand seems upon us and everything is perfectly clear. Then again, we do not know how or whence, our vision grows clouded and our mind disturbed. How can we avoid these frequent changes? Only by practical spiritual living. If we can learn to follow our spiritual instincts with the same fervor as we now follow our material instincts, it will not be a difficult task.

In the life of devotion we find the most spontaneous expression of our religious feelings — those feelings which unite man with God. We call it devotion because it expresses the highest in man. Through it we make really ours the ideals which now we accept only in theory. When this inner devotion becomes a practical factor in our life, we are sustained even in the moments of greatest trial. Wherever we may be placed, God lives with us and we live

with God. Then we are able to say from our heart: "It matters not where Thou dost put me, whether in poverty or in riches, I pray only that I may manifest Thy will." This is religion — when we can accept all conditions, whether easy or difficult, and find joy in them. We are not swept away by material glory, nor are we crushed by failure or calamity. Only such a character can stand the test of hardships and misfortune. Endurance, the spirit of sacrifice, undaunted courage, fearlessness: these are all gained through spiritual devotion. When God has become a reality to us, when the spirit of Truth has become a genuine part of our life, there is nothing to fear. Even though the body may fall, we know that there is no annihilation for us, no death, no destruction.

The tremendous courage which comes to a spiritually awakened soul is not an ordinary courage. It is not mere physical valor. It is the real spiritual strength which never fails. In the face of all difficulties it triumphs. Yet it never hurts any one, because it is not aggressive. It is gentle, but also it is powerful, because it is sustained by God. When we are sustained by Truth, we become fearless. Even if the whole world turns against us, it does not matter, because we have the conviction and the courage of our own life. We know that it is better to die for Truth than to live for untruth; that a life based on falsehood cannot bring lasting satisfaction. By offering our innermost devotion to God or Truth, we strengthen our character and we learn to express these loftier ideals through our daily living. As our devotion gradually enables us to touch our chosen Ideal within, it softens our heart and fills it so full of tenderness and love for humanity that we cannot be harsh towards any one.

Whether we have truly assimilated the principles of

religion is proved when we come face to face with lines of thought alien to our own. If our ideals and principles have penetrated our heart, we shall be gentle not merely towards those who feel and think and believe as we do; we shall be equally gentle towards those who have a totally different point of view. When our heart has been changed by practical devotion to the Ideal, we do not have to calculate in order to be loving to any one. Nor do we have to calculate to keep from being angry with any one. Such feelings do not rise. The light of spirituality transforms completely; but it transforms gently, as the dewdrop transforms the bud into a blossom. Our struggling life becomes wholly changed when we have touched the threshold of Truth, and there is no other power which can give us access to that threshold so quickly as the power of genuine devotion flowing from our heart.

Nothing can stand between us and our God; but if we do not believe that He is the most immediate factor in our life, if we do not learn to call upon Him simply and directly, both in misfortune and in good fortune, we shall often lose courage. We must make Him the whole of our life. The Infinite Being knows our innermost thoughts. If we fail, He knows how to correct us. If we prove ourselves weak, He knows how to sustain us. Our spiritual devotion, however, must be genuine. It must be whole-hearted. When we give our whole heart, then it is filled with the fullness of the infinitude of God. If we give merely a little of it, only that part is filled and the rest remains full of our own imperfection. We must bring our heart, our soul, our whole being free from prejudice, free from all material thoughts and ambitions, that God's will and God's blessings may fill our inner being and make us His true instruments.

We never realize the fullness of life until we become His instruments. This does not mean that we all have to become priests or ministers in order to express God's power. In every walk of life we are fulfilling His law. If we are conscious of this at every step, our every action will purify us and God will be able to manifest His blessings through us to others.

We cannot feel the nearness of the Supreme until our heart is at rest. So long as there is any sense of struggle, we do not catch even a glimpse of spiritual vision. Many obstacles may rise in our path, but these are not to discourage us. On the contrary, they are to inspire us with greater courage; because when we surmount difficulties, we have greater confidence in our spiritual Ideal. If we look back over our life, we shall see that even in the most difficult moments we had blessings in abundance, especially when we were able to lift up our thoughts in surrender. God is never absent from us, but we do not always look up to Him. I remember a little hymn in Bengalee which runs: "O Divine Mother, why is it that I do not always find Thee? Because I only call on Thee when I am in sorrow. When my life is full of happiness, I forget Thee."

This is the reason why we cannot always find God — we only turn to Him in the hour of need. It is not a grave misfortune, therefore, when we meet with sorrow and trials. It is so easy to forget when life runs smoothly and everything goes just as we wish. This may be why the lives of great men are so full of tragedy. Yet whatever may overtake them, their fervor never wavers. Our spiritual fervor should rather increase when we have to go through difficulties; and they cease to be difficulties for us when we understand their purpose. They come to make us feel closer to God. Also they come to make us realize how absolutely unreal are these material conditions which we

so often imagine to be insurmountable; for as soon as we fasten our heart to the heart of God, they fade away.

The devotional life, the life of prayer, the life of continuous spiritual consciousness, is not a mere theoretical, visionary life. It is as real as these material things we perceive about us. The sense of the unfailing presence and protection of Divinity can be cultivated. We can actually feel it. The trouble is that we do not try to feel it. The least little obstacle turns us aside. That should not be. Whatever comes, the brave heart welcomes and conquers it. This must be our attitude, if we really believe that God is our Protector, that from Him we draw our life and that from Him no evil can come. When we possess such perfect trust, we must have courage and peace; for absolute trust cannot fail to make us strong and peaceful. There can be no more calculation or anxiety. Calculation can exist only when our trust is half-hearted and we still feel that we must look out for our own interests.

Merely uttering loud prayers does not make us holy or bring us the sense of the nearness of God. It is the kind of prayer that we say and how devotedly, how faithfully we say it. When our devotion rises naturally and spontaneously, then our prayer is heard. Spiritual things must become vital in our life. And when they do, it adds tremendously to our material life also. Our outer life is not without a purpose. When it is enriched, we can carry so much more into the world. If our heart is full, we can share that fullness with others. Let us turn our thoughts to the great Cosmic Life. We are a part of that Life, we are sustained by It. Let us try to make ourselves conscious of the abundant blessings which are flowing upon us ceaselessly. Let our devotion be spontaneous; let our love be so big that it encircles all, leaving no one out. Through

the grace of the Infinite Being may we learn to carry the Divine Presence in our hearts, so that no matter where we are placed, that radiant Presence may light our path and fill our life full of joy and full of love.

PRAYER

O Thou Compassionate One! Make our hearts free from all that is alien and discordant.

Make our bodies and minds so true and surrendered to Thy will that we may serve Thee and Thy children with selfless devotion.

Fill us with Thy love that we may forget hate altogether.

Thou knowest our innermost thoughts and feelings; do Thou sustain us and help us to follow Thy path with steadfastness of purpose and undaunted courage.

Give us Thy support that we may rest in Thee and find in Thee our peace and joy.

O Thou Effulgent Spirit, fill our hearts with Thy light, that we may have no darkness or doubt within us.

Grant that we may always find our refuge in Thy all-abiding, infinite Being. May Thy peace rest upon us all.

THE OVERCOMING OF DESIRE

Selection from the Mahabharata. Shanti-Parva.

Be it happiness or be it misery, be it agreeable or be it disagreeable, whatever comes to one should be enjoyed or endured with an unconquered heart.

Every day a thousand occasions for sorrow and a hundred occasions for fear assail the man of ignorance and folly, but not the man who is possessed of wisdom.

Sorrow can never touch the man who is possessed of intelligence, who has acquired wisdom, who listens thoughtfully to the instruction of his superiors, who is free from envy and who is self-restrained.

Relying upon his higher understanding and protecting his heart (from the impulses of desire and passion) — thus should the man of wisdom live and act in this world.

Sorrow cannot touch him who knows that Supreme Self, from Whom everything comes and to Whom all things return.

The very root of that by which grief or heart-burning or misery is felt, or for which man is impelled to selfish endeavor, should be cast off, even though it be a part of his body.

That object, whatever it may be, which awakens in us the sense of possession, will become surely the source of grief and heart-burning. Whatever objects, among those desired by us, we are able to throw aside, become sources of happiness.

Neither the happiness which is derived from the gratification of the senses, nor that greater felicity which one may enjoy in heaven, equals even a sixteenth part of the joy which arises through the overcoming of all selfish desire.

Joy and sorrow, the pleasant and the unpleasant, continually revolve (as on a wheel) among living beings. Understanding this, the man of intelligence and wisdom lives at ease.

A person should disregard his desires and never allow his anger to get the better of him. This anger springs up in the heart and grows there vigorously and luxuriantly. This anger which dwells in the bodies of men and is born in their minds is spoken of by the wise as death.

When a person succeeds in withdrawing all his desires as a tortoise withdraws his limbs, then his soul, which is self-luminous, is able to look into itself.

When a person feels no fear and is feared by none, when

he cherishes no desire or aversion, he is then said to attain the state of oneness with God.

Rising above both truth and falsehood, grief and elation, fear and fearlessness, the pleasant and the unpleasant (all the dual conditions of the finite), thus thou mayest become of tranquil soul.

When a person abstains from doing wrong to any creature, in thought, word, or deed, he is said to attain to the state of oneness with God.

True happiness is his who can overcome that thirst which the ignorant cannot conquer, which does not decay with decrepitude and which is regarded as a mortal disease.

In this connection, O King, are heard the verses of Pingala. At the time of great misery she succeeded in acquiring tranquillity of soul.

Pingala said: — Alas! I have lived for many long years overcome by frenzy by the side of that dear Self in whom there is nothing but tranquillity. Death has been at my door. But before that I did not approach that Essence of purity (the soul) . . . What woman is there who regards that Supreme Soul, even when He is so near, as truly dear? I am now awake. I have been roused from the sleep of ignorance. I am no longer swayed by desire. Roused from the sleep of ignorance, I have cast off all desire for worldly objects. I have mastered the senses. One who is freed from desire and expectation sleeps in felicity. Freedom from expectation and desire is felicity. Having driven out desire and expectation, Pingala sleeps in felicity.

(Note: The sleep here referred to is a sleep to worldly things and a wakefulness to godly things. As it is said in the Bhagavad-Gita: "That which is night to all beings, therein the self-subjugated remains awake; and in that where all beings are awake, that is night to the knower of Self.")

GOD'S WORLD AND MAN'S WORLD

By Sister Devamata.

The world we live in is wholly ours. Nothing can enter it unless we give it access. We believe that our life is shaped by the action of the outer world upon us; in reality it is wholly moulded by our reaction on the world. This ceaseless play of external conditions is not what affects us; it is our attitude towards them. We have no actual acquaintance with the outside universe. All we know of it is the emotion or sensation it arouses in us. When some outer stimulus impinges on our consciousness, instead of studying it dispassionately and learning what it really is, we react immediately against it and judge of its nature by the pleasure or pain, the strength or weakness, it produces in us. If its effect on us is pleasurable, we call it good; if it is painful, we call it evil. But in itself it may be quite the contrary; and what we are passing judgment on is our own mood, not that which strikes us from the outside. This is proved by the fact that we react differently towards the same circumstance at different times, turning pleasure into pain and pain into pleasure. Until we are able to curb these involuntary reflex thoughts, as a strong man checks his reflex bodily motions, we can never escape from our present narrow self-made world. If, however, through the practice of non-attachment and fortitude, we learn to control these impulsive reactions, we shall pass naturally and automatically into a new and bigger world of thought and action.

At every moment a man may live in one of two worlds. He may live in his own personal world, or he may live in God's world. Our little personal world is too small for God to live in. If we wish to live with Him, we must go and live in His world. His world is all harmony, order,

peace and beauty. The dark ugly places we perceive in it are the shadows cast from our world by our limitations and lack of understanding. Whenever we have eyes to see the mighty cosmic Power at work, unimpeded by fretful human hands, we are awe-struck by the perfect adjustment of every part; the unfailing precision and dependability, the beauty and symmetry apparent everywhere. There could not be a pageant more lovely than the breaking of the spring, the sunset glow of the autumn, the white stillness of snow falling on winter fields and hills. Nature, when left to herself, is a constant lesson and upliftment; because Nature lies quietly in God's hand. She is obedient to the cosmic will. She follows the cosmic plan. When we go out into a forest or on a mountain height, we say to ourselves: "How easy to be tranquil here!" But why is it easy? Because there we are in God's world; and whenever we are in God's world, we are at peace.

Nor is peace to be found elsewhere. We may search the furthermost corners of the earth, but we shall not be able to discover a single selfish, undisciplined man or woman who is at rest. Always is there a prodding unrest in the heart, a nameless discomfort, bred of unsatisfied ambition, envy, rebellion, loneliness, life-weariness. The only ones who seem to go on their way in silent content are the saints, the seers, the consecrated ones: those who live habitually in God's world. They, then, must have found the natural dwelling-place of man; for unrest is always a sign that the one who feels it is in an unnatural condition or environment. The state of "the fish out of water" is proverbial. If we are tormented, dissatisfied with the world we live in, may it not be because we are not where we belong?

There can be no doubt that we are meant to be God's

children, not children of men; Divine, not human. And all this troubling about human affairs; all this striving to change them, to make another kind of human world, will never solve its problems or bring us peace. We can go on as we are going life after life; we can continue to improve our mental reactions towards this world, making them finer, more unselfish; but always underneath there will be a gnawing dissatisfaction. If, however, for a time we give up working on this human world and begin even in a small way to seek entrance to the Divine world, we shall find our whole life transformed and our power of human helpfulness increased a hundredfold.

People who use their religion only to make this world a more comfortable place to live in are misusing it. The essential purpose of religion is to rebind us to God; to lead us out of the finite into the infinite, away from the small and personal into the vast and universal. It seems strange that that which we cherish most ardently and which we are most reluctant to relinquish is just that which cheats us of this larger heritage — our personal point of view, our personal motive in action, our personal rights. These form the basis of our present limitation. There is no other. Within the circle of "me" and "mine" lie all our distresses and perplexities. The instant we emerge from it, we have a sense of liberation and expansion.

Nor is this confining personal outlook on life a difficult thing to eliminate. It does not penetrate deep into our nature. Even physically we get away from it quickly. When we pierce a little below the surface, we find ourselves with the same general constitution as every other human being. Our body is constructed like every other. It obeys the same laws and functions in the same way. The personal variation is wholly superficial. We go a lit-

tle beneath the outer covering of our mind or of our heart and we come upon the same fundamental impulses of thought and feeling. Even selfishness, which is the corner stone of personality, in the last analysis is all the same. We cannot move away from the surface anywhere that we do not move away from the personal, from that which feels itself separate and at war with other separate entities. We are our own jailers. We have imprisoned ourselves and we guard ourselves with the greatest watchfulness lest by any chance we escape from our prison-house of personality. Yet wherever we see a man of heroic stature, a leader among men, that which constitutes his bigness is the power to act from a universal motive in the service of a universal ideal. If he be a true scientist, he acclaims joyfully every new discovery without taking account of the channel through which it comes. If he be the messenger of spiritual Truth, he does not debase it by seeking his personal glory or honor. Christ said: "Why call ye Me good?"

When we can raise ourselves out of the narrowing circle of personality and begin to live according to the universal law, in harmony with the universal scheme of things, at once we transcend our little pains and troubles. They are born wholly of our attachment to the personal and our stubborn disregard of the universal. If our own small plan chances to be in line with the cosmic plan, we meet with what we call success. We gain our end and are happy. If, however, our personal ambition carries us contrary to the cosmic scheme, then we meet with what we call failure; but it does not mean that we have failed or succeeded in any ultimate or permanent sense. It means merely that in the one case we went with the Divine current and in the other we went against it.

At no time have we any rights to quarrel over, any in-

terests to protect, any thing to concern ourselves about except this — that we take our place in God's universe and fulfill our part in His mighty universal plan. This at once simplifies all our habits of thought. At present how many hours we spend in calculating what is best to do; then in calculating how to do it; again in calculating how to overcome the obstacles which prevent us from doing it; still again in contending with our fellowmen to beat down these obstacles. But when we have allied ourselves with the bigger life, we shall work with God in His vast world and shall accomplish spontaneously His good will and pleasure. There will be no more questioning or calculating. We shall not be watching with anxiety the course of the universe. We shall just be living and living with God. Then we shall have all the wisdom we need, all the love we need; we shall be sheltered and guided and watched over as the tender mother watches over and guides her little child.

God is eager to share the riches of His universe with us; not the mere paltry material riches, but His most precious spiritual treasure. He longs to make us wise as He is wise; He longs to make us loving as He is loving; He longs to make us strong as He is strong. Is there any true human mother who would impoverish her child or refuse to share with it what she has? Would she sit down to a hearty meal and let it cry with hunger? Will God do less than an earthly mother? His whole universe of knowledge and power and wisdom and love may be ours for the taking; but we cannot take it so long as we are narrow and trivial in our motives and desires. We cannot remain small and take so great a gift. Only by expanding beyond our present limited personal measure of things shall we make room for the blessings of God. Every time we yield to a petty impulse we cheat ourselves of some Divine advantage.

Each time we overcome the rebellion or selfishness of our lower nature, we open ourselves to a fresh inpouring of strength and light and sweetness.

How foolish then is it to cling to the little; to fight for it; to be wayward and defiant, or whining and complaining because of it! Let us rather adopt a new habit of mind. When we rise in the morning let our prayerful thought be: "To-day God's universe will move according to a mighty, well-ordered plan— a plan that makes for beauty and harmony and loving-kindness. I am in it, I am a part of it. Grant, O Lord! that I may live at one with it." If we can put our life wholly back into it, we shall move less noisily, we shall talk less, we shall be less nervous and impulsive in our decisions and actions. A great rhythm will come in our thought, in our words, in our movements, even in our breathing.

When we cease to assert ourselves, God asserts Himself through us. When we turn towards Him, His light shines in us and through us and all about us. Now we break up that effulgence by the many-angled prism of our little self; but if we can yield ourselves joyfully and with one-pointed devotion to the larger Self within, then the light will shine unbroken. We cannot expand ourselves and continue to be ourselves in the smaller sense. Something must give way. It is not possible to take the infinite and eternal into this small finite being. We must by complete surrender go out into it, as the little light shines forth and mingles with the stronger light. It does not cease to be light, it does not become darkness; it only changes from a dim flickering flame off in a corner by itself into a radiant part of a great, far-reaching brightness.

Does any one wish to be small and petty and contracted? No. Let us try then to unite ourselves with that One

through Whom we must live, since He is life; with that One through Whom we must think, since He is all thought; with that One through Whom we must love, since He is all love; with that One through Whom alone we can be wise, since He is all wisdom. Let us strive earnestly and prayerfully to transcend our little self, to forget our trivial concerns, to lose our sense of importance as human beings, and to seek rather the greatness of humility, of patience and tender compassion; the greatness which comes from being willing to be small in earthly things that we may be accounted great in things Divine.

CONSECRATED

By Marion Forster Gilmore

O, thou eternal Wisdom, boundless Love,
Fount of my life, Source of my peace and power,
In Whom I live, by Thee alone sustained,
What can I render Thee? What priceless gift
Bring to Thine altar? Lord, I seem so low,
So weak, so human as I lift mine eyes
Unto the heights of Thy grand Purity;
What can I offer Thee? No common gift,
No fragment, broken from my little life,
Is fit to lay before Thee. Gifts like these
We offer one another, but for Thee
Only the perfect sacrifice — the height,
The depth, the breadth of all we are, of all
We hope to be — is worthy.
So I come
And spread my gifts before Thee. Every dream,
Every desire, in the consuming flame
Of Thy pure Spirit tried and all the dross
Burned out, the gold refined; my energies,

So perilous, so erring but for Thee,
Devoted to Thy will forevermore;
My life laid down, a carpet of Thy weaving,
For Thee to tread upon — Oh! let it know
The touch of Thy Divine, mysterious Feet!
My self, my soul, a channel for Thy power,
An instrument to work Thy purposes,
An alabaster vase, brimmed up with Thee!

THE WAY OF HOLINESS

Sermon by John Tauler. 14th Century.

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

St. Bernard has said: "Man, if thou desirest a noble and holy life and unceasingly prayest to God for it, if thou continue constant in this thy desire, it will be granted unto thee without fail . . ." What we can *do* is a small thing; but we can will and aspire to great things. Thus, if a man cannot be great, he can yet be good in will; and what he, with his whole heart and mind, love and desire, wills to be, that without doubt he most truly is. It is little we can bring to pass; but our will and desire may be large. Nay, they may grow till they lose themselves in the infinite abyss of God.

Not that we ought to think within ourselves that we wish to be this or that, like such a saint or angel, for we ought to be much more than we can conceive or fathom: wherefore our part is to give ourselves over to God and leave ourselves utterly in His hands, being wholly His. And if ye cannot be as entirely His as ye fain would be, be His as much as ye may attain unto; but whatever ye are, be that truly and entirely; and what ye cannot be, that be contented not to be, in a sincere spirit of resignation for God's sake and in Him. So shall you peradventure possess more of God in lacking than in having. Therefore be God's;

yield to His hand, suffer Him to do in thee, and to thee, and with thee, what He will; and then nothing here or hereafter shall be able to confound thee.

Think not that God will always be caressing His children, or will shine upon their head or kindle their hearts, as He does at the first. He does so only to lure us to Himself, as the falconer lures the falcon with its gay hood. Our Lord works with His children so as to teach them afterwards to work themselves; as He bade Moses to make the tables of stone after the pattern of the first which He had made Himself. Thus, after a time, God allows a man to depend upon himself and no longer enlightens and stimulates and rouses him. We must stir up and rouse ourselves, and be content to leave off learning, and no more enjoy feeling and fire, and must now serve the Lord with strenuous industry and at our own cost.

Our Lord acts like a prudent father, who, while his children are young, lets them live at his cost and manages everything for them. What is needful for them he provides, and lets them go and play; and so long as this lasts they are at leisure, free from care, happy and generous at their father's expense. Afterwards he gives a portion of his estate into their own hands, because he will have them to take care of themselves and earn their own living, to leave off childish play and thus learn how to grow rich. So it is with us. In the beginning of a holy life there is nothing but brightness, enjoyment and feeling; and God draws us after Him with His gifts, that we may praise Him in the influencing of our wills, that we do all with a good will, and that we know and recognize therein God's will.

But now it is very different. Now God will have us to give up ourselves and our own will, and to accept Him with readiness in His acts of severity, in all kinds of suffering

and in darkness of mind, whatever He may do and however contrary it may be to all our natural wishes. As the Lord said to Peter: "When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hand and another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldst not." Thus did the Lord in our early days go beside us, drawing us onward by His benefits; then we went whither we would, for our will was sweetly girded with the pleasantness of Divine things. But now it must be otherwise; another shall gird us and lead us whither we would not.

The Lord will draw us and securely lead us to Himself in a way contrary to all our natural will, until He has divested us thereof and consumed it and made it thoroughly subject unto the Divine will. For this is His will: that we should cease to regard our own wishes or dislikes; that it should become a light matter to us whether He give or take away, whether we have abundance or suffer want, and let all things go, if only we may receive and apprehend God Himself; that whether things please or displease us, we may leave all things to take their course and cleave to Him alone. Then first do we attain to the fullness of God's love as His children, when it is no longer happiness or misery, prosperity or adversity, that draws us to Him or keeps us back from Him. What we should then experience none can utter; but it would be something far better than when we were burning with the first flame of love and had great emotion but less true submission: for here, though there may be less show of zeal and less vehemence of feeling, there is more true faithfulness to God. That we may attain thereunto, may God help us with His grace. Amen!

THE BASIS OF MORALITY IN VEDANTA

Adapted from the Brahmavadin

The Isavasya-Upanishad teaches that man should live, work, know and attain salvation. Life is not to be thrown away by him. The human soul has a goal to win; that goal is the recognition of its oneness with the Supreme. The *Jiva* or individual soul may appear to be a deluded and shackled toy of the phenomenal world, but it is none the less an essential part of the all-embracing and all-pervading Spirit of the universe. It is something more than a mere spiritual entity exalted above the universe to a region of eternal bliss. It stands alone and has no second; it is greater than the greatest and smaller than the smallest. As a wise Seer declares in the Upanishad: "That one moves not, but is swifter than thought. The senses never reach it. It goes before them." Man is not the mere creature of a God, he is one with God. He has not simply the image of his Creator impressed upon him; he is an integral part of the Creator. Will one imbued with so lofty a conception of his soul condescend to contaminate it with evil in thought, word or action? Nobility of character cannot but come of necessity to a man with so noble an ideal of himself.

The follower of this monistic path "beholds all beings in the Self and the Self in all beings;" he sees the human race, nay, all animate life, existing in the Supreme. The lower self should be merged in this conception of the oneness or solidarity of all beings. As it is said in the Brihadaranyka-Upanishad: "Verily, a husband is not dear for the sake of the husband; but for the sake of the Self, therefore, the husband is dear. Verily, a wife is not dear for the sake of the wife, but for the sake of the Self, therefore a wife is dear. Verily, sons are not dear for the sake of the sons;

but for the sake of the Self, therefore sons are dear." Here is a basis for the practice of universal love which in vastness extends far beyond the love of one's neighbor.

One who holds this point of view has within himself an infallible guide along the right path. The heart of every man is tuned to the promptings of righteousness; he needs no light other than what fills his own mind and no teacher other than his own inner spirit. Thus Vedanta in its ultimate teaching places the basis of all morality in the innermost consciousness of each individual. The True abides in the heart. "With the heart we know what is true . . . The heart indeed is the seat of the Highest Supreme." But the *Jiva*, self-enlightened as he is, yet is entangled in the meshes of desire. Indeed we are told that he consists of his desires. "And as is his desire, so is his will; as is his will, so is his deed; and whatever deed he does, that will he reap." Self-abnegation, the sacrifice of what binds and differentiates the *Jiva*, the undoing of the desires which enter the heart, this is the way of immortality. To quote the Upanishads once again: "When all desires of the heart are undone, then does the mortal become immortal, then he attains the Supreme . . . If a man clearly beholds this inner Self as God and as the Lord of all that is and will be, then he is no more afraid."

The subjugation of the misleading impulses in us enables us to overcome evil. Without this self-discipline knowledge and virtue are impossible for us and evil is not destroyed. "He who knows it, after having become quiet, subdued, patient, collected, sees self in Self, sees all as Self." The perception of the oneness of human nature is impossible to the man who is not subdued and collected. But of the self-subjugated it is said: "Evil does not overcome him, he overcomes all evil. Evil does not burn him, he burns all

evil. Free from evil, free from spots, free from doubt," he reaches the ultimate goal.

Life as a whole should be regarded as a sacrifice. To conquer the temptations which have their root in our bodily cravings is man's *Diksha*;— his preparation for the life-sacrifice. Its fruits are penance, liberality, righteousness, kindness and truthfulness. And the sacrifice is completed with death, which is regarded as the closing ceremonial of the sacrifice. A person who enters upon this path of sacrifice, even though he begin with faith alone, eventually is led up to knowledge. And when good works and knowledge are combined, he is on the right road to salvation. This constitutes the ethics of Vedanta, built upon the solid foundation of a realization of the inner Self of man. The Vedanta, to use the words of Prof. Max Muller, "has not neglected the important sphere of ethics, but on the contrary, we find ethics in the middle and ethics in the end; to say nothing of the fact that minds so engrossed with Divine things as the Vedanta philosophers, are not likely to fall victims to the ordinary temptations of the world, the flesh or other powers."

THE CHRISTMASTIDE

The Christmas celebration at the Vedanta Centre of Boston extended over three days. On Friday evening the house was gayly lighted with candles at the windows and on the Christ-Child altar in the corner window overlooking the Park. So lovely was the effect seen from the Park driveway that many passers-by stopped their motors to look at it. The two Chapels and the Library also were trimmed with evergreens, and red lights were burning before the altars and the picture of the Madonna. An unusually large number attended the Christmas Eve Service, which took

place at eight o'clock. It opened with a Christmas carol sung by members of the household; then after a meditation and another carol the Swami delivered an address in which he said:

"When a child is born in a family, the whole house seems to be lighted up with joyousness, but when a Divine Child is born, the whole world is lighted up with joy. The spirit of Christmas did not begin with the birth of Jesus the Christ; it is as ancient as creation, as ancient as existence itself. We yearn for spiritual signs. We mortals long for something which relates us with the immortal. So a spark of Divinity falls upon us, bringing to us in a concrete vivid way the fact that God exists, that His power and glory, His holiness and love can rend the veil of materialism and destroy evil. Not in pomp and ostentation does His glory come, however. It comes rather in lowly garb — so lowly, so gentle, that man scarcely recognizes it as the Spirit of God. . . .

When Divine love remains supreme within our hearts, then every day is a joyous feast day for us — a true Christmas, on which we may receive the gift of God. At the touch of His Spirit all sadness vanishes and we are filled with the radiance of Divinity. . . The birth of Christ should not be something which happens only once. It must happen often. In our hearts the spirit of Christ must be born constantly. We must make Christmas a living fact in our lives. The world can never be satisfied by words, or by mere outer observances and customs. It is the living quality of true spirituality which sustains us and we can make Truth living only by living it.

Christmas comes to remind us that we must fill our days with joyousness. The world does not want any more sadness. But we cannot do this through theories. We can-

not merely make believe. The joy must be felt and to feel it we must have a spiritual foundation for our life. It is not by clinging to the form or dogma or tradition that we lift ourselves, but by gaining access to the spirit. The Spirit of God is worshipped everywhere. The real Christmas is celebrated everywhere. Do not think that only one group of people has found access to Divinity. All over the world there are souls who are yearning for God, and those who have forgotten their selfishness, who have removed every blemish from their heart, in them Divinity shines."

Christmas morning was devoted to religious Services for the immediate household of the Centre. In the afternoon an informal tea was held for all friends, its special purpose being to provide cheer for those who might otherwise spend a lonely day. A Christmas tree had been added to the decorations of the Community Room. At sunset the windows and the Christ-Child altar were lighted up as on the previous evening and Christmas carols were sung. Tea was then served and the guests lingered until long after six o'clock.

On Sunday morning at the regular Service the Swami's address was on "The Oriental Christ." He dwelt with insistent emphasis on the breadth and universal appeal of the true Christ Ideal and drew a striking comparison between the dogmatic Christ upon which all exclusive theology, creed and organization rests, and the spiritual Christ which is the common heritage of all mankind. The cosmic Christ, he said, is like the sky overhead — it cannot be partitioned off and allotted to any one race or nation. He closed his address by reading parallel passages from the teachings of Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, and Laotze in order to show the remarkable similarity apparent in their funda-

mental teachings. Zealous sectarian Christians often try to explain this by claiming that the teachings of others were borrowed from the Bible, the Swami declared, but how could this be when they antidated Christ's coming by many centuries? Besides, borrowing is never necessary, he added, for God's universe is not so impoverished that at all times there is not enough direct Truth for all. Nor is borrowing necessary, since Truth wherever it comes, is always one and the same.

The Vesper Service on Sunday afternoon at five closed the celebration and every one felt a special peace and upliftment in the Swami's words and in the Service.

REPORT

Swami Paramananda devoted the third week of December to a brief tour, visiting Cincinnati, Louisville and Buffalo. Leaving Boston on Sunday after the morning Service, he lectured in Cincinnati on Monday evening, and in Louisville on Tuesday evening and Wednesday morning. He spoke again in Cincinnati on Wednesday evening, Thursday afternoon and Thursday evening. Saturday and Sunday were given to Buffalo. On Sunday evening he was invited to speak in one of the leading Presbyterian churches there. His subject was "Teachings of Christ and Oriental Ideals," and all that he said met with sympathetic response. In the afternoon he gave a Talk in the spacious music room of a prominent gentleman of Buffalo. Christmas carols were sung before and after the Swami's address, and the occasion was one of special delight for all who were so fortunate as to be among the guests. The Swami now expects to remain in Boston for some time and will conduct all Services and Classes at the Boston Centre.

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SPIRITUAL UNFOLDMENT THROUGH YOGA

Lecture by Swami Paramananda

The conception of Yoga is a very ancient one in India. It was the natural product of the searching minds of the sages. Its special province is to make spiritual things as real to us as material things are now. It also offers us certain methods by which we may improve both our physical and our mental being and awaken our spiritual consciousness. It teaches us how to make a body, now unfit for higher attainment, more fit, more balanced and healthy. It shows us how we may bring a mind which is unsteady and unruly, under absolute subjugation. It covers the whole field of human activity. Through it we learn how to gain mastery over all the forces which are working within and without.

The spiritual life is not a visionary dream. The science of Yoga as given in India from beginning to end deals with the practical side of living. As in chemistry they combine certain elements and certain results are produced; so the Yogis teach us that if we will combine certain practices in breathing, concentration and meditation, with proper action, definite results will be produced in our physical, mental and moral being. We may learn about some of these methods from books, but that is not sufficient to gain the

results. The practices must be absolutely in harmony with our life habits; and when this is the case, wonderful results are achieved.

These are not mere imaginations. They may be proved through practice. If one persists in practising, one can acquire absolute control over one's physical being. A person who is susceptible to anger, impatience or depression, can overcome these weaknesses by following special methods. But merely grasping this intellectually will not help us; for Yoga is essentially a practical science. Many people are inclined to believe that it is something peculiarly oriental and mysterious. The God-consecrated men who practise and teach Yoga are not mystery-mongers or miracle-workers or fakirs. They are men who have given up lower ambitions and desires and are willing to do anything in order to gain mastery over themselves. Through concentration and meditation they have learned to govern their lower appetites, to govern their thought, to govern every part of their nature; and they are able to impart their knowledge to others.

Yoga shows us how we may minimize our miseries. Where is the root of misery? When we investigate, we find that it is not in the thing itself. It is in our own lack of wisdom and power. The germ is in us. It exists in our own mind. As soon as we are able to control our mind, temporal things do not touch us; and the study of Yoga is entirely directed to this end. Whenever we are nervous or in a scattered state of mind, if we can realize that the cause and the remedy lie within ourselves, we shall seek our help within instead of without. This effort to direct our will inward will open a new vista of our own spiritual possibilities now unknown to us.

At the outset a person may say that he is not able to

exercise control, that it is his nature to be nervous and irritable, or dull and depressed; he cannot help it. It is only natural because he has formed the habit. To overcome this bad habit exertion is required; but when the counteracting good habit is formed, that will be equally natural. In the system of Yoga an exhaustive study is made of man's physical being; because unless we have a healthy body, we are not able to direct our mind to higher things. When we sit down and try to fix our thought on some vital problem of life, if it is distracted by a pain or an ache it cannot ascend. The best sign of health is when we are least conscious of our body. This is one branch of Yoga — to bring our body to such a state of equilibrium that we can forget it. We do this by cultivating the habit of moderation in our eating, drinking, sleeping, in our work and recreation. The Bhagavad Gita tells us: "The practice of Yoga is not for him who eats too much or who does not eat at all, nor for him who sleeps too much or keeps awake in excess. He who is moderate in his efforts in work, moderate in sleep and wakefulness, for him Yoga becomes the destroyer of all misery."

When we are talking, if we have control over our tongue, we do not waste any energy and we are not likely to say something which we may regret or by which we may create unhappiness either in our own mind or in the minds of others. Our inward life also grows more tranquil as soon as we establish the habit of moderation. This may seem difficult, so long as we have to be in the world. The life of the Yogi, it is true, is usually a retired one. In order to achieve the highest aim of Yoga he withdraws from the world; but Yoga does not deal wholly with meditation. There is one part which is altogether devoted to activity, showing how our work can be done with the greatest

amount of efficiency, yet without waste or strain. We cannot do this, however, if our physical and mental forces are scattered. The word Yoga means "union," "joining," "adding." We join the various fragments of our mind together and at once it becomes stronger. The scattered mind with the majority of us is a natural state; but with a scattered mind we are not able to perceive clearly. We have no power of penetration. Yoga, however, gives some simple rules by following which we can gather up our mind. In order to do this successfully we need some point of contact. Even physical concentration will help us.

In India various exercises are given. Some in order to fix their gaze take a very minute object. At first it is very painful and they cannot hold their gaze on it without tears flowing from their eyes; but when properly done the eyesight is wonderfully strengthened. The perception grows keener and indirectly the power of concentration is increased. In focusing the attention on the one point all the scattered forces are gathered up and balance is restored. Some people fix their gaze on the sun from morning till night, but this is an extreme practice and should not be tried in the beginning. It would be impossible for the beginner to gaze on the sun for any length of time without injuring his eyesight.

This body of ours which seems so frail, these senses which seem so inadequate, can be made to achieve more and more. We can expand the field of our physical, mental, and moral being; and this is one of the things the Yoga philosophy teaches us. It is not, however, anything that we can acquire by accident. We must do it through systematic study and training. There is nothing occult about it. It seems mystifying because it deals with the finer forces of our nature. Take for example the idea of the

third eye, with which it is said the Yogi sees. What does it mean? It means that the Yogi has evolved within himself a superior sight. He is not dependent on what the physical eye sees; but beyond this he has evolved another finer organ of vision, more unerring than these eyes. In order to develop this subtler power of sight, we need the aid of our outer sense faculties. If our eyes and ears are distracted, if our physical senses are divided and wandering, we shall not be able to gain that higher supersensuous sight.

If we would develop the greater power, we must not neglect the lesser. Our success depends wholly on this. The Yoga philosophy, therefore, begins with the lesser. It says that if a person is overpowered by the consciousness of the body and of physical conditions, he cannot sit in meditation for any length of time; so he is given certain exercises which will help him control the body. When the body becomes tranquil, the mind is relaxed; and when the mind is tranquil, the body becomes pliable and light. The two are so closely connected in most of us that whatever happens in the body affects the mind. If a heavy blow falls on the mind, the body is disturbed and illness even may result. But if through superior understanding and control we can keep our balance, we avoid these physical break-downs.

In the Gita Sri Krishna tells us that one who has become master of himself through control of breath, control of senses, control of body, is not overcome by any misfortune. He has become invulnerable. Nor is his strength dependent on his food or any physical condition; it springs from a source deep down in his inner being. He is in contact with certain forces which the ordinary man is not able to use. It is because we do not draw from this inward source of power that we feel so impoverished intellectually, men-

tally and physically. If we knew how to retire within ourselves, to shut all the gates of the senses and sever contact with the things which wear us out, we should be restored in a few moments. In five minutes we can have the rest of a whole night's sleep. This is no exaggeration, each one can prove it for himself. It is not by lying on the bed all night that we get our rest and restore our energy. Sometimes we may spend many hours on a soft bed without getting the least rest, because our mind is not collected.

The study of Yoga will not make us morbid or negative or dull. Some people imagine that meditation represents a dull passive state. On the contrary, it makes us keener. Our body becomes more alert, our perceptions grow quicker, our whole organism more receptive. Our meditation, however, must be on a higher object. Focusing our mind on a material object is a primary form of concentration, and will give us only a little power. The vital aim of concentration and meditation is to bring us in contact with our spiritual being. Man has a great love of power. That is why Yoga interests people so tremendously. But what will give it to us? It is the life we lead. A true Yogi has no worldly thoughts and therefore the world does not enter into him. He has no selfish ambitions, no harsh unkind feelings; therefore all this wear and tear which comes from worldly associations has no effect on him. It is his life which fortifies him.

We can live in the world and fortify ourselves absolutely by building an impenetrable wall round ourselves; and we do this by our spiritual understanding. We develop this superior understanding through practice. At first the practice will not seem natural to us; but as we go on, we shall love our meditation and shall be unable to live without it, just as we cannot live without breathing. We shall feel the

need of coming in contact with our spiritual resources. When meditation becomes natural to us and we have no sense of effort in our practice, we may know that we have gained a great victory over ourself. Then we can help others. If we have power, we can give power; if we have light, our light will shine even when we are not holding it consciously before any one. Our whole being becomes illuminated and this body, this mind, these senses are transformed into spiritual instruments. The Yogi spiritualizes everything. His hands and feet, his sight and hearing, acquire a new and higher use. He turns all his forces into different channels. But this comes only through practice.

We may want all the beautiful things which exist, but to attain these we must regulate our life and our thoughts. We must block all the avenues through which material contamination enters into us. When we do this, we find that we have established our life on a different principle. It has become so elevated and strong that nothing can overwhelm us. The world is full of suffering, but it is not with a suffering heart that we can relieve it. If we have an understanding heart; if we have sympathy, love, wisdom — only then can we help. First we must help ourselves; not physically, but spiritually. We must fortify ourselves. Two things cannot coincide. As Christ said, we cannot serve God and Mammon. If we have love of power, love of physical comforts; if we are guided by selfish motives, we may want all the results of Yoga, but they will not come. This is the stumbling block. Many people in the Occident have taken up the practices of Yoga eagerly in order to acquire higher powers for selfish or commercial ends, and they have gained nothing.

It is only through a pure mind, through unselfish thought, that these subtler qualities are developed. They do not be-

long to any one creed or race or nation. They are the natural fruits of a holy spiritual life. Whenever we strive for them with a sincere heart, a determined will, a humble spirit, we acquire them. The results are always the same, whether we find them in a St. Francis of Assisi or in a Yogi of India. It is the same transcendental state of consciousness, which lifts one above all the petty, insignificant things of life and brings one into union with the Supreme. We all can gain it, even in the midst of the world. When our mind is clear, when our heart is tranquil, when all our forces are gathered up, there is nothing which can prevent our success.

It is not merely for material success, however, that we should strive. We must hold the great ideal of spiritual illumination. "First seek ye the kingdom of God." That is the law. First we must find our union with the Supreme by abandoning all selfish propensities; then we shall have fullness of life, fullness of power and happiness. Whatever we say or think will come to pass. If we bless any one, that blessing will be fulfilled, because we have no selfish motive. We have found our home in God, our union with the Supreme. This is the aim of Yoga.

The wise man follows God, and God follows the soul of the wise man.

A king rejoices in those whom he governs and God rejoices in the wise man. He who governs, likewise, is inseparable from those whom he governs; and therefore God is inseparable from the soul of the wise man, which he defends and governs.

The wise man is governed by God, and on this account is blessed. — *Sextus the Phythagorean.*

THE PRACTICE OF YOGA

Selection from the Upanishads

When the fivefold result of Yoga takes place, then there is no longer illness, old age, or pain for him who has obtained a body produced by the fire of Yoga.

The first results of Yoga they call lightness, healthiness, steadiness, a good complexion, an easy ennunciation, a sweet odor and slight excretions.

If a wise man hold his body with its three parts (chest, neck and head) erect, and turn his senses with the mind towards the heart, then in the boat of Brahman he will cross over all the torrents which cause fear.

Controlling his breath, let him who has restrained all bodily motion breathe forth through the nose with gentle breath. Let the wise man without fail restrain his mind, that chariot yoked with vicious horses.

This is the rule for achieving it (spiritual vision): restraint of the breath, restraint of the senses, meditation, fixed attention, practice of discrimination, union (with the object of meditation): these are called the sixfold Yoga. When by this Yoga the sage beholds the Lord, the Supreme, the Cause, then leaving behind good and evil (all dual conditions) he makes everything (breath, sense organs, mind, etc.) to be one in the Highest Indestructible.

He who has his senses hidden as in sleep; and who while in the cave of the senses (his body), but no longer ruled by them, sees, as in a dream, with a perfectly purified intellect Him Who is called the Sacred Word (the *Logos*), the Leader, the Shining One, the Sleepless One, free from old age, from death and sorrow, he himself also is called the Word and becomes a leader, shining, sleepless (not requiring sleep), free from old age, from death and sorrow. And thus it is said:

Because in this manner he joins the *Prana* (life-force), the *Om* or *Logos* and this universe in its manifold forms; or because they join themselves (to him), therefore this (practice of meditation) is called Yoga (joining).

The oneness of breath, mind and senses, and then the cessation of all mental activities — this is called Yoga.

If a man practises Yoga for six months and is thoroughly free (from attachment to the outer world), then the perfect Yoga (union) which is endless, high and hidden, is accomplished.

But if a man, though well enlightened (by proper instruction), is still pierced by passion and darkness and selfish attachment, then perfect Yoga is not accomplished.

Through the practice of Yoga a man obtains contentment, power to endure good and evil, and tranquillity.

STEADFASTNESS IN RESOLUTION

From Letters of Swami Premananda

(Translated from the Bengalee. Swami Premananda was one of the closest disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. He passed away about two years ago.)

See that the Ideal is never lost sight of. Keep a keen watch on this. Set yourself sincerely for self-realization; kill your ego; realize the Self, then the whole world will be astounded to see you and will give you the seat of an *Acharya* (teacher). Be holy and sincere from the inmost recesses of your heart. Pray to the Lord: "Protect me, protect me." The all-gracious Lord will surely give you strength, faith and self-reliance. Pray to Him from the depth of your heart and your prayer must be heard. I do not say that I am great. I am born to learn and there is no end to learning. May Sri Ramakrishna give us a pure mind is my constant prayer. . . Through the grace of the Lord may all rise up from their slumber and attain a

new life; may their delusion be destroyed and may they enjoy everlasting bliss — this is the prayer of Premananda.

Keep your mind always at the lotus feet of your Master; what matters it where you are? "One should meditate in the heart, in the forest and in secluded corners." There is no use in getting by heart bombastic phrases or long passages of Scripture; nor in staying with *Sadhus* (saintly men) in holy places of pilgrimage. Profession and practice must coincide. Shame! Whence comes the fear of sinking? Do not allow such ideas to enter your mind. Do you think that any one who has got the grace of our Lord will ever sink? Set aside all depression. Know that by the Lord's grace we are ever free, pure and blissful.

In the name of the Lord be ever joyous. Never allow any despondency or doubt to rule your mind. On, on with the work of the Lord. Never allow any sense of pride to enter into you. If five people are of one mind, they can revolutionize the thought-world. Your work will go on well, if you can get six or seven people who are faithful, sincere, fearless and unselfish. May every one of you become a hero in action, in spirituality and in sacrifice! May the Almighty grant you strength, courage and devotion; and may you forget yourself in the thought of the Lord, is my constant prayer.

Give up all attachment — this is the sum and substance of the Bhagavad Gita. Work, but be not attached. Be free from everything. Think yourself a mere instrument in His hands. Believe that everything is being done by the Lord. Have love for all. The world must be conquered by love. This is what the Ramakrishna Mission stands for. Be very watchful and always pray to God.

Why are you so impatient? Sri Ramakrishna used to sing a song: "O my mind, be firm and steadfast even unto

death. Give up all ideas of fame or infamy and die a living death, if you wish to seize hold of the Deathless One." Listen, my child, if you want to achieve success in any work, you must devote your whole energy to it, you must sacrifice your life for it. When you have begun a work, you must bring it to fulfillment. Come! be a man and die in the struggle, if need be. When you have taken shelter at the feet of the Lord, there is no looking back. Pray constantly to the all-merciful One. Do not fear. Do you not see that the Lord is always behind you?

Sincerely pray to the Lord and you will have bliss, devotion and freedom. Blessed, pure and ever free are those who have got His blessings. Keep your mind always at the lotus feet of the Lord. Remember Him always and do your work. He will grant you purity and will guide you in the true path. Doubt is the devil in man. Push it aside always. Be strong in the name of the Lord and drive it out. Stubborn passion and all other human weaknesses can be cast off by the name of our Lord.

I am glad to hear that you are going to start an Ashrama (Peace Retreat) there. It is no doubt a good idea, but to make a temple in one's own heart is the best thing to do. Sri Ramakrishna says: "The heart of the devotee is the parlor of God." This is not a mere saying, but a real fact. . . . Try to see the Divine manifested in every being and to serve that one as God Himself without any selfish motive. God is the Creator of the world. He alone can remove the bondage of *Maya* (relativity). We are only insignificant factors in the world process.

We should try to be free from all bondage through the mercy of the Almighty. The work which makes us realize that we are His servant and His son cannot be the cause of our bondage. God's blessings are on him who offers all

to Him with tears in his eyes, praise on his lips and prayer in his heart. May your life be full of pure love and sympathy! Try to turn your body into a temple of God. May people be astonished to see your ideal life. This is the best preaching and will not make you conscious that you are doing a great work. Egoism is the greatest *Maya* (delusion). Turn the thought current and always keep your mind at the lotus feet of God and be absorbed in Him.

SUFI WORSHIP

By Harindranath Chattopadhyay

(A young Indian poet, only twenty years of age, a Bengalee by birth, but writing in English.)

Sometimes, O Love! Thou are revealed
To me, and sometimes art concealed
Somewhere. This strange Unity
Flowers in Thee and only Thee!
Love! Thou sayest to me, "I
Build my home in earth and sky . . .
In the hue of the new-blown rose
See! my hidden beauty glows.
I am born in every note
Showering from the bulbul's throat . . .
My pulsating dreams rejoice
In each tender maiden's voice.
I dwell in every starry spark,
And laugh alike in light and dark."
And yet, sayest Thou, "Behind the screen
I breathe alone, unknown, unseen!"
How oft, O Lover! Thou dost bless
Our hearts with Thy pure loveliness . . .
And yet, Thou whisperest, "Alone,
I smile behind the screen unknown!"
How long, O hidden Lover mine,

Shall I seek Thee in mosque and shrine?
Dost Thou not hear my call to Thee?
If Thou dost hear, O answer me!
Give o'er this war of Thee and me!
And thro' clear eyes of wisdom see,
In Love, what difference can there be
'Twixt me and Thee?

THE VISION OF GOD

From the Writings of Plotinus

(Leader of the Neo-Platonists, 3rd Century)

In the vision of God, that which sees is not reason, but something greater than and prior to reason. He who then sees himself, will see himself as a simple being, will be united to himself as such, will feel himself become such. We ought not even to say that he will *see*, but that he will *be* that which he sees; if indeed it is possible any longer to distinguish seer from seen, and not boldly affirm that the two are one. He belongs to God and is one with Him, like two concentric circles, that are one when they coincide and two only when they are separated. It is only in this sense that the soul is other than God.

Perhaps we ought not to speak of *vision*; it is rather another mode of seeing, an ecstasy and simplification, an abandonment of oneself, a desire for immediate contact, a stability, a deep intention to unite oneself with what is to be seen in the sanctuary. . . . Such is the life of the gods, and of god-like and blessed men; a liberation from all earthly bonds, a life that takes no pleasure in earthly things, a flight of the alone to the Alone.

In knowing God, the Spirit knows also itself. . . . to see is to become oneself the thing seen. . . . True being knows no gaps, no developments, no progress, no exten-

sion, no before or after. The One is everywhere and nowhere.

Even here, a wise life is the most truly grand and beautiful thing. And yet here we see but dimly. Yonder, the vision is clear. For it gives to the seer the faculty of seeing, and the power for the higher life; the power, by living more intensely, to see better and to become what he sees.

If any one has seen It, he knows how beautiful It is. We must approach Its Presence stripped of all earthly encumbrances, as the initiated enter the sanctuary naked. With what love we must yearn to see the Source of all existence, of all life and thought! He who has not yet seen It, desires It as the Good (the Goal, the End); he who has seen It, admires It as the Beautiful. He is struck at once with amazement and pleasure; he is seized with a painless stupefaction; he loves with a true love and a mighty longing, which laughs at other loves and disdains other beauties.

If we could behold Him Who gives all beings their perfection, if we could rest in contemplation of Him and become like Him, what other beauty could we need? Being the Supreme Beauty, He makes those that love Him beautiful and lovable. This is the great end, the supreme aim of souls. It is the want of this vision that makes men unhappy. He who desires to see the vision must shut his eyes to terrestrial things . . . and yet we may train ourselves by contemplating noble things here on earth, especially noble deeds, always pressing on to higher things, and remembering above all that, as the eye could not see the sun unless it were sunlike itself, so the soul can only see Beauty by itself becoming beautiful. . . .

In the vision, nothing stirred within him, neither anger nor concupiscence, nor even reason, or spiritual perception, or his own personality, if we may say so. Caught up in an

ecstasy, tranquil and alone with God, he enjoyed an imperturbable calm. Shut up in his proper essence, he declined not to either side, he turned not even to himself, he was in a state of perfect stability, he had become stability itself. The soul at such times occupies itself no more even with beautiful things — it is exalted above the beautiful, it passes the choir of the virtues.

THE PAIN OF SELF-INDULGENCE

Parable of Gautama Buddha

While Lord Buddha was preaching in the neighborhood of Shravasti, a man of great wealth came to him and said: "World-honored Lord, forgive me that I do not prostrate before you with proper reverence; but I suffer miserably from obesity, drowsiness, excessive lethargy and other complaints, which make it impossible for me to move without pain."

Buddha, observing the luxuries with which the man was surrounded, asked him: "Have you a desire to know the real cause of your unhappy state?" The man assented and Buddha continued: "There are five things which produce the conditions from which you suffer: — opulent dinners, love of sleep, love of pleasure, thoughtlessness and lack of occupation. Begin to exercise control at your meals, and take upon yourself some occupation which will employ your abilities and make you useful to your fellow-men. In doing this you will prolong your life."

The rich man hearkened to the words of the Blessed One, and having regained his lightness of body and buoyancy of mind, he returned to the world-honored One afoot and without attendants. "Master," he said, "you have cured my bodily ailments, I come now to seek the enlightenment of my mind." And the Blessed One said: "The worldling

nourishes his body, but the wise man nourishes his soul. He who indulges in the satisfaction of his appetites works his own destruction; but he who walks in the path of self-discipline will not only gain salvation from sin, but prolong his life."

TWELFTH ANNIVERSARY

Of The Vedanta Centre of Boston

The Vedanta Centre of Boston celebrated its Twelfth Anniversary on the evening of January 6th. An exceptionally large number of friends attended, the chapel and entrance hall being crowded; and the occasion was one peculiarly full of interest and good will. The house was decorated with flowers and evergreen boughs in profusion. About the altars were palms and blooming plants and at the windows hung a number of glowing red vigil lights. The first part of the evening was devoted to religious exercises, after which an informal reception was held with refreshments and music. The exercises began with an organ prelude. Swami Paramananda then welcomed the guests, saying in part: We have gathered here to-night to ask the blessings of the Supreme One, through Whom it has been possible for us to carry on our work and convey our message to others; for this Centre does not exist merely for the benefit of a few. Its influence is more far-reaching than we realize and brings us in contact with many places and people. It unites our hearts with other hearts, not only in this country but in distant lands. In order that you may gain some idea of its activities during 1920, I will ask Sister Devamata to give a brief outline of the work through the past year.

The Sister then said: The results of spiritual work are so subtle and evasive it is not easy to tabulate them.

They take place first in the individual heart, and perhaps long after do they become visible in the life. It is like casting seed on the wind. One knows not where it may fall and spring up. I once knew a simple man who made it his custom in his long spring walks to fill his pockets with flower seeds and strew them along the country lanes and hillsides as he went. Frequently he did not go that way again to see whether the seed had sprouted, but he liked to think as the summer went by that flowers were blooming where he had passed. So it is with us, we hope. There can be no doubt that during the last twelve months the work has made a marked advance. The period of misunderstanding appears to be definitely over. People no longer feel the need to offer explanations to their friends when they choose the Centre as their church, and a convincing sign that the clergy are arriving at the same attitude of mind came recently in the form of an invitation to the Swami to join the Federation of Ministers in Boston.

Many new connections have been made with the outside world also. This has been due to the Swami's frequent journeys. Aristotle's School of philosophy, you remember, received the name peripatetic because of the master's habit of walking up and down his garden paths as he taught; but I am sure no philosophy was ever expounded on longer walks than the Swami has taken during the past year. In the twelve months just ended he covered twenty-two thousand miles, teaching as he went. He began his wanderings in January by accepting an invitation to speak before the Philadelphia Art Alliance on "The Spirit of the Indian Drama." As a result of this lecture, requests from various dramatic leagues for similar lectures have reached the Swami, but he has not been able to consider them owing to lack of time. On his return journey from Philadelphia he

stopped in New York, at Dr. Wm. Norman Guthrie's request, to speak at St. Mark's-in-the-Bouwerie on "The Unseen as the Creative Force in Indian Life." At the close of February, he started on his first long western tour of the year. Following his usual custom, he broke his travels at Cincinnati, where in four days he delivered six lectures. The cumulative enthusiasm aroused during this and previous visits culminated in the formation of a definite study group, which has continued to meet regularly ever since. At present it holds a devotional Service on Sunday morning and a class on Tuesday evening.

After spending four days in Louisville, the Swami proceeded to Los Angeles, arriving on March 11th and remaining until May. Besides his regular programme of a devotional Service and a public lecture every Sunday and two week-day classes at the Los Angeles Vedanta Centre, established by the Swami in 1916, he gave four lectures at the Metaphysical Library and one at Krotona. Before the middle of May he was again in Boston and, with the exception of a few days spent in Cincinnati, he carried on his regular work at the Boston Centre for three months without interruption. The attendance during this interval grew steadily larger and the teaching gained many new adherents.

The Swami began his second long western tour on August 18th. This time his plan of travel included a visit to the northwest. After a few days in Cincinnati, he continued his journey to Seattle and Tacoma. He gave six lectures at the New Thought Temple of Seattle, and another course of equal length at Dr. Henry Victor Morgan's church in Tacoma. His reception in Tacoma was especially warm and large numbers attended all the lectures. At the closing one, aisles, gallery, every available space was filled. He

also addressed the Seattle Theosophical Lodge and several other meetings. An invitation to lecture in Victoria, B. C., came to him, but he was unable to accept it. Brief visits to friends in Portland and San Francisco consumed several days before he opened another season of lectures and classes at the Centre in Los Angeles. Lectures at Long Beach and another one on Sunday afternoon at Krotona were added to his usual schedule. So eager was the public to hear him speak on "The Science and Practice of Yoga" at Krotona that even the platform of the lecture hall had to be filled with chairs. He was asked also to speak at the Woman's Suffrage Victory celebration, given by the Friday Morning Club. He chose as his subject, "The Ideal of Womanhood in India." Two special lectures — one at the Hotel Darby and (as the result of this) another in one of the most beautiful homes in Los Angeles — brought him in touch with a new group of people.

In October he returned to Boston, but in November he was absent again for three weeks, which he devoted to the Branch Centres in Cincinnati and Louisville, with two days in Buffalo. This visit to Buffalo proved of unexpected interest. Its original purpose was to lecture before the Larkin Men's Club, an invitation which he had held over for two years; but an enthusiastic Mason carried him on his arrival to a Lodge luncheon, where he was seated at the table of the Grand Commander. Previous to this meeting the Commander had refused to consider having an outsider address them, but after some conversation with the Swami, entirely on his own initiative he rose suddenly and announced that he was convinced the world needed the message the Swami had to give, therefore he had requested him to speak for them that evening. Eight or nine hundred Masons were present and the sympathetic response

given to the Swami's words was evidenced, at the close of his address, by the long line of men who waited patiently to shake his hand and urge him to speak again on some occasion when their families also might be present to hear him. While repeating the same circuit in December, the Swami spoke at the Sunday evening Service of the Calvary Presbyterian Church of Buffalo.

Merely covering so large an area, however, would count very little. Lecturers are going back and forth over the country now in throngs, but where the Swami has passed, lives have been vitally touched. We know it from the increasing calls for lectures everywhere and even more from the growing demand for the literature. During the past year over 6,000 books and pamphlets have gone out from the Centre through orders received. These have been sent not only throughout the United States and to Canada, but also to Australia, New Zealand, Hawaii, Switzerland, Italy, Sweden, India, Cuba, England, etc. Nearly half of this amount was due to the Swami's tours. Our monthly publication, "The Message of the East," has also linked us with many new places and groups. Its circle of influence is rapidly widening and no source of encouragement in the work is greater than that which comes through the many appreciative, grateful letters received from its readers.

The general publication department has not been very active during the past year. In all we have brought out 11,000 books or pamphlets, two new titles and several reprints. It has been gratifying also to receive translations of several of our publications. The Swami's "Path of Devotion" has appeared in Hindustani and in German. Several of his shorter works have been translated into various languages and his other volumes are in process of translation. It is not in the printed page however that the Cen-

tre's greatest strength must lie, but in the living book of each life which comes in contact with it. On each one of us rests the responsibility of expounding the teaching by the way we live it. This Centre, as the Swami conceives it, is not merely a place or an organized work, but a Centre of spiritual influence, purifying and strengthening and sweetening hearts and lives wherever there is a channel through which that influence may flow.

At the close of the report the Swami again spoke, saying: The Sister's account of the work has brought to my mind afresh the many happenings of the year. I did not start out to travel twenty-two thousand miles. Requests came from here and there and I responded to them. But there is one thing I would impress upon your minds,—that all these connections with other places and Centres do not in any way lessen my interest in the Boston work. On the contrary, it increases it. My interest grows deeper all the time. What is our work? It is not a new sect; it is not a creed. It has a name, but that name stands for all-inclusiveness. At first ministers and the public were suspicious of us; but the more they know of us, the less suspicious they are. We have waited a long time for recognition, but it is nothing when we compare it with eternity. We are willing to wait and we shall wait patiently until our great Ideal is achieved. Our motto has always been unity, not exclusiveness. We have never asked any one to abandon his church, because that would be going against the very foundations of this religion and philosophy.

We try to offer an inclusive, unifying teaching, without label, creed or dogma. Accepting it entails no obligation of any kind. It is a question of living the life; upon that we lay all emphasis. We want nothing. We do not set a price on the teaching. It is sacred and only can be given

freely. We have something which the world has need of. There is so much dissension and antagonism abroad to-day. What is needed is unity and love, not denunciation. We need true understanding, true fellowship, true brotherhood. That is why people are beginning to turn eagerly to this teaching. Our creed is living the life, living our ideals daily. Who will pay heed to what we believe unless we live it? All this talk of universal love and brotherhood falls to the ground unless each man proves it by his life. To this we have consecrated our lives; for this, this work exists; and you who come here, all we ask of you is that you live according to your conviction. In that way we become better Christians, better Buddhists, better Hindus, better followers of every faith.

This Chapel may seem very insignificant in comparison with the big churches and cathedrals about us. It is. Because I have no ambition for ostentation. God forbid. So many religious organizations are ruined by growing too ostentatious. What we stand for is simplicity. We wish to have the spirit the dominant factor. Though this chapel may appear very small, yet the spirit of it is universal and unbounded. Let us to-night, as we take another step forward in a new year's work, all ask together the blessing of the Supreme Being, that the work may be still stronger, more efficient, and more extended in its usefulness and blessing. May the all-pervading Spirit of the universe bestow upon us His loving protection. May He give us new inspiration, that our life and activity may be full of spiritual fruition through His grace. May we remember at every step to invoke the blessing of the Supreme Deity. May we learn that our own strength is never sufficient but that our strength lies in His strength. May we, through His grace, so consecrate our hearts that all our thoughts,

words and actions may ever rest in Him. May His peace be upon us all.

The work at the Vedanta Centre of Boston was unusually active during the month of January. On Sunday morning the Chapel was always full and sometimes the entrance hall as well. Many new faces also were seen at the Services. Among the specially notable events of the month was the luncheon which the Swami gave to Sir Rabendranath Tagore, his son and daughter-in-law. Dr. Tagore expressed warm appreciation of the Centre's home and of the atmosphere which pervaded it.

* * *

We have been interested to receive from India a translation in Hindustani of "The Path of Devotion" by Swami Paramananda. This book has already appeared in several other languages. The present translator has asked permission to render into Hindustani the Swami's other volumes.

* * *

We have received from Dodd, Mead & Co. a book by Hereward Carrington entitled "Higher Psychical Development." It consists of twelve lectures delivered before the Psychical Research Society of New York in 1918 and deals extensively with the various exercises and practices leading to higher states of consciousness. "One of the chief aims of the book," the author claims, "is to link up and show the connections between these Yoga practices and our Western science, philosophy and psychic investigations." Mr. Carrington, who has been an ardent student of the occult for some time past, has a clear and direct manner of handling psychic questions and his book will no doubt prove of interest to all students along these lines.

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The Message of the East



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THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

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

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

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LIFE HERE AND HEREAFTER

By Swami Paramananda

We build a bridge across the river of what we call death by the life we live here. Death does not mean an absolute break with this life and entrance into a wholly unaccustomed state. We may have all sorts of visionary dreams of a heaven and a hell, but the seers and sages tell us there is no gulf between this sphere and that which lies beyond. Life here and life hereafter have an inseparable connection. One is the inevitable continuation of the other. Our present life well-lived gives us power over the life that is to come. Therefore wise men regard their life as a sacred thing—not something which has come by chance and which can be used for their own gratification. It does not rise and set with this physical span of existence. They know that this body is nothing but a garment, which they change when its usefulness is over. It is wrong therefore to cling to it, for when this one is worn out, the soul takes another which is better suited for its further evolution. Death may bring a lull, a brief interruption; but those who are already alive in a spiritual sense, they go onward and forward without delay. It is only those who are in slumber spiritually, even though they may appear to be physically awake, who find the gulf a very wide one.

In our life here therefore we must prepare ourselves for the life beyond. If our thoughts and ambitions are saturated with vulgar, material concerns, can we suddenly appreciate something fine and lofty? Can we become suddenly unselfish? Can we suddenly become holy? It is through the habits of our present life that we acquire these qualities. We must make ourselves ready for what comes hereafter by utilizing wisely all the opportunities given us in this life. By the actions which we perform with diligence, simplicity, selfless devotion and consecration, we build the bridge, a bridge which will hold us securely when we cross; but it must be done by ourselves. Priests and ministers and spiritual teachers can give us hints of what we should do; they may inspire us and stimulate us; but this age-long problem comes to each soul afresh and each one must meet it individually.

We must meet it bravely. We must prove our worth every instant—not only in big things, but also in small things. It is not merely our hours of prayer, but quite as much our hours of activity which determine our merit. Our prayer becomes useless when our activity is not in harmony with it. Our spiritual life and our worldly life should go on together in perfect unison. This is one of the great lessons we learn from the Indo-Aryan sages. They lay very little emphasis on the form of religion a man follows. Each soul has to do with God directly, they say. A child always goes to its mother. In all circumstances — in sorrow, in happiness—there cannot be any separation, unless the child forgets and forsakes the mother. Misled by the glamour of the material world, how often we forget our relation with our Divine Parent! But this should not be. We do not love our fellow-beings less if we love God with our whole heart and soul. On the contrary, the love we give is richer and nobler.

Life is never irksome or arduous to us when we gain this larger view-point. We are no longer afraid of living, nor are we afraid of dying. All fear springs from the narrow side of our nature. Egotism, selfish greed and ignorance, these are what cause fear. The large-minded, selfless man is never afraid. There can be no fear in our hearts except when we are selfish. If a man walks with God and feels his heart a part of God's heart, nothing can frighten him. There are certain orthodox teachings which declare it to be sacrilegious to claim that we are a part of the Divine, but did not Christ teach this? Did He not say: "Be ye perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect"? Also in the Upanishads we read: "Thou art That"— thou art in essence one with infinite and unalterable being. Is not this the theme sounding through all spiritual teachings — that unless we become Godlike, we cannot enter into conscious union with God; unless we become truly living, we cannot conquer death?

We all have the power to conquer death, but not in the physical sense. The material man would like to prolong his earthly life indefinitely. That is not possible. The combination of material elements which make up this physical body must dissolve sooner or later; but within this combination there is something finer, less destructible — the causal body, which will outlast this gross body. Our thoughts, our aspirations, our desires and feelings, our thirst for material things and our yearning for the spiritual, are all contained in this; and according to the measure of the spiritual or the material do we obtain what we deserve. Our future destiny is wholly moulded by ourselves. You may say: If we mould our own destiny, what does God do? But even granted that He moulds it, we still supply the material out of which He shapes it. He is not an arbitrary, partial, revengeful Deity.

Our life is full of opportunities through which we may secure progress and freedom. If we do not take advantage of these opportunities, it is our own misfortune. But nothing is lasting and we can always eradicate our failures. What we make we have the power to unmake. There is no mistake so terrible that it will overthrow the soul and condemn it to eternal perdition. Could an all-wise, all-loving Providence condemn any child of His to everlasting suffering? He grants us another life, another opportunity, another advantage, that we may still prove our worth and work out our salvation. So we must keep on. We must work to purify ourselves, to sanctify and uplift ourselves, that we may escape from the bondage of ignorance.

God gives us ample time and opportunity. There is no reason to be anxious or hasty. In our modern life this constant nervous haste is one of the greatest drawbacks to spiritual progress. Man takes his life too hurriedly. Before he has formulated his ideas, he begins to act. In consequence, his action brings him bondage and must be undone in order to release him from that bondage. Let us cultivate a calmer, broader view of life. Through greater spiritual understanding, let us try to realize that our soul is not the thing of one day. The body may rise and fall, but the soul is eternal and immortal. "Sword cannot pierce it, fire cannot burn it, water cannot wet it, air cannot dry it." Such is the nature of the soul which dwells within this body.

A materialist claims that this is not true. He says, sword can pierce me; and the wise man says, it cannot. Thus they are constantly at odds. Whence comes this conflict? It rises from the fact that one is looking without and the other is looking within. The one is dependent on material existence and the other on spiritual existence. But

the conflict cannot last. The man who now insists, "I am this body, I am Mr. So and So," will some day throw off the shackles of ignorance and rise into knowledge of his true being. This is the real resurrection — when we are able to rise out of the grave of ignorance and materiality. Life does not hold very much joy for us if we are constantly fearful, constantly driven by selfish desires, constantly overwhelmed by physical consciousness. Real joy comes when we have a new and bigger vision. For one who has gained that, the gulf between life here and hereafter is destroyed.

Through devotion to God and service to our fellow-beings we prepare ourselves to pass from this life to that other, and our mind learns to dwell habitually on our Ideal. Sri Krishna tells us in the Bhagavad-Gita that what we think upon at the time of our bodily death determines our next state in evolution. Therefore He admonishes us at all times to think on the Supreme and do our work faithfully; for if our mind and intellect are wholly dedicated to Him, beyond all doubt we shall attain unto Him. But if our last thought moulds our destiny, then all we have to do, it would seem, is to make our last thought a perfect one. Can we do it? Only he who is striving for perfection now can hold a perfect thought at the moment of passing. Can a man suddenly think of something high and lofty? Does a man paint a master-piece suddenly? He strives for it. He thinks, he dreams, he imagines; his whole being is on fire with it; and that fire consumes his limitations and he is able to paint a great picture. So it is with us when our whole being is on fire with spiritual yearning. That fire burns off the blemishes of our nature and lofty thoughts become habitual with us.

Did our life begin with this bodily existence? That is

not possible, for something cannot come out of nothing. Like a tree, it must spring from a seed sown somewhere. The feelings and tendencies and aspirations which we possess here must have had their origin in some previous state. They must be the result of past experience and effort. Who keeps the record of our past? you may ask. Not God. Do not imagine that an invisible Providence keeps a record and determines our reward and punishment. It is we ourselves who keep the record. In our own character and condition of life is stored up the record of every selfish and of every loving thought, of every good or bad deed; and we receive the fruits of these.

Life offers us innumerable opportunities. We cannot complain that we lack them. We are placed just where we can advance most quickly. We may not believe it. We may think that some one else has a better chance than we have; but the all-wise One knows what is best suited for each one; and if we have true longing and love for the Ideal, we shall take the material placed in our hand and out of it mould a beautiful life. The lesson we have to learn is not how we can get better opportunities, but how we may make the best use of those we have. We take our place according to our merit. No one can force us to take any other place than the one we deserve. We cannot stay where we do not belong. Even if someone should put us in the most perfect region, we would find ourselves out of place there. We should not know how to speak the language of that region, nor should we be able to enjoy the freedom it might offer us.

Living the life in harmony with our spiritual Ideal alone will enable us to benefit by the privileges of a higher sphere. All that is asked of us is to perform our daily tasks in a prayerful and consecrated attitude of mind. Then

whatever the hereafter may owe us will be given us. It is better to ask nothing, because we cannot ask wisely. But we can do each thing with humility, with surrender and with the prayer "Thy will be done." When we do this, we are safe. Our human side always blunders, but this human side can be brought into such absolute harmony with the Divine that it will become permeated with Divine life and move in rythm with it.

Within us is immortal life. When we know that, how can we fear death? Our consciousness must be trained to dwell on the immortal part in us — that is the only way to conquer the afflictions of this mortal life. Until we possess the knowledge of our immortal nature, nothing can relieve us permanently from the fears and miseries which confront us. To know and to become — these alone will enable us to enter into that other life with perfect peace and freedom.

THERE IS NO DEATH

Letter of Apollonius of Tyana. 1st Century.

(Addressed to the Consul Valerius on the loss of his son.)

There is no death of any one, but only in appearance, even as there is no birth of any, save only in seeming. The change from being to becoming seems to be birth, and the change from becoming to being seems to be death; but in reality no one is ever born, nor does one ever die. It is simply a being visible and then invisible; the former through the density of matter, and the latter because of the subtlety of being — being which is ever the same, its only change being motion and rest. For being has this necessary peculiarity, that its change is brought about by nothing external to itself; but whole becomes parts and parts become whole in the oneness of the all. And if it be

asked: What is this which sometimes is seen and sometimes not seen, now in the same, now in the different? it might be answered: It is the way of everything here in the world below that when it is filled out with matter it is visible, owing to the resistance of its density; but it is invisible, owing to its subtlety, when it is rid of matter, though matter still surround it and flow through it in that immensity of space which hems it in but knows no birth or death.

But why has this false notion (of birth and death) remained so long without a refutation? Some think that what has happened through them, they have themselves brought about. They are ignorant that the individual is brought to birth *through* parents, not *by* parents, just as a thing produced *through* the earth is not produced *from* it. The change which comes to the individual is nothing that is caused by his visible surroundings, but rather a change in the one thing which is in every individual. And what other name can we give to it but primal being? 'Tis it alone that acts and suffers, becoming all for all through all; eternal Deity, deprived and wronged of its own self by names and forms.

But this is a less serious thing than that a man should be bewailed, when he has passed from man to God by change of state and not by the destruction of his nature. The fact is that so far from mourning death, you ought to honour and reverence it. The best and fittest way for you to honour death is now to leave the one who's gone to God, and set to work to play the ruler over those left in your charge as you were wont to do. It would be a disgrace for such a man as you to owe your cure to time and not to reason, for time makes even common people cease from grief. The greatest thing is a strong rule, and of the

greatest rulers he is best who first can rule himself. And how is it permissible to wish to change what has been brought to pass by will of God? If there's a law in things, and there *is* one and it is God who has appointed it, the righteous man will have no wish to try to change good things; for such a wish is selfishness and counter to the law; but he will think that all that comes to pass is a good thing.

On! Heal yourself. Give justice to the wretched and console them. So shall you dry your tears. You should not set your private woes above your public cares, but rather set your public cares before your private woes. And see as well what consolation you already have! The nation sorrows with you for your son. Make some return to those who weep with you; and this you will more quickly do if you will cease from tears than if you still persist. Have you not friends? Why! you have yet another son. Have you not even still the one that's gone? You have, will answer any one who really thinks. For "that which is" doth cease not — nay *is* just for the very fact that it will be for aye; or else the "is not" is, and how could that be when the "is" doth never cease to be?

Again it will be said, you fail in piety to God and are unjust. 'Tis true. You fail in piety to God, you fail in justice to your boy; nay more, you fail in piety to him as well. Wouldst know what death is? Then make me dead and send me off to company with death, and if you will not change the dress you've put on it, you will have straightway made me better than yourself.

(Note: These words of Apollonius recall so vividly certain passages of the Bhagavad-Gita that we think it interesting to cite some of them. "There is no existence for the unreal, and the real can never be non-existent. Know

that to be indestructible by which all this is pervaded. No one is ever able to destroy that Immutable. These bodies are perishable; but the dwellers in these bodies are eternal, indestructible and impenetrable. The soul is never born, nor does it die, nor after once having been, does it go into non-being. The soul is unborn, eternal, changeless. The dweller in the body of every one is ever indestructible; therefore thou shouldst not grieve over any creature." Also in the *Katha-Upanishad* it is said: "The wise who know the Self (soul) bodiless, seated within perishable bodies, great and all-pervading, grieve not." "Knowing that which is soundless, touchless, formless, undecaying, tasteless, odorless and eternal; beginningless, endless and immutable; beyond the Unmanifested: knowing That, man escapes from the mouth of death." And in the *Chandogya-Upanishad*: "By the old age of the body, That does not age; by the death of the body, That is not killed. It is the Self, free from sin, free from old age, from death and grief, from hunger and thirst.")

THE WATER OF WATERS

By Jalalud-Din Rumi

The sea itself is one thing, the foam another;
Neglect the foam, and regard the sea with your eyes.
Waves of foam rise from the sea night and day.
You look at the foam ripples and not at the mighty sea.
We, like boats, are tossed hither and thither,
We are blind though we are on the bright ocean.
Ah! you who are asleep in the boat of the body,
You see the water; behold the Water of waters!
Under the water you see there is another Water moving in it.
Within the spirit is a Spirit that calls it.

HEAVEN AND FINAL ATTAINMENT

By Sister Devamata

The universal recognition that happiness is the goal of all individual effort has led every religion to posit a heaven; and because there cannot be a higher without a lower, so with a heaven has come a hell. These stand as outposts marking the boundary lines of the religious consciousness in its primary stages. As that consciousness expands, however, they diminish in importance; for belief in them can flourish only where there is a lack of the spirit of solidarity. What man of even normally decent feeling would go off happily to an eternal heaven, knowing that some among his fellowmen were doomed to an eternal hell? The very attitude of mind which would make it possible for him to accept such a reward, would prove him unfit to receive it. The Japanese recognized this when they made their Merciful Deity one who, when the gates of Paradise stood open, turned back, saying: "I cannot enter while one paining soul remains outside."

Heaven as ordinarily conceived is a vacation place, a sort of celestial summer resort, where perpetual pleasure can be had without pain; where there is success without failure, praise without blame; above all, where families are reunited and live on eternally together without the bickerings and frictions which punctuate their earthly household life. Even after the old orthodox picture of hymns and harps and wings is outgrown, heaven still remains for us a place where we shall have all the advantages of humanity with none of its disadvantages. Divinity is left quite out of the question save as a central figure. The geographical factor may be discarded: heaven may cease to be a place and become a "state of mind"; but the "good time" idea persists. Vedanta does not denounce this point of view. On

the contrary, it swings so readily with it that it multiplies the heavens. One is not enough, it says. No one region or form of pleasure could suit all types of men. There must be an endless variety of enjoyments and conditions; and it groups and grades these through a succession of seven heavens. May we not find here the origin of our expression "the seventh heaven"?

These celestial regions contain all degrees of satisfaction. There is the realm of the fathers, where family and social relations continue; the realm of the righteous; the heaven of the gods; the region of celestial spirits; the sphere of the saints; the heaven of the highest sages; and the realm of the Creator, the region of limitless wisdom and illumination. The Vedic Seers, however, did not stop here. They knew that a state, whether localized or not, was of necessity perishable. It might extend through incalculable stretches of time; but at the moment of involution, when the manifested merged into the unmanifested and all creation reverted to a finer state, the heavens must crumble with earth and suns and planets. Only the Creator would remain — not because He dwelt supreme in the highest heaven, but because he was superior to all heavens.

Permanent happiness, according to these sages, is a deeply interior state, independent of all things external. It cannot exist outside our consciousness, nor can it exist within it until we transcend clinging to form and whatever form implies. True happiness is born of one condition only — self-earned, conscious contact with the Supreme. How can we gain that contact? By lifting ourselves to that height of understanding where eternity and infinity will seem as normal to us as time and space are now; in other words, by learning to identify ourselves with the highest formless principle of our being and not with this

fleeting form and name by which men know us. It is the small, indolent, cowardly self in us which covets a heaven. For a truly heroic nature it can have no appeal. When Lord Buddha saw the world as it was and realized that beyond the walls of his pleasure garden men were suffering and aging and dying, its sweet odors oppressed him, its loves and joys saddened him, even its kingly duties mocked him. His earthly paradise became a place of torment and he fled from it into the travailing world outside. The veil had been rent. He had seen into the depths and he knew that salvation for mankind did not mean escape from a hell and admission to a heaven. Knowledge alone would bring it. "Ye shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free."

The same anguish of readjustment must come to every seeking soul who awakens to the vital fact that what ordinarily we call happiness in this world is merely a holiday diversion. It has no lasting quality. We do not damn ourselves by caring for it. It may be meritorious and even uplifting. There is no question of sin or harm. It is wholly a question of misplaced energy and time. We are devoting ourselves to a second best when with the same endeavor we might have the best. But we cannot compromise. We cannot with one hand hold to transitory things and with the other reach out for eternal things. Service of God and Mammon cannot be interwoven in our daily living and bring us any true satisfaction. One will neutralize the other. Sri Krishna is very definite concerning this in the Bhagavad-Gita. He says that if we wish to attain union with God or the Source of Eternal Bliss, we must make Him our one and only goal; or as Christ said: "We must love Him with all our heart and all our mind and all our soul."

If we are craving worldly returns — health, prosperity,

power, selfish gratifications — then we are worshippers of the minor aspects of Deity, the gods of success, of health, of riches, and we shall go to the heaven of the gods. Or if we are bound up in our human attachments, then our natural way will be to the heaven of the fathers. Only those who consecrate their undivided desire and effort to the Supreme shall gain "that bliss which is born of contact with God." And they alone will escape from the round of birth and death. All others must return and continue their education, as a child returns to the classroom when his vacation is at an end. A craving for partial, perishable joys and possessions is indicative of a lack of fine perception. It shows that we still need to cultivate our powers of penetration and our taste. Not until our whole desire is for ultimate beauty, eternal perfection, undying happiness, can we be said to have attained the highest point of culture. And we shall not be allowed to finish our schooling until that point is reached.

There is within us a spiritual power which is impelling us onward despite us. We may refuse to go forward. We may try to sell our soul and gain the world, but we cannot. Our soul's life is our life. Our soul's joy is our joy. It is not possible for us to separate ourselves from it. It is ourself. All these things to which we cling are but superimpositions; and whenever we would lend them reality and spend ourselves for them, the still voice of the soul whispers "This is not enduring happiness" and a blight falls on our joy, Heaven does not consist in going to some pleasurable realm, it consists in staying at home with our soul. It is there we meet with God and taste the bliss of Divine union. Nor is hell elsewhere than in the nether regions of our own being where the remnants of our brute nature linger. Passing into the human estate means the first stir-

ring of self or soul-consciousness. Once awakened, nothing can stifle it; and betrayal of it is the cause of every misery. This is the sin against the Holy Spirit of which the Bible speaks. Having become human, we cannot revert to the brute without tormenting pangs. Even the most degraded drunkard or thief or murderer feels the sting of them; and often men plunge into fresh debauch or crime to escape the memory of themselves. It is not merely from justice that they flee, it is quite as much from the rebuke of their own soul. And that inner voice not infrequently drives them from their hiding back into the arms of the law.

Vedanta declares that our ego is the only devil. From it spring both our temptations and our punishments. Surely no Satan could devise greater torments than are created by the belittling ambitions, rivalries and vanities of our selfish nature. Nor could any fires burn more hotly than the fires of envy, jealousy, anger, hatred, or unsatisfied desire. In reality within ourselves lie all heavens and all hells, as well as that middle purgatorial state where the powers of light and darkness war for ascendency. It is at this meeting-place of the two contending forces that most of us are living and in that rests our hope. The human world is the world of ultimate attainment. In heaven they are too absorbed in enjoyment, in hell they are too overwhelmed by misery. This central point where the two meet and alternate is the most favorable for the soul's development; just as Nature is at her best in climates where rain and sunshine are equally distributed.

Man needs a variety of experiences to bring out the best in him. Joy and sorrow, hardship and ease, failure and success, praise and blame, all contribute a necessary part towards the moulding and mellowing of his character. Go-

ing to heaven does not imply perfection. A man earns access to it by good deeds; that is, he brings the higher side of himself to the surface. But there may be other latent elements in him which in their turn will rise to the surface and pull him back to earth for another period of purification and training. Likewise a man may have yielded to his lower instincts and been dragged into hell, but the God in him is not dead and sooner or later It will pull him up to higher spheres. No being can be damned eternally, for the Divine flame of his heart can never be quenched. Eventually the Infinite must conquer the finite. "The Infinite is immortal, the finite is mortal."

The choice of being saved does not rest with us. We are fore-ordained to salvation by the very nature of our being, just as water is fore-ordained to rise to the level of its source. The impulse to perfect unfoldment comes from a point behind our conscious volition. When we were in the amoeba state, we did not choose to be human beings. Probably our highest desire was to be a bigger amoeba. But something pushed us on and now we can scarcely relate ourselves with that amoeba world. That something is pushing us to-day. It will never cease to push. It is that in us which has known the eternal and it seeks contact with eternity once more. It has felt itself commensurate with the infinite, and like a mountaineer in the valley it smothers in the narrowness of the finite.

Why do we resist this on-driving force? The reasons we give could as well have justified remaining amoebas forever. It is the ego which feels the break with the finite and will not have us infinite. As mere human beings we cannot save or be saved. We may change our laws so that every man will have all he wants to eat and drink, all the clothes he wants to wear, and all he needs to pay any rent

the landlord may choose to ask of him. Will this world be a heaven then? We know people who have all they want to eat and drink and wear; they live in fine houses and spend their days in pleasure; but are their faces more smiling than the faces of the poor, are their hearts more peaceful that the laborer's heart? No; and what is not true for one individual cannot be true for an aggregate of individuals.

It is a bitter wrong against mankind to uphold this false standard — that happiness depends on any material condition or object. Putting rugs on the floor of a prison or curtains at the windows does not make a man less a prisoner. He is still behind bars. When Christ came to this earth, He did not talk of institutions and legislation. He did not show men how they might get more meat and drink. He told them of a water, drinking which they would never thirst again. He spoke to them of eternal things, of the joy of seeing face to face.

Men are not saved by physical comforts, nor are they lifted out of hell by charity or counsel or admonition. One thing alone will reach them — bigness and nobility of life and heart. We must prove to them that holy living is joyous living; that saintliness is a truer asset than riches, because it gives to man a happiness and independence which any amount of money cannot buy. We must show them that the "pearl of great price," supreme Vision, is a lovelier adornment than any of the baubles of this earth. By example we must lead them to covet the things of God, as we have taught them, also by example, to covet the things of this world. If with all our feverish getting, we can get even a little higher understanding, quickly shall we realize that celestial delight is a paltry end to offer to the children of the Most High.

GOD ALONE

Attributed to St. John of the Cross.

On Mount Carmel God alone and I.
God alone in my Spirit to enlighten it,
God alone in my acts to sanctify them,
God alone in my heart to possess it.

SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE OF IMMORTALITY

By B. V.

The modern scientific doctrines of the conservation of matter and the conservation of energy are both sufficient to establish conclusively that both matter and energy are uncreatable and indestructible. And we naturally ask: Is the principle of consciousness, through which and through which alone we realize matter as well as energy, unconserved? The indestructibility of matter can be proved with the help of the balance; also it may be experimentally demonstrated that when energy seems to be destroyed, it is only transformed. But how are we to prove the conservation of consciousness? It cannot be weighed in the balance, nor in any other way can it be measured in the laboratory. Still it seems unreasonable to think that, while matter and energy are conserved, consciousness alone is unconserved, when it is recognized "that our certain knowledge does not extend beyond our states of consciousness." The matter that we know and the energy that we know are all states of our consciousness, and these are conserved; they are neither creatable nor destructible. But the consciousness of which these are states, we do not and cannot know whether it is conserved or not. Such is the rather curiously weak position which modern science takes in respect to the grave and ancient problem of immortality.

When to us matter and energy are merely states of con-

sciousness, the problem of immortality assumes this form: Can consciousness exist apart from its states, or at least apart from those of its states which we become aware of as matter and energy? How a particular succession and arrangement of these states of consciousness constitutes our idea of personality is a different question. There may be immortality without personality, or there may be be immortality with personality, both these aspects of the problem are known to philosophy and religion. As to the existence of the principle of consciousness apart from some of its known and knowable states, or even apart from all states whatsoever, there seems to be no *a priori* impossibility.

Adopting the peculiarly Indian method of elucidating topics of thought by means of analogical illustrations, we may say that clay, which is known to exist in the "state" of a pot or a jar, can also exist in the "states" of cups and dishes. Of course clay must exist as clay before it can exist in any of these states. Similarly, the principle of consciousness must be capable of existing in states other than those which we recognize to be matter and energy in their varied manifestations; nay more, it must exist in itself before we can have the phenomenal universe of matter and energy. It has been argued by physical philosophers like Professor Tait and Professor Balfour Stewart that the fact of the conservation of matter and energy indicates their reality. To the thoughtful student of metaphysics, however, the same great fact brings out the reality of the principle of consciousness, which forms the basis of both matter and energy, and indicates to him the permanent and unvarying orderliness of the nature of its manifestation in states.

What causes this principle of consciousness to assume

these states, is of course a cogent metaphysical question in this connection; and the answer to it may be found either in the "Ideas" of Plato, or in the "Will" of Schopenhauer, or in the "Prakriti" of Kapila, or in the "Maya" (relativity) of the Vedanta. Whatever be the explanation of the cause of all our states of consciousness, there can be no hesitation in holding that the conservation of matter and of energy conclusively establishes the uncreatability and immortality of the principle of consciousness. If the flowers on a tree are immortal, its roots cannot but be immortal also. Now that modern science recognizes hypnotism, multiplex personality, telepathy and many other subconscious phenomena as being within the legitimate province of the study of psychology, the fact that the immortality of the principle of consciousness cannot be directly cognized by us as part of our ordinary conscious experience, can be no insuperable objection against such immortality being nevertheless real and well-founded.

So far modern physics and modern psychology are both in favour of immortality. Whether this immortal principle of consciousness is personal and made up of infinite individualities which are similar or even dissimilar to one another, or whether it is one and undivided and homogeneous, cannot be conclusively settled by the means ordinarily at our disposal. The similarity which exists between the operation of this undying principle of consciousness in one person and its operation in another person, neither of them being in any way abnormal or supra-normal, has to be explained either on the supposition that that principle is the same in essence wherever found, or on the supposition that the different individual parts thereof are all alike in nature. If, however, the latter supposition is adopted, an explanation of the assumed likeness of nature has to be

discovered and rationally established. But this latter supposition has in its favor the strong sense of personality which makes every conscious being stick strongly to the belief "I am I." To dissolve this belief away seems to be very difficult; and even when the logic is quite conclusive, it fails to be convincing.

Our sense of personality does not change every time we wake up from sound and completely unconscious sleep; and so the existence of this unifying principle, apart from and above all our conscious conditions, cannot be questioned. This underlying principle is here called *Mahat*, the great; and its greatness is due to the fact of its being found in all conscious beings more or less effectively operating. But this great and unifying principle of consciousness is itself imperceptible as long as it is not made to assume states and thus become manifest. What imposes the states upon this great principle is the *Avyakta*, the *Prakriti* or invisible ground-work of Nature; and therefore the *Avyakta* is higher than the *Mahat*. Beyond the *Avyakta* there is the *Purusha*, the Person, forming the intelligent foundation of all beings.

It may be seen from this that the Vedanta has a strong psychological proof in favor of its ontology; and it also assures us that by the practices of Yoga, the soul may become objectified, as it were, and be seen by the inner vision. Such experimental demonstration of the soul's existence, however, is totally different from the ordinary intellectual processes of theology. Vision, not logical inference, is the basis of proof; hence it must be individual. Each must gain it for himself. Although the senses are ordinarily our instruments of knowledge, they blind us to the soul. "The self-existent One made the senses so that they turn outward. Therefore man looks outward, but not back into

himself. Some heroic man, desiring immortality, saw, with eyes turned inward, the Self within."

The course followed by the inward-turning vision is thus described in the Bhagavad-Gita. The perceived object is said to be higher than the perceiving senses; and *Manas*, the internal organ of attention, is higher than the senses and their objects; for the activity of the senses is generally determined by the objects, and sensation is not possible when attention is absent or diverted, even though the senses and their objects are there. Higher than the *Manas* is the *Buddhi*, the organ of intellection, which by co-ordination converts percepts into concepts and arranges those in accordance with their associations. Higher than this is the *Jiva* or individual soul, without which the unification of percepts and concepts into a well defined and integral personality is impossible. There must be an ultimate point where all our inner and outer experiences meet and relate themselves to one another as well as to our sense of I-ness.

"Know the Self or soul to be sitting in a chariot, the body to be the chariot, the intellect the charioteer, and the mind the reins. The senses they call the horses; the objects of the senses, their roads," we read in the *Katha-Upanishad*. "He who has no understanding and whose mind is never firmly held, his senses are unmanageable like the vicious horses of a charioteer. But he who has understanding and whose mind is always firmly held, his senses are under control like the good horses of a charioteer. He who has no understanding, who is unmindful and always impure — he never reaches that state, but enters into the round of births. But he who has understanding, who is mindful and always pure — he indeed reaches that place from whence he is not born again."

REPORT

Swami Paramananda spent two weeks of February in Cincinnati and Louisville. He reached Cincinnati on Saturday, the 12th, and on Sunday conducted a devotional Service at the rooms of the Branch Centre there. In the evening he spoke on "Higher Consciousness" at the New Thought Temple before a large audience. The following evening he delivered a lecture in the neighboring town of Hamilton on "India and Her Message." His next lecture, in the Assembly Room of the Gibson Hotel, called out so numerous an attendance that it was almost impossible to accommodate all who came. The chairs were packed close together and the ordinary capacity of the Hall was nearly doubled. The Swami's subject was "Super-natural Powers." On Wednesday afternoon one of the members of the Cincinnati Centre arranged a meeting in her home at Hyde Park, one of the out-lying suburbs of the city. A large number of friends responded to her invitation and listened with deep interest to what the Swami said to them regarding "The Power of Silence and Meditation." On the same evening the Swami spoke again at the New Thought Temple, his subject being "Life Hereafter." A class meeting in the Rooms of the Centre on Thursday evening closed his visit. Besides these lectures the Swami spoke before the Greek Circle of the Woman's Club of Cincinnati on "Buddha and His Message to the World." This proved to be an occasion of special interest, the Swami's words arousing great enthusiasm among those present.

On Friday evening the Swami lectured at the Truth Centre in Louisville and again on Sunday morning. Two other meetings were held at the Rooms of the Branch Centre there. On his return journey he stopped over in

Cincinnati for the regular mid-week meeting of the local Centre and reached Boston in time to conduct the Sunday Services on the 27th. The Swami expects to remain in Boston for the present. During his absence the usual classes and Services were conducted by Sister Devamata.

* * *

Among the Swami's recent outside engagements was a local lecture before the Wednesday Morning Club, an organization of more than fifty years' standing and counting among its members some of the most prominent ladies of Boston. The general subject chosen for the Club's study during the current season was "The Peoples of Near and Far East." Various able speakers from the different countries have told of the customs and ideals of their special country, and the Swami was asked to speak on "The Spiritual Genius of India." He brought into salient relief India's unfaltering tendency to leave intact every phase of belief and tradition. He showed how she had entered into sympathetic fellowship with all, never trying to wipe out any one of them in order to substitute something of her own for it. Unity on a constructive basis, the Swami said, was characteristic of Indian thought at all periods of her history. She did not seek to destroy the diversities of creation, she always sought to harmonize them. This inclusiveness and power of appreciation were specially needed at the present moment, to overcome existing conflicts and rivalries, he added; and this was the peculiar value of ancient Aryan culture for the modern world. He made plain, however, that true unity could be realized on the spiritual plane only. Therefore the greatest help we could bring to the world to-day was by cultivating the spiritual consciousness in ourselves through a truer standard of living and thus preparing ourselves to awaken it in others.

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MEDITATION AND SUPERCONSCIOUS VISION

Lecture By Swami Paramananda

Seeing supernaturally is one of the great dreams of all mystics, devotees and seekers. What does it mean to see supernaturally? Does our normal vision become abnormal? Some people imagine that this is the case. The idea of meditation and of superconscious vision to an average person seems very indefinite, abstract and wholly alien to practical everyday life. But there is nothing of greater practical value to a man than this deeper sight. What is the basis of life? Can one succeed by clinging to the point of view of mere physical existence? Those who are absorbed in it believe that the habit of meditation decreases ambition and energy. It is one of the accusations made against those who take up the contemplative life that they lack ambition.

But what is ambition? Is it ambition merely to wish to acquire wealth, to accumulate possessions, to gain worldly name and power; or is there another kind of ambition? Is it wrong to be ambitious spiritually? One who is ambitious for spiritual happiness is willing to make any material or physical sacrifice to gain it. The man who has not this point of view, may laugh at the one who thus sacrifices his material advantage. But the question

is, which is the most lasting and which sheds the greatest amount of light on our path or on the paths of our fellow-beings? That should be the basis of comparison. Whether we want to walk in the darkness alone or whether we want to offer up all our aspirations, our faculties, our will and mind to God and walk in His light; whether we want to follow the impulses of our body or to gather up our forces and let the higher principle within govern us: these are questions very close to every human heart and the answers to them come only through meditation.

Meditation is not a visionary abstraction. It does not mean that we sit in a corner and become selfish and morbid or indifferent to everything else in life. On the contrary, all our sympathies are quickened, our perceptions grow keener, our feelings deepen and we perform our duties with greater energy. We do not lose our present consciousness, we extend it. We do not lose any feeling of sympathy or love, we have a more abundant supply. It is not death to the mortal side of man when he attains a higher state of consciousness. It does not mean the extinction of his present self, but the quickening of a larger Self. The lesser light is swallowed up in a bigger light. The lesser light still exists, but it is merged in the greater glory of the larger light.

As long as we are guided by self-will and swept by the ordinary impulses of life, we never find happiness or rest. It is the contemplative man who is full of joy and peace. He is not carried away by his lower impulses. He exercises perfect control over all his faculties and powers, and he gains this control through meditation. Meditation means the unbroken flow of the thought towards some object. There are people who meditate on material things and there are others who just as naturally hold their mind

fixed on the spiritual. According to where we place our thought do we gain the result. Whatever a man thinks, that he becomes. This is the law. What a man's mind dwells upon, according to that his life and character are moulded, also his destiny.

We have free will to direct our mind either in one way or the other. Constantly we are moulding our life by the thoughts we are thinking. We can avoid all evil and unclean, detrimental thoughts if we wish; but more often we do not. Some one provokes or injures us and that person will rise in our mind more often than the one who has given us spiritual inspiration. The mind can become in this way very treacherous. Yet it is not the fault of the mind. It is the fault of the training we give to it. The mind has the power of retention; and when we train it to retain only that which is helpful to us and to discard that which is harmful, we advance quickly. If we begin to hold certain thoughts, we see the effect immediately; also whatever we allow our mind to associate with, we absorb the quality of that. If we come in contact with a person who is dull, heavy, ignorant, lethargic, very soon we begin to feel heavy and dull too. In the same way when we come in contact with one who is inspiring, radiant and spiritual, those same qualities rise up in us.

Either consciously or unconsciously we have formed our present habits of mind; and to build a new set of habits means a tremendous amount of work. By intelligent reasoning and discrimination every one can know the right path to follow. There is a right instinct in us all which tells us what to do and what to avoid; but very few of us have the strength, stability, and determination to keep that right path constantly before the mind and follow it. Why is this? Because we have so many wrong

impressions in the mind. We have to create a new set of impressions and there is nothing which can help us do this so quickly as the practice of concentration and meditation. In the Vedanta teaching there is no need whatsoever for any one to be despondent, believing that it is too late for him to begin or that he is unfitted for spiritual striving. It matters not how unfitted we may appear to be, we can always overcome. The key is in our own hand. We do not need a different kind of mind to follow the path of meditation and attain higher consciousness. It is the same mind which creates bondage for us and which liberates us. It is the same mind which makes us happy or miserable. The difference lies wholly in the training it has received.

We all have moments of exaltation and inspiration. The question is how to follow them up. No surer means can be found than the practice of meditation. There are no set rules for meditation, as there are no set rules for spiritual evolution in any form. Various suggestions are offered us by the great philosophies and religions of the world and we must absorb them according to our capacity. From beginning to end the path of meditation teaches us that it is not the letter which saves us; it is from the spirit within that we receive the revelation and it comes to us when we reach the superconscious state. As we practise meditation, gradually our consciousness extends. Instead of centering it in our little being and relating ourselves through it to one little environment or group, we begin to feel the pulse of the universe. The heart of the universe takes possession of our heart and the great cosmic life begins to surge through our life.

In India they say that there are three different states of consciousness—waking, dreaming and sound sleep. In

the first, although a man may appear to be awake and may seem to know and feel and do, yet he is not free from error. In the dream state between sleep and waking he is still not free from error. In sound sleep his active consciousness is dormant. But there is a fourth state, where a man does not make any mistakes, where he feels and knows unerringly, because he has come so close to the heart of the Infinite that he has no self-will left to hinder him. When our individual consciousness thus becomes merged in the universal consciousness, we do not lose our identity. Buddha did not lose anything when he attained Nirvana. He dropped the limiting, finite self and he became the Awakened One. This awaking of the higher consciousness comes to us when we drop the bondage of our lower nature; but we have to strive for it, and we can accomplish it only through persistent effort.

Meditation means contemplative thought. Whatever we think with singleness of heart becomes meditation. The power to meditate is a wonderful gift, but it cannot come accidentally. If we have not formed the habit of excluding all non-essential thoughts and distractions from our mind, it will not come to us; it cannot. Therefore we must begin to train the mind. This path is not for the careless person. It is for those who live every moment with thoughtfulness and with vigilance. We can all acquire this gift. Without it life is very empty. Accumulating material possessions does not fortify our happiness; it is the finding of the inward light. No priest or minister, no gospel or form of religion, can open the door to that unbounded source of spiritual blessing for us. We ourselves must open it, through yearning and well-directed effort.

The spiritual goal cannot be attained through material

means. We need the hand of God to lead us. Our steps are faltering without His guidance, our will is frail, our mind is full of error; but if we turn our thought unfailingly towards the Divine, our nature gradually becomes transformed. But how may we meditate on God, you may ask. If God is our Father and Mother, if He is the one from Whom we have descended, certainly there cannot be any closer bond than that which exists between God and ourselves. Why then should there be any reluctance or any hesitancy on our part to go directly to Him and ask Him how we shall meditate, in what way we shall call upon Him? The great Saviours and saints tell us that we must be born again as little children, if we would enter the kingdom of God. As the little child goes to its mother, in the same way we must be willing to go to the great Divine Mother as little children and lay all our troubles at Her feet. It is the self-conscious person who has endless troubles and distractions and miseries. The selfless person has always a sense of serenity. He can meditate.

We may not have the same power in the beginning, but we all possess it in the germ. There is not one who is not equipped with all the finest possibilities; but no one else can bring them out for us. No one can drink for us and quench our thirst; no one can eat for us and nourish our body. We have to do it for ourselves and meditation will help. The contemplative life does not mean that we go apart and lose all practical usefulness, or that we cease to contribute our share towards the good of humanity. On the contrary we pray and meditate in order that we may have greater power, greater ability, greater clearness of vision. Then whatever we contribute will be the gift of God. That is what the superconscious man does. He does nothing with self-conscious feeling. He does not even

write a sentence thinking that he is doing it. We say "Thy will be done"; but when it comes to actual practice, we use our own will. There is no contradiction in the life of the superconscious man and that is what we want to cultivate.

We make the best use of our human life by putting the Divine into it. The human life by itself can easily become barren and burdensome. If we feel that our life is full of darkness and despondency it is because we have not given access to the Divine. We have not brought in the Divine light and that is the reason why it remains in darkness. Why not bring in that light? Why not open that gate of our heart? Why close it to that one thing which can revive us? God has not created man with two hearts. He has not given him a divided mind. It is we who divide ourselves through our complex desires and ambitions and our self-will. So long as we are weak, our understanding will be clouded and incorrect; but when all our forces are gathered up in a one-pointed, aspiring, contemplative life, we shall begin to see clearly. Through the practice of meditation we cannot in any way lose our efficiency. People who have developed the power of meditation are always the most efficient. Whatever they do is invariably well done.

We must not imagine that our spiritual life and our life in the world cannot blend together. If they do not, there is something wrong in us. It means that our inner and our outer life are not coinciding, that we are hypocrites. We think one thing and do another. When the inner and the outer blend, when our thoughts and our acts are the reproduction of one and the same ideal, then we may know that we are living in accord with the Highest. And meditation is the chief means in accomplishing this.

It helps us to direct our action. Before we do anything if we fortify ourselves by the light of meditation, we are not apt to make mistakes and we do not have to waste any time undoing what we have done. When we are inspired and fortified by contact with the inner source of strength and wisdom, we cannot go very far wrong. When we have made God the foundation of our life, then whatever we construct on that foundation will be enduring and will bring lasting happiness.

Superconscious vision is clarified vision. All that we see in that state is free from error. Also we see more. Our sight is more comprehensive. That is why those who have this wider vision become more tolerant, more loving, and more enduring. A person with small vision sees only from one angle and easily grows irritable and angry; but when the heart has become a part of God's heart, it is never impatient or unloving. Peace and happiness come through understanding and understanding comes through meditation.

SURRENDER

Song by Kabir

O Friend, dear heart of mine, think well! if you love indeed, then why do you sleep?

If you have found Him, then give yourself utterly, and take Him to you.

Why do you loose Him again and again?

If the deep sleep of rest has come to your eyes, why waste your time making the bed and arranging the pillows?

Kabir says: "I tell you the ways of love! Even though the head itself must be given, why should you weep over it?"

PREPARATORY STEPS IN SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

By Swami Vivekananda

These are the preparations for getting intense love for God. The first is *Viveka* (discrimination). According to Ramanuja this means discrimination in food. Food contains all the energies which go to make up the forces of our body and mind. It has been transformed and given new direction in our body, but our body and mind have nothing essentially different from the food that we eat. Just as the force and matter we find in the material world become body and mind in us, so essentially the difference between body and mind and the food we eat is only in manifestation. This being so,—that out of the material particles of our food we construct the instrument of thought and that from the finer forces lodged in these particles we manufacture thought itself, it naturally follows that both the thought and the instrument will be modified by the food we take.

There are certain kinds of food which produce certain changes in the mind; we see it every day. There are other kinds which produce a change in the body and also in the course of time have a tremendous effect on the mind. It is a great thing to learn that a good deal of the misery we suffer is occasioned by the food we take. You find that after a heavy and indigestible meal it is very hard to control the mind; it is running, running all the time. There are certain foods which are exciting; if you eat such food, you cannot control the mind. After drinking a large quantity of wine or other alcoholic beverages, a man finds that his mind is not to be controlled; it runs away from him.

According to Ramanuja there are three things in food we must avoid. First there is *Jati*, the nature or

kind of food, which must be considered. All exciting food should be avoided, as meat for instance. This should not be taken because it is by its very nature impure. Any food that has been standing for days till its condition is changed, any food whose natural juices have been almost dried up, any malodorous food, should be avoided.

The next thing to be considered in regard to food is still more intricate to western minds. It is what is called *Ashraya,* the person from whom the food comes. The idea is that each man has a certain aura around him; and whatever he touches, a part of his character is left on it. It is supposed that a man's character emanates from him like a physical force, and whatever he touches is affected by it. So we must take care who touches our food when it is cooked. A wicked or immoral person must not touch it. The other thing to be considered is *Nimitta,* the instrument. Dirt and dust must not be in food. Food should not be brought from the market and placed on the table unwashed. We must be careful also about the saliva and other secretions. The lips, for instance, never ought to be touched with the fingers. The mucous membrane is the most delicate part of the body and all tendencies are conveyed very easily by the saliva. Its contact therefore is to be regarded not only as offensive, but as dangerous. Again, we must not eat food a part of which has been eaten by some one else (leavings of the food of others). When these things are avoided in food, it becomes pure; pure food brings a pure mind; and when the mind is pure, the memory of God becomes constant.

Sankaracharya takes quite another view. The word for food in the Sanskrit is derived from the word "to gather," "gathered in." What is his explanation? He says, the fact that when food is pure the mind will become

pure really means that in order that we may not become subject to the senses we should avoid the following: First, attachment; we must not be extremely attached to anything except God. As soon as extreme attachment comes, a man loses himself; he is no more master of himself, he is a slave. Love and do good to everybody, but do not become a slave. In the first place attachment degenerates us individually, and in the second place it makes us extremely selfish. So all attachment, excepting that for good works, should be avoided; but love should be given to everybody. Then jealousy. Jealousy is the root of all evil and a most difficult thing to conquer. Next, delusion. We always take one thing for another and act upon that, with the result that we bring misery on ourselves. We take the bad for the good. Anything that titillates our nerves for a moment we think the highest good and plunge into it; then we find, when it is too late, that it has given us a tremendous blow. Every day we run into this error and we often continue in it all our lives. When the senses work in the world without attachment, without jealousy, and without delusion, such work or collection of impressions is called pure food according to Sankara.

We have to follow Ramanuja in taking care about food and drink; at the same time we must also be careful about our mental food. It is very easy to be careful about material food, but mental work must go along with it; then gradually our spiritual self will become stronger and stronger and the physical less assertive. Then will food hurt us no more. The great danger is that every man wants to jump at the highest ideal, but jumping is not the way. That ends only in a fall. We are bound down here, and we have to break our chains slowly. This is called *Viveka*, discrimination. The next thing is *Vimok-*

sha, freedom. He who wants to love God must get rid of extreme desires; desire nothing except God. This world is good so far as it helps one to go to the higher world. The objects of the senses are good so far as they help us to attain higher objects. We forget that this world is a means to an end and not an end itself. This notion should be given up at once. This world is good so far as it is a means to perfect ourselves; and as soon as it has ceased to be so, it is evil.

After this comes *Abhyasa,* practice. The mind should always go towards God; no other thing has any right to withhold it. It should continuously think of God, though this is a very hard task; yet it can be done by persistent practice. What we are now is the result of our past practice. Again, practice makes us what we shall be. So practise the other way; one sort of turning round has brought us this way, turn the other way and get out of it as soon as you can. Thinking of the senses has brought us down here—to cry one moment, to rejoice the next, to be at the mercy of every breeze, the slave to everything. This is shameful, and yet we call ourselves spirits. Go the other way, think of God; let the mind not think of any physical or mental enjoyment, but of God alone. When it tries to think of anything else, give it a good blow, so that it may turn round and think of God. As oil poured from one vessel to another falls in an unbroken line; as chimes coming from a distance fall upon the ear in one continuous sound; so should the mind flow towards God in one continuous stream. We should not only impose this practice on the mind, the senses too should be employed. Instead of hearing foolish things, we must hear about God; instead of talking foolish words, we must talk of God. Instead of reading foolish books, we must read good ones which tell of God.

The greatest aid to this practice of keeping God in memory is perhaps music. The Lord says to Narada, the great teacher of Bhakti, "I do not live in heaven, nor do I live in the heart of the Yogi, but where My devotees sing My praise, there am I." Music has tremendous power over the human mind; it brings it to concentration in a moment. You will find the dull, ignorant, low, brute-like human beings, who never steady their minds for a moment at other times, when they hear attractive music, immediately become charmed and concentrated.

The next is *Kriya,* work. Doing good to others. The memory of God will not come to the selfish man. The more we come out and do good to others, the more our hearts will be purified and God will be in them. Man has no right to live in a house himself, until he builds for the poor also, or for anybody who needs it. The householder's house should be open to everybody who is poor and suffering; then he is a real householder. No man has the right to cook food only for himself; it is for others, and he should have what remains. It is a common practice in India that when the season's products first come into the market, such as strawberries or mangoes, a man buys some of them and gives to the poor. Then he eats of them. This training will make a man unselfish. The Hebrews in olden times used to give the first fruits to God. The first of everything should go to the poor; we have a right only to what remains. The poor are God's representatives; any one who suffers is His representative.

Next there is our duty to the lower animals. It is diabolical to say that all animals are created for men, to be killed and used in any way man likes. It is the devil's gospel, not God's. Think how diabolical it is to cut them up to see whether a nerve quivers or not in a certain

part of the body. One portion of the food cooked in a household belongs to the animals also. They should be given food every day; there ought to be hospitals in every city in this country for poor, lame, or blind horses, cows, dogs, and cats, where they should be fed and taken care of.

Then there are *Kalyana,* wishing well to all, and *Satyam,* truthfulness. He who is true, unto him the God of truth comes. Thought, word and deed should be perfectly true. Next *Arjavam,* straightforwardness, rectitude. The word means to be simple, no crookedness in the heart, no double-dealing. Even if it is a little harsh, go straight forward and not crooked. *Daya,* pity, compassion. *Ahimsa,* not injuring any being by thought, word, or deed. *Danam,* charity. There is no higher virtue than charity. The lowest man is he whose hand draws in, in receiving; and he is the highest man whose hand goes out in giving. The hand was made to give always. Give the last bit of bread you have, even if you are starving.

Next comes *Anavasada* (lit., not sitting down, not desponding), cheerfulness. Despondency is not religion, whatever else it may be. By being pleasant always and smiling, it takes you nearer to God, nearer than any prayer. How can those minds love that are gloomy and dull? If they talk of love it is false; they want to hurt others. The man who always feels miserable will never come to God. It is not religion to say "I am so miserable." Every man has his own burden to bear. If you are miserable, try to be happy, try to conquer it.

God is not to be reached by the weak; never be weak. You must be strong; you have infinite strength within you. How else will you conquer anything? How else will you come to God? At the same time you must avoid excessive merriment, *Uddharsa,* as it is called. A mind in

that state never becomes calm; it is fickle. Excessive merriment will always be followed by sorrow. Tears and laughter are near kin. People so often run from one extreme to the other. Let the mind be cheerful, but calm. Never let it run into excesses, because every excess will be followed by a reaction.

THE SUPREMACY OF BREATH

From the Upanishads

The five senses quarelled together, who was the best, each saying, "I am better," "I am better."

They went to their father Prajapati and said: "Sir, who is the best of us?" He replied: "He by whose departure the body seems worse than worst, he is the best of you."

The tongue (speech) departed, and having been absent for a year, it came round and said: "How have you been able to live without me?" They replied: "Like mute people, not speaking, but breathing with the breath, seeing with the eye, hearing with the ear, thinking with the mind. Thus we have lived." Then speech went back.

The eye (sight) departed, and having been absent for a year, it came round and said: "How have you been able to live without me?" They replied: "Like blind people, not seeing, but breathing with the breath, speaking with the tongue, hearing with the ear, thinking with the mind. Thus we have lived." Then the eye went back.

The ear (hearing) departed, and having been absent for a year, it came round and said: "How have you been able to live without me?" They replied: "Like deaf people, not hearing, but breathing with the breath, speaking with the tongue, thinking with the mind. Thus have we lived." Then the ear went back.

The mind departed, and having been absent for a year, it came round and said: "How have you been able to live without me?" They replied: "Like children whose mind is not yet formed, but breathing with the breath, speaking with the tongue, seeing with the eye, hearing with the ear. Thus we have lived." Then the mind went back.

The breath, when on the point of departing, tore up the other senses, as a horse, going to start, might tear up the pegs to which he is tethered. They came to him and said: "Sir, be thou (our lord); thou art the best among us. Do not depart from us!" . . .

Prajapati created the active senses. When they had been created, they strove among themselves. Voice declared: I alone shall speak. Eye declared: I alone shall see; the ear, I alone shall hear; and thus with all the other sense activities. Death, in the form of weariness, seized them. Having seized them, he held them back from their work. Therefore speech grows weary, the eye grows weary, the ear grows weary. But death (in the form of weariness) did not seize the central breath. Then the others sought to know him, and they said: "Verily he is superior to all of us, he who whether moving or not moving, does not tire and does not perish." . . .

Man lives deprived of speech, for we see dumb people. Man lives deprived of sight, for we see blind people. Man lives deprived of hearing for we see deaf people. Man lives deprived of mind or thought, for we see infants. Man lives deprived of his arms, deprived of his legs, for we see men living thus. But without *Prana* or the life breath no one lives. This *Prana* is one with the conscious Self, and having laid hold of this body, it makes it rise up. What is *Prana,* that is Self-consciousness. Together they live in the body, together they go out of it.

RIGHT-BREATHING AND EFFICIENCY

By Sister Devamata

In every created being are two elements, called in Vedic science *Akasha* and *Prana, Akasha* being primordial substance and *Prana* primordial creative energy. This *Prana* is the life principle. Without it nothing can live. If any one wishes to be truly alive, therefore, he must acquaint himself with the nature of this *Prana* and learn its control and use. In our own system its most evident form is to be seen in the motion of the lungs, commonly known as breathing. Breathing, however, is not the cause of this motion, but its effect. In each physical organism is a tireless pumping system, driven by the power of *Prana,* which inflates and empties the lungs. The capacity of this pumping engine determines a man's health and strength; yet the average person, it is said, uses only one-sixth of its power, that is, he takes in only one-sixth of the oxygen which he might have to cleanse and renew his system.

People often imagine that they are constitutionally weak. As a matter of fact they are constitutionally lazy. They prefer to have doctors and medicines do for them what they might do for themselves by wholesome work, outdoor exercise and gymnastics. In the same way they excuse themselves from alert independent thinking on the ground that their mind is naturally dull and slow, easily confused and scattered; whereas in reality it is only starved of oxygen and packed with effete matter due to sluggish circulation. It is like a typewriter clogged with dust-thickened oil. There can be no active thought life when the brain is undersupplied with *Prana* or vital energy. A man in this condition may try to think clearly, but he will see everything through a mist. His work and conver-

sation will be full of inaccuracies, his judgment will be clouded and his will sleepy and faltering.

His power of feeling also will be below normal. The man whose system is not properly oxygenated has a very torpid heart life. His love is a lethargic love. He would like to express it, he would like to do for others, he would like to respond to the affection shown him, but his physical mechanism moves too heavily and runs down before it has expressed or accomplished anything. Stolid, indolent people are always content to receive more than they give and it is largely due to the fact that they are not properly vitalized; that is, their supply of vital force is allowed to remain at a minimum. Sometimes this condition may be the effect of weakness rather than of indolence; but the means adopted to overcome it must be the same in both cases,—the lung action must be regulated and strengthened in order to increase the supply of *Prana.*

If illness or weakness is the cause, one must observe great moderation in stimulating the vital currents; but when the system is merely overpowered by habitual torpor, then it must be whipped into greater activity by the most intensive treatment. The person should rise very early and as his first duty take a walk in the open air, whatever the weather. He should avoid the heavier kinds of food, always eat less than his appetite dictates and frequently skip a meal. Gradually he should reduce his sleep to seven or even six hours. He should do as much active manual work as possible and of a kind which will force him to breathe deeply. He should keep himself constantly busy.

Chronic lethargy is one of the worst forms of infection, no drug could be more harmful. It is a kind of moral sleeping sickness, which little by little deadens all our faculties and kills our higher aspirations. There is but

one remedy for it,—to quicken and focalize our present store of *Prana* and increase the supply. Nor is this merely a hygienic precaution. It has a vital influence on our spiritual development also. Meditation and higher vision are impossible in the state of *Tamas* (density and heaviness). Before we can make any progress in these, we must quicken all the life currents of the body by expanding and regulating the lung action. That is why breath-control is given so important a place in all preparatory Yoga training. We must deepen and lengthen our normal breath. A good way to do this is to bring it into rhythm with our step, especially when we are walking in the open air. If our natural breath to-day covers six steps, next week we must try to increase it to seven and later, if possible, to eight. But we must exercise great discretion and not strain the lungs. In the beginning this practice may make us feel breathless; for that reason it should not be continued for more than a minute or two; then for an interval we should turn our attention entirely away from our breathing.

In bringing our breath into rhythm with our step, we must be careful also to keep it in rhythm with itself; that is, the in-breath and out-breath must be of equal length, both must cover the same number of steps. If one is naturally shorter than the other, it is better to reduce the longer to the count of the shorter one; then gradually increase both together. This exercise in time will make our breath as regular as the swing of a pendulum; all the parts of the system will be brought into rhythm; our scattered forces will be polarized; and not only will our strength be doubled, but the wear and tear of the system will be reduced enormously.

The machine which has a jerky irregular motion is

worn out quickly; and any break in the rhythmic action of our body or mind weakens our organism and opens it to attack from disintegrating outside forces. Nature is working ceaselessly to keep us strong and well and active. Our system is constituted to withstand every kind of attack, but we do not co-operate with it. We do not take advantage of the simplest, most obvious means provided. We are content to pant our way through life, to live and move breathlessly. We take in only *Prana* enough for our immediate use and have no reserve with which to meet unexpected demands. That is why we are unnerved and overcome so easily.

There are three planes of consciousness latent in every living being—the subconscious, the conscious and the superconscious. The superconscious is a wholly unknown realm to the ordinary human being; and even those who recognize its existence are powerless to reach it by any calculating effort of their own, however zealous and sincere. It unveils itself as mastery of the two lower planes is gained. In accomplishing this, the control of breath becomes a valuable factor. Breath stands at the meeting point of the subconscious and the conscious. It is, as it were, the handle by which we may seize and govern the activities of both planes. In our daily experience we demonstrate this constantly. When the breath becomes short or irregular, at once the mind grows confused. That is why people under a sudden shock or provocation which "takes away their breath", lose their presence of mind.

The nerve currents also are regulated through the breath. It is, indeed, the breath which propels these currents through the hollow passages of the spinal vertebræ. When the breathing is irregular, the nerve force is driven in jerks, the whole system is jarred and loss of energy

follows. This explains our exhaustion after a fit of weeping or of anger. We have squandered our vital energies. Taking long deep breaths before an open window will help us restore the rhythm of the system and repair our wasted forces. By a resolute practice of rhythmic breathing we can also stay rising temper or check despondency.

The science of *Pranayama* or breath-control is a comprehensive one and deals with breathing exercises of many different varieties. Some have for their aim to regulate the circulation and temperature of the body; others to purify and regulate the nerve currents; still others to stimulate the different nerve centres and their accompanying centres. Some have great healing efficacy, sending the *Prana* or life-force to depleted parts or withdrawing it from congested ones; others keep the vital energy equally distributed, thus maintaining general health. It is impossible to enumerate all the many kinds of exercises contained in this branch of Yoga; but as the larger part of them have as their purpose to rouse the finer forces of our being and set in motion subtler activities, they must be practised with great caution and only under the guidance of a teacher. Each individual temperament calls for some modifications of the general exercises. For that reason it is not safe for any one to take them out of a book and begin practising them by himself. But it is perfectly safe to cultivate the habit of deep rhythmic breathing and through this alone we can bring up the standard of efficiency in all our work.

Some years ago a social economist propounded the idea that the productive power of the laborer could be increased materially through right breathing. To demonstrate his theory he took a gang of workmen whose task it was to carry heavy steel girders. Before lifting one, he

had the men stand erect, take a deep breath, then stoop and lift the girder, carry it with a swinging step and lay it in its place, taking another deep breath as they put it down. Then they returned with the same rhythmic step and repeated the process. The men, it is said, carried more girders and were less tired at the end of the day. The value of regular motion in rhythm with the breath is proven by every skillful oarsman, every fast runner, every able sportsman in any line; and it is one we can demonstrate for ourselves in our ordinary daily occupations.

Endurance, steadiness, precision, are essential to efficiency and all these hang upon the breath. It determines the amount of life-force we take into the system and how evenly and continuously we distribute it. So long, however, as we make rhythmic breathing a purely mechanical exercise related only to our own little organism, the results must be small. Our real power will come when we bring ourselves into unison with a larger rhythm and unify our breath with the great cosmic breath which pulses through the universe. We all know how the force of every soldier is increased when the regiment falls into step, and further power comes when the breath of all the men is unified by singing or whistling. A new strength is generated which is more than the sum total of the individual units of strength in the company. We see the same thing in a tug of war, or in hoisting a sail, when the men expel their breath simultaneously by uttering some word or sound.

If this is true of a small group, how much more must it be true when we join with the universal cosmic forces. There is an in-breathing and out-breathing of God, a great breath wave of involution and evolution down the cycles. There is an in-breath of summer and an out-breath of winter; an in-breath of day, an out-breath of

night; an in-breath called birth and an out-breath called death. Everywhere is there this swing of the pendulum of the life-breath between the dualities which make up creation; and so regular and dependable is it, that men dare make it the basis of fine mathematical calculations. What power must be ours when we join ourselves with it! But how may we do it? By what means may we gain this union? By our thought.

Thought serves as the connecting link between ourselves and the universe, both inward and outward. When we think of anything, we are joined with that thing for the duration of our thought and partake of its qualities. If we fix our mind on a holy person, holier feelings begin to rise in us. If our thought dwells on one who is hateful or unlovely, a certain perversity seizes upon us too. But we cannot compass the whole cosmic universe by our thought, how then shall we become united with it? By training our thought to flow in habitual current towards that One in Whom the universe lives, moves and has its being; that One Who momently "breathes the breath of life" into every living thing. When we are unbrokenly God-mindful, we enter into the Divine being and fall spontaneously into rhythm with its rhythm. Our breath, our thought, our every motion, our whole life will pulse in harmony with the pulse of creation; we shall stand no longer as isolated units possessing a limited store of strength and ability, but we shall have the full strength and intelligence and skill of the Infinite behind us.

This is the secret of the power of the saint or the devotee. He may appear to be physically more frail than the worldling, but in the moment of need he will manifest a superhuman strength against which the sturdiest muscles cannot prevail. He may be without schooling, yet his

intuitional knowledge will confound the learning of the greatest scholar. The smallest wheel or piston shares in the mightiness of the engine when it moves in harmony with it; so do we share in the power of God and His universe when we live in perfect unison with His life, our heart-beat at one with His great heart, our breath in rhythm with His never-ceasing cosmic breath.

REPORT

There was no break in the usual routine of Services and Classes at The Vedanta Centre of Boston during the month of March. A special Good Friday Service was held instead of the regular Thursday Class in Holy Week. Also the Easter Service was marked by special music. The average attendance at all the meetings was excellent and the number of newcomers exceptionally large. It is gratifying to see the interest of the general public in the work steadily growing.

Swami Paramananda has received a cordial invitation to speak at St. Mark's-in-the-Bouwerie, New York, during May, and he is hoping to spend a part of the month there.

As the Swami was unable to make his usual journey to the Pacific Coast this spring, Sister Daya was sent to the Centre in Los Angeles for a short season. While there she conducted two weekly meetings at the Rooms of the Centre, and also spoke several times at Krotona and in drawing-room gatherings elsewhere. Her greatest service was in bringing together all the adherents of the teaching and infusing into them a new enthusiasm and devotion for the work. Through her they gained the sense of a closer personal touch with the head Centre in Boston and a deeper understanding of the service each faithful follower of Vedanta can render the cause by his or her individual daily living.

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Swami Paramananda

of India in charge

THIRTEENTH SEASON — 1921

SUNDAY, 11 A. M. — SERVICE WITH ADDRESS

SUBJECTS

May 1st The Secret of Serenity
May 8th The Divine Gift
May 15th Meditation and Liberation
May 22nd Spiritual Unfoldment Through Daily Activity
May 29th Evolution and Rebirth

NOTICE

We wish to make an earnest appeal to all readers of THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST that they do their utmost to enlarge its field of usefulness. As we do not resort to the usual methods of sustaining the magazine through advertisement, we depend wholly on the coöperation of friends in extending the radius of its influence by making it known to others and securing new subscribers.

THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

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

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

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FAITH IN THE DIVINE

By Swami Paramananda

(Address given at the Sunday Vesper Service)

We must never lose our faith in the Divine. It is the root of our being. When that is weakened, our whole life suffers. If through our own action or through what others say we begin to falter in our faith and in our relationship with God, we see darkness in everything. It is the greatest misfortune that can befall us. If we do not have faith in God and in spiritual things, that means we have more faith in the world. Our faith is misplaced. We believe too much in the non-essential, and our higher vision is obstructed. When people say that they have no faith in anything, it is not true. If they do not adhere to the Divine, it is because they are clinging to worldly things and making those real.

Our balance in life increases or decreases according to our feeling for spiritual things. We can never have an unbroken sense of the reality of God unless we have overcome the sense of the reality of the material universe. It is not that we destroy anything; but as we live our life in the world, we fill it with a new spiritual consciousness. To have faith in God does not imply that we lose faith in the world or in humanity; we have merely a better understanding of the whole scheme of life. We are strong in

faith and independent of the world if we see, not the seeming, but that which stands behind it all, sustaining it. Now this sense of God's reality we can create, strengthen or weaken. If we live carelessly, paying little heed or no heed to our spiritual unfoldment, it grows dull. It is not that we can ever lose the consciousness of God, but it may be buried under ignorance. A person may become selfish, for instance, or do something which is sinful. The reaction upon his moral being is greater than any punishment a judge can inflict. It shatters his moral fibre, overpowers him; but as he has caused his own downfall, so must he regenerate himself.

No one can make us happy. Others may say comforting things to us, or try to create the material conditions which they imagine will bring us happiness; but always there will be something lacking within ourself and that inward lack nothing external can fill. Name, fame, prosperity—we may have all these in abundance; but they cannot fill one part of our life, and until that part is filled we shall strive in vain for balance. We cannot have a true sense of balance unless we have an increasing measure of spiritual consciousness. But it is very simple to acquire, if we turn Godward with uncalculating faith—recognizing the all-ness of God, learning to depend more and more on Him and making constant thought of Him our first and foremost task in our daily living.

At first we may have to imagine. But how readily our imagination works in material things which are advantageous to us. Take a man who is ambitious to make money. If some one comes and tells him a most improbable story of how to grow rich quickly, his mind begins to work at once. He becomes full of unrest, it absorbs his whole interest. It is the same when a God-consecrated knower of

Truth comes to us and tells us of the wonderful blessing to be found in spiritual consciousness. Those who are ready, their imagination is awakened; their whole being is quickened by it; they begin to think; and as they think and feel and try to realize it, naturally they come closer and closer to it.

I do not mean that a religious life is based altogether on imagination, but in the beginning imagination will help. It is better to imagine something high and holy and spiritual than to imagine ourselves to be weak, sinful and sorrowing. Our mind can work both ways; and we find our perfect balance when the worldly consciousness and the activities of our physical life do not overpower our spiritual duties. We owe a certain obligation to our spiritual being; and when we do not fulfill it, we weaken our spiritual fibre and it suffers. It cannot die because it is immortal, but it can suffer through our carelessness; and when it suffers, everything suffers within us. We may think that by caring for our body we are going to be strong and happy. Many people feel that if only they can have perfect health they will be happy. But a man's happiness requires a great deal more than any material thing. We all find it out sooner or later. If we live our life thoughtlessly, we defeat our purpose; because our faith in God becomes shattered and there is no greater loss.

The spiritual life does not demand that we give up everything. We give up nothing, but we fill everything with richness of feeling. The idealistic thoughts given by the mystics and seers and by the Scriptures are only real when we make them real. Otherwise they remain closed books to us. We may say: "These are very wonderful, elevating thoughts, but they are not practical." We never know whether they are practical or not until they have

entered into our being and become a part of it. Sometimes our heart is closed, the door is shut and nothing can penetrate. We may be fortunate enough to come in contact with the highest and holiest, but we must have the openness, the readiness; otherwise we remain unblessed. If we allow our heart to be dry and barren, then even the grace of God, should it fall upon us, will dry up as water on desert land. Mundane things have a drying effect upon our soul. Everything becomes parched and thirsty within us when we devote ourselves to them.

Our faith in Truth can be increased or decreased. It is like a scale. If we hold our thoughts on worldly, material things and refuse to think of that which is higher and subtler, then our faith in the Unseen will inevitably diminish. You may ask: "But how can I place my faith on that which I do not see?" By our inward consciousness we can feel and see and know it; but by our physical consciousness we can never see, feel or know about God. The calculating mind can never solve the problems of eternity. A simple person, full of faith, full of devotion, full of openness of heart, may know a great deal more about God than a philosopher with a brilliant intellect. Sometimes it becomes a greater advantage that we know less, because we do not have to unlearn so much. How often we wish that we did not remember certain things. Instead of inspiring and elevating us, they hold us back. But this does not happen if all the actions we perform in life are done in relation to Godhead, with a sense of consecration and the feeling that He is the guiding Spirit working through us, abiding within and without us.

When happiness comes, we must not be over-elated. Let us be specially guarded then, that we may not forget and be carried away by the temptations and distractions

of material life; because as soon as we lose our balance, misfortune begins for us. We may have worldly good fortune, but it is indeed a cloudy dark day for the soul when we lose sight of God and have not a clear conception that we are of God, that our life is absolutely in God's hand. If we have faith in this, then nothing matters. Dire distress, sorrow, calamity, nothing can overwhelm us, because we have transcended all sorrow in our consciousness. This is a much truer security than any we may gain by intellectual calculation or by material means.

A simple, trustful attitude of faith and devotion will always bring a feeling of the nearness of Deity. When we begin to analyze and calculate, He seems to go away from us. Why is this? If He is so near as we are told; if He is our innermost being, the Soul of our soul, the Life of our life, how can He ever go far away? He does not. It is our attitude of mind which creates that impression. We hold Him aloof from us by our own attitude. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that a man realizes the Supreme through simple faith; but as soon as he begins to argue about it, God seems to run away. It is because he is trying to realize Him by the wrong method. When we depend wholly upon our own inferior faculties, we are unable to fathom the fathomless and we are filled with doubts and despair. But when with utter humility, simplicity and surrender we seek Him, very soon we begin to feel His protection and guidance.

Let us look up to the Supreme Divine Spirit with child-like faith, simplicity and openness of heart. He is ever near us. He is within us. He knows our thoughts, our feelings, our needs; and He will grant us what is needful for us. All things are possible unto the Supreme. At times we may feel depression and a sense of inability, but unto

Him nothing is impossible. If we can fasten our hearts to Him with steadfast devotion and faith, then through His grace all our imperfections are removed. Let us pray that our life may become more and more worthy, that He may surround us with His protecting blessing and ever lead us by His compassionate hand.

THE BLESSED DHARMA

From the Teachings of Gautama Buddha

The bhikshus (religious mendicants) came to the Blessed One, and having saluted him with clasped hands, they said:

O Master, thou all-seeing, we all wish to learn; our ears are ready to hear; thou art our teacher, thou art incomparable. Cut off our doubt, inform us of the blessed *Dharma* (Divine Law), O thou of great understanding; speak in the midst of us, O thou who art all-seeing, as is the thousand-eyed Lord of the gods.

We will ask the *Muni* (silent one) of great understanding, who has crossed the stream, gone to the other shore, who is blessed and of a firm mind: How does a bhikshu wander rightly in the world, after having gone out from his house and driven away desire?

Buddha said: Let the bhikshu subdue his passion for human and celestial pleasures; then, having conquered existence, he will command the *Dharma*. Such a one will wander rightly in the world.

He whose lusts have been destroyed, who is free from pride, who has overcome all the ways of passion, is subdued, perfectly happy, and of a firm mind! Such a one will wander rightly in the world.

Faithful is he who is possessed of knowledge, seeing the way that leads to Nirvana (realization), he who is no

partisan, he who is pure and victorious, and has removed the veil from his eyes. Such a one will wander rightly in the world.

Said the bhikshus: Certainly, O Bhagavan, it is so; whichever bhikshu lives in this way, subdued and having overcome all bonds, such a one will wander rightly in the world.

The Blessed One said: Whatever is to be done by him who aspires to attain the tranquillity of Nirvana, let him be able and upright, conscientious and gentle, and not proud.

Let no one deceive another, let no one despise another, let no one out of anger or resentment wish to harm another.

Happy is the solitude of the peaceful who know and behold the truth. Happy is he who stands firm by holding himself in check alway. Happy is he whose every sorrow, whose every desire, is at an end. The conquest of the stubborn vanity of self is truly supreme happiness.

Let a man's pleasure be the *Dharma,* let him delight in the *Dharma,* let him stand fast in the *Dharma,* let him know how to inquire into the *Dharma,* let him not raise any dispute that pollutes the *Dharma,* and let him spend his time in pondering on the well-spoken truths of the *Dharma.*

A treasure that is laid up in a deep pit profits nothing and may easily be lost. The real treasure that is laid up through charity and piety, temperance, self-control, or deeds of merit, is hid secure and cannot pass away. It is never gained by despoiling or wronging others, and no thief can steal it. A man, when he dies, must leave the fleeting wealth of the world, but this treasure of virtuous acts he takes with him. Let the wise do good deeds; they are a treasure that never can be lost.

DESIRE FOR GOD

Familiar Talk by Swami Ramakrishnananda

Poverty in itself does not lead to godliness. A poor man wears an old torn cloth. Why? Because he cannot get a good one. The *Sannyasin* (man of renunciation) wears a poor cloth because he does not care to have a good one. The poor man's ideal is not God. What is it? The poor man's ideal is the rich man. He does not wish to give up—rather he wants to acquire. It is the rich man who has tasted all the enjoyments of the world and learned their hollowness, who is ready to renounce. How long do you chew a piece of sugar cane? So long as there is juice in it. Only when all the juice has been extracted and it seems dry and tasteless do you spit it out. In the same way, only the man who has enjoyed this world until it has grown dry and tasteless to him is ready to throw it away. He who has learned the hollowness of all pleasures here, only such a man can give them up. Hence it is said: first *Bhoga* (union with the world), then *Yoga* (union with God).

Complete God-union only a Buddha or a Christ or a Ramakrishna may realize. You know what it says in the Gita: "Out of thousands, only one tries to realize Me; and out of the thousands who thus strive, one only perhaps attains to Me." This complete identification with God comes perhaps to one man in hundreds of years. We see that from history. The rest of us cannot hope to reach it after thousands of life-times. Yet we must not for that reason cease to strive for it. We must always keep God as our goal and that will pull us on. If a man aims at the sky, he may at least strike the top of a tree.

Man is a hero so long as he struggles. To conquer one's passions is no joke. A man can do it only by getting something which gives him greater pleasure. The whole

world is based on sense pleasure. To be able to give it up means that a man has found something better. As long as there is intense struggle, we may know that there are still desires which tie us to the world. We have not yet realized its complete hollowness. When that is done, the way is easy. For God to come, we must want Him and nothing else. We must be mad after Him.

Sri Ramakrishna had this madness. For twelve years He did not know when the sun rose and when it set. He used to lie on the bare ground and cry for the Mother. He did not care for His body or try to preserve it. But God in the form of others came and looked after it. He did not stop to think: "Who will care for my body while I am in *Samadhi* (super-consciousness)?" A calculating man can never realize God. He who gives up even his body to God, knowing that it does not belong to him, and who recognizes his own powerlessness so clearly that he knows he is unable to care for it properly, he is the truly wise man. Can you say that your body belongs to you? You take a little *rasam* (pepper water) and mix it with rice and throw it into your mouth. But do you know how it is manufactured into flesh, bone, blood and muscle? If you do not know, it cannot be this one whom you call yourself who does it; for all you do, you do consciously. He who does this, to him this body must belong, and that being is God (the Divine Power in you). Then let Him take care of it, since it is His property. . .

Say to yourself: "Sri Ramakrishna saw God everywhere and talked with God; why then can I not see and talk with Him? He was a man and I am a man. It cannot need money, for He had no money. It cannot need learning, for He had no learning. It cannot need social position, for He had no social position. Therefore when I have

these facilities which He did not have, why can I not realize Him? It must be because I do not want Him as much as Sri Ramakrishna wanted Him." Now you want your family, you want five hundred rupees a year, you want a position; and when you have these things, then you want God. But when you want Him and nothing else, when you are really mad after Him, then He is sure to come to you as He did to Sri Ramakrishna. Swami Vivekananda used to pray: "Lord, if to know Thee, I must live on filth, I am ready to do it." That kind of madness we must have.

If we pray to God in right earnest He is sure to come to us. The trouble is we pray to so many others besides God. We pray to the doctor to give us health, to the shopkeeper to give us food, to another for something else, and in among the rest we pray to God to give us spiritual light and knowledge. When we look to Him alone and pray to Him and to no one else, He is sure to hear and answer our prayers, if we make them really intense.

PURIFY THY HEART FROM DOUBTING

From the Shepherd of Hermas

(Composed by Hermas, brother of Pius I, Bishop of Rome, 2nd Century)

Turn unto the Lord with all thy heart and ask of him without doubting and thou shalt know the mercy of the Lord; how that He will not forsake thee, but will fulfill the request of thy soul.

For God is not as men mindful of the injuries He has received; but He forgets injuries and has compassion upon His creature.

Wherefore purify thy heart from all the vices of this present world; and observe the commands I have delivered unto thee from God; and thou shalt receive whatsoever good things thou shalt ask and nothing shall be wanting

unto thee of all thy petitions, if thou shalt ask of the Lord without doubting.

But they that are not such shall obtain none of those things which they ask. For they that are full of faith ask all things with confidence and receive from the Lord, because they ask without doubting. But he that doubts shall hardly live unto God, except he repent.

Wherefore purify thy heart from doubting and put on faith; and trust in God; and thou shalt receive all that thou shalt ask. But if thou shouldst chance to ask somewhat and not (immediately) receive it, yet do not therefore doubt because thou hast not presently received the petition of thy soul.

For it may be thou shalt not presently receive it for thy trial, or else for some sin which thou knowest not. But do not thou leave off to ask, and then thou shalt receive. Else if thou shalt cease to ask, thou must complain of thyself, and not of God, that he has not given unto thee what thou didst desire.

Consider therefore this doubting how cruel and pernicious it is; and how it utterly roots out many from the faith, who were very faithful and firm.

Despise it therefore and thou shalt rule over it on every occasion. Put on a firm and powerful faith; for faith promises all things and perfects all things.

Thou seest therefore how faith cometh from above, from God; and has great power. But doubting is an earthly spirit, and proceedeth from the Evil One and has no strength.

Do thou therefore keep the virtue of faith and depart from doubting, in which is no virtue, and thou shalt live unto God. And all shall live unto God, as many as shall do these things.

THE HEIGHTS OF CONTEMPLATION

By Jan van Ruysbroeck

(Flemish Priest and Mystic. 13th Century.)

If we would meet God above the natural world, we must enter into Him by a quickened faith; and there, in simplicity, in peace and freedom, we shall dwell, confirmed in love, in perfect nudity of spirit. When love has lifted us above objects, above light, into the holy darkness, we are transfigured by the eternal Word, like unto the Father; and as the air is penetrated by the sun, so do we receive in that peace which passeth understanding inward piercing and outward shining light.

And what is this light save limitless contemplation and ever active intuition? We contemplate what we are and we are what we contemplate; since our essence, losing nothing of its distinctive individuality, is united to that Divine truth that respects diversity. In the simplicity we share with the Divine Spirit a common life, and "Lo, Father! this is the contemplative life." To love God is most surely the better part. Contemplation of the Super-essential passes into communion.

Yet this contemplation has a further stage when life dies and love fails. For as we enter the darkness we are seized by the single ray, which, shining from the ocean of light where dwells our peace, immerses us in the Super-essential. Only after this absorption is the operation of measureless love experienced. For love cannot be inactive; its life is a ceaseless effort to know, to feel and to realize the boundless treasures hidden within its depths. This is its insatiable desire. This ceaseless attempt to grasp the unattainable is surely a swimming against the tide; yet the object of this desire can no more be given up than it can be attained; to renounce is intolerable, to gain impossible.

Words cannot tell it, silence has no power to hold it within its bounds; intelligence, reason, the creature itself, all are transcended, and desire has not yet reached its object. And if you look within the depths of yourselves, you will find it is the Holy Spirit that has raised within you this tempest, that has swept you out of yourself to complete you in super-substantial love, wherein you will find unity and the heights and the depths transcending all abysses. This simple possession by God is the life eternal enjoyed in the fathomless abyss. It is herein, beyond reason, that we await the peace of the Divine changelessness.

Without personal experience there can be no understanding of these things; for reason is ignorant of their mode. They subsist in their own state, stripped of all fashion of being. Even in the transcending of ourselves we cannot grasp the infinite well-being that we feel, though without understanding it. Poor in ourselves are we, rich in Him. In us hunger and thirst, in Him the bread and wine. Ceaseless activity and unending rest will meet together in eternity; for the possession of God demands and exacts perpetual activity, and whoever thinks otherwise deceives and is deceived. Our whole life is in God, immersed in bliss; our whole life is in ourselves, absorbed in action. And these two movements make but one, self-contradictory in its attributes, rich and poor, hungry, satisfied, active and at rest, sublime, pre-eminent, within time and within eternity, in the midst of His contending glories.

Life in God; life in ourselves; grace and activity; the Divine light which flashes from our highest aspiration spurs us to just deeds; then when we return to it after having fulfilled its demands by the exercise of active

virtue, we pursue it into the abyss whence it came forth; but we feel nothing save the immersion in love, and we plunge, never to re-emerge, into the shoreless ocean.

When lost to ourselves and plunged in God, we possess ourselves in the abyss wherein we are lost. God is our end and we are His, for we fathom this shoreless sea only to find ourselves in the depths. This is the essential absorption; vigil or sleep, oblivion or knowledge, all is one to it, for it exists always. The rivers pour ceaselessly into this ocean, each seeking its own place.

When we possess God, this immersion draws us by the might of love into the consciousness of the abyss, whence there is no return. If our contemplation were eternal, our consciousness would be eternal. This absorption passes the powers and the works of love; it is the going out of ourselves which we accomplish amid light; lost in another than ourselves we incline and move towards our own beatitude. For we experience an urgency impelling us from ourselves into another. It is the abyss which separates us from God felt in the interior sanctuary.

Reason stands wide-eyed but unseeing in the midst of the shadow. Then within this darkness there dawns boundless light, darkness for us by reason of its blinding intensity. Enfolding us in its purity, it transforms us into itself; and freeing us, leads us into consuming love, into the gulf of beatitude where unity waits to give itself to us. And in this union living knowledge and active love are called forth, . . . In such exaltation to contemplate and to know, to experience and to feel, to have and to be, are one; and in such exaltation we shall stand according to the differences of our individual aptitudes; for the Father in His wisdom bestows these gifts according to the excellence of each.

POWER OF EVEN-MINDEDNESS

Teachings of Chuang Tzu. 3rd Century B. C.

(Chief exponent of the philosophy of Laostze.)

Lieh Yu K'ou instructed Po Hun Wu Jen in archery. Drawing the bow to its full, he placed a cup of water on his elbow and began to let fly. Hardly was one arrow out of sight ere another was on the string, the archer standing all the time like a statue.

"But this is shooting under ordinary conditions," cried Po Hun Wu Jen; "it is not shooting under extraordinary conditions. Now I will ascend a high mountain with you and stand on the edge of a precipice a thousand feet in height and see how you can shoot then."

Thereupon Wu Jen went with Lieh Tzu up a high mountain and stood on the edge of a precipice a thousand feet high, approaching it backwards until one-fifth of his feet overhung the chasm, when he beckoned to Lieh Tzu to come on. But the latter had fallen prostrate on the ground, with the sweat pouring down to his heels.

"The perfect man," said Wu Jen, "soars up to the blue sky, or dives down to the yellow springs, or flies to some extreme point of the compass, without change of countenance. But you are terrified and your eyes are dazed. Your internal economy is defective." . . .

Chien Wu said to Sun Shu Ao: "Sir, you have been called to office three times without showing any elation, and you have been three times dismissed without displaying any chagrin. At first I doubted you; but now I notice that your breathing is perfectly regular. How do you manage thus to control your emotions?"

"I am no better than other people," replied Sun Shu Ao. "I regard office, when it comes, as something which may not be declined; when it goes, as something which

cannot be kept. To me both the getting and the losing are outside my own self; therefore I feel no chagrin. How am I better than other people?"

When Confucius heard this, he said: "The perfect sages of old! Cunning men could not defeat them; beautiful women could not allure them; robbers could not steal from them; Tu Hsi and the Yellow Emperor could not make friends of them. Life and death are great, yet these gave them no pang. How much less then rank and power! The souls of such men pierced through huge mountains as though they had been nothing; descended into the abyss without getting wet; occupied lowly stations without chagrin. They filled the whole universe; and the more they gave to others, the more they had themselves." . .

Confucius was hemmed in between Ch'en and Ts'ai and passed seven days without food. The minister Jen went to condole with him and said: "You were near to death, Sir."

"I was indeed," replied Confucius.

"Do you fear death, Sir?" inquired Jen.

"I do," said Confucius.

"Then I will try to teach you," said Jen, "the way not to die. In the eastern sea there are certain birds called the *i-erk*. They behave themselves in a modest and unassuming manner, as though unpossessed of ability. They fly simultaneously; they roost in a body. In advancing, none strives to be first; in retreating none ventures to be last. In eating, none will be the first to begin. Therefore, in their own ranks they are at peace and the outside world is unable to harm them. Thus they escape trouble. . .

"Note this, my disciples!" cried Yang Tzu. "Be virtuous, but without being consciously so; and wherever you go, you will be beloved."

VEDANTA AND BUDDHISM

By Sister Daya

The earliest worship of the Indo-Aryans, as recorded in the Rig-Veda, was a pure and spiritual form of nature-worship, beautifully blended with a fervent monism. Hymns to Pushan and Varuna, Agni and Indra were interspersed with deeper allusions to "The Golden Child," "The One," "The True," existing from the beginning, who "was Lord of all from his birth. . . . whose will is obeyed by all the gods; whose shadow is immortality and whose slave is death." There were no temples in those days; each man was priest in his own household, lighting the sacrificial fire on his hearth, making offerings of rice and milk, or pouring libations of Soma juice, as he invoked the bright gods. The simple ritual which he performed was made living by his faith.

From these sincere origins emerged a more complicated social order with well defined castes of priest and king. The Brahmans, jealous of the growing power of the Kshatryas or princely caste, built up a vast and complicated ceremonial with which to oppose them; and codified it in verbose compositions, known as the *Brahmanas,* devoted to sacrificial rites. The Kshatryas in turn, weary of this imposed formalism, reverted to the monism of the pre-Vedic Rishis and gave it new birth in a sublime spiritual impulse which resulted in the Upanishads. These two lines of thought developed later into the two schools of philosophy which taken together comprise true Hinduism,—the *Purva Mimansa,* based upon the *Brahmanas,* and the Vedanta, the direct outcome of the Upanishads.

Although the Vedanta nourishes practically all the philosophical systems of India, it is in itself more than a philosophy. It is the very essence of Hindu thought. Its

name implies its nature, signifying not only the final portion of the Vedas, the Upanishads, but in a larger sense, the final reach of knowledge, or supreme wisdom. "Tat twam asi" (Thou art That, the Infinite, the Divine) is its great slogan and it speaks with the authority of experience—a witness for eternity, ever directing the mind of man inward to its matrix which is God.

But this great Upanishadic reaction, though it preserved for India her spiritual heritage, failed to check Brahman autocracy which became more and more pronounced, till by the sixth century B. C. India was all but smothered under a load of cumbrous ceremonial, the degenerate offspring of the simple pre-Vedic rites. The Brahmans claimed exclusive caste privileges for the performance of these ceremonies and the people submitted in superstitious fear. There were still those who held to the spiritual traditions; but their voices were lost in the disputations, the confusion and the selfish clamor of the age. Then arose the gigantic figure of Siddartha Guatama, prince of the Sakya clan, known after his Nirvana as the Buddha, the Awakened One. Pure, compassionate and free, he passed with unerring vision straight through the chaos which surrounded him to the essentials of the Vedic ideals. India did not need a new religion; she desperately needed the re-proclamation of her old *Sanatana Dharma* (eternal religion). She did not need new creeds and new teachings; what she needed was a living example of her ancient truths, and this was what Lord Buddha brought.

He never sought to found a new religion. What he did seek was to *be* that about which others argued; to prove the reality of the old ideals by living them. He destroyed nothing but misconceptions. Far from being dreamy or negative, the whole purpose of his teaching was

intensely practical. Speculation he forbade. "Cease speculation," he urged; "become the thing and you will know. Here is the Way, here is the Path laid down for your treading centuries ago. Follow that; nothing else is needful." And every word was backed by his great life. There could be and there was no separation between this life and the age-old ideals which nurtured it, between Vedanta and Buddhism. They were related as the thought and the word. Lord Buddha was the living proof of Vedanta, a justification of India's spiritual life, the Gita and the Upanishads made manifest.

He could have taught as other men teach, by the book, but it was for him to prove every foot of the way, to speak from the heights of realization. In his seeking he tried all the methods of India, from extreme asceticism to philosophic discrimination, and finally discarded them all save "the middle path" of Vedanta, that path of perfect balance by means of which he attained his final vision. He reiterated as facts in nature the Vedanta teachings of reincarnation and karma or the laws of rebirth and ethical causation. The paths to Yoga or God-union which Vedanta offers, covering the four great human types—the devotional, the philosophic, the active and the meditative—he gave forth as the Noble Eight-fold Path leading through many lives and culminating in Nirvana, a state of superconsciousness comparable to the *Samadhi* of Vedanta, to be attained during physical life.

Buddhism like Vedanta lays the burden of human suffering upon the idea of ego. For ego is the root of lust or desire, which burns the heart of man with unappeasable flames and binds the soul of man to the wheel of birth and death. How to break away from this endless sequence was the Buddha's chief concern. Let a man flee from it as he

would from a burning building by means of right views, right aspirations, right speech, right behavior, right livelihood, right effort, right thought, and right contemplation. Thus he laid his great stress upon ethics rather than upon philosophy. "Cease doing evil, do good, follow the Law: this is the doctrine of all the Buddhas." Again and again he declared: "That which is most needed is a loving heart." . . "As the light of the moon is sixteen times stronger than the light of all the stars, so loving kindness is sixteen times more efficacious in liberating the heart than all other religious accomplishments taken together." It was when his later followers started philosophical speculation that confusion arose and Buddhism gradually separated itself from the main body of Hinduism. This confusion was due also to the fact that in order to correct various misconceptions which had crept into the Vedic teachings, he over-emphasized certain points and ignored others, bringing about a misinterpretation of terms as in the case of the *Atman* or Self. A verse in the *Katha-Upanishad* runs: "The Self is subtler than the subtle, greater than the great. It dwells in the heart of each living being. He who is free from desire and free from grief, with mind and senses tranquil, beholds the glory of the *Atman.*" Vedanta sets against the lesser and impermanent self a sublime universal Self, the *Atman,* realization of which amounts to union with God. The Buddha emphatically denied this idea of the *Atman.* "Only through ignorance and delusion," he taught, "do men indulge in the dream that their souls are separate and self-existent entities. There is re-birth of character, but no transmigration of a self. The thought forms reappear but there is no ego-entity transferred."

This would seem to dispose of the matter were it not offset by other words of his in the *Dhammapada:* "Self is

the refuge of self, Self is the Lord of self; who else could be the Lord?" The *Atman* which the Buddha opposes is not the *Atman* of the Upanishads "all-encircling, resplendent, bodiless, spotless, without sinews, pure, untouched by sin, all-seeing, all-knowing, transcendent, self-existent" who "has disposed all things duly for eternal years." It is the little self, the ego-consciousness, the "I, me and mine," which Vedanta no less than Buddhism has always taught must be wiped out, and which from the standpoint of the Absolute has no real existence. Why then should the Buddha have specifically named the *Atman*? He made no distinctions. Let us bear in mind that at the time of the Buddha, philosophical concepts on this point were evidently reversed. Subtly the ego idea had crept into the concept of *Atman,* exalting a glorified separateness instead of losing all separateness in Brahman, the Supreme. The Buddha, including within the term "self" this twisted notion of *Atman* as he found it, swept aside the entire conception. Practical as few men have ever been, he did not quibble over terms. Egotism stood between man and the Light; therefore destroy egotism, illumination must ensue. The name men gave it mattered little; Nirvana or *Samadhi,* it was all the same to the knower of Truth.

That the Buddhist Nirvana is total destruction of consciousness and therefore not in the least similar to the God-union of *Samadhi,* is put forth as an argument by the Southern or more atheistical school of Buddhism. Perhaps the most unanswerable response is that the Buddha attained Nirvana during his life and far from being annihilated, entered from that time into his full power and glory. The description of Nirvana as Bliss, Peace, Liberation, would be meaningless if it were a state of nothingness, but full of meaning if utter selflessness were intended. The whole

tangle is metaphysical. The Absolute is indefinable, beyond mind and speech; It is no-thing and all things; It is beyond good and evil; beyond pleasure and pain; beyond life and death. In the words of the *Katha-Upanishad:* "The sun does not shine there, nor the moon, nor the stars; nor do these lightnings shine there, much less this fire. When He shines, everything shines after Him; by His light all is lighted." As a final appeal we have the Buddha's own words: "There is, O monks, a state where there is neither earth, nor water, nor heat, nor air; neither this world nor that world, neither sun nor moon. It is the uncreate; it is the eternal which never originates and never passes away. There is the end of sorrow."

If this Absolute is approached from the negative aspect, we describe it as annihilation; if from the positive, as union. There can be no contradiction and the result is always the same,—bliss and infinite, enduring peace. The charge of atheism made against Buddhism rested largely upon these metaphysical subtleties and also upon the Buddha's insistence on individual effort without dependence on any outer form whatsoever. As a matter of fact he did not deny the existence of Brahma, the manifested Deity; but he strove ever to draw the Indian mind away from a weakening dualism to the pure Vedic concept of *Atma-Brahman,* the God within. "Verily, Vasatta," he states, "he who is free from anger, free from malice, pure in mind, master of himself, will when the body is dissolved become united with Brahman." Finally, the Rock Edicts of King Asoka, than which there are no more authoritative Buddhist writings, are unquestionably and purely theistic.

We must always remember that the Buddha above all else was a spiritual and social reformer. He sought to reform new departures into old ideals. It is a question

whether he taught the complete destruction of caste outside of his Order of Bhikshus, and his Order was only a more organized expression of the ancient Sannyasin idea. In fact there were already existing companies of Bhikshus or *Sramans,* as they were generally called, who renounced the world, performed no Vedic rites and passed their days in contemplation. Guatama founded only one sect of *Sramans* among many sects which then existed and his sect was known as that of the *Sakyaputrya-Sramans* or Bhikshus. The *Sannyasin* or spiritual renouncer was then, as he is to-day, outside of all caste, all family, all boundaries whatsoever. He belonged to the world and his flame-colored robe gained for him equal entrance into the Pariah's hut or the Raja's palace. The Buddha undoubtedly laid strong emphasis on the spirit of caste as opposed to the letter, lack of which had evidently brought about in the India of his day that most fatal deterioration of caste: a Brahman with the heart of a hireling, a Kshatrya with the soul of a trader. "Not by birth does one become an outcast, not by birth does one become a Brahman; by deeds one becomes an outcast, by deeds one becomes a Brahman."

His words would have fallen on deaf ears, had he not stood before men in all the moral grandeur of his being. Those who planned to ignore him were conquered, so it is written, by his mere presence. If he had never taught verbally, what he was would have survived the centuries. Because he was selfless utterly, men listened and still listen to his voice. Because he was free, the thought of him still liberates the minds of men. His plea for compassion towards even the meanest of God's creatures still echoes in men's hearts, because he was ready at King Bimbasara's sacrifice, to lay himself upon the altar a willing victim to save the lives of helpless goats.

Buddhism as a separate faith has largely passed from the land of the Buddha, but the spirit of it cannot pass; for it is the spirit of pre-Vedic monism, the spirit of the Upanishads, the spirit of Vedanta, the unconquerable spirit of India's eternal religion.

REPORT

As the "Message" goes out each month, we know little of the hearts and lives it may touch. It is deeply gratifying, therefore, to receive unexpected proofs such as the following of the far reach of its helpful influence:

"To The Reverend Sir Swami Paramananda: By my good chance I found this week at the bookseller's an old little book that procured me an exceedingly great joy. It was the 1914th year of the Vedanta Centre. Having never heard of this association and being profoundly interested my whole life in all that concerns Indian life and philosophy I was greatly surprised. The lecture of this book had such a good and healing influence at my soul! I must tell you that I am a refugee from Russia and am now, although before war I was professor and living in excellent circumstances, reduced to a poor and very bad life. Bereft of all my well beloved books, my philosophical soul was near to be overwhelmed by the hardships of the bad material life. In that critical moment this little book saved me and gave me back the joy of life and good hopes for the future time. Let me express you, dear Sir, my great thankfulness for your soothing and healing influence particularly, and generally express you my admiration for your great aim to open the treasures of the East to humanity."

After an absence from the work of nearly two months, Swami Paramananda will resume charge of the Services and Classes at The Vedanta Centre of Boston early in May. It is his intention to remain in Boston the greater part of the summer.

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

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The Message of the East



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SUBJECTS

June 5th *The Foundation of Character*
June 12th *Self-Healing*
June 19th *The Path of Discipleship*
June 26th *How to Conserve Our Energy*

NOTICE

Swami Paramananda will remain in Boston for the present and will conduct all Services and Classes at the Vedanta Centre. The two Sunday Services, at 11 a. m. and 5 p. m., and the Tuesday Evening Class at 8 will continue throughout the summer. The Members' Class on Thursday evening will be suspended until the autumn after the middle of June.

THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

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

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

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THE FIRE OF WISDOM

Class Talk by Swami Paramananda

Why does fire play so vital a part in the spiritual practices of India? Because fire is peculiarly symbolic. It can burn everything to ashes without itself being contaminated; and because of this, for the Vedic Rishis it became the visible symbol of wisdom. He in whom the fire of wisdom burns perpetually, never feels the weight of material life; all his impurities are purged and burned away. Therefore they kept this symbol constantly before them as a reminder. In some of the ancient Indian monasteries it was the custom to keep a sacrificial fire always lighted, and the pupils who came to be instructed were given it as their duty to feed this fire in turns. They were charged to keep watch diligently that the fire might never go out. It was regarded as a very bad omen, if it was allowed to die.

You may think this superstition. But try to see the deeper meaning of it. A person who is lethargic can never keep watch; it is only one who is full of energy, who is ready to sacrifice even sleep. If we should go to be instructed by a spiritual teacher and should show that we were still overpowered by physical lethargy, he would not feel great inspiration to instruct us. We must show alertness and a willing spirit of sacrifice. The vigil by the fire

was a test to prove whether the devotee had these qualities. You will recall how Yama in the Katha-Upanishad tested the boy Nachiketas to see whether he was really thirsting for knowledge. He offered him celestial and worldly delights, which were refused. Then he instructed him in a certain intricate fire sacrifice and the boy was able to repeat everything as it was taught him. Hearing this, Yama exclaimed: "May we ever find a questioner like thee!"

Spiritual teaching must come naturally and spontaneously, drawn out by the disciple's sincerity and whole-souled devotion. A soul eager for Truth can draw inspiration from everything—a tree, a bird, a running brook, a cloud, a beautiful landscape; because he has inspiration within himself. He sees spiritual beneficence everywhere. Many people are under the impression that all we have to do is to learn certain forms and formulas, to gather certain information, then we become wise. It is not that way. These things may give a certain amount of secondary knowledge; but finding out about something, and having direct perception of that same thing concerning which we have gathered information, are two totally different things. We must not lose sight of this fact. We cannot have unerring vision of anything until we have absolute harmony in our body and mind, our aspirations and feelings, in our whole being; and this does not come by merely waiting. We must strive for it.

What does an astronomer do, one who is really devoted to his study? Even on cloudy nights he seeks for opportunities. He adjusts and re-adjusts his telescope; he keeps guard, watching for the right moment; and when it comes, he gains new knowledge. So must it be with our spiritual research. Many times when we sit down to meditate, we fail; but if we faithfully desire the light and keep

on trying, some day we shall succeed. And that success is the result of all the times we have tried. Wisdom cannot come suddenly or by chance. It is the sum total of what we have done. Spiritual development is a process of unfoldment. But we ourselves must work for it. If we are unwilling to do this, that proves that we are not really in earnest. We have curiosity only. One who gives himself finds himself. One who is willing to give all shows himself ready to receive all. Solomon prayed for wisdom only. He did not ask for worldly riches, but they also came. It is a very interesting fact that when a man gives up everything, when he has no more desire for honor or success or selfish gratification of any kind, to him everything is given; while those who want so much go on begging without fulfillment.

The outer material object offered—a flower or fruit—is nothing; it is purely a symbolic expression of an interior offering. I give myself, my thoughts and actions. I burn up all desires and ambitions, all appetites, all limitations, that I may be wholly purified. That which the fire of sacrifice does not burn in us, that is the best part of us. One who has faith and a genuine desire to live for the highest only, is not afraid of this fire; because he knows that it only burns the non-essential, the dross. The real is never burned. There can be no formation of character without this fire. Gold cannot be shaped into an ornament until it has been put through the fiery furnace; so with our human nature. It must pass through the fire of wisdom. Let that fire therefore burn within and let it burn without, until all our impurities are burned off by it.

Those God-consecrated saints and Yogis were not afraid to keep the all-consuming symbol of fire before them; for their constant prayer was: "I live for the Truth,

I die for the Truth, my whole life is for the Truth. Truth alone lives, Truth alone succeeds, not untruth. Never may the false enter into my life or into my thought." Thus that which they kept outwardly as a symbol they also tried to kindle within themselves.

Sometimes we see a little lamp burning on an altar; what does it mean? It means that we must light a lamp within, on the altar of our heart, that we may be able to see the face of Truth shining there. All these symbols and observances, however, degenerate into mere superstitions unless we have the feeling in our heart. No spiritual practice is possible without feeling. For example, through the study of books we can find out much about the science of meditation, but that does not mean that we are able to meditate. Knowledge gained from the outside has very little to do with the act of meditation. A learned scholar may not be able to meditate at all; while some simple soul who cannot even define what meditation is, finds it easy to make his mind meditative.

Which would you rather have? The words, the definition, or the fulfillment? Which is more profitable? Some of us regard ourselves as superior because we can talk and display our gifts outwardly; while another person silently and devoutly goes to the source of things and he finds what we theorize about. No one can say, "I am going to be spiritual." Our inner life must be purified. Only the finer things are to be kept there—the things which are helpful. All our activities and desires must be given better direction. The mind which now is restless and full of unprofitable imaginations, must be trained to turn its imagination towards Divine things. Balance, a right sense of proportion—these must be cultivated. If our mind has become overweighted by material things, we must unburden it

gradually. We must release it and train it to move through proper channels.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say that the greatest help in our spiritual seeking was companionship with holy thoughts and feelings. By association we absorb them. Whatever we constantly think, that we become. If we let our mind dwell on ordinary things—things which are gross, vulgar, unclean—our mind will be filled with such things. In the same way if we are able to train the mind to flow through pure channels, it will become exalted and fortified. It requires untiring zeal to bring our mind to this high state. Only that one who is devoid of sloth, heaviness and dullness, who feels that nothing is too difficult, who has determination, will succeed.

Let us never be faint-hearted. It is a tremendous drawback. We must have courage and zeal. The spiritual world is accessible through our mental aspiration. Through our mind we reach it. Also through our mind we set up obstacles. One who has pure thoughts and aspirations, everything speaks to him of Truth. Through all the avenues of nature he receives inspiration, because he has kindled within himself the fire of wisdom. His path is lighted by that inward fire. He is never in the dark even though he be placed in a dungeon, because he carries the light within himself. The outside is nothing but the reflex of the inside; and if the inside is purified and illumined, then the outside can never prove a hindrance to us.

Diving and finding no pearls in the sea, blame not the ocean; the fault is in thee. —*Firdausi.*

Blessed is the man who has gained the riches of Divine wisdom; wretched is he who has a dim opinion of the Gods in his heart. —*Empedokles. 5th Century B. C.*

KEEP YOUR HEART IN PEACE

Spiritual Maxims of St. John of the Cross

(A Spanish Carmelite monk and close associate of St. Teresa. 16th Century)

By keeping guard over the senses, which are the gates of the soul, we keep also and increase its tranquillity and purity.

Man would never lose peace if he forgot and cast aside his thoughts and notions, and withdrew from the sight, hearing and conversation of men so far as he well may.

The restless and perturbed soul, the passions and desires of which are not wholly mortified, is as such incapacitated for spiritual good; for that enters only into the soul which is under control and ordered in peace.

Be assured of this: God reigns only in the peaceful and unselfish soul.

Be tranquil; put away superfluous thoughts, and make light of whatever may happen; so shall your service be pleasing unto God and you shall rejoice in Him.

Keep your heart in peace; let nothing in this world disturb it; all things have an end.

Be not made sad by the adverse events of this life, for you know not the good they bring with them, ordained in the judgments of God for the everlasting joy of the elect.

In all circumstances, however hard they may be, we should rejoice rather than be cast down, that we may not lose the greatest good, the peace and tranquillity of our soul.

If the whole world and all that is in it were thrown into confusion, disquietude on that account would be vanity, because that disquietude would do more harm than good.

To endure all things with an equable and peaceful mind not only brings with it many blessings to the soul,

but also enables us in the midst of our difficulties to have a clear judgment about them and to minister the fitting remedy for them.

It is not the will of God that the soul should be troubled by anything, or that it should be afflicted; for if men are afflicted because of the adversities of this world, that is the effect of their being weak in virtue; for the soul of the perfect rejoices in that which gives pain to the soul of the imperfect.

OBEDIENCE

By Sister Devamata

Obedience is a quality essential to spiritual progress. But the practice of it is not easy, especially if we have the habit of independent thinking, because it suggests always a curtailment of our rightful liberty. We even imagine that if we obey constantly, our own will will be weakened and we shall fall into a state of passive bondage. But if we look deep into our experience, we shall find that that in us which makes it difficult to obey is far more enslaving than any outside authority possibly could be. Rebellion and disobedience are signs of immaturity and childishness. It requires wisdom and bigness to be truly obedient.

We see it in military discipline. The best private makes the best general, they say. Why? Because the power of command springs from the same root as the power of obedience. Both require well-grounded self-control, quick intelligence and absence of selfish calculation. Thomas a Kempis lays insistent emphasis on the spiritual value of being subservient to a higher command. "It is a very great matter to stand in obedience," he writes; "to live under a superior; and not to be at our own disposing. It is much safer to stand in subjection than in author-

ity. He that endeavoreth to withdraw himself from obedience, withdraweth himself from grace. He that doth not cheerfully and freely submit himself to his superior, it is a sign that his flesh is not as yet perfectly obedient unto him."

In India the place of the disciple is regarded as the most favorable of all for higher attainment. To have occasion to serve, to efface the individual will, to be in the rank and file rather than in the lead, to suffer rebuke:—these are the conditions best adapted to spiritual growth and most eagerly sought by the sincere devotee. The little man, when he is corrected, rises at once in self-justification. He is eager to prove that he is not and cannot be wrong; but the true soldier salutes and stands silent. What strength of will lies beneath that silence! We need never fear that we shall be put upon by following this course. Nature and God invariably justify the right; we do not have to vindicate it. The man who is right is justified by that fact alone and sooner or later it will become evident, either in some outward turn of events or in his character. A new power will appear in him which will more than offset the moment of abasement.

It is one of the most purifying of spiritual practices to listen tranquilly to counsel or reproach. Whatever humbles us will in the end as surely exalt us, if we meet it with quiet submission. Humility is an invariable accompaniment of bigness. No truly great man was ever boisterous, rebellious or self-assertive. The larger virtues are inconsistent with this quality of mind and cannot be acquired so long as it persists. We must have openness of heart, receptivity, eagerness to learn, if we would gain the vision; and when we have these, the whole universe becomes our teacher. No Truth can be hidden from us. "Unto the humble God reveals His secrets and invites him to Himself."

Obedience in the ultimate sense is a subjective rather than an objective habit. We cannot obey any outer voice efficiently until we have learned to follow the Voice within. We must be absolutely law-abiding. That is, we must live in strict harmony with the larger law so far as we have made acquaintance with it. There must be no compromise with our furthest vision. As much as we know, that we must do. "It is the knowledge of the law which makes the sin," St. Paul declares; in other words, we are held responsible so far as our knowledge reaches. Our actions must be shaped not by a self-conceived plan, but by a vital principle. Public opinion, material benefit, personal importance, these must not be admitted as data in the solution of any problem. We must be obedient to the highest revelation vouchsafed us even in the most trifling question. By this habit of thought alone we shall make ourselves perfect in concentration and meditation, for it will keep our attention constantly focused. Now our forces are scattered because we are obeying so many gods—the gods of health and prosperity, the gods of tribe and family, the gods of success or power; in the confusion we forget almost to obey the God of Truth. When we learn to obey that Supreme God of gods from the time we wake in the morning until we lie down at night, all the lesser acts of obedience in our daily round will become easy and automatic.

Christ, you remember, said: "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." India's teaching with equal emphasis tells us that if we would be perfect in devotion, we must be willing to be the servant of the servant of the Lord. Why should we be so eager to exalt our little self, to justify it, to hold it up for admiration, when it is the cause of all our discomfort and misery? He who humbles or silences it is our truest friend, not he who

puffs it up by trivial praise. When we find it so difficult to overcome its belittling tendencies, should we be grateful to those who make it more aggressive? Rather let us be thankful towards those who bring it low and force it to make room for the Higher Self.

We should seize upon every opportunity to practise obedience. It is as vital an exercise in spiritual training as meditation or the study of holy books. We should choose by preference the lowly places. It is told of Saint Radegunde that when she renounced her throne to found an Order of nuns at Poitiers, she made a young girl of eighteen Abbess and to herself reserved the task of carrying all the wood and water for the convent's use. A position of authority does not make us master of others or of ourselves. The master who has not learned obedience will never be able to govern; his own slave, if he have the greater power of obedience, will be the master. Epictetus was a slave in his early years; Narada, the great Indian sage, was born a servant. The moment we can bring our personal will under complete subjection, we have the power of the universe behind us. That is why the meek inherit the earth.

We must guard against the common error of identifying strength with self-assertion or brute force. The strength of muscle and sinew is the weakest form of strength. All out-going strength is easily conquered. There will be always somewhere a sturdier muscle to overpower ours. Real strength springs from indrawnness, the strength of withstanding by withdrawing. It is much easier to strike than to check a blow; to give a sharp answer than to say nothing. That which differentiates physical strength from spiritual is just this—one is outgoing, the other is inholding; one is resistant, the other is non-resistant; one

is liable to constant defeat, the other as it increases grows more and more invincible. Every time we remain silent instead of entering into dispute, we have exchanged physical for spiritual strength; every time we are submissive rather than defiant, we have conserved our higher energy. The ability to deal the hardest blow, to lift the heaviest weight, counts as nothing against this subtler power; and it is reached by one path only—the path of obedient surrender.

Three cardinal vows characterize the vocation of religion everywhere:—chastity, poverty and obedience. The most vital is obedience. Chastity commits the neophite to perfect purity and singleness of aim; poverty demands of him detachment from material things and freedom from the sense of ownership; but obedience lifts him out of the finite into association with the Eternal and Universal, for true submission inevitably leads to union. If we can remain faithful to the one vow of obedience or surrender, then wherever or however we may be living, we shall be as truly consecrated and cloistered as any monk or nun. But how can we know the Divine command, you may ask. It is always sounding in our heart. If we do not hear it, it is because we do not listen. God is trying incessantly to make His voice heard, but the noise of our own mind drowns it. The daily acts of outward obedience create the needful silences in which He may speak. This is their chief value.

The spiritual life is a very easy life when we have learned the secret of obedience, just as a child's life is an easy one when it is naturally obedient. When we have become submissive to the Great Mother of the universe, Her Divine wisdom will direct us, Her Divine inspiration will impel us, Her Divine love will envelop us. We shall never

walk in darkness or lack for definite guidance. There will be no convulsions of uncertainty, no torments of indecision. Our days will flow along normally and happily in a broader, deeper channel. We shall be swept into the cosmic current and shall pass naturally into a holier, sweeter, serener life, free from the disquieting sense of self-importance and authority.

HOLY LEARNING

By Kaibara Ekken

(A Japanese philosopher and social reformer born in 1629)

In learning we should reverence our teachers. By exalting our teachers we can exalt the Way. By exalting the Way we can make the people reverence the Way. Therefore princes, in spite of their exalted position, never looked down upon their teachers as being subjects. In olden days, when Kings received the lessons on the "Great Learning," they never allowed their teachers to face toward north, thus showing their respect toward their masters. . .

There is a learning called the memorizing of phrases. Men who indulge in that study do not penetrate to the soul of things, however much they may believe themselves to be students of the moral philosophy and rejoice in that belief. Again, there are men who covet the name of moral philosophy, yet who do not possess the reality of it. What we should aim to possess is the fruit of moral philosophy rather than its name. Thirdly, there is a learning which seeks truth in our own hearts, thus ignoring the laws of the sages and the precepts of the Ancients. This learning is better than none. But it is not holy learning.

Scholars who love literature and yet neglect to grow in virtue are like men who eat Sakee lees while throwing away the wine itself. Common people oftentimes despise

learning because of the vanity of scholars and their contempt for others. Scholars therefore should meditate on themselves, for it is most regrettable that learning should make men so unworthy.

Do not concern yourself too much about the praise or condemnation of the world, but be guided by reason and the law of your life. If your conduct is in accordance with your reason, you need not be afraid of the blame of the whole world; and if it is contrary to your reason, then do not rejoice even if the world praises you. A true man is he who is praised by good men and blamed by bad. A man who is praised by all men is oftentimes a hypocrite.

A man will often stop doing good when he is ridiculed by others, while he would not dream of ceasing to acquire wealth for a similar reason, which shows he is not sincere in his love for good, though absolutely so in his love of wealth. A true man must love "good" exactly as a little man loves "wealth."

If one depends too much upon his cleverness, he is liable to become haughty and bring misfortune to himself. If he relies too much upon his courage, he invites defeat. If he is too confident of his bodily strength, he brings sickness and loses his life. If he is too conscious of his wisdom, he commits mistakes which lead to his downfall. All misfortunes come from excessive reliance on one's own strength and power.

The aim of learning is not merely to widen knowledge, but to form character. Its object is to make us true men rather than learned men. The chief reason why the teachings of the sages are not more appreciated by the people is because scholars endeavor to show off their learning, rather than to make it their endeavor to live up to the teachings of the sages.

THE NEW NAME

From the Ritual of the Pawnee Indians

(Rendering by Wm. Norman Guthrie in "Leaves of the Greater Bible")

Let all keep silence reverently and take heed unto our words!
Once more the hero's name we change.

Hearken ye, of his kindred and tribe, his near and dear ones, his friends and well wishers, his rivals, enviers and secret foes:—
We were wont to single him out and to summon his presence,
Calling him as we do now once more for the last time:
Rarutskatit, Black-feathered arrow:—the shaft of purpose
Drawn from the quiver, winged for swift flight,
Released from the bent bow, true to its aim, quivering in the heart of his quarry:
Out of the darkness was he drawn—the gloom that is mother of the gleam—
And shot was he into the unknown!
Hearken, he that answered to that name, though worthy and great,
Low he lies, dead now at his own feet. Yet mourn not, rejoice ye rather,
Leap ye up with him to new life, and to greater glory!

Hearken, now we are assembled all, his kindred, his people,
Utter we solemnly the new name he hath won for himself as his own forever;
Yea, let us cry aloud together and shout it abroad,—
Hearken, O well wishers and enviers of his deed,—
Exalting him, exalt we not his people also?
Is not the courage and glory of his deed, our encouragement, our pride, our glory?

Hearken!
Shakuru Warukste—*Sacred Sun*—shall be his Name henceforward,
Who accomplished so great a deed of valor!
The Sacred Sun is he, new arisen in splendor—
At the flaming horizon! Shakuru Warukste, hear us!
We call upon Thee by thy new name! Arise!
Lo, he cometh to life! He is born anew!
His very self now is he!
Behold him, for what he truly is in the sight of God and man!
Here he standeth fully revealed at last.
Rejoice, rejoice!
Is not His valor our pride,
Is not His glory our glory?
Rejoice, rejoice!

(Note: This ceremony of the Name, performed by the Red Indians, is specially interesting because of its striking similarity to the Indo-Aryan custom. In India when a neophyte enters upon the spiritual path and is initiated by the Guru or spiritual teacher, the new life is marked by a new name, chosen to portray the dominating higher tendency of the disciple. If he renounces completely, he drops his family name and is known altogether by his spiritual name.)

I believe the first test of a truly great man is his humility. I do not mean by humility, doubt of his own power, or hesitation in speaking his opinions; but a right understanding of the relation between what *he* can do and say, and the rest of the world's sayings and doings. All great men not only know their business, but usually know that they know it; and are not only right in their main opinions, but they usually know that they are right in them; only they do not think much of themselves on that account . . . They have a curious under-sense of powerlessness, feeling the the greatness is not *in* them, but *through* them; that they could not do or be anything else than God made them.

—*John Ruskin.*

DURGACHARAN NAG

A Close Disciple of Sri Ramakrishna

It was in the small village of Deobhog in Eastern Bengal on the 21st of August, 1846, that Durgacharan Nag, or Nagmahasaya, was born. His father, Dindayal by name, was a pious orthodox Hindu, employed on a very modest salary in a large commercial firm of Calcutta. His mother passed away early and he was left to the care of his aunt, whose dying admonition, "Let your mind always dwell on God," gives us a picture of what her living influence must have been upon his younger years. In those days schools were fewer than at present. There was only one in the vicinity of his home and that carried him through the third grade only. He begged his father to let him study in Calcutta, but there was not money enough. In some way, however, he learned that there were excellent schools in Dacca, ten miles distant from his village. With a handful of puffed rice for his noon-day meal he set out quietly on foot, made a tour of the Dacca schools, and on his return in the evening said to his anxious foster-mother: "From to-morrow I am going to a school in Dacca. Please have my meal ready by 8 o'clock." For fifteen months, in chilling rain or scorching heat, he trudged patiently back and forth the twenty miles, missing in all only two days.

At last the way opened for him to join his father and during a year and a half he studied at a Medical College in Calcutta. Later he worked with the well-known physician, Behari Lal Bhaduri, who gave him a careful training in Homeopathy. His success in his profession was immediate. He had a rare intuition in diagnosis and even as a student performed some remarkable cures. He refused, however, to charge any fixed fee for his services. If people

chose to make him an offering, he would take it, provided it was not more than he considered just. Once when he had saved from death a lady belonging to the household of his father's employer, Mr. Pal, they presented him with a silver casket filled with coins. He courteously declined to accept it, begging that they give him twenty Rupees only (about seven dollars). His father, out of all patience, exclaimed indignantly: "You will never succeed in your profession, I tell you, if you go on this way." The son replied humbly: "I cannot help it. What I believe to be wrong, I cannot do, come what may. God is truth. Have you not always taught me to walk in the path of righteousness? The cost of the medicines did not amount to more than six Rupees (two dollars) and my fees for those seven days should not be more than fourteen Rupees, how then could I accept more than twenty Rupees?"

Frequently instead of receiving, he gave money to his patients or made loans which never were repaid. There were times when he forgot to save enough even for his own meals. He would walk immense distances to visit the sick, especially if they chanced to be very poor. If by the roadside he saw some suffering creature, he would carry him to his house and nurse him back to life. Once he found a man lying on the floor of his hut in a deplorable condition; he hurried home, took one of his own beds, carried it himself the long way, and laid the poor man tenderly on it. Another time when the night was unusually sharp, he spread the warm woolen shawl he wore over a shivering patient; then in scanty clothing kept vigil beside the sick bed under a roof half open to the sky.

He had no thought or fear for himself. When the plague was raging in Calcutta and the servant of a friend who had fled from the city was stricken with it, he nursed

him with tireless devotion, carried him to the Ganges side when he begged to die there, held him in his arms until life was gone, then bore his body to the burning ghat. The pain of others caused him acute suffering, his own troubled him but little. Once he had been asked to come to Calcutta on business and eight Rupees and a blanket had been sent him for his journey. As he was buying his ticket, a poor woman with five ragged hungry children appeared. His money and blanket went to her; then with only fifteen cents in his pocket he travelled on foot, swimming the streams and begging his food. It took him twenty-nine days to reach Calcutta.

It was not merely the wretched and destitute among human beings, however, whom he made his next of kin; dumb beasts and creeping things shared equally in his compassion. He could not injure the smallest thing that crawled. Rather than disturb a busy ant hill, he let the ants gnaw through a pillar of his verandah until it fell. When the fish-monger stopped before his door, he would buy the whole basketful of live fish and throw them back into a nearby pond. One year some Europeans came to Deobhog on a hunting trip. Hearing the report of their guns, he ran out and with folded hands besought them to desist from their cruel sport. The hunters did not understand his words and merely thought him crazy. They reloaded their rifles and were about to shoot again, when he sprang forward and seized their weapons; with superhuman strength he wrenched them away and, running home, hid them. The *Sahibs* were very angry and wished to have him punished; but a Bengali official at the jute mill told them of Dr. Nag's saintly character and they withdrew their complaint, being content to have their guns returned.

Even the cobra was to him a friend. Once a large one came into his garden and his wife begged him to kill it. "It is not the snake of the forest that does us harm," he said to her in rebuke; "it is the snake in the mind which kills a man." Then he spoke persuasively to the cobra and the villagers still tell how it followed him back to the jungle. "The outside world is the projection of your own mind," was his explanation. "As you give out to the world, so you receive back from it. It is like looking in a mirror. The reflection in the glass shows exactly the faces you make at it."

Despite his success, the demands of his profession grew more and more irksome to him as time went on. His mind too was troubled and full of unrest. A *Sadhu* (holy man) had said to him: "However great may be your faith and your love for God, unless you are properly initiated by a Guru (spiritual teacher) and carry on your spiritual practices under his guidance, you cannot attain God-vision." Day after day he sat on the bank of the Ganges, praying the Divine Mother to have pity on him and send him a Guru. Then he watched eagerly the holy men who came to bathe in the river, hoping that one among them perhaps would offer him initiation. Finally one morning he saw a boat approaching and in it was Kailash Ch. Bhattacharya, the spiritual teacher of his family. He inquired how he happened to be in Calcutta and Kailash replied: "I have come by the special command of the Mother to initiate you."

On the morrow the ceremony was performed and his wife also took initiation. Earlier in his career his father's persistent importuning had drawn from him a reluctant consent to marry, but his wife had always given him perfect freedom. Never had she made the least wifely demand upon him; and once when he thought of retiring

to a solitary hermitage, she shamed his resolution with the words: "I have never troubled you, nor shall I ever do so. Why then should you live apart?" His initiation stirred in him a new fever of religious longing. By day he still cared for the sick; but his nights were spent by the Ganges in prayer or contemplation; and so absorbed would he become that once, it is told, while he was meditating, the tide rose and carried him out into the river. Fortunately the chill of the water roused him and he swam back to shore.

It was in 1880 that Nagmahasaya first came under Sri Ramakrishna's holy influence. His friend Suresh had heard of the great Light through Keshab Chunder Sen at the Brahmo Samaj. For two months he did not think to speak of it; but when at last he did so, Nagmahasaya was filled with an irresistible desire to go at once to see him. The next morning the two friends had their meal early and started for the Temple of Dakshineswar, which stands on the bank of the Ganges six miles above Calcutta. It was the month of April and the sun was very hot, but they hurried along the parched road with such ardor that they went far beyond the Temple and had to retrace their steps. It was two o'clock when they reached the door of Sri Ramakrishna's room in the corner of the Temple enclosure. They found a man seated there and asked him: "Sir, can you tell us where the Paramahamsa lives?" "Here," was the answer;"but to-day he is gone to Chandannagor." Sad-hearted and weary, they were turning away when they saw some one in the dim shadow of the room beckoning them to enter. It was Sri Ramakrishna himself. He gave them friendly welcome, explaining that it was Hazra's eccentricity to bar the door to strangers. They remained with him for several hours. While he was talking, he turned

suddenly upon Nagmahasaya and asked: "Why do you look at me so intently?" "I had a great desire to see you and now I am satisfying myself," was Dr. Nag's childlike reply.

The next week they went again to the Temple. Through the intervening days thoughts of Sri Ramakrishna had burned like a fire within Nagmahasaya. He came with feverish eagerness and as he entered the Master said: "You have done well to come again. I have been waiting for you." Then a little later he added: "No fear, my child, you have attained a very exalted state." After that Nagmahasaya was a frequent visitor at Dakshineswar and grew to be one of the dearest among the Master's householder disciples. There was always a place for him close to the Master's feet; but so modest was he that at first he never went to the Temple on Sundays or holidays, feeling himself too insignificant to mingle with the great men who visited the Master on those special days. Yet later when they knew him, it was they who paid him honor.

He still struggled manfully to carry on his medical practice, feeling it his duty to please his father; but one day he overheard Sri Ramakrishna say to another devotee: "If the mind clings to tiny drops of medicine, how can it conceive of the vast universe?" That was sufficient. He went home, threw his medicine chest and his medical books into the Ganges, took a bath, and began a new life. The more he saw of the Master, the stronger grew the spirit of renunciation within him; but Sri Ramakrishna's unvarying answer to his pleadings was: "What harm is there in remaining a householder? Only keep the mind on God. Your life will set up a true ideal for householders. Men will wonder to see it." Obediently Nagmahasaya returned to his home life. It was a bitter blow; but so rigidly did he abide by the Master's admonition that later, when several

devoted friends asked to provide for him and those dependent on him that he might pass his remaining days under the sacred shadow of the Temple at Puri, Nagmahasaya declined their loving offer, saying: "The Master told me to remain at home. I cannot deviate one inch from his command."

But no *Sannyasi* (monk) could have led a more rigidly austere life than that which he marked out for himself. He covered his body with one coarse cotton cloth and walked barefooted in all seasons. He ate only the poorest food, without seasoning of any kind. Often he fasted days at a time and would say to friends who remonstrated with him: "If I am to think day and night of food only, when am I to think of God and do my devotional practices? Constant thought of food produces a kind of mania in man."

For four years he enjoyed the rare blessing of intimate association with Sri Ramakrishna, and during all that time he was the ideal disciple—unswerving in obedience, self-forgetting in devotion and zealously eager to render service. A last and precious opportunity came to him five days before the end. He had walked out from the city and was just entering the Master's room at Cossipur, when he overheard Sri Ramakrishna ask for an Amalakee fruit and a devotee reply that it could not be had, being out of season. Once before Nagmahasaya had arrived with an offering of oranges at the very moment when the Master expressed a desire to have one. He prayed the Divine Mother that She might bless him again and enable him to fulfil his Master's wish. Without speaking to any one, he left the house and began a round of all the gardens in Calcutta. For two days no one saw him—he was still searching; but on the third day he appeared before Sri

Ramakrishna with an Amalakee in his hand. The Master's joy when he brought it was his parting benediction to him. Nagmahasaya never heard his voice again.

After the Master's passing (in July 1886), Nagmahasaya returned to his village and gave himself up to the care of his aged father. But devotees soon began to gather round him; for, as Sri Ramakrishna has said: "When the lotus opens, the bees come of their own accord." He received them all as disciples of his Master, not his own; and made himself their servant. "Those that come here must be true seekers of God. So I was told by the Master," he said to his wife. "Serve them with all care and devotion. God will bless you." Once when he was in acute bodily pain, eight or ten such devotees came to his door. There was not a grain of rice in the house. He dragged himself to the bazar and bought some rice; but as he was carrying home the heavy bag on his shoulders, he staggered under the weight and fell. "O Lord," he cried out, "devotees of Thine are at my house. It is growing late to feed them. Help me!" In a few minutes the pain subsided and he was able to continue on his way. Once again in the winter season two pious travellers asked shelter of him. The rain was falling heavily and the roof was in such disrepair that only one room of the four in his small house was dry. This he gave to his unexpected guests. "Come," he said to his wife, "we are fortunate indeed. Let us pass the night sitting on the porch and repeating the Lord's holy name."

Sometimes he not only fed these visitors, but he met their travelling expenses as well. When one fell ill while in his house, he nursed him until he was quite recovered; then he hired a boat and sent him home, paying all the costs of the journey. What money he received from the

rent of his small house in Calcutta rarely sufficed for this incessant output and often the family would be penniless for a season; but Nagmahasaya would say: "Never mind, I would rather starve than forsake the *Dharma* (religious duty) of the householder. Let Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna do what he deems best with me!" He had little difficulty in securing supplies, however, for so lovable and gentle was he that the merchants at the bazar were always eager to have him buy of them; and a belief prevailed among them that if the first sale of the day was made to him, that day would be a lucky one.

It was impossible to have any work done on the house so long as Nagmahasaya remained at home. Was a laborer called to mend a break in the roof thatch, Dr. Nag would prepare a *Chilum* (pipe) of tobacco for him, offer him food, and if still he persisted in working, he would sit beside him in the hot sun and fan him. Did he go out on the river, he would make the boatmen rest while he plied the oars; and the men tried to avoid taking him, because it seemed to them a sin to let the saintly man labor while they sat idle. So completely did Nagmahasaya feel himself the servant of every human being, however lowly, that it was impossible for him to accept service from any one. He was the embodiment of humility, chosen by the Master, it would seem, to teach the lesson of true lowliness to all his followers. The great Bengalee dramatist, Girish Ch. Ghose, once said of him: "If a man is sincere and all idea of egotism has vanished from him, he attains the state of Nagmahasaya. The earth becomes consecrated by the very touch of the feet of such great men." And Swami Vivekananda exclaimed one day: "Our life is passed vainly in the search after Truth; only he among us is the true blessed son of our Master."

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Swami Paramananda

of India in charge

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SUNDAY, 11 A. M. — SERVICE WITH ADDRESS

SUBJECTS

July 3rd *The Great Hereafter*
July 10th *Divine Love*
July 17th *Evenmindedness*
July 24th *Spiritual Optimism*
July 31st *Conquest of Fear*

NOTICE

We beg to remind our subscribers and readers that there will be no issue of THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST in August and September.

We regret that there should have been so much irregularity in publishing the recent numbers of the magazine, but it has been due to the continued printers' strike and we have been unable to avoid it.

THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

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

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

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THE SOURCE OF HEALING POWER

Lecture by Swami Paramananda

Life makes one living; absence of life means death. Light reveals; absence of light enshrouds in darkness. If through prayer or faith or devotion or meditation a person succeeds in uniting himself with the Source of life and light; and being united, becomes a medium through which these may flow, he is able to restore and illumine others. This is the way the Great Ones have always healed. They themselves possess life in such abundance that they have the power to impart it for the time being to another; but the cure cannot be permanent unless the person's spiritual nature is awakened. Help is lasting only when it shows us how to bring ourselves into union with the Source; and when we have learned to do that, we have no further need of healing, because there is a constant flux of life in us which keeps us well. What impedes that flow now? It is our attitude of mind—doubt, despair, all the various phases of worldly consciousness, which make us feel more united with the body than with spirit. The more we think of the body, the less we feel that which sustains the body. In this lie all the troubles of human existence.

Vedic teaching declares with dynamic force: The soul of man is eternal, unbounded; it has neither body nor

senses nor pain nor afflictions. It is perfect, pure and stainless. If through contemplation we are able to lift our thought to the plane where this is a reality, we are restored. If we can separate ourselves—not through death, but through higher reflection—from our body-consciousness, at once we are released from bodily pain. We must not do it, however, as beggars, asking for health or physical comfort. It must be done with superior feeling and understanding. We must seek the higher for the sake of the higher, not merely in order to benefit the lower nature; otherwise we shall miss our end. One who is always seeking material benefits rarely has his desires satisfied; but to one who does not seek them, they come easily and abundantly. How strange seems the law! When we study it, however, we find that it is neither strange nor unjust. The cosmic universe gives to each one according to his fitness, and a man makes himself fit to receive by his attitude of mind and by his feeling. If he is consumed with material desires, he blocks the way; no higher blessings can reach him. He has not made himself fit. The cosmic law never makes a mistake. It never gives anything to the unfit.

All real healing is quite involuntary. It comes from the central reservoirs of life, and that reservoir is shut off when our consciousness is fixed on the physical. If we are overcome by aches and pains and look to material means only for relief, this may come or it may not; but even if it comes, it will be merely temporary. There can be permanent healing only when we turn to the Source of all supply, which is within. We must learn to retire within ourselves when there is any trouble. Whatever overtakes us—whether it be physical illness, nervous excitement or mental disturbance—we must not reach out to the external

world for help; we must try rather to make ourselves more fit for the manifestation of the Divine Spirit. If we can draw close to the cosmic Source within ourselves, we shall be relieved from our aches and pains and darkness.

That inner Light, the wise men say, is the cure for all ailments; but we do not seek help there. We seek everywhere else. We turn to the spiritual Source as a last resort. Yet until we bring ourselves into contact with That, we shall have no real peace or rest or strength. Meditation therefore becomes a vital factor in all healing. I have known many instances of involuntary cures through meditation, and it is easy to explain them. The power of meditation enables one to transcend the physical, to forget the limited self with its endless concerns and occupations, which now absorb and distract the mind. What part of us is suffering? Can the real man be touched by any of these afflictions? Sages and seers tell us that the real is undying and undecaying. "Sword cannot pierce it, fire cannot burn it, water cannot wet it, air cannot dry it." It is immutable, imperishable. This brings before our mind another picture. If we can feel its reality, immediately we are restored. But mere words cannot do it. The method of positive mental affirmation may bring a moment's relief and upliftment, but any lasting result must be based on feeling. We must feel the presence of that indestructible essence; and if we actually do feel it, we cannot be saturated at the same time with bodily consciousness. If our sufferings are due to matter, then the remedy must be sought in the spiritual; and the more we learn to turn towards that, the more our life is balanced. Instead of giving way to a feeling of helplessness when afflictions come upon us, we should take a firm stand in spiritual thought.

We must not imagine that all bodily disease is the

result of wrong-doing. There are those who think that whenever there is any physical disturbance, it must be due to sin and they are ashamed to have it known. On the contrary the disturbance may be the outer sign of an active cleansing process, which is preparing us for a new spiritual awakening. It is a very great thing to have a healthy body, but a healthy body alone does not lead one to the loftiest pinnacle of spiritual attainment. There are plenty of healthy animals and there are also plenty of healthy people who have not reached the highest consciousness. Physical health is not the end and aim of life. Bodily healing is not always a blessing. It may even prove a drawback. Suffering also has a purpose in our experience. It loosens the hold of the flesh on us and enables our mind to rise to a higher plane of consciousness. Sometimes an illness brings a lesson of which we have need. People are awakened often to higher thought and ideals through bodily afflictions or through misfortune. A person who is full of aspiration learns both through good fortune and ill fortune; he learns as much through physical disease as through health. There are many different disciplines in life; and if we do not have an all-round experience, our consciousness remains incomplete.

This does not mean that we should deliberately invite ill health. Health is a great blessing. A healthy body is an undeniable advantage in our spiritual pursuits; but we must not let ourselves become absorbed in the idea of health as an end in itself. The best form of health is where we are least conscious that we have a body. When we are really healthy, we do not think about the body at all, our feet scarcely touch the ground; but when we are thinking constantly of the body, that is not a healthy attitude of mind or a healthy state of body. We should try to regulate

our life in such a way that we do not violate the law, because nothing contributes more towards good health than an orderly life of moderation. We must be careful not to be carried away by minor details. We must desire a strong body wholly that we may express Divinity within us, and that we may love and serve the Ideal. If we do not use our health to this end, we are bound again and again by physical fetters.

Meditation is invaluable even for our bodily welfare, because it gives us balance, balance both in our activities and in our bodily habits. It quiets our nerves and brings our muscles to a state of tranquillity. Often this is done involuntarily. We must not begin to meditate on God, however, with the idea that we may get health or happiness or prosperity. Not at all. We must meditate on Truth for the love of Truth; and when that is fully awakened in us, it will so consume our heart and thought that we shall rise above all material considerations and in an instant we shall be restored.

This is the real method by which we gain health. It is not done merely by turning our thought on our head when we have a headache, or on our heart if we have a heartache. That is a very primary way of trying to relieve pain. We drive it out from one part and it goes to another. To-day we free our mind from one grief and to-morrow again something may happen to disturb it. We do not get rid of our troubles and ills in life in that way. It is done by lifting our thought, by fastening our heart to that which is unbounded and eternal. The Vedic Rishis have taught us this higher method. They declare to man that there is no permanent happiness in the finite, the changing, the fleeting. That which is infinite and everlasting, That alone is the Source of real happiness and blessing. We must bind

our hearts to That. In That is the only permanent cure for all disease, because It carries us beyond ignorance, beyond selfishness, beyond the unreal.

Intellectually we may conceive that our soul is perfect, pure, free from sickness and death, but we cannot hold to the idea when something goes wrong. We are troubled and unhappy in spite of our theoretical conception. We are unable to maintain our peace and our equilibrium. It is not a matter of a philosophic theory, but of knowing directly, of feeling, of being in tune with Spirit. An intellectual conception, no matter how big or how comforting it may appear to be, will never support us really unless we have made it our own through contemplation. This contemplation, however, is not an abstraction. It does not make us visionary or turn our thoughts to emptiness. No. It makes the Unseen real and tangible to us. So long as we depend on a physical source only, we are deprived of many rich blessings. But when we go inward, we touch the real source of wholeness. We may think out hundreds of external ways to safeguard ourselves, but still we find we are not safe. The real safety of man is within himself. When we find that inner Refuge, we shall know how to rise above all afflictions and calamities and we shall be able to help others rise above them.

We must not give up. We all have latent within us a love for the true, for the perfect. We all want that which is unlimited and eternal. There is an inner longing which drives us constantly. Even the mistakes we make are due to our effort to find true happiness; but we seek it in the finite, so we suffer. The Eternal is not to be found in the perishable. If we desire a real cure for our ills, physical or mental, we must seek it in the Imperishable. The Source of life is not outside and separate from us. It is within us.

The kingdom of God is within and we are told to seek that first, then all else will follow. Do we believe it? If we do, then we shall turn towards it naturally. Whenever we feel any lack or any distress, instead of turning towards the external, we shall turn towards the internal. A wise man goes within himself in his joys and his sorrows. He strives to unite himself more closely with his Source in every experience of life. He knows that all his power comes from there and he takes no credit to himself. No man can become a channel of Divine power so long as his ego is in the ascendancy. He may be able to heal temporarily, but it will not last. To become a true channel he must make himself in tune with God through humility, through purity, through an utter lack of self-consciousness.

Whenever we feel turbulence in our mind or disturbance in our body, if we can fix our thought on our spiritual Source and give Nature a chance to restore us by trying to forget the cause of our pain, we shall be healed without any outside help. God is our common property. We do not have to gain access to Him through any book or minister or church or healer. All that we need is purity of thought, an open heart and sincere childlike longing. When we have these, all darkness vanishes quickly and healing takes place. When we touch the reservoir of life, the storehouse of *Prana* or vital energy, all our weakness must disappear. Some accomplish this by a definite system of thought; others do it through simple faith and devotion.

There are many simple people who by mere faith and ardent devotion have performed what we call miracles; but they are not miracles in the sense that they could not happen to any one. Healing comes wholly through fitness. Let us all strive to make ourselves fit for the manifestation of Divine power. Let us make it our first duty always to

turn towards that inner Source for all our needs. Let us tune ourselves in such a way that we shall never be a jarring note in the cosmic harmony. If we learn to keep ourselves in tune, there will be no need of healing; because when our body and mind and soul are attuned to the central spiritual power, this physical machine will run smoothly and we shall be scarcely conscious that we have a body. Our whole thought will be turned towards God.

IN QUEST OF HIM

Bengalee Hymn

(Translated for The Message of the East)

In vain is my birth, in vain is my life, if I cannot see the Life of my life.
I search for Him everywhere, but nowhere do I find Him.
Where has He hidden Himself away?

O bird, sitting happily on the branch of a tree, art thou calling on the Lord of all worlds?
In what tongue dost thou call? Tell me, that I too may call and perchance obtain Him.

O bee, art thou humming the glory of the Glorious One?
Teach me, who am devoid of all merit, that I too may sing His glory.

O flower, why art thou smiling? Hast thou obtained that all-merciful One?
I bow before thee and implore thee, tell me by what merit hast thou pleased Him?

O Meru and immovable Vindhya, loftiest of mountains, what do you behold as you lift your towering peaks?
Have you fulfilled the aim of existence and seen the all-pervading Lord of the Universe?

O beautiful blue sky, is it thou who art hiding the Life of my life behind thy soft azure veil?

Draw back that veil for one blessed moment, that I may behold Him and soothe the mad yearning of my mind and heart.

THE TRUE MEANING OF RENUNCIATION

By Sister Devamata

True renunciation has nothing to do with giving up in the material sense. Renunciation, according to Vedanta, is merely overcoming the sense of ownership. Christ tells us that we cannot serve God and Mammon; that is, we cannot have two standards of measurement, two varying ideals, two conflicting aims in life. It is no more possible than it is to follow simultaneously two different methods in music. Yet in choosing one standard or ideal we are not called upon to blot every other from our consciousness. The law of the universe is not a law of exclusion. In order to make way for one thing, it is not necessary to push out something else. There is a place for everything in God's creation, and so should it be in our life.

Serving God does not mean rejecting the world. It means changing our point of view regarding it. Now the world exists for us in relation to ourselves. When we make God's service our first thought, it will still exist for us, but related to Him. Our attitude will be like that of a man who is consumed by an absorbing ambition. He refers whatever rises in his daily round not to himself, to his personal comfort and pleasure, but to his ambition. If it hinder that, he puts it aside, however it may tempt him; if it further that, he makes gladly any sacrifice it may entail. In the same manner must we measure the importance or value of every experience, not by its effect on our material

condition, but by its bearing on our relationship with Deity.

We need not fear that this will make us indifferent towards our human duties and obligations. In trying to overcome the feeling of ownership we are not forced to give less care to our outer possessions or to ourselves. On the contrary, we take better care of both, because we look upon them as God's. In ordinary life when anything is left with us in trust, we do not dare misuse it; because some day, we know, we shall have to return it and we would be ashamed to have it marred or hurt. We should have the same feeling towards our external belongings and our physical organism. They are a part of the universe and we are answerable for their use. Realizing this does not lessen our satisfaction in them. Rather we have more, because we enjoy them—not the fact that we possess them, as is so often the case now. They are dearer, more lovely to us because they belong to God. If we are deeply devoted to some one, how happy we are to have a book or a picture or anything that was his. So will the world gain new value for us when we disassociate it from ourselves and associate it with God. The most insignificant thing then will seem to us a sacred relic. We shall catch the fragrance of His Divine being in every passing object or person. The whole material universe will be a reminder of Him.

Even our own body will acquire a new sanctity. Now how often it is a weariness to us. We rebel against the continuous irksome round of washing, clothing and feeding it. It seems to encumber and weight us. It is constantly limiting our power of expression. But when we see it as an integral part of the cosmic body, our feeling towards it changes automatically. We no longer look upon it as a toy to play with, a something with which we have the right to do as we please. We do not care to dress it in

tawdry finery and parade it in order to earn admiration or advantage through it. We are not depressed when we see it aging. If some physical disability like blindness or deafness attack it, we do not let that cut us off; we create new avenues of association. Nature mends and beautifies always; and when we pass our bodies back to her, the same grace and economy of force will be manifest in them that we see in all her untrammelled workings. We shall make no useless motions, obey no foolish impulses, waste no energy in futile efforts, carry no unnecessary burdens. The great cosmic Mother will restrain and guide and foster us.

Renunciation really means casting our burden on the Lord. At present life weighs heavily on us because we are trying to hold on to something which does not belong to us. We are struggling to pull a little part of the universe away from the whole and the universe pulls against us. What wonder that we tire and lose heart! The instant we let go, the weight will disappear; and we shall be none the poorer. As members of the cosmic body we partake of its universal life and power and riches. Can any small personal possession offset that? The sense of ownership merely builds a fence round a minute corner of creation and shuts us away from all the rest. We cannot take our little portion out of the universe and do what we will with it. We can only stay inside the enclosure and endure a self-enforced imprisonment, fighting all the while Nature's efforts to free us. The man who does not resist, when life's varying fortunes batter down the fence, is truly the rich man; because the whole universe lies open before him.

At present if we see our possessions diminish, we grow sad; and if they increase, we are full of elation; but when we rise to a higher elevation, we perceive that all this alteration in condition is only apparent. Contraction or

expansion in creation occurs in relation to one particular spot or one particular object only. The sum total of energy in the whole is constant. All changes take place within the universe, hence they cannot impoverish it. In one of the Upanishads it is said: "Though the visible whole has come out from that Invisible Whole, yet the Whole remains unaltered." We cannot take the finite out from the Infinite, as we cannot take the wave out of the ocean. We can remove it merely from one place to another in the Whole. If we carry the furniture from one room of our house to another, we still have the same amount of furniture; or if we take money from one pocket and put it in another, we have no less. The same law holds in the universe. Whatever the apparent ebb and flow, the supply never lessens. Is there any change in the ocean's volume of water at high tide or low?

Our feeling of poverty and misfortune springs from a sense of separateness. We picture ourselves standing alone in space surrounded by things we call our own, which we are forced to protect against numberless enemies intent on making them their own. Actually they can be neither theirs nor ours. Individual ownership in the light of cosmic economics is a chimera. We may keep a thing from another human being for a season, but we can never keep it from the forces of Nature or from God. In a night all that we possess may be swept rudely from our grasp. Then what are we to do with all these things we call ours? Leave them where they are and look after them diligently; but hold them so lightly that should they be moved elsewhere, we shall feel no wrench. We should be as faithful in poverty as in abundance. "The superior man," declares a Confucian text, "can find himself in no position in which he is not himself. In a position of wealth

and honor, he does what is proper to a position of wealth and honor. In a position of poverty and lowliness he does what is proper to a position of poverty and lowliness." He knows that it is the Lord who giveth and taketh away and that true blessedness is to be found in the Giver, not in His gift.

So long as our chief satisfaction in worldly things comes from the consciousness of possessing them, we shall be driven by a feverish unrest to get more and more; and we shall be cheated of any real joy in what we have. The sense of mine-ness is the destructive element in all our happiness, because it sets us against the cosmic law. God's creation is open and free to every one. Not one corner of His vast universe is shut away. His every truth is waiting to be discovered. His wonder and glory are flashing before us. His revelation is incessant. It is we who will not hear or see. The barriers against which we push are within ourselves; they are the barriers of I-ness and mine-ness. All our limitations are self-created; and were our possessions a thousand-fold greater than they are, we should still feel restricted, unless our sense of values is altered fundamentally. We could label the whole external universe ours and still the hunger for more would be there. The sense of lack will never go, so long as we lend all reality to these temporary worldly contacts and fail to give reality to the one vital contact—with God.

The problems which disturb us have this as their cause. The man who has learned to mingle his life wholly with the Divine life has no problems. He may still feel the binding fetters of finite existence, but he has one unfailing remedy—the Infinite and Eternal. When we learn to look upon ourselves, not as isolated entities, but as inherent parts of the whole, we cannot be at odds with any

part, any more than our hands can be at odds with our feet or our eyes with our ears. No man fears his own hands and feet. He allies himself with them. He knows that their well-being is his well-being. So does our advantage rest upon the advantage of every living creature. With whom then can we be at war? What have we to guard or to set apart? Through many devious ways we are all seeking one thing—happiness; and *Anandam* or bliss is the crowning name of God. There is plenty of Him for everybody. He is never less or more. He cannot be divided into parts and distributed. He is not something man can obtain by calculating effort. If we try to cut off and appropriate some part of Him, by the inevitable nature of things we suffer.

The whole cannot belong to any part, nor can one part belong to another part. Every part must belong to the whole and be related to every other part through the whole. He cannot be ours; we must be His—we and all that we call ours. There can be no existence outside of universal existence and God is that. Our life is in His life, our thought is within His thought, our love is a small fragment of His great love. We are complete and whole only in Him. He is our wealth and our support. No human being can impoverish us, nor can we impoverish any human being. No man can rob us, nor can we rob any man. We are one with all living creatures—one in interest, one in joy or sorrow, one in aim.

If we try to exchange this sense of oneness with the whole for a sense of ownership of some part, we have made ourselves paupers and outcasts. Like Esau we have sold our heritage for a mess of pottage. Apparently we may have gained a world, but that world will be like a fireless hearth, beside which we sit shivering and alone. Kings

have possessed it and cast it away for a beggar's bowl. Men of countless riches have given it as the price of a mendicant's staff. "All this whatsoever exists should be covered by the Lord. Having renounced the unreal, enjoy the Real. Do not covet any man's wealth," the Upanishad enjoins. Nor does this mean a sacrifice for the man who sincerely longs for Reality. He does not turn away sorrowing as did the Jew who asked of Christ the way to salvation. When all material things are fused into one by the burning radiance of that Divine presence, human wealth will seem to us too small a thing to covet. We shall ask for nothing less than Infinity and Eternity, having learned, as a Vedic sage proclaims:

"In the Infinite alone is bliss. There can be no lasting joy in the finite. The Infinite is immortal, the finite is mortal . . . In the world they call cows and horses, elephants and gold, fields and houses, greatness. I do not mean this, for in this case one thing rests in something else; but the Infinite rests in its own being. It is below, above, behind, before, right and left—the Infinite is all this. He who sees, perceives and understands this, loves the Infinite, delights in the Infinite, revels in the Infinite, rejoices in the Infinite. He is master of himself and lord of all worlds. But they who think differently from this, live in perishable worlds and have other beings for their rulers."

Let a man learn to look for the permanent in the mutable and fleeting; let him learn to bear the disappearance of things he was wont to reverence, without losing his reverence; let him learn that though abyss open under abyss, and opinion displace opinion, all are at last contained in the Eternal cause. —*Emerson*

OF POVERTY

By Richard Rolle, Hermit of Hampole, 14th century

(Regarded as the father of English mysticism and sometimes called the English St. Francis)

If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell all that thou hast and give it to the poor and come and follow Christ. In the forsaking of worldly things and in the following of Christly things it is shown there is perfection. Forsooth all that have forsaken their goods follow not Christ, for many are worse after forsaking their goods than they were before. Then certain they serve backbiting, and they dread not to withdraw the good fame of their neighbors. Then they swell with envy; they nash with malice; they set themselves before all others; they praise their state, all others they either dispraise or condemn.

Thou that understandest what I have said, take thy poverty another way. When He says "go and sell," He marks the changing of thy desire and of thy thought, as thus: he that was proud now be lowly; he that was wrathful now be meek; he that was envious now be charitable; before covetous, now generous and discreet. And if he were unclean, now let him abstain not only from all ill but from all likeness of ill. And if before he exceeded in meat or drink, now by fasting let him amend. He soothly that loved the world too much, now let him gather himself altogether in Christ's love; and fasten all the waverings of his heart in one desire for things everlasting. And so no marvel that wilful poverty shall be fruitful to him, and the noy that he suffers for God be a glorious crown. *Beati pauperes spiritu, quoniam ipsorum est regnum coelorum.* That is to say: "Blessed be they that are poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.!"

What is poverty of spirit but meekness of mind, by

the which a man knows his own infirmity? Seeing that he may not come to perfect stableness but by the grace of God, all things that might let him from that grace he forsakes, and he sets his desire only in the joy of his Maker. And as of one root spring many branches, so of wilful poverty, taken in this wise, proceed virtues and marvellousness untrowed. Not as some that change their clothes and not their souls; soothly it seems they forsake riches, yet they cease not to gather innumerable vices.

What is worse than a proud poor man? What more cursed than an envious beggar? If thou truly forsake all things for God, see more what thou despisest than what thou forsakest. Take heed busily how thou followest Christ in manners. *Discite, inquit, a me quia mitis sum, et humilis corde.* "Learn of me," He says, "For I am meek and lowly of heart." He says not "learn of me for I am poor." Truly by itself poverty is no virtue but rather wretchedness; nor of itself praised, but because it is the instrument of virtue and helps to get blessedness and makes many eschew many occasions of sinning. Therefore it is to be praised and desired. It lets a man from being honoured, although he be virtuous; but rather it makes him despised and over-led (oppressed) and cast out among lovers of the world. To suffer all which for Christ is highly needful. Therefore Christ to our example led a poor life in this way, for He knew that for them that abound in riches and pleasure it is hard to enter into heaven.

They soothly that have wilful poverty and lack in the meekness and lowliness that Christ teaches, are more wretched than they that have plenty of all riches. . . . They soothly that shine in meekness and lowliness, though they have much riches, yet shall they be set on the right hand of Christ when he deems. Some men soothly say:

we cannot leave all, we are sick; it behoves us to keep our necessaries that we may live and that is lawful. But they are the less worthy, for they dare not suffer anguish, poverty and neediness for God. Yet by the grace of God they may come to the height of virtue and lift themselves to the contemplation of heavenly things, if they forsake secular occupations and errands and unwearily rise to meditate and pray; and hold not the goods they have with full love, but having them, forsake them.

In meat and drink be thou scarce and wise. Whilst thou eatest or drinkest, let not the memory of thy God that feeds thee pass from thy mind; but praise, bless and glorify Him in every morsel, so that thy heart be more in God's praising than in thy meat; that thy soul be not parted from God at any hour. Many truly there are that always fluctuate in eating, so that over little or over much they always take; and the form of living they never keep whilst they trow that now this, now that, be better. The unwise and untaught, which have never felt the sweetness of Christ's love, trow that abstinence be holiness. But truly abstinence by itself is not holiness; but if it be discreet, it helps us to be holy. If it be indiscreet, it impedes holiness; because it destroys discipline, without which virtues are turned to vice. If a man would be singular in abstinence he ought to eschew the sight of men and their praising, that he be not proud for nought and lose all.

The best thing, and as I suppose pleasing to God, is to conform thyself in meat and drink to the time and place and estate of them with whom thou art; so that thou seem not to be wilful nor a feigner of religion. . . It behoves him truly to be strong that will manfully use the love of God. The flesh being enfeebled with great disease oft-

times a man cannot pray, and then much more he cannot lift himself to high things with hot desire. I would rather therefore that a man failed for the greatness of love than for too much fasting. Be thou therefore steadfast in all thy ways and dress thy life after the rule shown to thee; and if thou may not get that thou desirest in the beginning, mistrust not; but abide; for by long use and time thou shalt come to perfection.

If thou be a pilgrim and rest by the way, whatever thou dost in this life, to God ever have an eye. Let not thy thought go from Him; think that time lost in which thou thinkest not of God. In the night praise Him and desire His love, that sleep may not find thee in any other wise occupied than praying or thinking of God. See that thou flow not with vain thoughts, nor give thyself to many charges; but study to get and hold this steadfastness of mind so that thou dread not the wretchedness of this world nor desire the goods thereof unmannerly. He that dreads to suffer adversity knows not yet how it behoves us to despise the world; and he that joys in earthly things is far from everlasting things.

WHY HAVE YOU FALLEN ASLEEP?

By Jalalu'd-Din Rumi

Why, when God's earth is so wide, have you fallen asleep
in a prison?
Avoid entangled thoughts, that you may see the revelation
of Paradise.

Refrain from speaking, that you may win speech hereafter.
Abandon life and the world, that you may behold the Life
of the world.

A KNIGHT OF OUR LADY SAINT MARY

Mediaeval Mary-Legend

Many centuries hence there lived a certain noble knight, by name Sir Walter of Birbech. From his earliest childhood he had accounted himself the little servant of the Blessed Virgin; and when the time was ripe for him, according to the ancient ways of chivalry, to swear fealty to some fair lady, he could think of none lovelier or sweeter than the Lady Saint Mary. So he bound Her color, a scarf of azure blue, about his arm; set Her device, a lily flower, on his shield and pennon; and rode forth to uphold Her honor, either by brave jousting in the lists or by valorously protecting the weak and afflicted wherever he might pass.

Now it was proclaimed that a great tourney would be held in a certain lordly castle and Sir Walter went to do battle for his Lady's fame. But the tourney was on a Saturday, the which day is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. And it so happened that as he rode, he came upon an Abbey consecrated to the Queen of Heaven. It was yet early in the morning, close upon the hour of prime, and that knight said to his companions: "Come, let us enter and hear the Mass. Perchance today we may lose our lives. Let us not miss this last opportunity to pay our devoir to our Blessed Lady."

But the knights faring with him gave impatient answer: "It grows late. If we loiter, we shall arrive when the tourney is over and our honor will remain undefended. Come let us forth."

"Go ye onward," Sir Walter replied. "I shall tarry. Never did knight suffer misfortune by any courtesy done to the Lady of his desire."

So he entered the church, that was very vast with

many chapels and altars of rich design. At one a priest was saying a Mass and Sir Walter, kneeling right humbly upon the ground before it, gave himself to prayer. But scarce was that Mass ended when came a priest to another altar and began the Introit of Our Lady. As the knight heard the *"Salve, Sancta Parens,"* he thought within himself: "Surely would it seem most discourteous were I to leave the church when my Lady's Mass is being said; so will I wait until it is finished. Then will I rise quickly and ride on to the tourney."

But when the second Mass was nearly ended, came the Lord Abbott himself to recite his *Confiteor* before the High Altar—for it was the pious usage of this Abbey to honor Our Lady each Saturday with as many Masses as they might. Thus one following another, Sir Walter found not occasion to leave his devotions, but heard each Mass with unabated ardor. When at last all were at an end and the clerks had left the choir, the knight hastened forth, bethinking him to rejoin his companions. So short had seemed to him the hours of prayer, he knew not that the morning was nearly spent. When he reached the tourney, he was amazed to find the lists deserted.

"What!" he called to some passing knights, "is not the jousting begun?"

"Yea, it is long since over and we go homeward."

Greatly vexed was he with himself that thus he should have missed tilting in his Lady's honor.

"Who has prevailed?" he asked again.

"Sir Walter of Birbech, a most valiant knight," was their answer. "His name is in all men's mouths because of the rare skill and bravery he has shown this day."

Sir Walter heard in dumb bewilderment; yet not understanding, he donned his armor, bound his arm-piece,

took his shield and pennon, and rode into the field. But there was none there to tilt with him. The knights to whom he made appeal merely knelt and did him homage.

"My noble friends," Sir Walter exclaimed, protesting, "surely is there some error. Neither have I jousted nor overcome you."

"Nay, nay," the knights rejoined; "you would deceive us. Never have we seen such deeds of arms as those you have performed this day. Wherever the press was thickest, there flashed your shield with the lily flower; and wherever you rode, good fortune of a truth rode beside you. Verily it seemed as if some heavenly power fought with you, for whereas none could touch you, not even the most valiant went free of your spear. And no error can there be; for we heard your voice as we hear it now, shouting *'Virgo virginum!'* or *'Jesu Maria!'* Likewise saw we the blue gage that is yet bound about your arm."

Then knew Sir Walter that while he knelt before Her altar showing courtesy to his Lady in devout worship, that gracious Lady did arm Herself in his likeness and rode to the tourney in his stead. Straightway went he to the Abbey church and made offering of his shield upon the altar, for he knew now that he had a protector better far than any earthly shield or buckler. And he swore ever to keep spotless the pennon She had deigned to bear; and never to use that spear with which She had held aloft his honor, save for the defence of holy womanhood or the succoring of the oppressed.

The which teaches us this simple lesson, that when we give all without stint to the Most High Lord and count naught against His service, no earthly devoir of ours shall ever fail; but rather shall we excel the more in both earthly and heavenly undertakings.

REPORT

At the Vedanta Centre of Boston the Services and Classes continued as usual during June. On June 16th Swami Paramananda gave his annual dinner. There were seventy-seven present. The table was arranged in a long hollow rectangle, at which sixty-eight guests sat down. The Swami presided and served at the connecting cross table. Plants, palms and flowers in profusion filled the rooms and covered the table. All the dishes served were prepared wholly by the Swami. At the close of the dinner, Mr. John Orth, the well-known pianist and composer, spoke with deep appreciation of his debt to the Centre and of the inspiration it had given him in his humanitarian work. Professor Perrin, of the Boston University, carrying on Mr. Orth's closing thought that without loving service to one's fellowmen there can be little joy in living, gave an enlightening account of the prison system in Switzerland, where he had served as a teacher. The method employed, he explained, was to isolate each convict from all degrading associations and surround him with strong up-building influences, in which vigorous manual labor and study alternated. In this way, the man gradually forgot his evil propensities and substituted for them new constructive interests. The Swami, in commenting on Professor Perrin's words, drew attention to the striking similarity of this method to the Eastern teaching, in which, as a great Indian sage once declared: "The only sin is to call a man a sinner."

Mr. Ennis, for some time a minister in the Unitarian church, told of his long religious searchings and of his deep satisfaction in finding at the Centre and in the Swami's teaching a truly simple comprehensive spiritual message, in which sectarianism and dogma had no part. Miss

Shepherd gave special pleasure by her vivid presentation of Longfellow's "King Robert of Sicily," which, she explained, seemed to her a remarkable portrayal of the struggle of the lower self and the higher Self as set forth in Vedanta. Various other speakers added their share to the pleasure of the evening. The Swami spoke at intervals, laying stress upon the value of such gatherings as a means of breaking down all sense of difference and creating a more fundamental spirit of world-fellowship.

* * * *

We are deeply gratified to learn that the Ramakrishna Students' Home of Madras has acquired commodious quarters of its own. The Home was started in 1905 by Swami Ramakrishnananda, for the purpose of providing free education for students otherwise unable to continue their schooling, preference being given to orphans or sons of widows. Board, lodging, clothing and books are provided for the boys; but they are obliged to earn their own tuition by winning a scholarship in some of the colleges or schools of Madras; and unless their standing continues far above the average, they must give their place to some more worthy student.

The new Home of the institution was dedicated on May 11th by Swami Brahmanandaji, the President of the Ramakrishna Mission, with many other members of the Mission assisting. A long procession with music and chanting and bearing aloft the large picture of Sri Ramakrishna together with various sacred emblems, marched from the old quarters to the new, passing through the principal streets of Mylapore, the suburb in which it is situated. After the President at the threshold had blessed the new Home, the vast gathering entered the large hall and took part in a solemn religious service. Later in the day there was sacred singing and a social gathering.

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Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

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THE VITAL CENTRES OF THE BODY

Class Talk by Swami Paramananda

The Yogis have found that there are certain definite vital centres in the body. They define these as lotuses; some, they say, have a little light, others more, while still others are full of light. They are like stars in the sky on a clear night—some scarcely more than a spark, others glowing like a burning fire. These centres are distributed throughout the body. The highest one is located in the brain and is likened to a thousand-petal lotus; the basic centre is at the lower end of the spine. As our mind dwells in these different centres, we experience different sensations in the body. There are people who feel heavy, lethargic, despondent, without any aspiration towards higher things, and it seems impossible to rouse them. The reason is that their mind is dwelling in the lower centres. After a time, perhaps, it may rise above this point of extreme dullness. Then it begins to manifest envy, jealousy, hate, attachment to material conditions. It revolves in a circle of food, drink, clothes; and it will not be able to escape from this round of immediate gross concerns so long as it is bound to the lower centres.

The centres below the navel are always productive of lower thoughts. They induce heaviness, lack of ambition,

or ambition for selfish personal gain only. If, however, through good fortune our higher aspiration is awakened and we succeed in touching the centre near the heart, a change is apparent at once. We no longer take pleasure in ordinary things. Our ear turns away instinctively from vulgar conversation; petty personalities do not interest us. Our whole delight is in higher things. A new habit of mind is formed, which is as strong and binding as the old habit for food and clothes. This cannot be accomplished at once, however. Although we may grasp intellectually a lofty ideal, our mind cannot rise to it suddenly. We may like to hear about spiritual things, to talk about them and think about them; but our mind falls back. It is not accustomed to remain in so high an atmosphere. Yet if we keep on, it will form the habit of dwelling there continuously.

So long as we are tied by our desires to the lower centres, we cannot reach the higher ones. First we must relax our hold on the lower ones. The food we eat, our mode of living, our mode of thinking, all play a tremendous part in the effort to do this. A great soul who is liberated from all bondage may live in a palace or a hut or under a tree; he may be surrounded by luxury or by poverty; he is not touched by these things. But this is not the case with us. We must be very careful to create the right conditions. Also we must go through a certain amount of rigid discipline. There are people who, when they are asked to rise early in the morning and devote some time to meditation, claim that it is not necessary for them; that they can meditate just as well lying down. Perhaps they can, but they must be careful that they are not yielding to a weakening impulse. When our body does not wish to get up and we make it do so, it becomes more flexible. Gradually through such discipline our whole system grows more flexible and we progress.

The reason the mind cannot remain constant in any of the higher centres is because it is weighed down by material thoughts. We may read in some book that if we hold our mind on the heart centre, we shall obtain illumination; or if we can hold it on another centre near the throat, we shall acquire a superior power of speech and become a prophet; but doing it is quite another matter. The secret of how it is done may be told to the whole world, but it will remain a secret just the same. Talking glibly about it will not bring it. Only when we have formed the habit of praying and meditating shall we gain the light of understanding. People have an instinctive desire for power, but power comes only as the result of wisdom. First we acquire wisdom; then follow all wisdom's attributes. It is as with a flower—first it blossoms, then comes the fragrance. The two are inseparable. A seed has to be planted in the ground; it must be watered and cared for; then at the right time it blossoms.

In the same way we begin our spiritual study. First we make the soil ready. We do this by cleansing our inner being. Every morning as we wash our physical body, let us make an effort also to wash our mind by filling it so full of kind, loving thoughts that no inharmonious feeling will find room there. In this way we shall purify and strengthen ourselves. If our mind is not weighted by inharmonious, materialistic thought, it will rise up naturally. It is the weight of attachment to material things which holds it down in the lower centres; and so long as it remains there, it is difficult for it to think of anything higher. That is the reason the world is so bound. Mind alone is the cause of bondage and mind alone is the cause of liberation. The Yogis recognize this. They also recognize that body and mind are so closely inter-related that we cannot act on one without affecting the other.

We cannot afford to disregard the body, because the body likewise is an instrument. Rather should we try to purify it. Our body should be kept pure so that it may become a clear channel for higher inspiration. We should not let it do anything that is unworthy, because that will hinder our progress. Where we live and how we live, where we sleep and how we sleep, the food and care we give the body, the association we seek: all these may be purely physical, but they have a tremendous spiritual importance. I do not mean that one should think only of this side. Not at all. But a thoughtful person, one who is spiritually conscious, cannot disregard these things, because out of the little things is our whole destiny made up. One who is careless in the small things will be careless also in greater spiritual things. To a lofty soul there is no high or low, no great or small.

Real meditation begins when the mind rises to the heart centre. In the Bhagavad-Gita Sri Krishna says, "Let one concentrate one's mind on the heart." The heart is practically in the middle of the body and it is there we establish our equilibrium. When the mind is dragged down to the lower centres, we find it difficult to maintain a proper balance. Those whose thought dwells in the lower centres always lack in self-control. If a person says something to irritate them, they grow angry at once. The mind is already below the level and it is easy to destroy their balance. It has no time to rise up and travel towards the higher centres. Because of this it is under-nourished. It does not come in contact with the main sources of strength. The great spiritual force is there latent, but it does not circulate.

The finest channel for its circulation is purified thought; and that is evolved by meditation. A great commentator on Yoga has declared that the process of medi-

tation is like pouring oil from one vessel to another in unbroken stream. A Yogi's mind is never broken when he is in meditation. A sudden sound does not break it, whereas we are distracted constantly by every pleasant or unpleasant sound. What does this indicate? It does not mean that the Yogi has lost all sensibility, but that he is master of the situation. Whatever he wants to do he does in spite of all material disadvantages. When we reach this stage, necessarily we become greater in our power, in our efficiency, in our self-control, and above all in our power of penetration. The mind also grows more and more receptive. The first problem for us is to gather up our mind from the lower centres. So long as the mind dwells in these lower centres, we are bound by sense pleasures, by a love of food and drink and clothes; and we create a thousand ties. No matter how we may wrestle day and night to maintain a high standard, we are pulled back. As soon as we bring the mind, however, to a higher centre of consciousness by means of spiritual practice, our whole nature changes. We are not interested in bodily gratifications. We have found something far better; therefore it becomes easy for us to cast off our old habits.

In the Gita it is said that a man by denying himself sense gratification may deaden the feelings of the senses, because by not giving food to the senses they dry up, but the hunger for sensation still lingers; only when he has seen the Supreme, then alone all his desires vanish. We know by experience that it is not merely by tearing ourselves away from the objects which tempt us that we acquire mastery. Rigid discipline is necessary. To give up our attachment to lower things is not a small task. Yet we must not be discouraged because it does not seem easy. It appears difficult because of long-standing habit. We can

displace this habit by forming a new spiritual habit; and we do this by meditation. Even the most tremendous physical or mental bondage we can be released from through the continuous practice of meditation. The mind becomes free each time we succeed in getting into the rhythm of deeper thought.

Meditation acts as a cleanser. At first of course we find much to cleanse; then by degrees there is less and less to do; but until all impurities are wiped out, we cannot have a perfect vision. It is like washing a mirror; first we go over it roughly, then we rub each little speck, and we keep on rubbing until the whole surface gives a perfect reflection. Our heart is polished in the same way by daily meditation. Sometimes it seems almost impossible to collect our scattered thought and we grow discouraged. Should we give up and run away from it? No. We must keep at it, however little we may seem to accomplish from day to day, and gradually the habit of meditation will be formed. This habit has a tremendous value in our life. It strengthens our character and brings us close to the vision. Meditation is not an arduous task. This is difficult for the average mind to believe, because it seems very abstract to hold the thought on invisible spiritual principles; but in meditation we have something very definite, and it becomes more and more definite as we advance. A new inner world opens for us. That which we imagined to be uninteresting becomes so absorbing and full of interest that it no longer seems an effort on our part to withdraw from this outer world and turn our whole thought within.

A daily routine is a great help in this. There may come a time when we shall need no routine at all, because we shall have a perpetual consciousness of higher reality. Our mind will be like a polished mirror, reflecting Divinity

everywhere. Before we have reached this point of complete illumination, however; that is, before we have reached that centre which is described by the Yogis as the thousand-petal lotus, it is better to have regular hours of practice. But we should strive also to carry the habit of spiritual thought into all our ordinary activities; then when we have an opportunity for inner communion or meditation, we attain it without effort. It is difficult for a person who is not cleanly in his habits of body and mind to develop the power of meditation. Habits of physical cleanliness are comparatively easy to form, but to establish habits of inner cleanliness requires much more effort, because it means ordering and readjusting our entire mode of thinking and living by shifting our consciousness to the higher centres. When this is done our whole life will flow in perfect accord with the cosmic life.

THE INNER IDEAL

From the Chinese of Pai Ta-shun

I would not paint a face
  Or rocks or streams or trees—
Mere semblances of things—
  But something more than these.

I would not play a tune
  Upon the sheng or lute,
Which did not also sing
  Meanings that else were mute.

That art is best which gives
  To the soul's range no bound;
Something beside the form,
  Something beyond the sound.

SPIRITUAL CULTURE

By Sister Devamata

We can measure our spiritual growth and our spiritual sincerity by how far we seek higher things for their own sake. It is a sign of culture always, whether in art or letters or in religion, to value the finer expressions of life for themselves. The truly learned or gifted do not parade their endowments. A genuine artist cares for beauty for the sake of beauty; the vulgar mind cares for it as an adornment. The artist beautifies his surroundings, because anything besides beauty repels him; the ordinary man does it to impress his neighbor. We find men approaching spiritual study from the same opposing angles. The majority take it up for what it will bring to them of health or happiness or powers; here and there is one who turns to it because truth and holiness and the ultimate refinements of life draw him with irresistible force. He feels the recoil of the artist from anything that is gross or harsh or ignoble. He cannot rest so long as he is not in perfect harmony with cosmic beauty and order. "Dislocation and detachment from the life of God" jars and hurts him.

Do we who claim to be seeking God feel in this way? Are we sensitive to the lack of order and proportion in our daily living? Are we as careful as we might be about the neatness and fitness of our dress? Is our tread soft and gentle? Are we thoughtful about the way we move and speak? Are our words quiet, gracious and to the point? Are we scrupulously watchful in the accomplishment of each task? These are not negligible considerations in the spiritual life. Arjuna proves it when he asks Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gita: "What are the signs of a man of well-established wisdom? How does the man of steadfast wisdom speak? How does he sit? How does he walk?"

True culture penetrates to the minutest habit of life. A gentleman is a gentleman in every detail of his deportment. There can be no veneer or contradiction anywhere. So is it with the fully consecrated devotee. His thoughts, his actions, his whole being must measure up to his Ideal. He is perpetually in the attitude of putting the shoes from off his feet because wherever he stands is for him holy ground. In certain convents it is the custom to train the scholars, whenever they enter a room, to make obeisance in homage to the unseen Presence there. This may seem a foolish superstition, but any practice which keeps us mindful of the Divine has value. If some great personage were in the room, how careful would we grow of our words and behavior. Will not the remembrance that a Greater than all human great ones is present hold us on a higher level?

Our virtues are too much for others. We keep them on call to use when we come in contact with people. They form a part of our social code; they are not imbedded in our character. That is why we have so much struggle in practising them. Our springs of action go down too deep in our human relationships. We try to be honest in our dealings with men; we do not strive to become honesty itself. We are loving and kind in relation to others; love is not an essential element of our being. We concern ourselves too much with the practice of isolated virtues; we make too little effort to rise to the realm of virtue, as Emerson puts it. We do not cultivate the loftier attributes for their own sake. We are all things in relation to men; hence there is a continual variation in our behavior. But this is not the lesson taught in the text-book of God's universe. Nature goes on her way without concern as to whether she is seen or heard. The sun shines because it is

its nature to shine. Flowers bloom, trees bear fruit, in the darkest tangles of the jungle; they do not wait for the passer-by. Everywhere creation is fulfilling itself in relation to a universal rhythm, a universal order and beauty.

We constitute a part of it and should follow the same law. We should train ourselves to be at all times that which we hope to express on special occasions. We should cultivate the habit of loving, the habit of living and working well. When we have done this, we shall be as unconscious of the world's baser, ruder side as the rose is unconscious of a foul odor. Even on a dung heap it perceives only fragrance. There can be no compromise, however. We must be big and noble and consecrated all the way through. The small human point of view must be discarded. We must not set our course by what people say and think and do. We must look upon life, not in relation to living beings, but in relation to life itself—the all-embracing cosmic life. We must think of love, not in relation to what is lovable or unlovable, but in relation to love itself—the unchanging love of God. Work for work's sake, love for love's sake, truth for truth's sake, life for life's sake: this must be our standard.

How to attain it? Everywhere it is recognized that the quickest way of acquiring culture is to associate with those who possess it. We may not find holy companions outside, but we may always have them in our thoughts. A Christ, a Buddha, a Saint Francis may go with us wherever we go and be the close comrade of our work and play. We must fill our memory with the words and acts of the Holy Ones. Our life must be mingled with the substance of their life until it has taken on the same hue and radiance. To think deep and yearningly of anything is to make our whole system vibrant with that thing, in time a per-

manent impression is graven on our consciousness and a new habit is formed. The love that can hang on a cross, or lay itself on a sacrificial altar in the place of dumb beasts, or eat and sleep with lepers, such a love is impelling and will transform us if we but open ourselves to its influence through daily remembrance of it.

We squander our mental forces on the tawdry things of life,—the scandals and accidents of the newspapers, gossip, personal adornment, books and plays of a season. We imagine we can touch these things lightly and pass on; but each contact with them lowers our taste and deadens our higher sensibilities. Even a genius will drop to a lower level by constant association with his inferiors. Every able worker and thinker knows the value of contact with the leaders in his profession. One walk through the woods with a botanist will quicken a new sight in us; one visit to a gallery with a painter will open to us a new world of form and color. All things in Nature are easily interpenetrable—virtues and vices, knowledge and ignorance, quite as much as gases and liquids. If therefore we wish to cultivate the loftier qualities, we must seek out those places, those companions and books which make these qualities real and living to us.

Spirituality does not consist in sitting long hours in meditation, shutting ourselves off from our fellow-men, choosing some peculiar diet and dress. It means clearing out the dross and refining every part of our being until no adulteration or mixture of attributes remains. That is what purity means, the purity which leads to God-vision. Our nature must be made up entirely of love, entirely of honor, entirely of patience, of long-suffering and compassion. And when we have reached that state of singleness, we can live in any environment, wear any kind of dress,

follow any occupation. People spend too much time getting ready to be spiritual. They wait too long for some special condition or opportunity. Spiritual education is just as possible in the workshop, in the kitchen or in the field as in the cloister. There is no better school than experience. Every place and every condition offers untold advantages for the sincere seeker.

One rule however must be observed rigidly. We must never allow a thought to lodge in our mind, a word to linger on our lips, or an act to busy our hands and feet, to which we would not give a permanent place in our character. Each thought, each word, each act is the beginning of a habit which will lead either to our elevation or to our degradation. We cannot afford to slur over anything. We must be as exact and uncompromising in our spiritual living as a mathematician in his computations. Accuracy and precision are fundamental elements in all research work; and where can we need greater exactitude than in the search after ultimate knowledge? George Eliot has defined genius as the power to take infinite pains, and this is preeminently true of spiritual genius. The spiritual life is a life of care in detail. It consists in lifting each small homely task to catch the glorifying light of Spirit. Christ indicates this when He admonishes His disciples to be faithful in the little things, if they would become rulers over greater things. One little self-indulgence, one unlovely thought, one moment's loss of temper, one word of ungenerous criticism, may undo the work of many days of spiritual practice; just as one hour of fever may eat up a week's gain of bodily strength. But also one whispered prayer, one quick call for Divine help, may avert a downfall and carry us out of danger.

Spiritual culture needs no learning to stay it. Its base

is cheerfulness, obedience, simplicity, forgiveness, tolerance, straightforwardness, courage, carefulness and unswerving loyalty to the Ideal. When these qualities fill the whole heart, every part of the nature will manifest a refinement, a power of penetration and understanding which no amount of intellectual attainment can bestow. To grow in the knowledge of God means also to grow in Divine grace and beauty. The only way of knowledge, however, is through contact. Our thought must rest close within His thought, for it is to those whose hearts are fixed on Him, whose life is absorbed in Him, whose joy and content are in Him, that He holds out the promise: "To these ever steadfast and loving devotees I give that wisdom by which they come unto Me. Out of pure compassion for them, I, dwelling in their hearts, destroy the darkness born of ignorance, by the effulgent light of wisdom."

THE RECOLLECTION OF GOD

By Ali Ghazzali

(A Sufi philosopher and teacher of the 11th century)

The recollection of God consists in a man's remembering that God observes all his acts and thoughts. People only see the outward, while God sees both the outer and the inner man. He who really believes this will have both his outer and inner being well disciplined. If he disbelieve it, he is an infidel; and if, while believing it, he acts contrary to that belief, he is guilty of the grossest presumption. Till a man is thoroughly convinced of the fact that he is always under God's observation it is impossible for him to act rightly. A certain sheikh once had a disciple whom he favored above his other disciples, thus exciting their envy. One day the sheikh gave each of them a fowl and told each to go and kill it in a place where no one

could see him. Accordingly each killed his fowl in some retired spot and brought it back, with the exception of the sheikh's favorite disciple, who brought his back alive, saying: "I have found no such place, for God sees everywhere." The sheikh said to the others: "You see now this youth's real rank; he has attained to the constant remembrance of God."

In the traditions it is written that God has said: "Paradise is for those who intend to commit some sin and then remember that My eye is upon them and forbear." Abdullah Ibn Dinar relates: Once I was walking with the Caliph Omar near Mecca when we met a shepherd's slave-boy driving his flock. Omar said to him, "Sell me a sheep." The boy answered, "They are not mine, but my master's." Then, to try him, Omar said, "Well, you can tell him that a wolf carried one off and he will know nothing about it." "No, he will not," said the boy, "but God will." Omar then wept; and sending for the boy's master, he purchased him and set him free, exclaiming: "For this saying thou art free in this world and shalt be free in the next."

There are two degrees of this recollection of God. The first degree is that of those saints whose thoughts are altogether absorbed in the contemplation of the majesty of God and who have no room in their hearts for anything else at all. It was to this kind of recollection that the Prophet referred when he said: "He who rises in the morning with only God in his mind, God shall look after him, both in this world and the next." The saint Shibli one day went to see the Sufi Thaury; he found him sitting so still in contemplation that not a hair of his body moved. He asked him: "From whom didst thou learn to practise such fixity of contemplation?" Thaury answered: "From a cat which I saw waiting at a mouse-hole in an attitude of even greater fixity than this."

Abu Talha was once praying in a palm-grove, when the sight of a beautiful bird which flew out of it caused him to make a mistake in counting the number of prostrations he had made. To punish himself for his inattention, he gave the palm-grove away. Such saints knew that their sensual nature was prone to go astray, therefore they kept a strict watch over it and punished it for each transgression. If a man finds himself sluggish and averse to austerity and self-discipline, he should consort with one who is a proficient in such practices so as to catch the contagion of his enthusiasm. One saint used to say: "When I grow luke-warm in self-discipline, I look at Muhammad Ibn Wasi, and the sight of him rekindles my fervor for at least a week."

Ibn Hanif relates: "I was informed that in the city of Sur a sheikh and his disciple were always sitting lost in the recollection of God. I went there and found them both sitting with their faces turned in the direction of Mecca. I saluted them thrice, but they gave no answer. I said: 'I adjure you, by God, to return my salutation.' The youth raised his head, and replied: 'O Ibn Hanif! the world lasts but for a little time, and of this little time only a little is remaining. Thou art hindering us by requiring us to return thy salutation.' He then bent his head again and was silent. I was hungry and thirsty at the time, but the sight of those two quite carried me out of myself. I remained standing and prayed with them the afternoon and evening prayer. I then asked them for some spiritual advice. The younger replied: 'O Ibn Hanif, we are afflicted; we do not possess that tongue which gives advice.' I remained standing there three days and nights; no word passed between us and none of us slept. Then I said within myself: 'I will adjure them by God to give me some counsel.' The

younger, divining my thoughts, again raised his head: 'Go and seek such a man, the visitation of whom will bring God to thy remembrance and infix His fear in thy heart, and he will give thee that counsel which is conveyed by silence and not by speech.' "

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Parable from the Teachings of Buddha

In Kaushambi there was a Brahman well-versed in the Vedas. As he found no one who, in his opinion, could equal him in debate, he formed the habit of carrying a lighted torch in his hand. When asked the reason of this, he explained: "The world is so dark, I carry this torch to light it."

A holy man sitting in the market place overheard these words and said: "My friend, if your eyes are blind to the all-pervading light of day, do not call the world dark. Your torch adds nothing to the glory of the sun, and your good intention to illumine the minds of others is both arrogant and futile." The Brahman asked, "Where is the sun of which thou speakest?" The holy man replied: "The wisdom of the Tathagata (Buddha) is the sun of the mind. His radiance shines by day and night; and he who is of strong faith will not lack for light on the path to realization where he will enjoy bliss everlasting"

Woe to them who leave Thee as their guide, and go astray in the traces of Thee; who, for Thee, love these intimations of Thee, and forget what Thou intimatest! O Wisdom, Thou most sweet light of the cleansed mind; for Thou ceasest not to intimate to us what and how great Thou art, and these intimations of Thee constitute the universal beauty of creation. —*St. Augustine.*

THE POOR OF INDIA

By C. F. Andrews

I have just come out of the furnace of affliction at Chandpur, where in a cholera encampment we were forced to see day after day the misery of our brothers and sisters and their little children, the refugees from Assam. If this article bears upon its surface the marks of the fire that burnt within us, I know that I shall be pardoned by all those who read my words with understanding hearts. What we have just been through cannot be forgotten easily and lightly. I am giving hot memories, not cold, calculated thoughts,—memories that still burn, even while I put them down in this Shantiniketan Ashram, where all around me is smiling with peace, in the pure joy of the fresh monsoon rains, and where nature herself is rejoicing in the beauty of new life.

The story has been already told, how the refugees came down from the tea gardens of Assam, emaciated beyond description; with stark hunger looking out of their eyes; with scarcely sufficient rags to cover their own nakedness; with little children who could hardly stand, their legs were so thin; with babies pinched by hunger, seeking in vain to draw nourishment from their mothers' breasts. I have seen many sights of misery and destitution before,—in a sense, my life has been full of such sights; for I have lived and worked among the poor. But I have never seen such utter misery as I saw among these refugees, when I met them on the railway platform at Naihati first of all, and then afterwards at Chandpur itself. In their destitution they were miserable beyond description. Misery was the spur which had goaded them forward on their journey. They had one hope left, to which they clung with a pathos that was as great as their suffering itself. It

was the hope that through Mahatma Gandhi deliverance would come from all their burden of sorrow and affliction.

We watched each day these poor refugees from Assam in the cholera encampments on both sides of the river channel. We saw the courage that sustained them. We noticed how their spirits were kept up, during those long-drawn days of disappointment, by this hope which I have mentioned. To the men, who were refugees, it gave patience and endurance. To the women, it was like a passion of the soul; and they were able to enkindle something of their enthusiasm even in their little children. The national volunteers, who worked among them, used to talk to one another with wonder about this. It was a transforming faith that raised the whole scene above the commonplace and touched it with spiritual beauty.

It is true, indeed, that Mahatma Gandhi himself has set his face firmly against any religious cult being originated in his name. He has repeatedly stated that he is an ordinary man with no claim to super-natural powers, beyond those to which ordinary men may attain by trust in the Supreme. But this devotion which we all witnessed at Chandpur, among these poor refugees, was rather the devotion to an idea than to a person. Mahatma Gandhi represented to them that idea, tinged with his own personality, and it filled their minds to the full. His name was the concrete symbol which expressed it. He was the embodiment to them of their ultimate deliverance from oppression.

I must tell at some length one story which touched my heart most deeply. As we made our voyage with the last contingent of refugees from Chandpur to Goalundo, I had been walking to and fro along the decks of the crowded steamer. We had left behind us for good, oh! how thank-

fully, the cholera camp with all its misery. There was a busy eagerness among the refugees and a hum of expectation. One slender figure on the upper deck had stirred my compassion each time I had lingered near him. He was a little boy, about twelve years old, who had recovered (so I was told) from cholera, but was still so weak and thin, that he had to be carried on board and to lie on the deck during the voyage. While I stood beside him, we happened to pass out of the midstream of the great river. The steamer came round a bend of the river quite close to the shore. Bright, healthy children on the bank were running along and shouting,—"Gandhi Maharaj ki jai! Gandhi Maharaj ki jai!" I looked at the invalid child on deck. His face shone with excitement and he raised his head with great difficulty. Then he waved his hand to the children running along the bank, and cried in a voice that was pitifully weak, "Gandhi Maharaj ki jai!"

Out of all the suffering and misery, which we have been through, the haunting face of that child still stands out before my mind. There was something in it, through all the weakness, that seemed to have conquered death. It carried a light within the soul, which the Upanishads have called "the joy that is deathless." As I stood watching him, lying there on the deck and waving his hand, the tears came streaming from my eyes. I remembered the words of the great (Sanskrit) prayer,—"Lead me from untruth to truth; lead me from darkness to light; lead me from death to immortality. O thou Manifest One, be thou manifest in me." The thought came like a flash to me, that here, in this child's faith, God himself was being revealed. Through all this suffering and pain, the words were finding their fulfillment,—"God manifests himself in forms of deathless joy."

In the midst of all these scenes, the question was borne in upon my mind with great insistence: "Is this that I have seen one of the signs of a new religious awakening throughout the length and breadth of India?" It has seemed to me that there is much to-day which points to a positive answer. During the past few months it has been my own lot in life to travel over almost every part of the North of India, from East to West and from West to East —to places as far distant from one another as Sindh and East Bengal. On these journeys I have seen strange happenings and witnessed a new spirit. The countless millions of the poor in India are all astir. They are coming forth out of their long dark night of ignorance and oppression. They have symbolized their yearning for deliverance in the person of Mahatma Gandhi. Pitifully, eagerly, pathetically, and sometimes almost tragically, they have placed their all—their destiny, their hopes, their aims, their very life itself—in his keeping. They are quite firm in their faith, that he alone can bring deliverance.

This is not happening in one place only. Time after time, recently, I have been in the company of the poor and the outcast and the destitute. They appear now everywhere to be taking their courage in both hands as they have never done before. They have often exhibited an emotion which was almost violent in its urge upwards towards the surface. I have seen in it something of that *elan vital,* of which Henri Bergson writes, and have thanked God for it, even though it has not seldom startled me by its explosive energy. I do not think there can be any question, that a flame has been kindled within and the fire has begun to burn.

There is one picture, which I may give, by way of illustration. I was in Patna Junction Railway Station on

my way back from Gorakhpur. Late in the day, as the sun was setting behind a ridge of dark monsoon clouds, with streaks of gold piercing through the gathering darkness, I was waiting quietly on the platform, trying as best as I could to collect my thoughts while the evening was drawing to its close. Many persons had come to see me, and quiet was difficult at such a time and place. The porters and sweepers and others, whom the railway authorities call the "menial staff," having heard of my arrival, gathered round me in a body. They knew that I was a friend of Mahatma Gandhi and they welcomed me on that account.

At first they greeted me in silence, with their uplifted hands placed together in an attitude of prayer. Then one of them, who was in the forefront as their leader, cried out, "Gandhi Maharaj ki jai!" It was not a conventional and jovial shout, such as is often heard from processions that pass along the street. It was rather the solemn call of religion. A light came into their eyes, and their hands continued to be uplifted in prayer to the end. It was like an act of evening worship.

After this, they went back to their various duties on the railway. It was only a momentary flash that I had seen,—a look, a gaze, a gesture; but it spoke to me at once of the same emotion, which I had witnessed so many times before. It told me what depth of religious idealism there is in the hearts of the simple poor; and that evening scene in Patna Station, with the setting sun and the gathering darkness, brought back with a strange power the memory of sunsets at Chandpur. For there at Chandpur, again and again, just as the sun was setting, I had passed along the road and mingled with the groups of the Assam refugees, sitting in dejection, and had seen the look of

hope return to their eyes, as they had raised the cry,—"Gandhi Maharaj ki jai!"

The darkness of that despair at Chandpur had been broken with a golden light of hope, even as those monsoon clouds, which formed the background of the scene at Patna Station. However great might be the sufferings of the poor, whether as the menial staff of a railway, or on the tea plantations, or elsewhere, life to them with such ideals of emancipation, as they were now enthusiastically grasping, was at least a nobler thing than the dull monotony that went before with no hope, no faith to cheer them. The crust of the surface of their poverty-stricken existence had been broken. The waters of life from beneath the hard rock had gushed forth; and even if all should end in outward failure, who should say that it had been in vain?

How wonderful is this spring of freshness that ever wells up from the hearts of the poor! And withal, how tragic is their suffering! People have often spoken slightingly of the poor, and called them the "lower classes,"—as though the uneducated were also the unrefined; as though the illiterate were also the unlearned. But it is not so in truth. There is a wisdom and a refinement, which come from the very suffering itself, which the poor have constantly to bear. Who are we to despise them? It was Christ himself who turned away from the luxurious cities of Capernaum and Bethsaida, and went directly to the oppressed peasants of Galilee and pronounced blessings upon them, rather than upon the rich. "Blessed," he said, "are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven." Nay, further, Christ preferred even the company of the publicans and sinners with their open vices, to the society of the wealthy Scribes and Pharisees, with their cloak of self-righteousness. For the very vices of those who are the

outcast of society are on the surface, and they suffer punishment often beyond their deserving. But the vices of those who are the outcast of the wealthy are glossed over with all kinds of soothing palliatives, and therefore in this life they rarely suffer for their vices to the full.

Thus there is always a fertile soil in the heart of the poor, which is ready to receive the good seed and to make it fruitful. A religious faith that is able to strike its roots deep in this soil, is far more likely to flourish than some respectable and artificial creed, which owes its origin to conventionally educated mankind. It is Mahatma Gandhi's fellow-suffering with the suffering poor: his fellow-poverty with the poverty-stricken poor, his fellow-hardship with the hardship-bearing poor, which has endeared him to their hearts. It is this which has won from them an instinctive reverence for his goodness. It is this which has made them flock to him from every country-side wherever he goes. It is this which has made them follow his simple precepts, so that, in a few short months, intoxicating drink and drugs have marvelously decreased. It is this which has caused a new hope to be born in millions of hearts, where before reigned only the blank apathy of despair.

(Taken from an article entitled "The Oppression of the Poor" and published in The Modern Review of Calcutta)

REPORT

Despite the extensive alterations and additions which have been in progress at The Vedanta Centre of Boston during the summer, the two Sunday Services and the Tuesday evening class have continued without interruption. Swami Paramananda has conducted all the meetings with a few exceptions, and the attendance has been so large as to demonstrate conclusively the need of the greater seating capacity which the Chapel will have when the alterations are completed. The number of strangers from every part

of the country has been unusually large, and there have been many indications that the Centre's radius of fellowship and helpfulness is lengthening. Also the various opportunities the Centre has had to entertain distinguished visitors from India has created new links between Occident and Orient.

In August on the invitation of Rev. Wm. Norman Guthrie, the well-known rector of the church of St. Mark's-in-the-Bouwerie, New York, Swami Paramananda spoke at Onteora Park before a representative group of the more thoughtful men and women prominent in New York's public life, who gather each year in this special spot in the Catskills. They all expressed deep interest in what the Swami had to tell them of Vedanta, and they urged him to accede to Dr. Guthrie's long-standing request to begin a regular course of meetings at St Mark's, in order that they might hear more of the teaching.

The First Annual Convention of Applied Psychology drew the Swami to Cleveland on September 17th in response to an invitation from Miss Maud Hallam, the founder. The Convention lasted three days and the Swami spoke each day, but on Sunday afternoon he gave a special address on "The Conquest of Fear" before a very large audience. He also lectured on Monday evening, his subject being "Concentration." As an outcome of the new associations formed, the Swami was invited to lecture in Syracuse, Rochester, St. Louis, Pittsburg, Columbus, and a number of other cities.

From Cleveland the Swami went to Cincinnati. On Tuesday evening, the 20th, he met the regular students who constitute the group there; on Wednesday he spoke in the drawing-room of one of the local members and in the evening delivered a final lecture. He returned to Boston on September 23rd.

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THE QUALITY OF PATIENCE

By Swami Paramananda

One of the greatest attributes is patience. To be able to go through life with utmost patience is to strengthen our character. Even though we may not do it with any spiritual aim, it inevitably brings us spiritual results, because one cannot be patient unless one deepens one's understanding. We become impatient when we judge our pains and discomforts from the surface. When we take hold upon things real and eternal, the misfortunes of life do not touch us. They may touch us superficially, but we are not shaken by them. All great lives, the lives of consecrated saints, are marked by a very wonderful patience—patience with humanity and with Divinity. It is not that every prayer they utter is answered, or is it that every time they do some beneficent act, it is recognized; but they keep on doing with infinite patience, whether there is any return or not, because they act with higher understanding. A surface grasp of life can never give us a deep sense of patience. When, however, we gain knowledge of the underlying laws of being, a new sweetness comes to us. We cannot call it pleasure; for there is no pleasure in disease or misery; but there is a sweet feeling whenever we succeed in going through any great trial with patient fortitude.

Often when we deny ourselves or bear a great deal for some one else who appears to be undeserving, it seems as if our effort were wholly wasted; but it cannot be wasted, because no good action is ever wasted. There is no waste in the unselfish life. When we have a spiritual standard, time, energy and devotion are never thrown away. We are here for a definite purpose. Although we are human and are constantly reminded by our limitations that we are human, yet no matter how feeble we may seem, we are, every one of us, part of the Divine plan. Not to believe in this, not to be able to carry our Divine relationship in our mind, is sacrilege; for what religion can a man have who does not believe that he is a child of God? The soul has a sacred origin; and the more we realize that, the less shall we feel loss or disgrace. We find this in the lives of holy men. No disgrace is a disgrace to them; no injury is an injury. They forbear, but with no sentimental or morbid idea of patience; it is an exalted state which is born of understanding. They are glad to go through anything, because they know that it strengthens their faith and deepens their character.

We learn through good fortune, through our friends, through our hours of spiritual upliftment; also we learn from those who do not treat us well, from the hard blows and from the hours of spiritual darkness. If we are able to stand on the rock of Truth and not lose our standard in our daily living, that is spirituality. Spirituality is not merely professing a particular form of faith or joining some special religious organization, it is deepening the understanding. When we penetrate below the surface, we see that nothing happens by chance, that nothing is without a Divine purpose, no matter how evil it may seem. We make our own world either spiritual or unspiritual; but

we cannot create a spiritual world by material means. It is by our attitude of mind and our feeling. When our life is filled with sweetness, love, gentleness; when there is lack of harshness, lack of intolerance, then our world is a spiritual world. And it is a world we enjoy. We do not feel lonely in it. We have no sense of neglect, if others do not come to comfort or entertain us. On the contrary we are constantly comforted by our inward life, because it is unfailing.

Spirit is indestructible; and our faith must be first and foremost in Spirit, in the Immortal and Eternal. These bodies change; they are born, they ripen and die; but Spirit is unalterable. This should be the basis of our faith. The more we believe in this, the less shall we be shaken by material circumstances. The greatest blessing that can come into our life is this unshakable trust in the Divine. It gives us spiritual backbone, and enables us to help others in moments of misfortune and darkness. We are able to sustain them because we ourselves feel secure. It is not by word of mouth that we help people. Those are the greatest helpers who live silently, gently, unaggressively: who are always loving and tolerant, because they live so close to the heart of Truth that they cannot be anything else. This is the whole aim of the devotional life. Through our devotion to the Ideal, we make ourselves like unto It—full of lovingness.

The world seems to change its entire aspect when we grow gentle and free from all harshness. We merely reflect our own mental image when we look at the world. We radiate and we reflect our own life constantly. We see how quickly a man of understanding seems to change the most turbulent conditions. It is not that he performs a miracle. He brings with him another atmosphere. He

creates a new spiritual world, and all the turbulence and darkness vanish before the spiritual sunshine of that world. We must try to create such a world, but it can be done only through utmost yearning and persistent effort. It is never too late. We must never think that we cannot do it. God is unconditioned. He is not a respecter of time, space, or any limitation. He sees our heart. If our heart is true, if it is willing and ready to receive the Divine blessing, it is given to us. One of the greatest mystics declares that after seeking God for many years, he discovered that God was seeking him. He is ever calling us. We do not hear because our ears are filled with human voices. It is only when we give ourselves a chance in the hour of silence and meditation, when we refuse to hear the disturbing noises of the world, that sometimes we hear.

If we succeed in shutting off the material—and that should be our ardent daily practice—then we find our whole rest in Spirit. When that channel is open, nothing can frighten us; nothing can depress us or make us irritable and impatient. That is the origin of the custom found in so many religions of keeping a light burning. It is a symbol of the spiritual light glowing in the heart; and as long as it burns steadily, nothing can happen. It is a very bad omen when that light goes out accidentally, because that means lack of watchfulness. So long as the lamp of devotion burns in our heart and we care for it steadfastly, with patience and perseverance, it does not matter what comes or goes. We still keep on, because the spiritual life is a part of our being. When we keep that lamp burning daily and constantly, no harm can befall us.

Let us try to draw the Infinite Spirit closer to us, that we may never feel separated from that Divine influence. He is our sole sustenance. When we do not know this, we

try to draw our strength from without; but He alone can unfold our vision, that clean pure sight which will keep us from being deceived by what is seen or heard. May He bestow upon us such understanding that we may never waver. May He guide and protect us. May that beneficent, all-blessed One make our hearts so loving and free from all blemish or discordance, that at every hour we may feel Him present with us.

When self-will is dead, we come to taste, amid our tears, the sweetness of patience. O wondrously delicious fruit! how sweet thou art to those who taste thee, even as thou wert to Me, who tasted thy sweetness, abiding in bitterness on the cross! In the time of suffering, thou bringest peace; the tempests arise, the ocean waves rage and foam, and toss about the vessel of the soul; then thou comest calmly and tranquilly, sheltering the poor weather-beaten vessel under the memory of the sweet Eternal and Divine Will; so that, covered as by a garment, the foaming waves cannot penetrate it and it receives no harm.

O beloved daughter, this royal Queen of Patience will uphold thee upon a rock; she holds the fortress against all comers. She overcomes all enemies, and is never overcome; and she is never alone, but brings perseverance in her train. She is the very pith and marrow of charity. Other virtues may deceive us, but patience, never. If she is in the soul, there is charity, there is humility, there is the love of Me, there are all the virtues.

—*Saint Catherine of Siena.*

When the fruit grows out of the flower, the petals drop off of themselves. So when the Divinity in thee increases, the weaknesses of thy human nature will all vanish of their own accord. —*Sri Ramakrishna.*

THE FIRE OF TRIBULATION

By Miguel de Molinos. 17th century.

O that thou wouldst understand the great good of tribulation! This is that which blots out sins, cleanses the soul, and produces patience; this in prayer inflames it, enlarges it, and puts it upon the exercise of the most sublime act of charity; this rejoices the soul, brings it near to God, calls it to and gives it entrance into heaven. The same is that which tries the true servants of God, and renders them sweet, valiant, and constant; that is it which makes God hear them with speed. *Ad dominum, cum tribularer clamavi, et exaudivit me* (Psal. xvii. 6). It is that which annihilates, refines, and perfects them; and finally, this is that which of earthly makes souls heavenly; of human, Divine; transforming them and uniting them in an admirable manner with the Lord's humanity and Divinity.

It was well said by St. Augustine that the life of the soul upon earth is temptation. Blessed is the soul which is always opposed, if it doth constantly resist temptation. This is the means which the Lord makes use of to humble it, to annihilate it, to spend it, to mortify it, to deny it, to perfect it and fill it with His Divine gifts. By this means of tribulation and temptation He comes to crown it and transform it. Persuade thyself that temptations and fightings are necessary for the soul to make it perfect.

O blessed soul, if thou knowest how to be content and quiet in the fire of tribulation, and wouldst but let thyself be washed with the bitter waters of affliction, how quickly wouldst thou find thyself rich in heavenly gifts! How soon would the Divine bounty make a rich throne in thy soul, and a goodly habitation for thee to refresh and solace thyself in it! Know that the Lord hath His repose nowhere but in quiet souls, and in those in which the fire of

tribulation and temptation hath burnt up the dregs of passion, and the bitter waters of afflictions have washed off the dark stains of inordinate appetites; in a word, the Lord reposes not Himself anywhere, but where quietness reigns and self-love is banished.

O how much is there to be purified in a soul that must arrive at the holy mountain of perfection and of transformation with God! O how disposed, naked, denied, annihilated ought the soul to be, which would not hinder the entrance of this Divine Lord into it, nor His continual communication. This disposition of preparing the soul, in its bottom, for Divine entrance must of necessity be made by the Divine wisdom. If a seraph is not sufficient to purify the soul, how shall a soul that is frail, miserable, and without experience ever be able to purify itself?

Therefore the Lord himself will dispose thee and prepare thee passively by a way thou understandest not, with the fire of tribulation and inward torment, without any other disposition on thy side than a consent to the internal and external cross. Thou wilt find within thyself a passive dryness, darkness, anguish, contradictions, continual resistance, inward desertions, horrible desolations, continual and strong suggestions, and vehement temptations of the enemy; finally, thou wilt not be able to lift up thy heart, being full of sorrow and heaviness; nor do the least act of faith, hope, or charity.

But though thou shalt see thyself so oppressed, seeming to thyself to be proud, impatient and wrathful, yet these temptations shall lose their force and power upon thee; they have no place in thy soul, by secret virtue, the sovereign gift of inward strength, which rules in the inmost part of it, conquering the most affrightening punishment and pain and the strongest temptation.

Keep constant, blessed soul, keep constant; for it will not be as thou imaginest, nor art thou at any time nearer to God than in such cases of desertion; for although the sun is hid in the clouds, yet it changes not its place nor a jot the more loses its brightness. The Lord permits this painful desertion in thy soul, to purge and polish thee, to cleanse and disrobe thee of thyself; and thou mayest in this manner be all His and give thyself wholly up to Him, as His infinite bounty is entirely given to thee, that thou mayest be His delight; for although thou dost groan and lament and weep, yet is He joyful and glad in the most secret and hidden place of thy soul.

THE SHRINE WITHIN

From the Siva-Vakyam

(A South Indian collection of verses of the 11th or 12th century)

But yet I have a shrine—
The heart within my breast,
An image too is there—
The soul that came from God,
I offer ash and flowers—
The praises of my heart;
And all the God-made world
Is frankincense and myrrh.
And thus where'er I go
I ever worship God.

Early and late never be but earnest. If you do not attend jealously to your small actions, the result will be to affect your virtue in great matters,—as when, in raising a mound of nine fathoms, the work is unfinished for want of one basket of earth. . . The wise, not thinking, become foolish; and the foolish, by thinking, become wise.

—From the Shoo-king.

THE ESSENCE OF THE VEDANTA

By S. E. Waldo

The Vedanta is more than a system of speculative philosophy. If it were only that, it would be a dead something instead of a living power. In the widest sense the Vedas mean knowledge, infinite and eternal. In a more restricted sense, they mean the Aryan Scriptures. Swami Vivekananda says: "The Vedas are without beginning and without end. It may sound ludicrous to say that a book can be without beginning or end, but by the Vedas no books are meant. They mean the accumulated treasury of spiritual laws discovered by different persons at different times." Instead of looking at the phenomenal aspect of things, if we proceed to examine their inner nature, the noumenon, we find that all the differences in the world are differences of time, space and causation, or of names and forms; that these names and forms, deeply considered, are but forms of the mind, appearances or pictures projected by the mind; and that when the mind is subdued and at rest, the inner unity or the ultimate substratum of this phenomenal universe reveals itself. This underlying essence is God, timeless, spaceless, causeless; and the world, from this standpoint, is nothing but God manifesting Himself in different names and forms. In Him the world lives and moves and has its being.

So long as one's attention is fixed on the outer attributes of matter, one cannot see the inner essence. But the moment one's attention is turned from this heterogeneous world of names and forms to the inner essence, one sees or ought to see God in everything. The Vedanta does not say that the tree before us is God. So long as we look upon the tree as tree, it is nothing but a tree; but when we dive deep, leaving name and form behind, and try to realize

the inner essence of the tree, we see nothing but God. That is what the Vedanta means when it asks us to perceive God in everything. The difference between the Vedanta and Pantheism may be thus stated:—according to Pantheism, God is the sum or totality of phenomena; while according to the Vedanta, God is the underlying essence of phenomena, the phenomena themselves being merely the result of names and forms superimposed on the essence. Therefore, of the two kinds of knowledge—knowledge of phenomena and knowledge of the noumenon—that which finds the whole of existence in its essence to be God is wisdom, the end of all knowledge, for "when we know Him all the world is known."

Though the knowledge of the phenomenal world is ever on the increase and though this knowledge may be of great help in attaining to true knowledge, yet all men have at one time or another to find out that such knowledge can never become perfect; and that to reach the truth which can satisfy the heart, they will have to pass beyond appearances, beyond name and form. In other words, knowledge can have rest only in wisdom; and a person is said to have attained the end of knowledge when he has attained realization of the Self. Few men however perceive this; and fewer still have the requisite courage to overcome the mind which presents this now terrible, now attractive dream-vision of an infinitely differentiated world. They are therefore content to carry on their traffic in the phenomenal world. Unable to reach wisdom, they pursue knowledge. Though the majority are ever seeking knowledge, yet there are a few who have found its end in wisdom. Thus we see that the Vedanta is really the end of knowledge—wisdom; for its greatest triumph is that it dives beneath the vision of names and forms and reveals

the inner essence of the universe as God, thereby unfolding at one stretch the full meaning of the universe. The Vedanta is therefore supreme knowledge or wisdom, and well deserves its name.

The one great question that the Vedanta philosphy seeks to solve is: "What is that, knowing which, everything else will be known?" And it claims to have found the solution in finding the final unity of all existence, the "One without a second." It teaches that the source of all the misery and suffering of the world is the idea of separateness and this idea arises from ignorance of our true nature. In this the teachings of the Vedanta are the same as those of Buddhism, which also proclaims that ignorance is the cause of all sorrow. And when we are told in our own Bible that we must be "wise unto salvation," a similar note is struck. In fact in every religion the fundamental truths are identical, but the different modes of expression make them seem diverse. If we were to look as earnestly and perseveringly for the truths to be found in all religions, as we usually do for the errors, we should find a wonderful harmony, where now we generally find something to oppose and condemn.

The very essence of Vedanta is its universality, its wide recognition of all religions, truths, and aspirations; and this universal acceptance rises from the very basis upon which the whole philosophy rests, the oneness of all existence. Thus love becomes a natural expression of such a philosophy, for how can any man hate his own self? When he thoroughly grasps this grand idea of unity, he sees his fellow-men, not only as brothers, but as other selves; and the underlying reality of all as the one Self of the universe. It is not as separate personalities, as apparently distinct phenomena, we are all one. It is that behind

the distinctions produced by name and form is the one indivisible ocean of being, the eternal Self, the Reality of everything we see or know. The waves in this infinite ocean can never be separated from the ocean itself. We call these little shapes that appear on the surface "waves"; but take away the shape, the name and form, and only the sea remains. So it is with this world of infinite variety. Every manifestation is, as it were, but a wave on the one eternal ocean of existence, never for one instant separated from its unchangeable background. This background the Vedanta calls "Brahman," the unthinkable "Existence-Knowledge-Bliss-Absolute," of Which we can only say "not this, not this."

Of the Brahman no concept can be formed. To It no attributes or qualities can be given. It can never be known as an object of knowledge; but we are It, and the famous phrase of the Vedanta tells us so,—"Tat tvam asi" (That thou art). The Vedanta not only tells us that we are Existence Absolute, but it also tells us that we can realize this, and it shows us various ways by which it can be accomplished. To realize our oneness with the Brahman is the only salvation that the Vedanta teaches; all heavens and lesser attainments are but temporary and will end, when again we shall have to attempt to reach the final realization. To do this we have to transcend all relativity, all that we now know as consciousness, and reach the superconscious. It is quite natural that to those who are attached to sense-enjoyments, who keenly identify themselves with their bodies and minds, that to such the idea of a stage beyond consciousness should seem like the state of the stock or the stone, merely nothingness or extinction. How could it be otherwise? If you take a savage of a very low order of development, one whose only idea of enjoy-

ment is in the merely brutal indulgence of the senses, and confront him with a highly intellectual man whose whole pleasure is found in the pursuit and enjoyment of mental triumphs, it will certainly appear to the savage that the enjoyments of the man of intellect are really non-existent, mere creations of his fancy. No power under heaven could give that savage even a glimmer of an idea of the kind of satisfaction felt by the other. Just in the same way, only in a thousandfold more intense degree, is it impossible for one who has no concept, no experience of spiritual pleasure, to dream even that a state beyond and above what he calls consciousness can be one of supreme bliss.

It will inevitably appear to be a mere blank to the lower mind. Therefore the Vedanta is all-tolerant to the frailty of the human mind and is all-patient with those who are yet unable to climb the higher spiritual paths. This lofty philosophy has no condemnation for what does not apparently harmonize with it; because, being wisdom or the end of knowledge, there is nothing left out, nothing not understood by the great teachers whose lives have illustrated the eternal principles on which the Vedanta rests. To their purified vision all was clear; not only so, but they tell us that we too can follow in their footsteps; that we can reach the same spiritual heights and have the same all-knowingness; that we can realize the final Unity. Wisdom, the divine *Sophia,* is a sealed book to any one only because he fails to make the effort to open it. To every being who is willing to purify life and thought by love and sinlessness the "Book of Life" will open; but as the Psalmist of old told us, only "he that hath clean hands and a pure heart" shall "ascend into the hill of the Lord, or stand in His holy place." If that were true of the Jewish Jehovah, infinitely more is it true of the Absolute Brahman, the Inconceivable, the Changeless, the One Reality.

The very initial steps are purity and unselfishness; and these have to be practised until they become integral parts of our nature, as inseparable from our conduct as breathing from our life, and as unconsciously performed. In fact we have to become purity itself, unselfishness itself, if we would realize our Divine nature. And how is this to be done? By constant effort, by concentration, and by meditation. Never by merely talking about it, or by sitting down and wishing for it. Meditation is not the mere passive dream that many suppose. It is the intensest activity, the most positive and powerful self-control. It is no vague idle speculation swayed by fancy, or by an undisciplined mind; it is the controlled focusing of every thought, every energy, every faculty, on one ideal, a focusing so concentrated as to make us actually one with that ideal to the exclusion of everything else. Whatever is worth having must be paid for in some way; and spirituality, the supreme blessedness, that which alone is really worth having, which is the one absolute satisfaction that is eternal: this must be bought with the highest price of all, the price of man's whole power and thought and effort. To realize this true Self he has to extinguish his lower self, his little personality. He has to enlarge his little finite consciousness until it embraces the all-consciousness, until he realizes the One Unit Existence.

The crowning glory of the Vedanta is that it teaches the Divinity of man, his essential oneness with God, and his power to realize his true nature. It lifts him from a "worm of the dust," a mere helpless puppet in the hands of some supernatural power and tells him he is eternally pure and perfect in his real Self; that he is free and immortal; that he need not suffer, need not despair, but can purify himself, can shake off the bonds of ignorance, which alone

enslave him, and realize the words of Jesus when he said, "I and my Father are one." Through the several steps, man will naturally rise to the Supreme Reality. He will first worship God as outside of himself, then as the vast whole of which he is a part, and lastly as the One without a second, his own real Self. A great Hindu Sage once said of these stages in man's progress towards God: "When I think of myself as this body, I am Thy servant, Oh Lord! eternally separate from Thee; when I think of myself as soul, I am a spark of that Divine Fire which Thou art; and when I identify myself with the Atman, I and Thou art One."

This is the essence of the Vedanta and what makes it an eternal world-philosophy; for in reaching a final unity, it has reached the ultimate goal of all thinking and of all life. All stages below that final Oneness are but steps on the way, all good, all necessary, and all destined to lead to the final realization of the Knowledge and Bliss Absolute, which is the supreme goal of all existence.

THE BLESSED FRUITS OF WISDOM

From the Wisdom of Solomon

(Apocryphal Scriptural Writing, author unknown)

There is in wisdom a spirit quick of understanding, holy, alone in kind, manifold, subtle, freely moving, clear in utterance, unpolluted, distinct, unharmed, loving what is good, keen, unhindered.

For wisdom is more mobile than any motion; yea, she pervadeth and penetrateth all things by reason of her pureness.

For she is a breath of the power of God, and a clear effluence of the glory of the Almighty; therefore can nothing defiled find entrance into her.

For she is an effulgence from everlasting light, and an

unspotted mirror of the working of God, and an image of His goodness.

And she, being one, hath power to do all things; and remaining in herself, reneweth all things: and from generation to generation passing into holy souls she maketh men friends of God and prophets.

For nothing doth God love save him that dwelleth with wisdom.

For she is fairer than the sun, and above all the constellations of the stars: being compared with light, she is found to be before it;

For to the light of day succeedeth night, but against wisdom evil doth not prevail;

But she reacheth from one end of the world to the other with full strength, and ordereth all things graciously.

For she is initiated into the knowledge of God, and she chooseth out for him his works.

But if riches are a desired possession in life, what is richer than wisdom, which worketh all things?

And if understanding worketh, who more than wisdom is an artificer of the things that are?

I determined therefore to take her unto me to live with me, knowing that she is one who would give me good thoughts for counsel, and encourage me in cares and grief.

When I am come into my house, I shall find rest with her; for converse with her hath no bitterness, and to live with her hath no pain, but gladness and joy.

When I considered these things in myself, and took thought in my heart how that in kinship unto wisdom is immortality, and in her friendship is good delight, and in the labours of her hands is wealth that faileth not, and in assiduous communing with her is understanding, and great renown in having fellowship with her words, I went about seeking how to take her unto myself.

But perceiving that I could not otherwise possess wisdom except God gave her me, I pleaded with the Lord and besought him, and with my whole heart I said:

With Thee is wisdom, which knoweth Thy works, and was present when Thou wast making the world, and which understandeth what is pleasing in Thine eyes, and what is right according to Thy commandments.

Send her forth out of the holy heavens, and from the throne of Thy glory bid her come, that being present with me she may toil with me, and that I may learn what is well-pleasing before Thee.

For she knoweth all things and hath understanding thereof, and in my doings she shall guide me in ways of soberness, and she shall guard me in her glory.

For the thoughts of mortals are timorous, and our devices are prone to fail.

For a corruptible body weigheth down the soul, and the earthly frame lieth heavy on a mind that is full of cares.

And hardly do we divine the things that are on earth, and the things that are close at hand we find with labour; but the things that are in the heavens who ever yet traced out?

And who ever gained knowledge of Thy counsel, except Thou gavest wisdom, and sentest Thy Holy Spirit from on high?

And it was thus that the ways of them which are on earth were corrected, and men were taught the things that are pleasing unto Thee; and through wisdom were they saved.

For they that have kept holily the things that are holy shall themselves be hallowed . . . The righteous live forever and in the Lord is their reward, and the care for them with the Most High.

BUSHIDO THE SOUL OF OLD JAPAN

By Sister Daya

Character is the first essential to the spiritual life. That nation which through its ideals develops character in its members is preparing them for God realization later on. Thus it is that the influence upon a man's soul of the civilization into which he is born is incalculable. Life after life first one point of character is strengthened, then another: the austerity gained from Sparta balanced by a life in Italy, perhaps, or turned to more spiritual uses under the Indian sky. Rarely does one find a nation correcting its own extremes. Yet this self-correction, this balanced training was the wonder and glory of old Japan. The souls which passed through its gates were tempered like the swords of its Samurai by a fiery discipline, which might have resulted in harshness and barrenness, as it did in Sparta, had it not been modified by an intense love of nature; an ever present consciousness of the invisible, if not of the spiritual; a wistful appreciation of the eternal in the fleeting; and a profound recognition of the value of the beautiful and gracious in human existence.

Japan was a warrior nation for hundreds of years under the sway of the Samurai or Two-sword Men, who constituted its knighthood. Their unwritten code, Bushido or Military-Knight-Ways, provided its rules of chivalry, quite as exacting, quite as lofty as the chivalry of the West, but more impersonal and austere, more akin to the traditions of the Kshatrya or warrior caste of India. It was a living code, handed down from heart to heart, conveyed in hero tales innumerable to children from their tenderest years. They grew up in an atmosphere of Bushido and were expected to live it. Very typical is the plaint in the drama of a famished little prince of Sendai who, while watching a

nestful of birds being fed by their mother, exclaims: "How eagerly and happily the little ones eat! But for a Samurai when his stomach is empty, it is a disgrace to feel hunger." Small Samurai were flung upon their own resources with a sternness verging on cruelty. They were at times kept from sleep and deprived of food. They walked bare-footed in the snow. Their spirits were tried by the horrible and the gruesome, by visits to graveyards at night and to places of execution. For courage they must have, not an emotional courage, but a courage which results from a serene self-control that nothing can shake. It was no uncommon thing for couplets to be exchanged in battle. "Ah, how in moments like these our heart doth grudge the light of life," improvises the conqueror of the great builder of the castle of Tokyo, Ota Dokan, as he pierces him through with his sword. "Had it not, in hours of peace, learned to look lightly on life," instantly replied the dying warrior. The Samurai liked to be proud of their enemy. They were magnanimous and it was with difficulty that they could strike down a noble and self-possessed foeman.

The West has long been horrified over the glorification of self-slaughter known in Japan as *Hari Kari;* but the manner of its accomplishment was so controlled and heroic, that it was lifted by the power of the Samurai spirit out of the revolting almost into the sublime. It lent dignity even to the self-immolation of the condemned Samurai, who was granted the privilege of death by his own hand. Horrible as this may seem, it is a question whether such a death, performed as a voluntary sacrifice in a solemn beauty of surroundings, is not more ennobling to the victims and the witnesses than the electric chair or the hangman's noose. But the spirit of Bushido is needed to make it possible even. Loyalty inspired the act, as it inspired almost every

act of the Samurai. It was the great Shinto contribution to Bushido,—passionate loyalty to sovereign, to ancestors, to superiors everywhere. At a word of command a Samurai would sacrifice himself instantly and without question. Samurai parents would give their children to death in order to save the children of their lord. Death as a means of protest against wrongdoing, death as retribution, death as an act of devotion in order to follow and serve the dead master, these were common occurrences in ancient Japan. Yet then as now it was a fragrant land, a land of smiles and graceful ways, of apparently unruffled happiness; a happiness based on self-control, on courtesy and consideration for others; a happiness of training and habit.

To mar the comfort or peace of one's fellows by sadness or depression was considered unpardonable selfishness. Concerning this Mr. Lafcadio Hearn writes: "At what period it first became a mark of disrespect to betray, by look or gesture, any feeling of grief or pain in the presence of a superior, we cannot know; there is reason to believe that the most perfect self-control in this regard was enforced from prehistoric times. But there was gradually developed a most elaborate code of deportment which exacted very much more than impassiveness. It required not only that any sense of anger or pain should be denied all outward expression, but that the sufferer's face and manner should indicate the contrary feeling. Sullen submission was an offence; mere impassive obedience inadequate: the proper degree of submission should manifest itself by a pleasant smile and by a soft and happy tone of voice. Samurai women were required, like the women of Sparta, to show signs of joy on hearing that their husbands or sons had fallen in battle;" even though shortly after they would plunge the dagger into their own throats and follow their lords into the Land of the Gods.

In Japan the individual seemed hardly to exist. Every act of life down to the smallest was governed by rules and regulations that were rigidly enforced by the people themselves. "It is difficult," again writes Mr. Hearn, "for the Western mind to understand how human beings could patiently submit to laws that regulated not only the kind of ornaments to be worn in a woman's hair, but the material of the thongs of her sandals,—not only the price of presents to be made to friends, but the character and the cost of the cheapest toy to be given to a child." It was in short, as he expresses it: "A society in which all self-assertion was repressed, and self-sacrifice was made a universal obligation,—a society in which personality was clipped like a hedge, permitted to bud and bloom from within, never from without."

Who can say what the result of these banked-up personal forces might have been, into what outlet they would have forced their way, had they not been drawn forth into religious and artistic expression through the mighty influence of Buddhism, which entered Japan by the way of China, bringing with it not only the spiritual traditions of India and the far East, but the immense culture of the great Chinese Empire. It speaks well for the vitality of the Japanese spirit that it was able to absorb these traditions and this culture and make them peculiarly its own. In early Japan there had been no art. The Shinto "ghost houses" were rude and barren. Development was one-sided. The sword was worshipped, but the cherry blossom had not yet come into its own. Buddhism supplied the needed corrective and set against the growing military ideal the humanizing elements of religion and beauty. From its advent dates the finer culture of Japan. In fact all that is winning and lovely in Japanese life came as a

result of Buddhism, but it came only because the national soul, girded and strengthened by centuries of self-discipline, was ready to receive and apply it.

Bushido owed to this source its gentler virtues, its reverence for beauty and art. Poetry was encouraged and tender fancies were exchanged by the most warlike. Yet this worship of the beautiful never degenerated into a weakening sentimentalism or love of luxury. An austere reserve chastened every artistic creation, added dignity to each smallest act. Nowhere was this more apparent than in Cha-no-yu and Ike-Bana, tea ceremony and flower arrangement. Ike-Bana was an outgrowth of the Buddhist monks' care for their altar flowers. It developed into an exquisite art and made of even the humblest householder an artist. Cha-no-yu originated in the monasteries of the Zen Buddhists in China, where before an altar the monks were wont to sip tea as at a sacrament. This custom they brought with them to Japan and it gradually captured the public imagination at a time when wars were tearing the island empire asunder. Although ostensibly a social ceremony, it never lost its spiritual aroma, Zen principles being observed in its setting and conduct. Zen is a name derived from the Sanskrit *Dhyana* or meditation. Thus the Roji or garden path which led to the tea house was symbolic of the first stages of meditation. It was intended to break connection with the outside world, and to rouse by its loneliness and charm the proper emotions.

The tea house itself or the Abode of Fancy was suggestive in its frail construction of the Zen theory of evanescence. Its little door, only three feet high, forced the guests to enter bending low in token of humility. All swords and warlike memories were left without. Within were beauty and cleanliness and peace, dim light and the

mellowness of age, toned down to an immense simplicity. The deep quiet was broken only by the hum of the kettle so cunningly constructed that in its song could be heard "echoes of a cataract muffled by clouds, of a distant sea breaking among the rocks, a rainstorm sweeping through a bamboo forest, or the soughing of pines on some far-away hill."

Cha-no-yu itself was the apotheosis of grace and control. From the moment of the first obeisance to the flower decoration on the Tokonoma or place of honor, to the time of leave taking, there was not an unordered word or action, not a wasted motion. It was "poetry with articulate gesture for rhythm;" and it provided sanctuary for the harrassed hearts of that period, where they could contemplate undisturbed the beautiful and the serene.

Though the ideals of the Samurai were ethical rather than spiritual, esthetic rather than religious, though they did not reach to the sublime concepts which were the glory of the Indo-Aryans, the qualities they fostered were many of them the qualities of discipleship:—unquestioning loyalty and obedience, endurance, self-sacrifice, non-attachment, self-control. What matter if their aim fell a little short of the ultimate goal! They became an immortal heritage for the pilgrim souls of Japan; and for them, wherever they may be, it needs but the lifting of the ideal to turn the path of the Samurai into the path of God.

Be patient with every one, but above all with yourself. I mean, do not be disturbed because of your imperfections, and always rise up bravely from a fall. I am glad you make daily a new beginning; there is no better means of progress in the spiritual life than to be continually beginning afresh, and never to think we have done enough.

—St. Francis de Sales.

REPORT

Swami Paramananda lectured before the Applied Psychology Club of Boston at Steinert Hall on October 10th. There was a large attendance and so great was the interest aroused that when the Swami brought his lecture to a close, he was urged insistently to continue for some time longer. At the end also many questions were asked. His subject was "The Psychology of Concentration." In dealing with it, he said: "Instead of going here and there to beg a little insight from others, we can gain our wisdom first hand through the power of concentration. It enables us to penetrate to the depths of life and truth. A concentrated mind has been likened to a lamp placed in a windless spot; it burns steadily and by it we see clearly. So long as our mental power is flickering and scattered we cannot solve our problems, and still less the problems of others. But if we can learn to think steadily and with one-pointedness, we can change our whole character and condition. We create our own distractions and distresses and we can uncreate them. Instead of dwelling so constantly on the non-essential, we must think of something that is dynamic, positive and elevating. A person may have enshrouded his consciousness by unworthy thought; he can free it by focusing his mind on what is noble and vital." A number of those who heard the Swami have since been attending the services and classes at the Vedanta Centre in order to profit further by his teaching.

The two Sunday services and the Tuesday Class were held as usual during the month of October. It was not possible to resume the Thursday Class because of the confusion due to the building, and it is probable that it cannot be resumed before the middle of November. By that time it is hoped all the alterations will be completed.

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

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The Message of the East



DECEMBER, 1921

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST completes its tenth volume with the present number. We earnestly request our subscribers to renew their subscriptions promptly. Any effort to make the magazine known to others and thus extend the sphere of its usefulness will be deeply appreciated.

INVITATION

The Vedanta Centre of Boston closes its thirteenth season of work with the present year. It will celebrate the anniversary of its establishment on Thursday evening, January 5th, 1922, at 8 o'clock in the Chapel of the Centre. All friends are cordially invited to be present and to bring with them their friends.

THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

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

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

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THE DIVINE GIFT

Lecture by Swami Paramananda

Among all the gifts we receive from the Divine, which is the most essential and beautiful? Each individual perhaps will find a different answer to this question. Some will say happiness, others power or pleasure; but these are only various attributes of life, like fragrance or color in a flower. Life has many attributes and the greatest of all is understanding. One may have numerous advantages. We know people who possess unlimited wealth, vast learning or high position, yet their life is not complete because there is lack of understanding. Solomon said that he prayed for wisdom and when it came, he preferred it to scepters and thrones and to all the wealth of the world. He found it to be the choicest gift of God, because it revealed everything to him; and although he did not ask for material blessings, yet they also came. It is here that we blunder. We want the attribute without cultivating that which produces it. We want only the things which are pleasing to us. There are even followers of certain sects who believe that unless all is smiling with joy, it is not God's Will; that if any misfortune overtakes them, it cannot come from Him; it is rather the will of another,—an evil spirit. But this is inconsistent. Do we at any time cease to live as a

part of God? Why should our life be any less with God, if a calamity falls upon our path?

We never find real, unbounded happiness and freedom or the great bliss all the seers and mystics proclaim, until we see that everything which happens is based on the Divine Will. It is a cowardly attitude of mind not to accept anything that comes because it is not pleasing to us. We miss a great deal when we take a one-sided attitude and ask only that which gives us pleasure. The men we honor and worship, the great teachers and saints and Truth-seers, always remain contented and even-minded in all circumstances and that is what proves their greatness. The light which penetrates even the darkest hour of our life—that is God's light, and to be steadfastly conscious of that light is the most precious gift. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul; or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? That is the eternal challenge. Any man who forsakes the path of wisdom in order to find some momentary satisfaction, exchanges something very precious for something which has no lasting quality. We must never try to escape from anything, but we must try to see the Divine light shining through every experience, pleasant or unpleasant, as it is shining everywhere and through everything. It may not be manifest on the surface, but the essential is rarely visible on the surface. Those who live on the surface miss the deeper satisfaction to be found at the depths of their being. Life becomes very shallow and empty for them; and when a great calamity befalls them, they are crushed.

Why should we think we have to depend on these surface joys which are not a real part of our life? One thing alone sustains us and that is wisdom. When our life rests on that, no misfortune or calamity can overwhelm us. It

is sometimes easy for us to think that our life is dependent on food and drink and other material needs; but that is only the external man, which reaches outward and clings to the ephemeral. There is another part of us which longs for nothing less than the Divine. When that is unfolded, then we have real strength, a strength which never fails. And a light burns within which cannot be hidden, no matter where we are thrown. We may be in the darkest corner of the world, yet it illumines our path. It is that side which makes one a spiritual giant or hero, a master, a real server of humanity and a real servant of God. All else is mere words. We may talk about lofty ideals; but we never begin to serve until we feel this inner strength rising in us.

We all possess this strength. We would not be living if we did not have it. But each individual can increase or diminish it through his attitude of mind, and through his environment; that is, through the influences he attracts towards him. This is where our responsibility lies. The light is shining for every one; but some people turn their backs towards it, while others seek for it tirelessly with sincere heart. Religion is not a matter of following some dogma. It is not a question of professing one creed or another. It is something which unfolds from within and there is no one who can unfold it for us. It must come through our own earnest striving. We are told constantly that God is very near, the nearest thing in the whole world; but merely being told it does not give us access to God. We hear many beautiful lessons; but we do not attain the fulfillment of these until our life has become in tune with these precepts. We have to work to reach our end.

The first step towards it is humility. In barren ground nothing grows; and a haughty, harsh, egotistic nature is

always barren ground. The rain does not settle on the high places, it flows down to the low levels. So God's choicest gifts are ever poured on us; but it is only those who are humble, sincere and pure, those who have no arrogance in their hearts, who retain His blessings. It is not what we profess; it is our living which counts. A beautiful life is like a flower: it blossoms and gives out fragrance wherever it is. We come near it, catch the sweetness, and at once we are refreshed and full of new hope.

This is what we can all do. But by merely belonging to a sect or creed it cannot be done. It is by finding ourselves and our relationship with God. In Him we live and move and have our being. This teaching is not the special property of any one religion; rather it is the product of every religion. When a seeker comes face to face with the Divine vision, that is his invariable conclusion, whether he is a Christian, a Hindu, a Mahommedan or a Jew. He comes to know that there is no escape from that great Presence which permeates all life. We live in Him at every moment. It is our greatest misfortune when outer circumstances force us to disbelieve this great truth. We are never separated from Him. The knowledge of this fact alone will give us security. No priest or minister or church can give it. And we gain this knowledge through the unfoldment of our inner spiritual nature.

One who possesses a deeper understanding always lives with God. In misfortune he lives with God; in good fortune he lives with God. He never lives without Him. He does not partition off the universe and say, this is my place and that is your place. He finds his place everywhere—in privation or in ease and comfort, in joy and in sorrow. If we try to acquire this point of view, shall we lose anything materially? That is the great fear in our

hearts, but we have this fear because we do not have the faith in spiritual things which we profess. From our childhood we have heard that we must seek first the kingdom of God, but among all the people we know how few are following this admonition or even endeavoring to do so. Where is the fulfillment of the great spiritual laws? Not in sermons or in church-going, but in the kind of life we lead. The aim of true religion is not to bind us to some special creed or dogma, but to infuse us with a new light. In most of us the inner light burns very dimly and in some cases it seems to have gone out altogether, but that can never be, because this subtle inner light is undying. It is God's Divine gift to us. When we learn to look to this light for our sole guidance; when we learn to cherish this light above all things, then it begins to glow effulgently and fills our innermost being with its radiance, dispelling all darkness and doubt. Our actions become freer, our life moves along in perfect harmony with the great universe; and we begin to serve both God and man truly.

Wisdom reveals unto us that we are part of the Divine Principle; that our life and joy are in Him. There is nothing which can sever the connection; but we have to protect this consciousness that it may never become clouded. Most of us do not know how to use this sacred life which has descended from God. To understand how to utilize and direct it as God wills is a great gift. Often we act and afterwards we have regrets and heart-aches. Why? Because we have acted from our individual will; our ego has interfered with the Divine Principle working within. When we can harmonize these two, a very wonderful change takes place within us. Outwardly we may appear to be the same. The saints are not necessarily different in their outer life. They also work with their hands and feet;

they also work with their mind, but they do not work with the idea of what they may gain or lose; they do not assert their individual ego. They move in complete subjection to the Divine. Each one of us can learn to do this. We are all children of God. We may imagine that material things add to our importance; but when we compare them with the things of eternity, their value melts away. When men have some talent or a strong body, social power or material prosperity, they regard themselves as greater than their fellows; but when they gain the vision of the Greatest, these little fictitious egotistic ideas vanish and a great peace rises in the heart.

Understanding always brings peace. Man wants happiness. He yearns for a heart which is not turbulent or torn by desires. Where can he find it? Is it to be found in any place? Peace and happiness have nothing to do with locality or outer conditions. They exist within us. In wisdom all these things are contained. What is the root of life? Some people say, "We are born, we pass through a series of changes and we die: that is the whole of life." But the wise man declares, this is not so. We do not come accidentally into this universe. It is not a chance happening that we are born here. We descend from God. The root of our life is in Him and it can never be severed. Even death cannot cut it asunder. That root is eternal; when man knows this through his understanding he becomes unshakable. In the midst of sorrow he remains tranquil; in the midst of happiness he does not grow elated. This complete serenity is the product of wisdom. Why do we call great men great? It is not merely because they have done something which has brought them the praise of the whole world; it is because when the world has shown suspicion, doubt, criticism and condemnation, they have stood up and maintained their absolute trust in the Divine.

Religion is something we evolve. It is not something we are born with or something we inherit from our parents. We cannot inherit religion, although some people seem to think they can. It unfolds from within. When we can say that we are part of the Divine and nothing in heaven or earth can shake our faith—that is religion. When one man in a community reaches that state, he becomes like a Saviour for his community, although his work may not be aggressive work. No great man ever works aggressively, especially along spiritual lines. It is by his living that he helps others. If we have this great faith, we bring it into our home; our children are infused with it: we impart it constantly to every one with whom we come in contact. Also if we have a scoffing, doubting mind, a mind full of darkness and despair, we impart that to others. We are always giving and the greatest thing we can give is the gift of God.

MY SOUL LIVES NOT IN EAST OR WEST

By G. O. W.

My Soul lives not in East or West
For when upon the Tree
Christ turned Him to the hungry thief,
He whispered too, to me.

And I who write these words to-day
Walked on the Mount with Him.
I touched His garment blazing white
While all the worlds grew dim.

And now beneath my coat of silk,
Thrilling within my side,
Unhealing, deep and bittersweet,
His selfsame wound I hide.

PRAYER

O Thou Compassionate, All-loving Spirit!
We lift our thoughts and prayers to Thee.
Thou art the sustaining power of our life.
Thou art the unalterable source of our existence.
Thou art eternally abiding within us.
Thou art above us and below us; Thou art before us and behind us; Thou art all about us.
Unfold our understanding that we may comprehend Thy vastness.
Reveal unto us Thy Divine Grace that we may be sustained by the knowledge of Thy Presence within us.
Fill our hearts with Thy holy inspiration that we may follow Thy path with unwavering faith and undaunted courage.
Enkindle within us a glowing fire of wisdom.
Consecrate and sanctify our life.
Make us like little children, gentle, sweet and free from all blemish.
Fill our whole being with Thy Divine Light that we may know all things in that Light.
Bestow upon us the gift of true vision that we may love in Thy Love and live in Thy Life.
Teach us how we may partake of Thy blessedness.
We come to Thee with humility and devotion.
Grant unto us Thy abiding protection and surround us with Thine all-enfolding peace. —*Paramananda.*

Although it be good to think upon the kindness of God, and to love and praise Him for it; yet it is far better to think upon the naked Being of Him, and to love Him and to praise Him for Himself.

—*From "The Cloud of Unknowing."*

ENDURING HAPPINESS

Class Talk by Swami Ramakrishnananda

Do your duty, never grow anxious and do not think of the future. Whenever anxiety rises in you, you become an atheist; you do not believe in God and that He cares for you. If you have real faith in God, you can never grow anxious. No man, however, really disbelieves in God, for God is *Anandam* (bliss) and every one believes in happiness; otherwise why should every one seek it? Why do men marry? Why do they try to earn money or to get name and fame? Because they believe that these things will make them happy, which shows that they have no doubt of the existence of happiness; and happiness is God, for He is the source of all bliss.

You think you are the son of Mr. So and So. This great blunder is the cause of all your miseries. You have not come from any man or woman. You are eternal, self-existent. This body is born, this body dies; but you are not born, you do not die. This is your false belief, which brings all your misery. So long as you believe this, fears and anxieties will come and then you are an atheist. How can you say you believe in God when you claim that this man or that is your father? Does any one say, my father is God? Christ could say that because He knew that God was his only father. You may say that you are a Christian or Hindu and you may think yourself religious; but you do not know the meaning of the word so long as your relation with man seems more real to you than your relation with God. Did not Christ say: "He who loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me?"

But if we depend wholly on God, does He always answer our prayers? Of course He does, if we know how to pray earnestly enough. A poor man goes to a rich man's

house, because he knows that the rich man can give him food. When he is told to go away, still he stands and waits. Even when some one insults him, he will not go, until at last he is given food. So we must pray to God. If no answer comes, we must still keep on praying and in the end God is sure to hear us. Sometimes there is a desire in our heart and God may counteract that desire to try our strength. We may long to be good, yet we are placed in the most evil environment and we may think God wants to lead us into temptation. But He does this to test our desire for goodness; and if we prove it to be intense, then He will yield and place us in a good environment. First there must be a clear understanding of the present conditions in which we have been placed by God. It is a fact that we desire to be happy, but the things we covet for our happiness will make us happy only for a time, so we must learn to seek for happiness in the permanent and enduring.

That this world is not truly real I can prove to you in a few minutes. All memory exists in the mind. The mind indeed is made up of memory. Therefore all the past exists in the mind. Only the present exists in the senses. But how long does any sense perception last? Just the point of time when the object comes in contact with the sense organ; then at once it becomes a matter of memory. Now this point of time, like Euclid's geometrical point, actually has no magnitude. The present in reality is only such a point without dimensions. Man, however, because he wishes to live in his senses, magnifies this point and extends it to the "present age" or the "present time" or to "now-a-days," which means these few months or years. But actually the present has no conceivable existence and only the past and future have duration, and as these exist in the mind, the whole of the universe may be said to live in mind.

When a man's thought turns away from the universe, it ceases to exist for him. This is proved when he is in sound sleep. At that time he goes away from his mind and senses. He does not remember that he has a wife or child, that he owes money, that he possesses a house or a garden. All these have ceased to exist for him. Only when he wakes up does he gradually remember them and his anxieties return. This shows that these anxieties only exist in the mind and have no real existence outside. When a man once understands this, he ceases to care for this mirage of the mind, or for this mirage of the senses. The whole mirage of creation then appears to him hollow and meaningless and nothing in it can disturb him. When a man rises above his mind, he grows calm, quiet, free. This is his natural condition. Otherwise he would not feel at rest in it. We see when we wake from sound sleep how rested and strong we feel and ready for fresh effort. This shows that it is natural for us to live beyond our mind and senses; but the sense pleasures of this world have cheated us into believing that our real place is here.

The situation that has not its duty, its ideal, was never yet occupied by man. Yes; here, in this poor, miserable, hampered, despicable Actual, wherein thou even now standest, here or nowhere is thy Ideal: work it out therefrom; and working, believe, live, be free. Fool! the Ideal is in thyself, the impediment too is in thyself: thy condition is but the stuff thou art to shape that same Ideal out of: what matters whether such stuff be of this sort or that, so the form thou givest it be heroic, be poetic. O thou that pinest in the imprisonment of the Actual . . . know this of a truth: the thing thou seekest is already with thee, "here or nowhere," couldst thou only see. —*Thomas Carlyle.*

THE JOY OF SELF-CONQUEST

From the Teachings of Buddha

The illusion of self originates and manifests itself in a cleaving to things. The desire to live for the enjoyment of self entangles us in the net of sorrow. Pleasures are the bait and the result is pain.

He who conquers self will be free from lust. He no longer craves and the flame of desire finds no material to feed upon. Thus it will be extinguished.

There is salvation for him whose self disappears before Truth, whose will is bent upon what he ought to do, whose sole desire is the performance of his duty. He who is wise will enter the path and make an end of sorrow.

Blissful is freedom from malice. Blissful is absence of lust and the loss of all pride that comes from the thought "I am."

Most men move in a sphere of worldly interests and find their delight in worldly desires. The worldling will not understand the doctrine, for to him there is happiness in selfhood only, and the bliss that lies in a complete surrender to truth is unintelligible to him.

He will call resignation what to the enlightened one is the purest joy. He will see annihilation where the perfected one finds immortality. He will regard as death what the conqueror of self knows to be life everlasting.

The truth remains hidden from him who is in the bondage of hate and desire. Nirvana remains incomprehensible and mysterious to the vulgar mind that worldly interests surround as with clouds.

The restless busy nature of the world, this, I declare, is at the root of pain. Attain that composure of mind which is resting in the peace of immortality. This ego is but a heap of composite qualities and its world is empty like a fantasy.

Though a person be ornamented with jewels, the heart may have conquered the senses. The outward form does not constitute religion or affect the mind. Thus the body of a shramana may wear an ascetic's garb, while his mind is immersed in worldliness.

A man that dwells in lonely woods and yet covets worldly vanities, is a worldling; while the man in worldly garments may let his heart soar high to heavenly thoughts.

There is no distinction between the layman and the hermit, if both have banished the thought of self.

Whatsoever is created will be dissolved again. All worry about the self is vain; the ego is like a mirage and all the tribulations that touch it will pass away. They will vanish like a nightmare when the sleeper awakes.

He who has awakened is freed from fear; he has become Buddha; he knows the vanity of all his cares, his ambitions, and also of his pains.

It easily happens that a man, when taking a bath, steps upon a wet rope and imagines that it is a snake. Horror will overcome him and he will shake from fear, anticipating in his mind all the agonies caused by the serpent's venomous bite. What a relief does this man experience when he sees that the rope is not a snake. The cause of his fright lies in his error, his ignorance, his illusion. If the true nature of the rope is recognized, his tranquillity of mind will come back to him; he will feel relieved; he will be joyful and happy.

This is the state of mind of one who has recognized that there is no self, that the cause of all his troubles, cares, and vanities is a mirage, a shadow, a dream.

Happy is he who has overcome all selfishness; happy is he who has attained peace; happy is he who has found the truth.

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

By Sister Devamata

A lesson we must all learn in the spiritual life is that the law fulfills itself; we do not have to fulfill it. We imagine we must know Nature's laws that we may apply them. The true reason for learning them, however, is that we may not interfere with them. If we have an apple in our hand and let go of it, the force of gravitation acts upon it immediately of itself. We do not have to bring the law into play to make the apple fall. It drops spontaneously. So is it with all the laws of life. They are operating incessantly and in perfect wisdom, but we block their free course. From this come our disappointments, our feverish unrest and bitter rebellions. When we permit Nature to act without hindrance, our days move along in quiet strength and peace. That is why we are admonished to let our light shine. Actually the Great Light is perpetually shining; it lights every man born into the world, we are told; but we do not let it shine through. It does not glow in our eyes or in our words and actions, because we veil it. Whenever a devotee attains the higher vision, the sign always noted in the Upanishads is that "his face shines as one who knows God;" and when we no longer bar the inner light by wayward self-assertion, our whole being will radiate its effulgence. We have only to tear the veil of the finite and the Infinite will flash forth in all Its glory.

Knowledge gained by any lesser light is never enduring or dependable. A stronger lens in the microscope or telescope may overturn it. The interior soul light alone casts no shadows of uncertainty. Intellectual acumen, however keen, can never be a substitute for it. Christ implies this when He speaks of that which is hidden from the learned, but revealed to the childlike. The same idea pre-

vails among Indian sages. They believe that intellectual attainments, far from being essential to higher vision, may even prove a barrier to it; because much study often sets the mind in a definite mould and makes it less receptive. All human powers, when used independently, represent not the manifestation, but the limitation of the universal Power. Only when we withdraw the obstructing action of our self-will, is It able to accomplish Its eternal purposes through us. "Hands off! Who are you to do God's business!" are Swami Vivekananda's warning words.

Nor is it difficult to make acquaintance with God's laws. They are operating all about us, as open to us as the law of gravitation. Even the most hidden ways of Nature become plain to the obedient and prayerful heart. But in our foolishness we recoil from the thought of complete surrender. We fear that we may be reduced to helpless parts of a grinding mechanism, driven we know not whither or to what end. But such is not the way in which the Divine Power works. It does not drive or overwhelm. It co-operates and unites. The law in the universe allies itself with the law in us. We become a conscious part of it. We are not moved by it; we move with it. It does not act through us autocratically. It stimulates our own volition to go the higher way; and as we yield to the sweep of the larger will and energy, we feel a new and indescribable exhilaration.

We are inseparably one with the Supreme and have a share in all the joy of Divine manifestation, if we care to claim it. There can be no force in the universe hostile to us. God can have no interest apart from our interest, which would lead Him to thwart our sane impulses; nor can we have any interest apart from His, which would make it necessary for us to be on guard against the fulfill-

ing of His plan. There can never be a wiser way to go than God's way. When we turn from Him and determine our own course, we deprive ourselves of every advantage and every chance of productiveness in our undertakings. We are all hungry for eternal life, for freedom, for lasting happiness, for boundless knowledge; but all these qualities are inherent properties of the soul. They are ours at this moment. The reason we long for them is because we dumbly sense their presence within us, yet we are unable to express them. But we do not have to express them. They will express themselves, if we put no obstacle in their way.

We hinder the working of the Divine in us by our narrow conception of life. We think of ourselves as finite, and naturally we fall a prey to finite desires and finite fears. So long as we believe that we have only a small detached fragment of human life, which can be snatched from us, we shall fight and perhaps even kill to protect it. Or if we are convinced that our present little horde of riches is all we can count upon for our sustenance, we shall be tormented constantly lest we lose it. In other words, so long as we hold the thought, whether defined or not, that God and His creation threaten our individual life and possessions, and that we must battle to defend them, we shall put ourselves at odds with all the providing and protecting forces of the universe.

One thing alone can set us right,—the sense of a common cause with the Infinite. As soon as we realize our indestructible nature and our true relationship with God, every thought of contention and fear will vanish from our mind. There can be no rivalry or enmity among the members of the cosmic body, any more than there can be rivalry or enmity between our hands and our feet. If one member of our organism is in pain, every member suffers; if any

small part is cold, the whole body shivers. Life is one, and all living things are knit together by it. Knowledge also is one. Argument, dispute, whatever divides, closes the way to it. It reveals itself only in hearts which are washed clean of personal bias and assertive opinion. Joy, too, is one; it can never be had at the expense of any living creature. He who feels the pains and pleasures of others as his own, he alone can taste it. Life, knowledge, bliss, these are universal indivisible attributes of God, and can be found in their fullness only when we throw off the bondage of the manifold and personal.

The aim of all spiritual striving is to make Reality real to us. That is what realization means. No one ever willingly pursues a shadow. It is because we believe the shadow has substance that we follow after it. We may think that God is real to us; but if He were, we would not be able to resist His superior charm and beauty. Our life shows that we still covet the shadow; otherwise why do we laugh and weep so easily over these passing earthly joys and griefs? Why are we so deeply immersed in the petty detail of mere living? We seem to forget utterly that beneath this sordid outer material round a mighty drama of Divinity is going on. The fasts and feasts of every religion have as their purpose to remind us of this profound fact. Of what use a yearly Christmas, if it merely multiply our outward occupations and obligations? Christ might come a thousand times and leave us unsaved and unblessed, unless He lay His purifying touch on our individual life and heart. Spirituality means putting the accent on spirit; regarding spiritual advantage, spiritual obligations, spiritual relationships above worldly advantage and worldly claims. It is altogether a question of right values and whole-hearted consecration. External forms and observances play a minor part only in it.

The real things are big and simple. They demand no violent, distorting struggle. They do not entangle us, they free us. But they admit of no complexity or duplicity. They require us to be direct and uncalculating. Whenever our mind grows hot with anxiety or impatience, we may know it is because the unreal is closing in on us. If we will analyze, we shall find that nearly all our joys and sorrows spring from the crumbling of something which we believed was real, but which proved unreal.

We have formed the habit of giving our first service to the unreal. Now we must form the habit of serving the Real. It is the Real which makes life bearable. It is the yearning for a closer touch with Reality which pushes us on in our evolution. The Real will never fail us. From It come our joy and strength and light. God longs to share all the blessings of His universe with us. He would fill us with His Divine sweetness. If He asks us to become empty vessels, it is that He may give us more generously of Himself. Are those faint glimmerings of Divinity which we catch through matter worth more to us than the full light of God, unveiled and unrefracted? Have we grown so accustomed to the dimness of this world that we prefer to see Truth through a glass darkly? Apparently we like to grope our way in the darkness, only vaguely sensing the larger revelations. If it were not so, we would let God's light shine through us. We would answer the call: "Arise, shine, for thy light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

The soul gives sight to the eyes; he who gives sight to the soul is the Great Lord; therefore one should worship in supreme love Him who does kindness to the soul.

—*Saiva-Siddhantam.*

DIVE DEEP O MIND

Bengalee Hymn

Dive deep, dive deep, dive deep, O my mind, into the Sea of Infinite Beauty.

Make a search down, down in the furthest depths of the Sea; there you will come upon the precious jewel of *Prema* (intense devotion to God).

Within thy heart is the abode of the all-loving God.

Go about searching, go about searching, go about searching. Thou wilt find Him.

Then shall burn for thee without ceasing the lamp of Divine Wisdom.

INVOCATION

From the Persian

Soul of the soul!

Neither thought nor reason may comprehend Thy essence and there is none who knows Thy attributes.

Souls have no idea of Thy being. The prophets even sink in the dust of Thy road.

Although intellect exists by Thee, has it e'er found the path of Thy existence?

O Thou, Who art in the interior and in the exterior of the soul! Thou art, and Thou art not that which I say.

In Thy presence reason grows bewildered; it loses the thread that would direct it in Thy way.

I perceive the universe in Thee, yet I find Thee not in the world.

All beings are marked with Thy impress, but Thyself hast no impress visible;

Thou withholdest the secret of Thine existence.

Verily we are from God and to Him we return.

—*The Koran.*

THE THREE COMINGS OF CHRIST

By Jan van Ruysbroeck

(Flemish priest born in 1273. Excerpt from his "Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage")

"Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him." This Bridegroom is Christ and human nature is the bride. We shall consider three comings of our Bridegroom, Jesus Christ. In the first coming He became man, for man's sake out of love. The second coming takes place daily, often and many times, in every loving heart, with new graces and new gifts, as each is able to receive them. The third coming we shall see as the coming in the Judgment or at the hour of death.

Now understand this. When the sun sends its beams and its radiance into a deep valley between two high mountains, and, standing in the zenith, can yet shine upon the bottom and ground of the valley, then three things happen: the valley becomes full of light by reflection from the mountains and it receives more heat and becomes more fruitful than the plain and level country. And so likewise, when a good man takes his stand upon his own littleness, in the most lowly part of himself, and confesses and knows that he has nothing and is nothing and can do nothing of himself, neither stand still nor go on, and when he sees how often he fails in virtues and good works: then he confesses his poverty and his helplessness, then he makes a valley of humility. And when he is thus humble and needy and knows his own need, he lays his distress, and complains of it, before the bounty and the mercy of God. And so he marks the sublimity of God and his own lowliness; and thus he becomes a deep valley.

And Christ is a Sun of righteousness and also of mercy, Who stands in the highest part of the firmament, that is, on the right hand of the Father, and from thence He shines into the bottom of the humble heart; for Christ

is always moved by helplessness, whenever a man complains of it and lays it before Him with humility. Then there arise two mountains, that is, two desires; one to serve God and praise Him with reverence, the other to attain noble virtues. Those two mountains are higher than the heavens; for these longings touch God without intermediary and crave His ungrudging generosity. And then that generosity cannot withhold itself, it must flow forth; for then the soul is made ready to receive, and to hold, more gifts.

Whoever wishes to meet Christ as his beloved Bridegroom, and to possess in Him and with Him eternal life; he must now, in time, go out to meet Christ at three points or in three ways. The first point is that he shall have God in mind in all things through which we earn eternal life. The second point is that there shall be nothing that he means or loves more than God or even so much as God. And the third point is that he shall with great zeal seek to rest in God, above all creatures and above all God's gifts, above all the works of virtue and above all feelings that God may infuse into soul and body. If this man wishes to go forward in the light of faith, and lay hold of all the works of Christ and all His suffering; all the things He promised us and did to us and will do to us until the Day of Doom and in eternity; if that man wishes to lay hold of these that they may avail to his salvation: then he should go out to meet Christ once more, and should have Him ever in his sight, with praise and thankfulness and with a worthy acknowledgment of all His gifts and of all that He has done and will do in eternity. Then his faith will be strengthened; and he will be more often and more ardently impelled towards all virtues.

If, then, he wishes to go forward in the works of vir-

tue, he must also go out to meet Christ with self-renunciation, neither seeking himself nor pursuing things alien from God; but let him be wise and discreet in all that he does, having in mind in all things God alone and God's praise and glory; and let him continue therein even unto death. Thereby his reason is enlightened, and his charity is increased, and he grows in piety and in the aptitude for all virtues. We should have God in mind in all our good works; in evil works we cannot do this. We should not have in mind two ends; that is to say, we should mean God alone and nothing else. All other ends should be subordinate to God and not opposed to God; they should be in their order a help and a furtherance, that we may the better come to God. And then we are in the right way. We should also rather seek our rest upon Him and in Him whom we mean and love, than in any of the messengers He sends; that is to say, His gifts. The soul should also rest in God above all the jewels and all the gifts which it may send back to God by its own messengers. The messengers of the soul are intention, love, and desire: these carry all good deeds and all virtues up to God. But above all these things, above all multiplicity, the soul should rest in its Beloved. In this way and in this wise we should go out to meet Christ with an upright intention during all our lives and in all our works and in all our virtues; so that we may also meet Him in the light of glory at the hour of death.

O God! hushed is the day's noise; with his beloved is the lover. But Thee I have for my lover and alone with Thee I joy. —*Rabia.*

Thou needst not call Him from a distance; thy opening and His entering are one. —*Meister Eckhart.*

THE EVER PRESENT SPIRIT

From a Letter of Clement to the Corinthians

(Clement was a disciple of Peter and later became Bishop of Rome)

Take heed, beloved, that his many blessings be not to us to condemnation; except we shall walk worthy of Him, doing with one consent what is good and pleasing in His sight.

The Spirit of the Lord is a candle, searching out the inward parts of a man. Let us therefore consider how near He is to us; and how none of our thoughts or reasonings which we frame within ourselves, are hid from Him.

For thus saith the Scriptures in a certain place, Whither shall I flee from Thy Spirit, or where shall I hide myself from Thy presence? If I ascend up to heaven, Thou art there; if I go to the utmost parts of the earth, there is Thy right hand; if I shall make my bed in the deep, Thy Spirit is there. Whither then shall any one go; or whither shall he run from Him that comprehends all things?

Let us therefore come to Him with holiness of heart, lifting up chaste and undefiled hands unto Him; loving our gracious and loving Father, Who has made us to partake of His election . . . Wherefore we being a part of the Holy One, let us do all those things which pertain unto holiness.

Let our praise be of God, not of ourselves; for God loveth not those that commend themselves. Let the witness of our good actions be given to us of others, as it was given to the holy men that went before us. Rashness and arrogance and confidence belong to them who are condemned of God; but equity and humility and mildness, to such as are blessed by Him. Let us then lay hold of His blessing and let us consider what are the ways by which we may attain it . . . Let our boasting and our confidence be in God; let us submit ourselves to His will.

REPORT

Among the Reports which have reached us recently, we have been interested specially in reading of the steady growth of the Ramakrishna Home of Service at Kankhal. Its chief aim is to bring relief to religious pilgrims and holy men who frequent that district. During the year 48,582 were cared for. The workers also conduct a night school for poor children and they have added a Library to their other varied branches of activity. Under Swami Kalyananda's able direction the Home has completely outgrown its present quarters and he is bending every effort to make possible the construction of a special building for the night school, a dispensary and a Rest House.

* * * *

There was no departure from the usual activities of the Centre during November. Despite the discomforts and inconveniences caused by the alterations now going on at the Centre, the Chapel was crowded every Sunday. The Tuesday Class was suspended for two weeks and it has not been possible to reopen the Thursday Class. The present number of the Message has been delayed also because of the confusion incident to building; and it is probable that the January number will be late. We hope that by the new year the Centre will be restored to order and the habitual routine will be resumed. After the Services on the last Sunday of November Swami Paramananda set out on a lecture tour covering seven or eight cities. A full account of it will be given next month.

The earnest wish goes from our hearts to all the friends of "The Message of the East" that the Christmastide may prove for each one a season of holy joy and spiritual renewal.

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SUNDAY, 11 A. M.—SERVICE WITH ADDRESS

SUBJECTS

January 1st Hidden Powers of the Soul
January 8th Meditation and Superconsciousness
January 15th Karma and Fate
January 22nd Healing of Body and Mind
January 29th Value of Food in Spiritual Unfoldment

NEW YEAR GREETINGS

We send to all our friends and readers our most cordial greetings and best wishes for a very happy and peaceful New Year. We hope that during the coming months "The Message of the East" may prove to them a constant source of inspiration and helpfulness. We call upon all to work with us in our task of binding close the hearts of mankind in a truer spiritual fellowship.

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

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THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

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

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

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PRACTICE OF DISCIPLESHIP

Lecture by Swami Paramananda

Who is a disciple? One who has taken up the discipline of life, who does not choose the easiest path and try constantly to compromise with his loftier ideals; but one who is willing to put aside selfish ambition and gratification in order to find his way to the highest. Disciples are those who live, rather than merely theorize and talk. People call themselves disciples of Christ or of Buddha or of some other great prophet or Messiah; but unless they listen to the voice of their Ideal and follow it, they are not disciples. Religion is not an abstract principle which a man can theorize about and turn to his personal advantage; it must form his character wholly. Without character we are weak and miserable in ourselves and we bring confusion in the world. We take wrong steps and we stumble, because we are thinking all the time of our own selfish advantage.

Greatness cannot be expressed except where there is elimination of all selfishness. Education which does not accomplish this is not true education; therefore in India they hold that even those who do not take up the spiritual life should go through a primary training in discipleship. A man who has learned to be obedient does not lose in power of individual judgment. On the contrary, his opin-

ion is of greater value because it is the product of his life. He has subdued his selfish tendencies, consequently whatever he produces is worth something. It is invariably a benefit to humanity. One who has not developed his higher powers through discipline is not able to use the opportunities which come to him; rather he turns them to his disadvantage. If a child tries to manipulate a piece of machinery before he has been taught how to handle it, he may easily put his hand in the wrong place and have it crushed. The same way is it with life. Unless we have learned its right use, we shall be crushed by it.

The path of discipleship requires obedience,—obedience to higher principles. Every one needs it. Any one who thinks that he does not need to practise obedience is a much deluded person. It would be all right if we could take care of ourselves, but we cannot. We must look to those who have superior qualities and be subservient to them until we ourselves have gained wisdom. People who are ambitious and aggressive never contribute anything towards the welfare of humanity; but those who forget themselves utterly, who want nothing for themselves, they are released from the smallness of life and pass naturally into a larger sphere of action. Without self-discipline we are so disorganized, so lacking in control that we cannot do good to any one. This was the reason why the idea of discipleship entered so profoundly into the social and religious institutions of India. Every child was sent to live with a teacher, but scholarship alone did not make one a teacher. The teacher must be a man of lofty character, who lived his precepts. This was vital. Often we tell our children not to be angry or untruthful, but our instructions fail to make an impression because they are not supported by the moral force which comes through living ourselves

what we demand of others. This is one of the great benefits of discipleship, that we learn to govern ourselves through service and the practice of obedience.

Our main interest is to conquer ourselves; and conquest in any line means effort. We must work for it. No one ever gained a victory of any kind who was unwilling to be wakeful and active. It is the energetic type of mind which conquers in every line of life. We must not have a morbid idea of the spiritual life and imagine that it means merely going to church, reading the Bible and repeating prayers. True spirituality is intensely active. It must enter into our ordinary life and transform it to such an extent that there will be absolute accord between our principles and our living.

Man releases himself from the bondage of life when he finds his relationship with his own highest Self. But this requires a great many disciplines. The unruly tendencies which rise within us—anger, greed, jealousy, hatred—stifle our loftier nature. That is why we are filled with remorse when these waves pass. If we can learn to check them when they start to rise, we make a tremendous step forward in our evolution. How much easier it is when we begin early, instead of waiting until we have a deeply rooted habit of undisciplined thought. People say: "It is my nature to be impatient or irritable, I cannot help it." But these things are not natural to the real standard of humanity. There is no tendency we cannot curb, if we choose. We can reverse the current and make the opposite tendency just as natural. The beautiful teachings of religion,—"Love your neighbor as yourself," "Be perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect," "Do good to them that hate you": these are not mere sayings to repeat. We must do them; and a disciple is one who tries to do them.

It does not matter to what religion he belongs; that is of very little importance, because real religion cannot be labelled by any name. It is in the life; and those who are true followers of their faith, they live it; and by becoming living examples they extend their blessings to others. First they fill their own life with blessing, then they have something to give their fellowmen. One who has conquered himself through discipline is far happier than the man who seeks happiness in self-indulgence, because his happiness does not depend upon outward circumstances. He continues to be happy whether he is blamed or praised. He knows an inward joy, a deep inner tranquillity. It is a foolish attitude of mind when we rise and fall with every passing circumstance. We find much greater satisfaction in life when we have an ideal and follow it. The strength of character we give by living a more interior life offers us far greater sustenance than either intellectual or material power. Money, name, position, all these things fade away; but even these fleeting material advantages become beneficial when they are in the hands of a master. The masters are those who are masters of themselves and remain the same under all conditions. We may insult them or flatter them, but we cannot make them shift their ground, because they are stable; and they are stable because they do not work with any selfish motive; they have a bigger standard in life.

A religion which does not bring into every human life a higher ideal is not religion no matter what it is called. People say: "I am a follower of Christ and you are an inferior man because you are not a follower of Christ"; but let them be followers of Christ, let their life be Christlike; that is the only way they can impress the truth of their religion upon another mind. Disciples are those who fol-

low very closely, not from a long distance. Some people are thoroughly sincere. They are full of zeal, but they believe they can best serve their ideal by fighting for it; they wish to conquer by force. Real conquest, however, is only possible through the force of life and character.

There are certain principles which are inseparable from character,—humility, obedience to higher principles and vision. We cannot have faith in any ideal, any spiritual Truth, unless we have become thoroughly familiar with it by our own vision, and vision is the product of our life. If we live an orderly, tranquil, pure life, it will reflect the Truth. Truth never shines upon that heart where there is falsehood. Falsehood never really helps us. We may escape apparently from others through falsehood, but we can never escape from ourselves. If we say or do anything which is not true, it will obscure our vision. The heart must be pure and genuine to see clearly.

The practice of discipleship is very cleansing. It does not destroy or mutilate the nature; but it cleanses it of all that is non-essential and harmful to us. At times it may impose severe disciplines, but through them we grow stronger. This is its great value. In our modern life we are becoming more and more dependent on artificial help, and it is not a good sign. People have learned to depend on machines to such an extent that they would be glad if some one would invent some sort of machine to do the thinking for them. This brings degradation. It would be much better for us if we would depend less on these outer material devices and would enlarge the inner, essential part of our being. When people are given too many tools to work with, they use their mental faculties less and less. They follow a certain routine of thought and if anything unusual occurs, they are absolutely at a loss. They have

not the power to use to the best advantage this instrument given them by God; but those who have the habit of independent thinking always find a way out.

Our life should be simplified. We are so burdened. It is not by trying to satisfy every craving which rises in us that we attain the highest happiness or perfection. We must be thoughtful and discriminating. We must begin to adjust our life. We all have a vocation. We all have something to give to the world, something to contribute to the general good. We are all children of God; we are all aiming for ultimate attainment in one form or another; and until we find the highest expression of life which flows from Eternity, we shall never be free. To find it, however, requires zeal. One of the Upanishads declares that Truth can never be attained by the weak. This does not mean physical weakness; it means moral weakness, the weakness which makes us doubt and fear and shrink from anything big. Spiritual vision is born as the product of self-discipline. We have to work for it and it is better to work for it right now. Salvation does not begin after we are dead. It is here that we taste it. It is here that freedom and joy must be realized. True disciples, whether they are followers of Christianity or Buddhism or Confucianism, always maintain a cheerful heart. The God-consecrated man is always joyous, because he is not selfish. Selfish people cannot know true happiness. Even when they have gained their desire, there is always something to mar their happiness. Mere accumulation of wealth or material advantage will never bring us satisfaction, unless at the same time we unfold our spiritual nature.

Discipleship means self-discipline. It is not that some one tells us to do this or that; but out of our own love of Truth and our sense of consecration, we set for ourselves

a certain path to follow. Our life becomes a deeper life, a life which is not separated from the God Principle in anything. At first it may seem a tremendous task to acquire this continuous contact with the Divine. We say: "How can we who are so busy relate ourselves with an abstract spiritual principle? If we cease to protect our own interest, some one may deceive us." But those who devote themselves to their own interest do not really succeed or find lasting satisfaction. When, however, through discipline we have learned the deeper lessons of life, we are not wounded or distracted by the material world. This external world seems harsh, empty and artificial to us, because it is lacking in balance; and those who follow the spiritual path ardently and faithfully restore the balance. Then even this outer life becomes mellow and full of sweetness, full of hope and courage.

LEADINGS OF THE SPIRIT

From the Letters of Isaac Penington

(English Quaker Mystic, born 1617)

Sit down and count the cost of ploughing up thy field and of searching after the hidden treasure of pure and true wisdom, and consider seriously whether thou canst sell all for it, both inward and outward riches; that, if thou do set thy hand to the plough, thou mayest not look back after anything else, within or without, but mayest be content and satisfied with the pearl of true wisdom and life alone.

Now, if thou be truly willing in God's sight thus to do, thou must singly give up to follow the Lord in the leadings of His Spirit, out of all the ways of thy own wisdom and knowledge, out of all things wherein thou hast a life and delight out of Him. Thou must not determine what thou

hast a life in, but the Lord must search thy heart; and He will soon show thee (if thy heart be naked and open before Him, willing to hear and learn of Him), somewhat in thy heart, somewhat in thy ways, somewhat in thy words and thoughts, which is contrary to His pure life and Spirit; and then, that must be denied and given up immediately.

If thy heart come to feel the Spirit of God, and to wait upon Him in the measure of His life, He will be tender of thee as a father of his child, and His love will be naturally breaking forth towards thee. This is the end of all His dealings with thee, to bring thee hither, to make thee fit and capable of entering and abiding here. And He hath changed and doth change thy spirit daily; though it be as the shooting up of the corn, whose growth cannot be discerned at present by the most observing eye, but it is very manifest afterwards that it hath grown.

But wait to feel the relieving measure of life, and heed not distressing thoughts, when they rise ever so strongly in thee; nay, though they have entered thee, fear them not, but be still awhile, not believing in the power which thou feelest they have over thee, and it will fall on a sudden. It is good for thy spirit and greatly to thy advantage, to be much and variously exercised by the Lord. Thou dost not know what the Lord hath already done, and what He is yet doing for thee therein. . . . O learn daily more and more to trust Him and hope in Him and not to be affrighted with any amazement, nor to be taken up with the sight of the present thing; but wait for the shutting of thy own eye upon every occasion, and for the opening of the eye of God in thee, and for the sight of things therewith, as they are from Him.

Oh! wait, hope, trust, look over that which stands between; come into His mercy! Let in the faith which open-

eth the way of life, which will shut out the doubting and distrusting mind, and will close up the wrong eye, that letteth in reasonings and temptations, the wrong sense, and death with them. Thus mayest thou witness, in and through thy Redeemer, the abundance of His life and peace.

THE SOURCE OF POWER

By Sister Devamata

Power is not something which man can create; it is not something which he can acquire. He cannot even possess it, it must possess him. Science has discovered that there is only one force in the universe, moving in different directions. Religion too has come to recognize one Power only, impelling all life. That one Power is omnipresent and it makes itself manifest wherever there is a channel for it. It beats constantly against the closed avenues of our being. It is knocking now at the door of our heart, of our intelligence, of our physical organism. From without and from within it is seeking to take possession of us, but we beat it back; or if we open ourselves a little to it, very soon we bar its way again by the foolish pride which rises in us as we see our individual powers increasing.

Nothing so quickly checks its flow as self-consciousness. "Our best work is done, our greatest influence is exerted when we are without thought of self," Swami Vivekananda declares in his *Inspired Talks*. "All great geniuses know this. . . . Be perfectly resigned, perfectly unconcerned, then alone can you do any great work." Self-consciousness induces calculation and the habit of calculation is peculiarly hostile to largeness of life in any form. It kills all our loftier impulses. The man who stops to count the costs can never be a hero. There is no time to

make a contract with destiny when the call to noble action sounds. The opportunity passes while we are adding and subtracting probable dangers and glories.

The heroic act appears to be a sudden and exceptional expression of power; but it is only the culmination of a continuous habit of bigness of thought. If our vision were sufficiently penetrating, we would see that the genuine hero is as heroic in each commonplace task of the day as he is at the moment of peculiar stress. It is the quality of small natures to haggle and strain over every expenditure of themselves and of their resources. They have so little, it is not easy for them to be generous; and their acute anxiety to protect their own interests makes it difficult for them to get anything from the universal Source. The petty wage-earner considers it necessary to calculate his output very carefully; and so long as we live like hirelings, demanding an exact return for every service we render God or man, we too shall be apprehensive, miserly and calculating.

This does not imply that a man should throw caution to the winds and follow every impulse which seizes upon him. Discrimination and prudence lie behind every great manifestation of power, but they are interwoven always with self-forgetfulness and surrender. The man of exalted mind discriminates in order to free his vision from petty personal refractions; while prudence for him consists in remaining close to the universal storehouse of strength and wisdom. It would seem to him the height of imprudence and unreason to sever his connection even for a moment with the central Source of supply. He knows that life, power, wisdom, happiness are universal, indivisible, unmarketable qualities. They cannot be bought or sold on any exchange. They cannot be parcelled out in small

quantities. They are like the air of the high mountains or of the sea, one must go there to breathe it; it cannot be purchased by weight or measure at the street corner.

If we would partake of the attributes of Divinity, we must connect ourselves with the Divine. There must be some point of contact, and we establish this through our thought. The more we think of ourselves, of our personal joys and sorrows, our selfish advantage or disadvantage, the less of our mind remains with which to think on God and the less of godliness shall we enjoy. Every thought of self puts out a thought of God and every thought of God puts out a thought of self. But the God-thoughts are full of sweetness and light and subtle power; while the thoughts of self are full of fear and disappointment and discontent. God-thought expands and liberates, self-thought contracts and enslaves. Why then do we think so much about ourselves? Have we found the companionship of our ego so satisfying that we should be reluctant to exchange it for the holier, sweeter companionship of God? Whenever we have cause to feel ashamed and disgraced, is it not always because our selfish nature has gained the upper hand and betrayed us?

So long as we divide our attention, we shall be weak and undependable. Power comes only to the single-hearted. Christ has told us that the pure alone can gain access to the Divine; and purity means something more than mere cleanness of body, mind and heart. It means unmixed. If we take two perfectly pure chemical substances and put them together, the new substance produced is not pure; each of the constituent parts adulterates the other. Purity in the spiritual life, quite as much as in chemistry, demands uncompromising singleness—singleness of heart, singleness of mind, singleness of purpose.

To attain it we must eliminate the multiplicity of interests and obligations which now entangle us. We plead our duty to society as an excuse for not doing so. How can we withdraw from our present complex mode of living without appearing selfish and unfeeling? But this social body to which we yield such servile allegiance is not a self-existent entity. It is the creation of man and would die to-morrow if groups of human beings did not sustain it. Only those serve it truly who possess sufficient force of character to be independent of it. All great men who have led the world and benefitted it, have had the courage to cast off the fetters of custom and live in accord with their own highest conviction.

The spectacular exhibitions of power we see in the world—power of wealth, of position, of popular acclaim—must not dazzle us. They appear flimsy and puerile when placed beside the silent steady flow of Divine energy manifest in the life of a saint or Saviour. Enduring power springs not from ambition or aggressive affirmation, but from the seed of patient denial. The man who cannot govern his own appetites, has not developed the principle of rulership in his nature and is unable to command anywhere. He may make a show of authority, but it wears itself out very soon. Strength, whether of muscle, of mind, or of feeling, rests always on discipline. The rigid training of the army has a deeper aim than the mere toughening of the soldiers in its ranks. It represents an enormous economy of vital energy. We squander a large measure of our force in adapting ourselves to unaccustomed conditions. Our power of endurance is so feeble that we cannot eat or sleep unless we have just the right kind of bed or food. To be a slave to creature comforts is one of the most insidious forms of slavery. It was to

break this bondage that men began the practice of austerity. Asceticism has no merit as an end in itself, but as a means to an end it is of great value. It represents the five-finger exercises of religion, making the organism pliable and ready for higher uses.

The man who marks off his day by his meal hours and believes that one-third at least of each turn of the sun must be devoted to sleep, gains very little momentum in any undertaking. He spends his effort in getting ready to live rather than in living. Those of us who would hasten our spiritual development and increase our efficiency should begin a systematic process of hardening. We should train ourselves to be less sensitive to heat and cold, less susceptible to inconvenience and hardship. Without fortitude one cannot go far in the spiritual life. "We count them happy which endure," James writes in his general epistle. By degrees we should advance the time for rising and keep strictly to the earlier hour until it becomes natural for us. We should teach ourselves to sleep and wake easily. Gradually our body will habituate itself to less rest and will feel lighter. Nearly every one eats and sleeps too much and in consequence grows steadily heavier as he grows older. If we seem to require a large amount of food and rest, it is indicative of a habit, not of a need. We can accustom our system to make almost any demand upon us. It suffices for us to take a nap at a certain hour every day for a week to develop a new and crying necessity for more sleep. We are overpowered by drowsiness each time that hour comes round.

In the matter of food also, our taste should not be our only guide. We should choose a diet fitted to the kind of life we lead. There is no virtue in not enjoying our food, but there is great benefit in learning to enjoy that which

will give us the maximum of energy with the minimum of waste. The athlete is very rigid about his diet; and we need to be strong much more than he, because he requires only strength of nerve and muscle, while we need strength of mind and heart as well to be able to meet bravely the rigorous tests of the spiritual path. No man ever manifests real power until he takes up the life of self-denial. The Christ method of selling all for the sake of one's purpose is the practical method for success in any direction. It tells us how we may excel, whether it is in digging a ditch or in writing a poem. We must detach ourselves from the material and physical, if we would become a channel for the spiritual.

We steep ourselves in the human and then wonder why we find it so difficult to express the Divine. It is because our processes of thought are reversed. We must learn to think of ourselves last and of God first. In painting a picture the good artist puts in his high light first and refers all his color values to that. So must it be in living. We must relate each experience to our highest point of vision, not to our work-a-day self with its petty needs and complaints. When we succeed in doing this with conviction, we can carve our way through solid rock. No obstacle will stay our course. If we can keep the Ideal uppermost in our thought at all times, we shall be carried forward by Its power; and our own strength may be expended altogether in holding firmly to It.

Connection with the Source is all that should concern us, not what we shall get out of it. If we approach It devoutly and unquestioningly, we shall be filled to the full measure of our capacity; and as our capacity increases, so will our power. That one who is in unbroken touch with God will always know what is needed to be known. He

will render just the right service, he will speak just the right word, he will take just the right course. There will be no waste of energy anywhere, because he will have no steps to retrace, no mistakes to mend, and no wearing down of the bearings of life through friction. In all circumstances he will act in perfect conjunction with the one supreme cosmic Power.

Each of us has a special centre of activity in the universal scheme, a special place where we can be used to the best advantage. Nowhere else shall we be at ease. We may imagine that we are happier when we follow our own fitful will and shift ground according to our mood, but the ache and despair of our heart when we do it is evidence enough to convince us we are wrong. The musician who plays out of tune and off the beat finds little pleasure in his art; only when he falls into perfect rhythm with the orchestra does he catch the inspiration of the surging sound. Similarly when we set our own pitch and measure, our life will be full of clashing discords. But let our heart begin to beat in unison with God's great heart, at once a new harmony and rhythm will establish itself in our being, and such strength will rise in us that all the powers of the world will not be able to confound us.

It matters not to me what I do, or what I suffer, so long as I abide lovingly united to God's will,—that is my whole business. . . . The greatest glory we can give to God is to distrust our own strength utterly and to commit ourselves wholly to His safe-keeping.

—Brother Lawrence

Wisdom is one thing. It is to know the thought by which all things are steered through all things.

—Herakleitos. 5th century, B. C.

THE WAY OF BIRTH IN GOD

From Hermes Trismegistus

Hermes. Withdraw into thyself, and it (the Way of Birth in God) will come; will, and it comes to pass; throw out of work the body's senses, and thy Divinity shall come to birth; purge from thyself the brutish torments—things of matter.

Tat. I have tormentors then in me, O father?

Hermes. Ay, no few, my son; nay, fearful ones and manifold.

Tat. I do not know them, father.

Hermes. Torment the first is this Not-knowing, son; the second one is Grief; the third, Intemperance; the fourth, Concupiscence; the fifth, Unrighteousness; the sixth is Avarice; the seventh, Error; the eighth is Envy; the ninth, Guile; the tenth is Anger; eleventh, Rashness; the twelfth is Malice. These are in number twelve; but under them are many more, my son; and creeping through the prison of the body they force the man that's placed within to suffer in his senses. But they depart (although not all at once) from him who hath been taken pity on by God; and this it is which constitutes the manner of Rebirth.

And now, my son, be still and solemn silence keep! Thus shall the mercy that flows on us from God not cease. Henceforth rejoice, O son, for by the Powers of God thou art being purified for the articulation of the Reason (Logos).

Gnosis of God hath come to us; and when this comes, my son, Not-knowing is cast out. Gnosis of Joy hath come to us; and on its coming, son, Sorrow will flee away to them who give it room. The Power that follows Joy do I invoke, Thy Self-control. O Power most sweet! Let

us most gladly bid it welcome, son! How with its coming doth it chase Intemperance away!

Now fourth, on Continence I call, the Power against Desire. . . . This step, my son, is Righteousness' firm seat. For without judgment see how she hath chased Unrighteousness away. We are made righteous, son, by the departure of Unrighteousness. Power sixth I call to us,—that against Avarice, Sharing-with-all. And now that Avarice is gone, I call on Truth. And Error flees, and Truth is with us. See how (the measure of) the Good is full, my son, upon Truth's coming. For Envy hath gone from us; and unto Truth is joined the Good as well, with Life and Light. And now no more doth any torment of the Darkness venture nigh, but vanquished all have fled with whirring wings.

Thou knowest now, my son, the manner of Rebirth. . . . Who then doth by His mercy gain this Birth in God, abandoning the body's senses, knows himself to be of Light and Life and that he doth consist of these, and thus is filled with Bliss.

Tat. By God made steadfast, father, no longer with the sight my eyes afford I look on things, but with the energy the Mind doth give me through the Powers. Father, I see the All, I see myself in Mind.

Hermes. This is, my son, Rebirth—no more to look on things from body's view-point. . . .

Tat. Tell me, O father: This Body which is made up of the Powers, is it at any time dissolved?

Hermes. Hush, son. Speak not of things impossible, else wilt thou sin and the Mind's eye be quenched. The natural body which our sense perceives is far removed from this essential birth. The first must be dissolved, the last can never be; the first must die, the last death cannot

touch. Dost thou not know thou hast been born a god, son of the One, even as I myself?

Be still, my son; hear the Praise-giving now that keeps (the soul) in tune, Hymn of Re-birth. Thus then, my son, stand in a place uncovered to the sky, facing the southern wind, about the sinking of the setting sun, and make thy worship; so in like manner too when he doth rise, with face to the east wind. Now, son, be still!

HYMN

Let every nature of the World receive the utterance of my hymn!

Open thou Earth! Let every bolt of the Abyss be drawn for me. Stir not, ye Trees!

Ye Heavens open, and ye Winds stay still; let God's deathless Sphere receive my word (Logos)!

Let us together all give praise to Him, sublime above the Heavens, of every nature Lord!

'Tis He who is the Eye of Mind; may He accept the praise of these my Powers!

Ye Powers that are within me, hymn the One and All; sing with my Will, Powers all that are within me!

O blessed Gnosis, by thee illumined, hymning through thee the Light that mind alone can see, I joy in Joy of Mind.

Sing with me praises all ye Powers!

Sing praise, my Self-control; sing thou through me, my Righteousness, the praises of the Righteous; sing thou, my Sharing-all, the praises of the All; through me sing, Truth, Truth's praises!

Sing thou, O Good, the Good! O Life and Light, from us to you our praises flow!

Father, I give Thee thanks, to Thee Thou Energy of all Powers; I give Thee thanks, O God, Thou Power of all my Energies!

Thus cry the Powers in me. They sing Thy praise, Thou all; they do Thy Will.

The All that is in us, O Life, preserve; O Light illumine it; O God in-spirit it.

STORY OF SISTER MARIANNA

Retold by Br. Gurudas

Near a quiet little country town in Italy stood long, long ago a convent shaded by chestnut trees; and a river flowed by. Here in this old convent dwelled some good Sisters, devout women, who went out among the poor, helping where help was needed. Early and late the Sisters laboured, nursing the sick and feeding the poor. And among all these good women, Sister Marianna was the most patient. Kind and willing, never sparing herself, quietly she went about, choosing for her share the heaviest and most difficult tasks. Thus she lived always content quietly to bear the burden of others. She loved God and this made her most happy. And she was rich too, for God had given her the grace to choose not the world's deceitful riches, but the wealth one cannot lose, the wealth one takes with one when this earthly life is done.

The old and the feeble and the sickly and the heavy-hearted all knew and loved Sister Marianna. For she was always sure to appear when her presence was most needed. She carried food and warm clothes and blessing as she wended her way over mountain paths in summer heat and winter cold. And with her travelled One whom she always kept close to her heart. And He was the source of all her strength.

And Sister Marianna was happy—oh so happy!—if in her scanty hours of leisure she could enter her little white-washed cell. For there from the wall looked at her the

dear and holy faces that she loved above all else. From an old and faded picture the Holy Infant Jesus in His Mother's arms looked at her. And her faith and spirit of devotion lent to the dear faces a beauty and glory not seen there by any one else. And often when she returned in the early morning from a lonely home where she had watched the sick by night, she would gather a few flowers with the morning dew still on them and place them on the wooden shelf before the Holy Child and His Blessed Mother. And so Sister Marianna's life was full of sunshine, for in toiling for the Lord she had found the hidden sweetness that lies stored in common things.

But the time came—poor Sister!—when her step grew heavy, as one winter day after day she climbed the steep mountain path covered by snow to a poor rough home, far away from neighbors. And her rosy cheeks grew pale as night after night she nursed the poor young mother lying there helpless in her dingy room attacked by a malicious disease. Many a night the good Sister watched and during the day she had little rest, for her heart was with the poor patient and her babe. The husband had gone to the plains to seek for work when the young wife was taken ill and now word was slow to reach him. Waiting and hoping, patient and nurse prayed for the husband's return.

Weeks went by and the young mother grew more feeble. In vain did Sister Marianna try every simple cure she knew. The doctor had given up hope and had left his last instructions. And the priest had done his last office. Sister Marianna was left alone with the mother and the child, all unaided, still to watch and think and labour with what little strength she had. Two days more the patient lay sleeping and Sister Marianna watched beside the bed, saying prayers to help the soul departing and rocking the baby in her lap. Then something stirred within her heart.

And she spake with eyes dilated and her soul in every word, as to one she saw before her: "Thou hast been a child, my Lord! Thou hast lain as small and speechless as this infant on my knees; then, oh listen to my plea; Lord, remember for one moment what Thy Mother was to Thee! Oh, for love of Thine Own Mother, save the mother of this child!"

Then she paused and waited breathless, for she knew and felt that the Lord was there in the room listening to her passionate appeal. And she bowed her head and a strange light came in her eyes, for her soul had heard the answer that the young mother would not die.

And now night came, a lonely night. The wind and rain beat against the door and window. And Marianna, faint and weary with the strain of many days, lighted a fire on the hearth, for the poor woman she cared for would need to eat before the morning. So she prepared a dish that would strengthen the patient, a dish made of food brought from the convent. The food had to be prepared with care, and Marianna planned to do her best. But oh, she was so weary for want of sleep and rest. "Now, Lord, help me this night's labour to complete," said the Sister. And she placed the broth upon the fire, stirring it to keep it from burning. But so sleepy was the poor Sister that the spoon kept falling from her hand. Then again she would rouse herself and struggle bravely to drive off the languor. Fear filled her heart that she might faint from fatigue and no neighbors were near and the storm was raging outside. Her head ached strangely as it never did before. "Oh good Lord, only help me through the night that my eyes may not close till the mother and babe are safe."

But her pleading was in vain. Sleep had conquered and her prayer died away in a faint murmur. She slept the sleep of the weary, unconscious of how the hours sped on. Her head reclining against the wall, the firelight flared and flickered on her pale, peaceful face. And the broth was on the fire all untended. Had the Lord not heard her prayer? So earnestly she had pleaded for just a little more strength. The Lord has many ways to answer prayers—ways that His children think not of.

A long time she sat there sleeping in front of the fire. But the fire-wood kept burning and the pot boiled gently. And when suddenly, with a sense of guilt, the Sister awoke at last, a strange and sweet vision greeted her eyes. At her feet, near the fire, stood a child watching the boiling pot and keeping the fire alive. And when the child turned his face towards her and smiled, she knew that it was the Holy Child. It was the Lord who stood before her, the Child Jesus. When her willing hands had failed, when her weary eyes were closed, He had finished all she had failed in; He had watched while she rested. Sister Marianna did not shrink or start, for her faithful heart was filled with joy. When afterwards curious lips would ask the Sister how the Child looked, all she would say was: "I knew it was He, my heart melted and you also will know when you meet Him."

With that one sweet look and smile the Child passed away from her vision. But the peace it left in her heart lasted till her dying hour. The storm had ceased and the morning star was shining through the window. When later the sun was rising and Sister Marianna looked out, softly opening the door to let in the morning breeze, she saw through the trees a moving form. It was the husband

returning home. Leaving joy behind her in that home of many tears, Marianna returned to the convent. There was music in her heart. And gathering a few flowers on her way, she placed them lovingly on the little shelf before the Holy Mother and her Child. (From the *Prabuddha Bharata,* India)

REPORT

Since Swami Paramananda lectured, on the invitation of Miss Anna Maud Hallam, before the Convention of Applied Psychology last September in Cleveland, he has received urgent invitations to lecture all through the East and Middle West. In response to some of these he set out on November 27th. His first stop was in Rochester, where he spoke before the Club of Practical Psychology. So great was the interest shown that he was asked to hold a class on the following day before leaving for Syracuse, where he went to deliver a lecture for the Practical Psychology Club of that city. The meeting was held in the Universalist Church and every available space was filled with eager listeners, a number of whom persuaded the Swami to speak for them again the next morning before he returned to Rochester. In Rochester he gave a second lecture in the large hall of Exposition Park and at its close he was carried away to another meeting where he was kept busy until midnight answering questions. Cleveland was his next stop. His first lecture here was scheduled for the Hotel Winton; but the crowd which gathered nearly half an hour before the meeting so far exceeded the capacity of the hall engaged, that it became necessary to secure larger accommodations. Nothing spacious enough being available, some one suggested opening the lunch room. It was quickly filled and in order to be seen and heard, the Swami was forced to convert the lunch counter

into a rostrum. On Friday morning he held a class and in the afternoon he went with Dr. E. Thayer Ward, National Secretary of the Associated Clubs of Applied Psychology, to address the Psychology Club of Youngstown. The lecture, which was preceded by a banquet, was given in the Auditorium of the Young Men's Christian Association and so numerous was the attendance that even after filling aisles, platform, and doorways, several hundred people were turned away.

Saturday Swami spoke twice in Cleveland again—before the New Life League in the afternoon and in the evening under the auspices of another Club. Sunday was a very full day. In the forenoon he addressed the Unity Study Club on "Efficacy of Silence and Prayer"; in the afternoon he spoke on "Psychology of Yoga" for Dr. Grumbine at his New Thought Church; and in the evening he delivered a final lecture at the Hotel Winton on "Law of Compensation." He left Cleveland at midnight and spent Monday morning with the members of the Vedanta Study Group in Cincinnati. Monday evening he lectured for the Psychology Club of Indianapolis and on Tuesday morning he reached St. Louis. He began his work at 3 p. m. with a class in a private drawing-room, and at 8 p. m. he delivered his principal lecture in the auditorium of the Wednesday Club. The audience was a very large one and great enthusiasm was manifested. The president of the Club announced that the public lecture would be followed by a practical concentration class at half past ten, and a number remained despite the late hour to profit by the special opportunity. The following morning the Swami held another class and he closed his visit with a second public lecture in the evening on "Upbuilding of Body and Mind." He spoke in Cincinnati on Thursday night, and on Friday returned to Boston.

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KARMA AND FATE

Lecture by Swami Paramananda

The great Aryan law-giver of ancient times, Manu, tells us that we cannot gather what we do not sow; as we plant the tree, so it will grow. The kind of seeds we sow, according to that we must reap. There is no such thing as chance in Nature. Nothing happens accidentally. Good fortune or misfortune, pleasing conditions or trials, come to us because consciously or unconsciously we attract them; we draw them into our life. They come as the reactions of our own actions. Whenever we do something ignoble, at some time we must suffer from it; not because there is a relentless Providence, whose task it is to punish us; but because our own better self has a sense of justice and until we make amends for our unworthy action, it will not allow us to feel free. A man may murder another in secret; no one may know anything about it; yet his own thought of it will haunt him until he can no longer bear it and he finds relief in confessing it. Does this not show that we cannot evade the greater forces of life? We create a moral obligation by our deeds; and however we may try to avoid it, sooner or later we are forced to pay every debt we incur. Until that is done, we cannot make the best use of new opportunities. But it is not only the fruit of our mistakes that we gather. We reap blessings also as we deserve them; and they become permanently ours because we have earned them.

In India this great idea of Karma, which is a Sanskrit term meaning action and reaction, cause and effect, is deeply rooted. Western scientists take full account of the law of cause and effect on the physical plane, but the Indian sages claim that it operates just as truly on the higher planes. Our present life is the culmination of our past; our to-day is the result of our yesterday, and to-morrow will be the result of to-day. Our future life will be what we make it now by our thoughts and deeds and aspirations. Buddha told His disciples that man is the product of his own thought, he is made up of his thought, because thoughts are a great deal more vital than actions. Everything which happens in the physical has its counterpart in the spiritual. It exists in seed form there. Our actions therefore cannot be productive of good unless our thoughts are first brought into harmony with the spiritual forces of our being.

Some people believe that it is their fate to be born in certain surroundings and conditions, that they are powerless to change them, so it is useless to exert themselves to counteract them. This is a very erroneous notion, both from the spiritual and from the material point of view. There is no such thing as permanence in this world of impermanency. When a little misfortune comes to us then, why should we take it as a final issue in life? It has a purpose, no doubt. These passing conditions have a great deal to teach us. When a man is confronted with loss or failure, he should not regard it as a great curse, over which he must sit in a corner and brood. On the contrary, it holds a valuable lesson for him. It may be that through it he is paying off a debt, which, when paid, will free him from some binding condition.

These experiences are not so terrible as they seem to be when we accept them with shallow understanding. Make a study of the lives of great men. Through how many hard-

ships and struggles and privations have they passed! There are certain difficult experiences in our life which quicken our inner powers much more effectively than any amount of ease and prosperity could ever do. Life means training and discipline. Those who are afraid of these never make any headway spiritually; and our physical life is governed largely by our spiritual understanding. When a man who has no comprehension of higher laws is confronted with miseries, he sees only one way of escape open to him—suicide. But does he escape from his miseries? No. Because he carries the cause of his misery in his own consciousness.

People of small understanding who take this span of existence to be all in all, cannot help but resent it when they see some one who has more than they or who succeeds where they fail. But if they could grasp the fundamental principle that nothing happens accidentally, that each one receives what he earns, they would not have such harsh, bitter feelings towards their fellowmen or towards Divine Providence. The law of Karma explains why things take place as they do in this world. A person is born deformed or blind; if we try to explain it by saying that it is God's will, we make God whimsical and arbitrary. The Indo-Aryan sages did not throw the blame on Providence; they found within the individual soul the elements which created the condition. We may not suffer the consequence of our act at once, but a record of it is graven on our own life and character; and even though we may escape from the human law, we cannot escape from the Divine law of which we are a part. That will find us out, wherever we may go, and call us to account. Thus we bring on ourselves whatever overtakes us. We reward ourselves and we punish ourselves. Therefore wise men are not overeager to seize momentary pleasures, which later on may lead to unhappiness.

This life truly can be called a harvest field. Upon this field we sow the seeds of our daily living—good seeds or bad seeds. If we yield to our lower impulses, we block the way to spiritual things and our life will be full of misery. But if through our thoughts and actions and aspirations, day by day and little by little, we make ourselves fitting instruments for God's power to express itself, we shall work out our salvation and the salvation of humanity. A person who looks wholly to his own good, who thinks solely of his own interests, is of small mind and attains only small ends. Our good must include the good of others. Our happiness must include the happiness of others. We cannot have any happiness or peace without including those who stand next to us.

We must cultivate a bigger point of view. We must not consider immediate returns only. That is the way we are trapped. We yield to the fascination of momentary glory; and when it fades, a mark of unhappiness and resentment against our own self is left. The greatest curse is when we doubt ourselves; and nothing awakens doubt within our own soul so quickly as our failures, which are often the result of misguided zeal. We do things hastily, unthinkingly; then when the reactions come, we feel powerless to cope with them and we say it is our fate. But what we make we have the power to unmake. That is one of the great principles of the Vedic teaching. Our present life conditions, whether good or evil, are the result of finite actions, finite causes; hence they cannot be everlasting. For that reason in India they have never believed in eternal perdition. There is a passage in one of the Upanishads which says that the knower of Truth is full of bliss and free from fear. Fear is the product of the selfish instinct in man. He is afraid of endangering his own interest. It is always the lack of understanding which lies at the root of all fear and depression; but as soon as we gain a larger

perspective, fear leaves us and in its place come trust and surrender.

We shape our destiny by our daily living. It may seem an arrogant attitude to say that a man is the maker of his own destiny; but it is not arrogance, it is understanding. Suppose that God moulds our destiny and bestows upon us this or that? There must be some reason why He bestows one thing rather than another. The reason lies in us. We provide the material out of which He makes our destiny. We cannot escape from the responsibility of our actions whichever way we turn. We cannot bribe Providence, as many believe. They think it does not matter how they cheat their fellow-beings or what kind of life they lead, so long as they maintain their connection with some church. They imagine that loyalty to a creed will give them a passport to heaven, but the only passport which will carry them to heaven is in their own hearts. It is not anything exterior. When we understand this, we refuse to take advantage of others. If we can make people, especially the more ignorant, understand that their good fortune and ill fortune are justly earned by themselves; that no one can give them something unless they deserve it; and no one can deprive them of what they have earned; they will have a different attitude towards life. They will refrain from doing harm to others, because they will understand that it will react upon their own life. We cannot have a slave without being a slave; we cannot make another unhappy without being unhappy ourselves.

We have the power to express ourselves through the best avenues; they are all open to us. A man can act just as well on the right course as on the wrong. The wrong way reacts upon him, brings a blemish on his life, mars his own happiness and that of his fellow-beings. Why not avoid these reactions by taking proper care before the seed is rooted in the soil of

life? Some one does us an injury; indignation rises in our heart; we begin to brood over it, until it seizes upon our mind and we give way to a revengeful act; then we suffer and make others suffer. The highest course is to take precautions at the very outset. We must so order our life on the basis of higher understanding that these reactions cannot occur. There are people who wish to have all happiness and no misery, but that is not the way life runs. We cannot take the one without the other. We have to learn to maintain our balance. When we meet with good fortune, we must not become over-elated; and when we meet with ill-fortune, we must not be overwhelmed by it.

When we have the proper understanding spirit, it is not for us a question of how much we have or what we have. It is a question of what benefit we may reap from each experience of life. A great man benefits wherever he is placed. If he is placed under privations, he finds his exaltation there; if he is surrounded by riches, instead of being haughty and aggressive, he becomes the friend of the poor. He understands the law of life, so he is not carried away by outer conditions, nor does he swing to extremes. Sometimes we are not able to see why certain things come to us in this life. We do not seem to have done anything to deserve them. Perhaps the cause lies in a past life. Our present existence has not sprung from nothing. We have brought our ideas, our instincts, our good feelings and also our obstacles with us. But that does not mean that since this life is the product of Karma, its conditions are inevitable. No matter what we have brought, we can adjust and readjust and remould. Even our body may be changed by our thought and action and by the atmosphere we create within our self.

Life is like a scale. The weight of evil may be on one side, but we can counterbalance it by loving, constructive thought

and good action. A man must become strong; and as he grows in strength, he realizes his inherent nature and ceases to weep and wail and find fault with the conditions of his life. He lifts his head and goes through every sort of condition, trusting in the Divine. Remember that no man is self-sufficient. He may have a brilliant intellect, a healthy body, many things to his advantage; but never for one moment must we imagine that we do not need the support of Divine Providence. He is a mad man who thinks he can get on without God. The more we know of life, the more we know of higher principles, the more eager we shall be to ally ourselves with Divinity. All ideas of fate and bondage vanish when we throw off the shackles of self-consciousness. As soon as we have found our connection with Divinity, our individual responsibility ends. God becomes responsible for us; and when our responsibility is in His hands, our life cannot be productive of harm. Our task is to cleanse ourselves. We should cleanse our mind, our heart, the whole sphere of our consciousness, that the great Life may shine upon us and through us.

A life of activity offers the opportunity of tremendous blessing to humanity. We wipe out our past through our actions and also we accumulate fresh causes for unhappiness. We must not be in haste. If we believe in prayer, let us pray before we act. If we have any idea of philosophy or religion, let us take that as our companion in all our tasks. Let us never leave it. It is the greatest support we can have. When we do not possess the sense of consecration, we lose our opportunities. Work is productive. It can be productive of incalculable good; also it can be productive of harm to us. It all depends upon ourselves. We have enough free will to choose our course. A man can love the good so much that he is willing to forsake all evil for it; and he can also form the habit of evil association and vulgar thoughts. Habit is a tremend-

ous influence in our life. We can cultivate the habit of loving and doing good to others; and by thus eliminating all that is base and wiping out our past, we can mould a beautiful future. All our happiness lies in the dawn of wisdom. We do not love darkness. We never feel comfortable or happy or free when we are in darkness; therefore we should always march towards the light.

It is not the kind of action which determines our merit; it is the motive. It is the motive which regenerates every human being. Where or how we are placed is of little consequence; it is what our feeling and thought and motive are. If we are actuated by nobility of purpose, no matter how insignificant our starting point may be, it will carry us over all difficult situations to the ultimate goal of unity—unity with God and unity with humanity. All the harsh, discordant feelings which dominate our life now will drop away and we shall realize that life is a great, abundant blessing. We shall be happy that we are living, that we can serve and that we can radiate God's grace through our thoughts and actions.

PRAYER

O Lord, Who art our Guide even unto death, grant us, I pray Thee, grace to follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest. In little daily duties to which Thou callest us, bow down our wills to simple obedience, patience under pain or provocation, strict truthfulness of word and manner, humility, kindness; in great acts of duty or perfection, if Thou shouldest call us to them, uplift us to self-sacrifice, heroic courage, laying down of life for Thy truth's sake, or for a brother. Amen.

—*C. G. Rossetti.*

The best days of a man's life are those in which he renders service. —*Abu 't Tarif.*

THE HOUSE OF LIFE

From the Hako—A Pawnee Indian Ceremony

(Taken from a poetical rendering by Prof. Hartley Burr Alexander of Miss Alice Fletcher's Report of the Ceremony published by the Bureau of American Ethnology.)

Within the House of Life man entereth,
A little Child with slow and faltering feet:
The breathing Heaven is in his fluttering breath,
The pulse of Earth in his swift blood doth beat.

Within the House of Life man tarrieth,
As one who for a season taketh rest:
The Blue above, below the grassy Earth,—
An oriole within a wind-swept nest.

Within the House of Life man offereth
The simple tokens of his daily need,
His prayer for food and drink, in humble faith
That some dim distant Power shall give
them heed.

Then from the House of Life he hasteneth . . .
Aye, as an Eagle in his feathered mail
Battleth adown the blast with windy Death,
Speedeth the Warrior-Soul with battle-hail!

Even a journey involving thousands of miles must begin with a single step. When going to a distant place, one must ever start from where one is. So likewise when advancing on the true Path. If one goes on learning and doing without ceasing for decades, he will reach eventually to a great distance and accomplish much. If a tradesman saves a sen daily he will finally become a rich man.

—*Kaibara Ekken, (Japanese moralist).*

REALIZATION OF THE DIVINE SELF

By Swami Vivekananda

(Notes of informal conversations)

Only in the highest state of realization can a man say truly that he is directed wholly by God's Will and is not responsible for his own actions. When your mind has been purified by work and you see that it is He Who is causing all action, then alone have you the right to speak in that way. Stop and think whether all you do in your daily life is not done with the egotistic idea that you yourself are the agent. How long do you remember that it is the Lord Who is working through you? Yet, by repeatedly reminding yourself, you will arrive at a state where the ego will disappear and in its place the Lord will come. Then you will be able to say with truth: "Thou, Lord, art directing all my actions from within." If, however, the ego occupies all the space in your heart, where is there room for the Lord? The Lord is forced to be absent.

Is God the cause of our evil impulses?

No. It is a blasphemy to think in that way. He is not inciting you to evil action. Your wrong impulses are the creation of your desire for self-gratification. If a man says that everything is done by God and then persists in wrong-doing, he brings ruin on himself. This is the origin of self-deception. Do you not feel elated after you have done a good deed? You give yourself the credit then of doing something good; you cannot help it, it is human. But how absurd to take the credit of the good act on yourself, and to lay the blame for the evil act on the Lord! This is a most dangerous idea, the effect of ill-digested Gita and Vedanta. Never hold this view. Rather say that He causes the good work to be done, while you yourself are responsible for the evil action. That will give you greater devotion and faith, and you will see His grace manifested at every step.

The real truth is that no one has created you. You have created yourself. This is discrimination. This is Vedanta. But a man cannot understand this before he attains realization. Therefore the aspirant should begin with the dualistic standpoint, that the Lord causes the good actions while he is responsible for the evil. This is the easiest way to the purification of the mind. It is very difficult to hold monistic ideas at the outset; but the dualistic point of view gradually leads to the realization of *Advaita* or pure monism. If there is no wilful self-deception and a man sincerely believes that even the most wicked impulse also springs from the Lord, be assured that he will not continue to perform evil actions very long. All the impurities of his mind will be destroyed quickly. . . .

Within there is the lion, the eternally pure, illumined and ever free *Atman* or Divine Self; and directly one realizes Him through meditation and concentration, this world of fleeting manifestation vanishes. He is equally present in all; and the more a man practises, the more quickly will the Kundalini (the "coiled-up" power) awaken in him. When this power reaches the head, his vision will be unobstructed; he will realize the *Atman*. Some attain this early and others later. One must stick to it, determined never to let go. This is true manliness. You must keep the mind fixed on one object, like an unbroken stream of oil. The ordinary man's mind is scattered over different objects; at the time of meditation, too, the mind is apt to wander. But let thoughts arise in the mind as they will, while you sit calmly and watch them. By continuing to watch in this way the mind becomes calm and no more thought-waves rise in it. These waves represent the thought activities of the mind. Those ideas which you think very deeply, transform themselves into a subconscious current and come up to the surface again in meditation. The rise of these

waves during meditation is an evidence that your mind is tending towards concentration.

Sometimes the mind is concentrated on a set of ideas; this is called meditation with *Vikalpa* or oscillation. When the mind becomes free from all activity, it melts into the inner Self, into that One which is the essence of infinite knowledge and itself its own support. This is what is called *Nirvikalpa* Samadhi, (free from all the seeds of activity). Meditate every day alone. Everything will open up of itself. Now the Divine Mother, the embodiment of Illumination, is sleeping within; hence you do not understand this. She is the Kundalini. When before meditating you proceed to purify the nerves, you must strike hard mentally on the Kundalini in the sacral plexus and repeat: "Arise, Mother, Arise!" One must practise these exercises with moderation. During meditation suppress the emotional side altogether. That is a great source of danger. Those who are very emotional, no doubt succeed in drawing the Kundalini up more quickly; but it is as quick to come down again; and when it comes down, it leaves the devotee in a state of utter misery.

Practise meditation and concentration with the utmost care. At the outset take such external help as will make the mind pure. Place fragrant flowers in your sanctuary and burn incense. Repeat the name of your Ideal and say "Peace be to all creatures and to the whole universe." Send loving wishes to the north, south, east, west, above, below, in all directions; then begin to meditate. During the early stages one must practise in this way. Do not skip a single day. If you have pressing work, still go through your spiritual exercises for a quarter of an hour at least. Can you reach the goal without steadfast devotion?

Always try to become absorbed in the eternally present *Atman*. If once you get the vision of the *Atman*, you get every-

thing; and the bonds of birth and death will be broken. . . . Every one, from the worm to Brahma, will attain *Mukti* (freedom). Be possessed of *Shraddha* (faith) and *Virya* (courage), attain to the knowledge of the *Atman*, and sacrifice your life for the good of others—this is my wish and blessing.

THE TYRANNY OF DESIRE

From the Shanti-Parva of the Mahabharata

He who regards everything—joy and sorrow, honor and insult—with an equal eye; who never strives to gratify his desire for earthly possessions, who practises truthfulness of speech, who is freed from all kinds of attachment, and who has no craving for (selfish) activity, that one, O Bharata, is a happy man.

These five, the ancients say, are the means by which one acquires perfect tranquillity and emancipation. These are called Heaven. These constitute Religion. Upon these rests the highest happiness.

The person who desires happiness should renounce all attachment. The man who is without attachments and who no longer cherishes a desire to earn earthly possessions, can sleep peacefully.

Of these two,—one who attains the fruition of all his desires and one who casts off every desire: the second, who renounces all, is superior to the other who gains the fruit of his desire. No one can ever attain to the end of desire.

Forbear from every desire for action. O my soul, thou art possessed by cupidity. Adapt tranquillity by freeing thyself from all attachments. Repeatedly hast thou been deceived. How is it that still thou dost not free thyself from attachments?

O my wealth-coveting, foolish soul, when wilt thou succeed in emancipating thyself from the desire for earthly things?

Shame on my folly. I have become thy toy. It is thus that one falls into slavery.

No one born on earth ever reached the end of desire, no one yet to be born will succeed in attaining it. Casting aside all covetous action, at last I am roused from sleep. I am now awake!

I know thee, O Desire, and all those things that are dear to thee! Seeking to satisfy thee, I shall find happiness in my (Divine) Self.

O Desire, I know thy root. Thou springest from self-will. Therefore I shall avoid self-will. Thus shalt thou be destroyed with thy roots.

The desire for earthly things can never be fraught with happiness. If acquired, great is the anxiety felt by the one who acquires them. If lost after acquisition, that is felt as death. Acquisition also is very uncertain. . . .

If I continue to be agitated by thee, O Desire, I shall be without a fixed path (by which to reach liberation). Thou, O Desire, art always the generator of thirst, of grief, of weariness and toil.

At last, after a long time, I have come to understand that the desire for earthly things is fraught with sorrow. Whatever the object, O Desire, upon which thou settest thy heart, that thou forcest me to pursue. Thou art without judgment. Thou art a fool. Thou art difficult to content. Thou canst not be gratified. Thou burnest like fire. . . .

I cast thee off, O Desire, with all the passions of my heart. Thou shalt not again dwell with me or sport with me.

I shall forgive those who slander me or speak ill of me. I shall not injure even when injured. If any one from aversion speaks harsh words of me, not heeding those words I shall speak to him friendly words. In contentment of heart and with all my senses at peace, I shall live upon what I may earn.

I shall not contribute to the gratification of thy cravings, who art my foe. Freedom from attachment, liberation from desire, contentment, tranquillity, truthfulness, self-restraint, forgiveness and universal compassion, these are the qualities which now have come to me.

Therefore let desire, greed, thirst, miserliness, avoid me. I have chosen the path of Goodness.

Having cast off desire and greed, great is my happiness. No longer shall I yield to the impulse of covetousness. No longer shall I suffer misery like a person of uncleansed soul.

One obtains happiness according to the measure of desire he is able to cast off. Truly, he who yields himself up to desire always suffers misery.

Like a person plunging into a cool lake in the hot season, so have I now entered into Brahma, (the Divine). I have given up selfish activity. I have freed myself from grief. Pure happiness has now come to me.

The felicity that results from the gratification of desire, or that other pure felicity which one enjoys in heaven: neither of these compares even to a sixteenth part of the joy which arises when one abandons every kind of thirst.

The Duke of She asked Tsze-loo about Confucius and Tsze-loo did not answer him. The Master said: Why did you not say to him: He is simply a man who in his eager pursuit of knowledge forgets his food, who in the joy of its attainment forgets his sorrows, and who does not perceive that old age is coming on?

The Master said: The reason why the ancients did not give utterance readily to their words was that they feared lest their actions might not come up to them. . . When Tsze-loo heard anything, if he had not carried it into practice, he was only afraid lest he should hear something else.

—*Confucian Analects.*

GENTLENESS AND CHEERFULNESS

From the Letters of St. Francis de Sales

Be steadfast, my dear child, aim at being God's servant as perfectly as possible. Be very watchful as to gentleness. I do not bid you love that which you ought to love, I know you do so; but I bid you strive to be even, patient and gentle. Control the ebullitions of your natural temperament, which is somewhat over-quick and eager. I wish I had a heavy hammer wherewith to pound away the edges of your mind, which are too sharp for your spiritual progress. I have often told you that devotion must be pursued in good faith and on a broad scale. If you do well, thank God for it; if ill, humble yourself. Do not be fearful any more and do not fret your poor conscience. You know that all you need is to seek the Lord's love and give Him yours. Do this, my dear child, and diligently cultivate gentleness and inward humility.

We always want sugar in our food, that is, we want to enjoy conscious love and kindness and their pleasantness, just as we would fain be free from all imperfections; but we must patiently bear with our nature, which is human and not angelic. I do not mean that we are to rest satisfied with our imperfections. But we ought not to be discouraged or surprised; we should learn from our failings submission, humility and mistrust of self; never despondency and sadness, much less mistrust of God's love for us. He does not love our imperfections, but He loves us in spite of them. Just as a mother grieves over her child's weakness and faultiness, yet still loves him most tenderly, so God cherishes us, notwithstanding all our frailty.

Be cheerful. Our Lord looks lovingly upon you and the weaker you are, the greater His tenderness. Do not allow your mind to dwell upon anything contrary to this. If vexatious thoughts arise, do not dally with them; turn away and look to God with a brave humility; dwell upon His infinite goodness,

which has regard to our frail, needy humanity in all its infirmity. I cannot understand why those who have given themselves up to God and His goodness are not always cheerful, for what possible happiness can be equal to that? No accidents or imperfections which may happen ought to have power to trouble them or hinder their looking upward. Be tranquil and abide in gentleness and humility of heart.

God calls us to Him and He allows nothing to happen save what is for our real good. He knows what we are; when we come to rough places, He will always uphold us with His Fatherly hand, so that we be not hindered. But to respond to this grace we need an absolute trust in Him. Do not look forward to the changes and chances of this life in fear; rather look to them with full hope that as they arise, God, Whose you are, will deliver you out of them. He has kept you hitherto; do you but hold fast to His dear hand and He will lead you safely through all things; and when you cannot stand, He will bear you up in His arms. What need you fear, my child, remembering you are God's and that He has said: "All things work together for good to them that love Him." Do not look forward to what may happen to-morrow; the same Everlasting Father who cares for you to-day, will take care of you to-morrow and every day. Either He will shield you from suffering or He will give you unfailing strength to bear it.

Be at peace, then; put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginations; and say continually: "The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart has trusted in Him and I am helped." He is not only with me, but in me and I in Him. What can a child fear surrounded by such a Father's arms? Be truly as a child. You know children do not trouble themselves with looking forward; they leave that to others and are perfectly content so long as they are near their father. Do this, my dear child, and you will be at peace.

PARABLES

From the Hagadic Writings of Israel

Rabbi Jonathan said: "The potter does not try the vessels that have been made imperfectly, because he does not doubt that if he strikes them even once, it will break them. But he tries the fair vessels; for however many times he may strike them, they will not be broken. So he strikes them to show the purchaser how strong and good they are." Thus, God does not try the wicked but the righteous, and their trials show their virtue to the world.

Rabbi Jose bar Chanina said: "This is like unto the weaver of a fabric. The more he strikes at it and cuts at it, the more it is praised, and the more does it acquire a good name. When he knows the fabric is bad, he does not dare to cut at it even once, for fear of tearing it." Thus the Holy One, blessed be He, does not try the wicked but the righteous.

Behold this may be likened to the goodman of the house who has two heifers; one healthy and strong the other weak. On which of them will he put the yoke? Is it not upon the healthy and strong one?

There was a certain king who made a feast and invited to it all the wayfarers and strangers in his dominions; but he made a decree that every man should bring with him something to sit upon at the feast. Some brought with them beautiful and comfortable cushions, and some brought sofas to recline upon, and some brought logs of wood, and some brought stones and boulders. The king provided everything for the nourishment and entertainment of all comers, but ordered that each man should sit, at the feast, on the couch or seat that he had made or brought for himself.

Then they who were sitting on logs and stones and other uncomfortable and ugly seats, grumbled at the king and said:

"Is it to the honour of the king that we should be sitting

here in such discomfort, on stones and bits of wood?"

And when the king heard their complaints he said to them: "Is it not enough for you that you disgrace my palace with stones and logs, my palace that I have built and beautified at so much cost; but will you also insult me and fasten an accusation upon me? Your honour and splendour are such as you make for yourselves."

A certain king had a vineyard and he hired a great number of labourers to work in it. There was among them one labourer who worked better and more quickly than all the others and even more than was necessary. What did the king? He took him by the hand and walked about the vineyard talking with him. And at eventide all the labourers came to receive their reward, and that labourer came with them, and the king paid him for the full day.

Then the other labourers complained. They said: "Behold we have worked all the day while this one only worked two hours, and the king has given him a full day's pay!"

Then the king said: "What right have you to be envious? This one did more in his two hours of proper work than you did who toiled all the day."

The righteous are compared to the stars. For, as the stars (each one of which could burn up this whole world) shine in glory and never clash together and are never jealous of one another, but all go on in their appointed courses, dispensing light, so the righteous are at peace with each other and are glad when others shine.

It happened that a certain poor woman brought a handful of flour to the temple as an offering, and the priest looked at it with contempt and said: "What is this to bring as an offering? What is there in this to eat?" Then that priest was rebuked in a vision . . . and the Divine voice said to him: "Thou shalt not look with contempt upon her. It is as if she had offered her own life."

THIRTEENTH ANNIVERSARY

Of The Vedanta Centre of Boston

The Vedanta Centre of Boston celebrated its thirteenth Anniversary on the evening of January fifth. The Chapel was entirely filled and every one expressed great admiration for the additions and improvements in the house. After music and a few words of welcome by Swami Paramananda, the report of the year's work was given. It ran: "The best commentary on the growth of the Centre during 1921 is to be seen in the numerous additions to the building. The enlarged entrance, the entirely new structure covering the remaining portion of the property, the raising of the rear wing another story, and the addition of a fourth story to the front of the main building practically amounted to a complete reconstruction. As a result of the various additions, the Centre now has six more bedrooms and two more baths, a large sun-parlor, four more storerooms, a number of additional storage closets, a much larger kitchen, an enlarged dining-room, a new laundry, a reconstructed furnace room with an entirely new heating system, and a spacious work-room for the use of the publication department and the mailing of the magazine. The remodelling has also necessitated the repainting and repapering of the entire house. One of the most effective changes is the building of the new entrance porch lighted by Gothic windows. This has made possible a re-arrangement of partitions inside which has increased materially the seating capacity of the Chapel. In the large main Gothic window of the porch the symbol of the Ramakrishna Mission, which appears on all the Centre's publications and stationery, has been reproduced in stained glass, and in the arched division below is inserted the Vedic text: "Truth is one, men call it by various names."

As if stimulated by the fresh setting, the work has shown a great increase in activity. The added rows of chairs in the

Chapel are already occupied each Sunday and people keep warning us that our enlargements will prove insufficient before the season is over. The Centre has had also unusual opportunities during the past year to act as a link between East and West. Sir Rabindranath Tagore was entertained on three different occasions; and a prominent physician of Bombay, (Dr. Nair) with his entire family spent a day with us. Still other prominent visitors have come to the Centre. It has made many new friends also through "The Message of the East," as well as through the Swami's outside lectures and travels. In September he attended a large Convention of Applied Psychology in Cleveland, delivering two lectures and speaking several times informally. As the outcome of the warm interest aroused, the Swami has been besieged with invitations to lecture before the different Clubs represented at the Convention. On the last day of November he set out on a tour arranged by their National Secretary. During the twelve days it covered, he visited seven cities in four different states and delivered twenty-two lectures, sometimes speaking three times a day. The best measure of the enthusiasm and appreciation which met him everywhere is to be found in the fact that in the twelve days eighteen hundred of his books and pamphlets were sold. A number also subscribed to "The Message of the East."

Through the year the magazine has received encouraging words from many unexpected quarters: one, for instance, from a Russian refugee in Switzerland, a professor of Chinese literature, who found an early bound volume in a second hand book stall and drew from it fresh strength to bear his poverty and exile. The Message now travels each month to England, France, Germany, Switzerland, British East Africa, India, Ceylon, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, British Columbia and to many different states in this country. It was interesting to

us also to receive Hindi translations of three of Swami Paramananda's works,—"Problem of Life and Death," "Self-Mastery" and "The Way of Peace and Blessedness." The same translator brought out the Swami's "Path of Devotion" last year.

Because of the confusion incident to building, the publication department has not been as active as usual during the last twelve months. In all, through mail orders and local sales, about seven thousand books and pamphlets have gone into circulation. But no new titles have been added to the list of publications. These figures, however, do not give the true measure of the growth of the work. Its real achievement is unseen and unmeasured. It is in the stillness of the closet, when the door is closed and some yearning heart seeks God—it is then that the fruit of the Centre's effort is garnered; and that none but God sees. Therefore our part must always be not to count costs or calculate results, but by holy thoughts and eager loving service to keep the central source of inspiration free and unclouded."

In his commentary on the report, the Swami said in part: "I came to Boston about Christmas time, 1908. I had no idea of building up a work of this size; in fact I had no plans, but I was ready and willing to do anything that came to me to do. I went where I was invited, I slept and ate wherever I happened to be; my life was wholly planless; and that is the way the Centre started. My purpose was not to proselytize or to establish a church. The message I brought, it seemed to me, had a tremendous human appeal and I gave it whereever an opportunity presented itself. At first it was not easy. There was opposition and a great deal of misunderstanding. People had an idea that the Orient was full of mystery, and they were amazed to know that India had so simple and direct a teaching to offer the world. . . . Our mission here is

to create unity—unity of thought and unity of culture. Although the vital aim of the work is to fulfill the spiritual need of those who seek it, it has also another definite purpose,—to bring together East and West.

This little seed which has been sown here in the form of a very modest Centre, is bearing fruit in various ways. I do not consider it a big work. I have not the ambition to build up a big work in the outer sense. When a religious work grows pretentious, often the higher expression of feeling is lost. I like rather to feel that we are humble, that our bigness lies in the ideals we uphold and try to live up to. We have not always met with success, but we have tried to go forward with a steadfast spirit of devotion. And it is our prayer at the beginning of the new year that our conviction may be so fixed in our hearts that whether people look on us with suspicion or friendliness, whether they try to crush us or aid us, yet we may maintain a loving spirit of tolerance and deeper understanding. This is what the world has need of. If even a few of these who come here realize this in their hearts, that is enough. Our effort is to eliminate all feeling of harshness, discordance, doubt and suspicion of one another; to break down all boundary lines. We have never tried to organize, because it is difficult to express the highest ideals in a large organization. We stand for freedom, freedom of thought and action; that each one may realize the loftiest and best in his own way. We like to be able to do our share. It does not require a large institution to send out loving thoughts and to pray for one's fellowmen. On the contrary, it is easier to do it when our mind is less distracted by outside influences and concerns. Let the work ever remain modest and let our hearts grow big and full of feeling for others. It does not matter whether people agree or disagree with us. Ours is to love and serve. A spiritual work can be built up only by

putting its trust in God; if He sustains us, then nothing can thwart us. Those of you who are friends of the Centre and have your heart's interest in the work, let this be your prayer for it:—that God's will may be fulfilled in every step of its journey; that we may have ever greater courage; and that we may serve all men with selfless devotion, without asking anything for ourselves."

The exercises closed with a prayer and benediction; and the rest of the evening was spent in informal social intercourse. Refreshments were served and there was music by the gifted violincellist, Miss Florence Colby, who also played at intervals during the exercises.

REPORT

Swami Paramananda spent three days of January in Rochester. On the 16th he delivered a public lecture, on the 17th he lectured before the Psychology Club and on the 18th he spoke in a private drawing room to a group of earnest students who have become specially interested in the teaching. He also held two classes during his stay. In Boston he conducted the two regular Services each Sunday and the open class on Tuesday. The special class for members was resumed on the second Thursday in the month and will continue now until the summer.

* * *

Certain volumes of "The Message of the East" are becoming rare because some numbers in the issues of these years are exhausted and no longer available for further volumes. If any one who has copies of these special numbers cares to return them to us, we shall be glad in exchange to send them any single lecture by Swami Paramananda mentioned in our list of publications. The numbers specially desired are: January 1912; May 1913; June 1914; April, May, August, November of 1915; February, May and November of 1916; March 1918; November 1919.

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Swami Paramananda

of India in charge

FOURTEENTH SEASON—1922

SUNDAY, 11 A. M.—SERVICE WITH ADDRESS

SUBJECTS

Mar.	5*th*	*Creative Power of Silence*
"	12*th*	*Spiritual Optimism*
"	19*th*	*Right-Thinking and Concentration*
"	26*th*	*Divine Presence*

NOTICE

Certain volumes of "The Message of the East" are becoming rare because some numbers in the issues of these years are exhausted and no longer available for further volumes. If any one who has copies of these special numbers cares to return them to us, we shall be glad in exchange to send them any single lecture by Swami Paramananda mentioned in our list of publications. The numbers specially desired are: January 1912; May 1913; June 1914; April, May, August, November of 1915; February, May and November of 1916; March 1918; November 1919.

THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

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

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

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HEALING OF BODY AND MIND

Lecture by Swami Paramananda

Man's life is inter-related. His physical life is so absolutely dependent on his moral and his spiritual life that unless he pay proper heed to these, he can never hope to be healthy. Whenever we violate the spiritual law and try to find a short cut to happiness, the fibre of our moral being is injured and we begin to feel pains and aches in the physical body. When these conditions continue and we do not try to remove them, a mark is made on the mind. Doubt, despair, despondency arise and these react again on the body. The only healing which can be effective then, will be one which brings a regenerating influence into the mind and restores it to its normal state.

How does spiritual healing take place? A sceptic says that it does not take place at all, it is a myth; but it could not be conceived by human minds unless it were founded to some extent at least on fact. All history is filled with accounts of such healing. We read of it in the life of Krishna, in the life of Buddha, in the life of Christ, of Lord Gouranga, of St. Francis. It is love conquering brute force. The force which is moving in the direction of evil is reversed suddenly and becomes a power for good. This is what I call conversion. A man can never be converted by violence or by mere persuasion. He can be transformed permanently only by a spiritual influx

which is so redeeming, so life-giving, so healing, that when he comes in contact with it, he is re-made. Whenever this influence falls upon a receptive heart, it cleanses and exalts the whole nature as a natural sequence; disturbing physical conditions fall away and mental distresses vanish. This is the only real process of healing.

In India spiritual healing has never been practised as a profession, because there they know that God's power cannot be used for any material advantage or with any sense of egotism. Only when we have no ulterior motive, no thought of self, do we become direct channels for it. Our heart must be full of purity, of selfless devotion, of real love for humanity. If on the contrary we take up healing as a profession, expecting a definite return from it, the supply is cut off. Every individual has the right and the power to connect himself with the Infinite Source and be filled constantly with fresh life and understanding. In accomplishing this the mind plays a greater part than the body. We are all anxious to maintain physical health. There is not a person who is not interested in possessing it. But in order to have it, we must acquire a well-ordered mind; because our thoughts and feelings and aspirations will produce either good health or ill health in our body. You may ask, why do so many good people suffer? Suffering is not a curse; bodily illness is not necessarily a punishment. Sometimes it comes to purify and strengthen us. Therefore those who have deeper understanding strive to make the best use of illness. Bodily suffering becomes a blessing when it teaches us to transcend outer conditions and to turn to the soul within.

Each of us is a living part of the Whole, a direct descendant of Godhead; and when we become truly aware of this, it cures all our ailments. In my own life I have known of extreme cases, pronounced hopeless by physicians, which were healed by a mere touch. Yet there was no miracle about it. It was

the transmission of a spiritual power which accomplished it. If any man can resign himself absolutely and unreservedly to the Will of God, in a moment he will be made whole, and he will be able to heal others. The healing takes place by the natural process of life. Ordinarily we seek relief through round-about ways; we seek all our consolation and help from outside; but if we can turn directly within to our own inward resources, we shall get results which will amaze us. The reservoir of life is inexhaustible. So long as we go on crying: "My strength has failed, my usefulness is gone, my faculties have lost their power to act!" we shut ourselves away from the Fountainhead. The fact that we are in that state shows that we have detached ourselves from the Source of life. A branch withers quickly when it is severed from the root, and the root of every human life is God.

If we do not believe that God is the Source of our life, in what can we believe? Can we believe in changeable mundane things and hope for perfect health or happiness through them? No. We may try to reverse the order of our life, but the Cosmic Law does not reverse its order. That is why the fundamental principle of attainment must be always: "Seek ye first the kingdom of Truth, all other things shall be added unto you." Why is it we find this so difficult to follow? Because we do not really believe in it. We may pretend loyalty to a religion, we may pretend to have lofty aspirations, we may pretend devotion to all sorts of ideals with high-sounding names, but mere pretending will not lead us anywhere. We must have real love for an Ideal in our hearts; then not only do we elevate ourselves, but we are able to bring constant benefit to the world. We see this in the lives of the Great Ones. A Buddha, a St. Francis, a man who possesses nothing, becomes a great power. He revolutionizes human society. Even material weapons drop powerless before him. In the life of Gautama Buddha

we read that once the priests out of jealousy plotted to do away with Him and engaged some wicked men to take His life. The men came to Him with drawn swords, but they were disarmed by His gentle exalted bearing and refused to do Him harm. If our faith in the all-conquering power of love is equally genuine, we also shall be victorious over evil. But there can be no compromise. In all circumstances, whether pleasing or unpleasing, we must hold fast to our ideal of love. That love never fails to cure both mind and body. It was by this love that St. Francis conquered and transformed the hearts of the three robbers.

Once three robbers came to the monastery asking for food. Brother Angelo, knowing who they were, drove them away with harsh words. St. Francis, returning from his daily round of begging, heard of it and, sad at heart, he reproached the brother for his lack of loving-kindness. "Take thou this wallet of bread," he said, "and this flask of wine which I have begged, and seek out the robbers. Kneel before them humbly and ask their pardon for thy harshness. Beseech them in my name to offend God no longer by evil-doing. Tell them, if they will do this, that I promise to provide for their needs. Give them to eat, then return hither." Brother Angelo found the robbers, and while they were eating of St. Francis' alms, their hearts were so softened they began to be overwhelmed with remorse for their evil deeds. "Let us go to St. Francis," they said to one another, "and implore Him to save us from our many grievous sins." St. Francis received them lovingly, consoled them with many tender hopeful counsels, and they all became devout members of the Order.

We often say: "I would like to be unselfish; I would like to think noble thoughts, but it is an impossiblity for me." Why should it be an impossibility? If the mind is capable of thinking ignoble thought, it has an equal capacity for loving, con-

structive thought. It is a question of training. Unless we train our body and mind and readjust our habits, it is useless to uphold visionary ideals, which remain mere theories for us. We should be grateful that difficulties come sometimes, because they test our sincerity. They show us whether we are standing on the solid foundation of spiritual conviction. If we are not, it is better that we find it out. Ailments come, misfortunes come; but they prove to be curses only when we fall under their sway. When we are not crushed by them, we rise up with greater strength. This conquest is the greatest thing man can hope for and it comes through the power of the Spirit. Wealth cannot buy it, or learning. Sometimes rather these hinder our efforts, because they confuse our mind and destroy the purity of our vision. If we would have either health or wisdom, we must keep to simplicity and directness in our mental and bodily habits.

The story is told that when Lord Buddha was preaching in the neighborhood of Shravasti, a man of great wealth came to him and said: "World-honored Master, forgive me that I do not prostrate before you with proper reverence; but I suffer miserably from obesity, drowsiness, excessive lethargy and other complaints, which make it impossible for me to move without pain." Buddha, observing the luxuries with which the man was surrounded, asked him: "Have you a desire to know the real cause of your unhappy state? The man assented and Buddha continued: "There are five things which produce the conditions from which you suffer:—opulent dinners, love of sleep, love of pleasure, thoughtlessness and lack of occupation. Begin to exercise control at your meals, and take upon yourself some occupation which will employ your abilities and make you useful to your fellow-men. In doing this you will prolong your life."

The rich man heard the words of the Blessed One and, hav-

ing regained his lightness of body and buoyancy of mind, he returned to the world-honored One afoot and without attendants. "Master," he said, "you have cured my bodily ailments. I come now to seek the enlightenment of my mind." And the Blessed One said: "The worldling nourishes his body, but the wise man nourishes his soul. He who indulges in the satisfaction of his appetites works his own destruction; but he who walks in the path of self-discipline will not only gain salvation from sin, but prolong his life." This may not seem a great miracle. Buddha made only the simplest suggestions. He did not lay His hand on the man and cure him at once, although He might have done that. But such instances of sudden healing to me are not more miraculous than this one, because this has the element of rebuilding the moral fibre; and until that is accomplished, no matter how much we may try to help any one, it will not prove a lasting blessing.

One can be cured by the laying on of hands, by prayer, by transmission of spiritual force, provided the healer is pure, exalted and free from every selfish motive. Often those who are the most powerful healers are not conscious that they are healing. Nor do they wish their power to be known or recognized. Why? Because they are not willing to mix their spirit of consecration to God with the cheaper materials of self-glorification, egotism and vanity. If you are interested in healing, do it; but keep yourself out of it. Bring in God's power and all things will be made whole for you. Do not resort to trivial methods; that is, when you have a little bodily ache or pain, do not focus your thought on it in the hope of escaping from it; or when you think you need a new dress or a new hat, do not expend your precious mental energies in trying to obtain them.

Concentrating your mind to satisfy trifling desires proves always a great detriment to your higher unfoldment, and you should do your utmost by the practice of discrimination to

avoid this mis-step. There are people who by concentrating realize their material ambitions, and they imagine that they possess superior spiritual power, but this is merely a snare, which cheats them of true attainment.

How do you know that what you obtain is good for you? Oftentimes we find that it is not beneficial for us to have a great deal of material prosperity. We may like the soft conditions of life; but they are not always wholesome for our higher nature. What we need is a mind which can stand firm in all circumstances; a mind which is brave and heroic. True heroism is born of Spirit, never of material conditions. Real strength does not come from the flesh, it comes only when flesh is connected with Spirit; then we can go through the greatest ordeal unmoved. All that we crave for we shall receive in unbounded supply, when we know how to use it for our own good and for the good of our fellowmen. We would all like to possess happiness and power, but these do not come to us because we are not big enough to take them. We must cultivate bigness and inwardness.

We cannot realize the highest happiness so long as we are thinking of ourselves only, of our own needs and gratifications. Not until the sun of wisdom shines and melts away these selfish limitations, not until then will rise from within our true power, which is inexhaustible. An unrivalled passage in the Upanishads tells us that in the vastness of infinitude alone lies the fullness of happiness for man; never in the finite. Men go on groping here and there to gratify their desires; and they often gain what they covet, but it never satisfies their deeper craving. We enter into our true state of being only when we forget ourselves; when we cease to believe that our body is given us for our gratification, that our mind and acquirements are for ourselves.

We must lose all self-consciousness in the great thought that

we are instruments of God; we must feel that our body must be kept clean and holy as a shrine for the dwelling-place of Divinity. If we keep uppermost in our mind these higher concepts of life, we shall refrain from doing what is ignoble. Do we wish to be strong, do we wish to be happy? If we do, then we must plant the seeds of constructive thought in our hearts. We must remember constantly that no matter what happens on the physical plane, there is a dominant ruler within, the Spirit, and that Spirit can never be vanquished. When we are able to take this stand, we can overcome every obstacle.

Why do people become selfish? Why are they guilty of unworthy acts which harm others? It is because they have lost this lofty point of view. Their whole life is centred in their flesh, in sensation, in immediate bodily concerns. But let them extend their vision, let them project their thought beyond mere physical boundary lines, and a new inner consciousness will dawn in them. Their body may still have its limit, their material surroundings may continue to be disturbing; in spite of all this, they will not be moved from the state of tranquillity they have found. This is only possible when we bring spiritual consciousness into our life. When we feel that we are direct descendants of the Infinite, when this conviction is firmly established in our hearts, then are we made whole. It is the life which brings healing. It is entering into the inner realm of consciousness where we are restored naturally. When our thought is filled with Spirit, all must be well with us; because where Spirit shines unobstructed, there is life; there can be no sickness or suffering.

Thine own self-will and anxiety, thy hurry and labor, disturb thy peace and prevent Me from working in thee. Look at the little flowers in the serene summer days; they quietly open their petals and the sun shines into them with his gentle influences. So will I do for thee, if thou wilt yield thyself to Me. —*G. Tersteegen.*

WAY OF FREEDOM

From The Samhita

(An ancient dialogue between the Sage Astavakra and King Janaka. Rendered from the Sanskrit.)

The Sage Astavakra said: He alone dwells in unshaken calmness and bliss who perceives clearly that this ego which enjoys and suffers is not the true Self.

He alone tastes the sweetness of peace who perceives clearly that the Supreme Lord is the sole fashioner of the universe. Knowing this his cherished desires drop away one by one, his ambitions melt into nothingness, and his heart craves for naught of this world.

As time rolls on, prosperity follows adversity and adversity prosperity in inevitable sequence. Knowing this, the wise man leads a healthy contented life, free from desire and free from grief.

Life is an endless series of experiences. From the Invisible emanate the forces which create and destroy. That Power inscrutable is the dispenser of human happiness and human misery. Knowing this, the wise man works without attachment and without expectation of recompense.

Convinced that he is not the body and that he does not possess it, the wise man attains oneness with his Higher Self, and casts aside all thought of himself as the doer. Rising above his worldly self, freed from the limitations of personality, and realizing his oneness with Absolute Truth, he transcends the dual plane of good and evil and merges himself in the perfect Ideal.

He who is convinced that he is present in all, from the Creator down to the meanest creature, dwells in unmodified purity. The profound peace and joyousness of his soul are never disturbed, whether he lives in riches or in poverty.

He lives peacefully, like a shining flower of perfection, desireless and detached from the world.

The acquisition of untold riches may bring ease, comfort and bodily enjoyment, but a blissful state of soul is impossible without complete detachment.

How can one whose heart is scorched by the burning fire of earthly desires enjoy blessedness? But when the charm of created things has lost its hold over him and the veil of ignorance has dropped from his eyes, then the man gains direct vision of Truth and becomes free from all grief and anxiety.

TRUE LOVE SEEKETH NO REWARD

By Saint Bernard. 12th Century

Not without reward is God loved, albeit He is to be loved without thought of the reward. True love cannot fail, yet neither is it a hireling; in sooth it seeketh not its own. It is affection, not a contract; it is neither gained nor gains by bargain. It affects freely and maketh free. True love is content with itself. Its reward is the possession of the object loved. For whatever thou mayest seem to love for the sake of something else, thou clearly lovest the ultimate end of thy love, not the means. Paul doth not preach the Gospel that he may eat, but eats that he may preach the Gospel; he loves, not meat, but the Gospel. True love seeketh no reward, but merits it. Reward is not offered to the lover; it is gained by him that loves, and rendered to him that perseveres. When we would dispose to things of a lower order, we invite the unwilling by promises or rewards, but not the willing. For who thinks that a man should be rewarded that he may do what he freely desires? No one, for instance, leads one that hungers to eat, or one that thirsts to drink, or a mother to give suck to the little son of her womb. Or who thinks that a man should be induced by prayer or price to hedge in his own vine, dig round his own tree, or build the structure of his own house? How. then, should the soul that loves God seek any other reward of her love save

God? If she seeketh another, she assuredly loves that, not God.

It is natural to every one that uses reason to desire, always in proportion to his judgment and intention, the things that are greater, and to be content with nothing than which he deems what he lacks to be better. He who is clothed with a precious robe aims at one more precious; and, possessing much wealth, he envies one richer than himself. Thou mayst see men, abounding in lands and possessions, still day by day adding field to field, and with infinite greed extending their boundaries. Thou mayst see, too, those who dwell in royal houses and ample palaces, nevertheless daily joining house to house, and, with restless curiosity, building, pulling down, changing square for round. What of men uplifted by honours? Do we not see them, with insatiable ambition, straining more and more with all their might to higher things? But it is foolish and smacks of sheer madness always to desire those things which never, I say not satisfy, but even lessen the appetite; inasmuch as, whatever of such thou mayst have, thou still longest for what thou hast not, and ever restlessly pantest for what is lacking.

Thus it happens that the mind, wandering through the various false attractions of the world, is wearied, not satisfied, by running to and fro with vain labour; while whatever it hungrily swallows, it reckons little to what remains to be devoured; and ever not less anxiously desires what are lacking than gladly possesses what are present. For who may obtain all things? And although a man is not certain when he will lose with sorrow even that little which he has obtained with labour, he is nevertheless certain that he will some time lose it. If then thou wouldst fulfill thy wish, if thou wouldst take hold of that of which the possession leaves no more to be desired—what need to essay the rest too? Thou runnest through bye-paths, and shalt die long before thou attain by this circuit to thy desire.

"Better is a little to the just, than the great riches of the

wicked;" for, indeed, as the wise man says and the fool finds, he that loveth money, shall not be satisfied with money; but they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, they shall have their fill. Righteousness is the vital and natural food of the spirit that uses reason; but money no more lessens the hunger of the mind than does wind that of the body. If, then, thou shouldst see a hungry man, with mouth opened to the wind, drawing in the air with puffed-out cheeks, as though thereby to satisfy his hunger, wouldst thou not deem him mad? So it is not less madness to think that the rational spirit is not rather puffed up than satisfied by any bodily things. For what have bodies to do with spirits? Neither can those be refreshed with spiritual things, nor these with bodily. Bless the Lord, O my soul, who satisfieth thy desire with good things. He satisfies with good, He stirs to good, He preserves in good; He prevents, sustains, fulfils. He makes thee desire, He is what thou desirest.

I said above: The cause of loving God is God. I spoke truly; for He is both the efficient and the final cause. He gives the occasion, He creates the affection, He consummates the desire. He wrought (or, rather, is what He is) that He might be loved; He is the object of hope, to be loved more blissfully, that He may not be loved in vain. His love both prepares and rewards ours. It goes before more graciously, is repaid more justly, is expected more sweetly. He is rich unto all that call upon Him; nor still hath He aught better than Himself. He gave Himself to be merited, He keeps Himself for reward, He sets forth Himself for the reflection of holy souls, He gives Himself out for the redemption of those in captivity. Thou art good, O Lord, to the soul that seeketh thee: then what to her that finds? But herein is a wondrous thing: no one can seek Thee save whoso has first found. Therefore, Thou dost will to be found that Thou mayst be sought; to be sought that Thou mayst be found.

INSPIRATION

By Marion Forster Gilmore

They are not born of us, the songs we sing,
Although they seem of our own fashioning,
O, brother bards, for we are only reeds
That grow among the other water weeds
In Life's deep ever-onward rushing river.
God gathers us and in His Hands we quiver,
With a mysterious wild ecstasy.
That we are chosen thus through melody
To give His message to a world in need.
But it is God's own breath that, through each reed
How subtly passing, ever outward floats
In marvellous and never dying notes,
Breathing of wisdom's glorious design,
Vibrant forever with a Love Divine;—
Ay, no! those songs are born of heavenly powers,
My fellow poets,—they are not ours, not ours.

SONGS OF KABIR

O Friend! this body is His lyre;
He tightens its strings, and draws from it
the melody of God.
If the strings snap and the keys slacken,
then to dust must this instrument of dust return:
Kabir says: "None but God can evoke its melodies."

* * * * *

The harp gives forth murmurous music; and the
dance goes on without hands and feet.
It is played without fingers, it is heard without ears;
for He is the ear, and He is the listener.
The gate is locked, but within there is fragrance:
and there the meeting is seen of none.
The wise shall understand it.

THE BUILDING OF CHARACTER

By Sister Devamata

The soul wears two garments,—this outer one of the gross body, and an inner one of character. The inner body contains the mind, the intellect, the moral nature and the sense of "I",—the whole of our personal identity, in short, as well as the record of our previous lives. The question is often asked: if we have lived again and again, why have we no record of it? What better record could we have than the character we wear to-day? We write our thoughts and deeds deep into our being, and every time we move or speak we betray how we have lived down the ages. No recording angel is needed.

The substratum of the character-body is memory. The slightest impression made upon the mind is graven in the memory. The chance word we hear, the headline we glimpse in the street car, the fleeting wave of impatience or resentment, even these are duly set down. Not a scratch over the surface of our thought is ever effaced absolutely, although some are so lightly traced that they can be regarded as negligible. It is the frequent repetition of an idea or a desire which imbeds it in our character and makes it a dominating principle in our action. We wonder why our good resolutions break down so easily. It is because they are undermined by our actual life. Our resolutions are theories, while the disintegrating impulses are daily habits.

Yet these habits, however firmly rooted, can be wiped out by the persistent repetition of a counteracting thought. It is attention which lends strength to our mental impressions. The entire world might be in a ferment and we would know nothing of it, if our attention were turned wholly elsewhere. We discover this in the class room when we try to teach children. If we are unable to fix their attention, the hour's lesson is lost. Our first concern in shaping our character, therefore, should

be to withdraw our attention from all destructive, weakening impressions. The more sins we have to remember, the more we must try to forget them; otherwise we increase their hold over us. The true penitent cannot afford to repent. If he will be purged and made clean, he must forget himself and all his shortcomings and merge his thought in some lofty ideal. It is a very beneficial exercise, whenever the consciousness of our limitations threatens to overwhelm us, to read or think of some holy life which illustrates the virtues we need to acquire. There is no quicker way of cultivating them; for what we think on, that we become.

A man who wishes to build a strong character must never indulge in trivial, flimsy thought. We cannot be cowards six days in the week and expect to be heroes on the seventh. We shall be what our cumulative thought has made us. If we have not borne the little stings and pains of to-day bravely, we may be sure that we shall go down under bigger wounds a week or a month hence. It is the little things which test us; and one who would build enduringly must pay heed above all to the little things. If we are faithful in the small things of life, the Bible tells us, automatically we shall become ruler over greater things.

The cardinal qualities of compassion, fortitude, loyalty to the Ideal, spiritual courage, are all bred of patient practice in the commonplace tasks of each day. So often people complain that they have no time for serious pursuits; but it is the will which is lacking, not the time. All life is an open opportunity. It requires no more effort to think of God and His greatness than of our neighbor and his smallness. It is altogether a question of habit. You may say: "How can I think on two levels at the same moment?" The human mind always carries on two collateral lines of thought,—the line of the immediate experience and a line of self-consciousness, with a connecting zig-zag line of comparison between. Now everything which occurs re-

minds us of ourself. Whatever we feel or perceive or think on, we refer spontaneously to the little self—its likes and dislikes, its advantage or disadvantage, its knowledge or ignorance. When we begin the training of our attention, our thought processes still remain dual, but consciousness of God takes the place of consciousness of self. All things are referred to the Ideal instead of to the ego. Only when we cultivate this new habit are we able to provide a solid foundation for our character.

Ordinarily we associate character with morality, with struggle and warfare in the name of virtue. But a character which does not extend its reach beyond the ethical almost invariably is angular, harsh and unyielding. It is lacking in all the subtler grace and loveliness which should adorn the superior life. St. Francis de Sales writes to a young wife: "You should not only be religious and love religion; you should make religion attractive, useful and agreeable to every one around. . . Let your religion be as winning to others as possible." Probably nothing has done more to discredit virtue than the stern, uncompromising, puritanic practice of it by those who make ethical achievement the final goal.

I would not minimize the essential value of morality in human progress. It is as indispensable to spiritual development as technique is to music. The exercises of choice and volition, which it sets for us, do much to increase the pliability and vigor of the inner body and prepare it for the soul's use. But ethics alone cannot offer a firm basis for character, because they deal wholly with the external, and all external things are shifting. The fundamental spiritual truths are the same the world over, but ethical laws vary from nation to nation and race to race. Each individual even is constantly repairing and readjusting his moral standards as his outlook on life broadens; whereas the spiritual knowledge he gains remains unaltered and unalterable.

True character building is an interior process. Nothing we are at the present moment is the result of any super-imposition from the outside. All the changes which have taken place in us as we have passed from amoeba to man have come through the outpouring of our inner nature. External conditions and surroundings have furnished merely the proper occasions for this unfolding of our essential being. We have grown as the branch does,—from within our own root and stem. In every living creature perfection exists, out of sight perhaps, yet there none the less; and because perfection is stronger than imperfection, because the Infinite is stronger than the finite, that mightier Principle of life prods us on and on; but we hold back. To this holding back are due all our aches and pains and miseries. We are like rebellious children being dragged home by the mother. We are scratched and hurt because, not wishing to leave our play, we refuse to stand up and walk on our own feet in cheerful obedience.

One of the salient marks of a man of character is his willingness to co-operate with Nature. He does not find his pleasure in breaking the law, but in going with it. Only a child-mind takes delight in defying the word of command; the grown-up intelligence likes to feel the support of a superior authority. It believes that it can move more confidently and freely when it is conscious of a supreme sustaining and restraining Power. There is a certain obstinacy of self-will which is sometimes mistaken for character, but it is sure to break under stress. The pushing, assertive man is fore-ordained to defeat when he runs counter to the man of quiet resolution, who shapes his action on cosmic lines.

The very root of character is indrawnness. The strong man acts from the centre outward. He follows the rule of Nature, which preludes every forward spring by a recoil. As the arm draws back before it deals a heavy blow, so he gathers himself

constantly to the centre of his being and attacks life from that vantage ground. The activity which begins and ends at the circumference is of necessity feeble and unproductive. In certain games, we know, a run does not count unless the player first touches base; so unless we touch the base of our life, the great Inner Principle of wisdom and strength, before each outer effort, our endeavor will be sadly ineffective. This cannot be done at random, however. There must be firmly established contact with the centre to be able to swing there quickly at the moment of need. If God remains a stranger to us, we shall forget Him in the rush of living. We must develop the habit of association with Him. This can be done only through regular practice of meditation.

The nervous unrest we feel now when we sit down and try to meditate, proves how far we have moved away from the central point of strength and stillness in us. We are like a boat with hoisted sail tugging at its moorings. We can scarcely wait to plunge into the activities of our usual round. The only way that we shall overcome this unwholesome scattered state is by setting apart certain definite hours for silent thought, and observing them with unwavering determination. It does not occur to us to skip the brushing of our teeth or the combing of our hair, however hurried we may be, and such should be our attitude towards this daily exercise of interior communion. The time devoted to it may be short, but it must be kept with rigid exactitude. Otherwise we shall falsify our values and persuade ourselves that the outer is more important than the inner.

Quietness is a salient quality of character. Lord Buddha says: "The gods even envy him whose senses have been subdued, who is free from pride and free from appetites; his thought is quiet, quiet are his word and deed, when he has obtained freedom by knowledge, when he has thus become a qui-

et man." The feeble mind is garrulous and noisy, but the man who lives in unbroken awareness of his soul feels no impulse to boisterous argument or self-advertisement. He is confident that truth will prove itself, right will protect itself, that in due season the Divine will prevail over the human. Such a man is generous by the very logic of his nature. He has touched the Source and he knows that all the basic things of life are inexhaustible. There is more than enough for all; and however much is given, the Infinite still remains undepleted.

Forgiveness is an unknown virtue to him, because he never finds anything to forgive. Forgiveness implies a consciousness of injury; but if we were truly generous, we would excuse our neighbor's fault before it has wounded us. We would cover it over as a mother eagerly cloaks her child's wrong-doing. If we are offended, the fault lies in us; we have a sore place in our character which needs to be healed. When we are sound throughout, we take even the sharpest blow with a smile. A sense of grievance is an unfailing symptom of weakness and egotism. It is we who need to be forgiven, not the one who has hurt us.

The strong man again is habitually cheerful. Despondency is like a dry rot which eats away the supporting beams of our character. All the fears and failures which induce dejection, taken together, could not do us so much harm as dejection itself. Swami Vivekananda declares despondency to be the most insidious enemy of the spiritual life. We would not willingly breathe poisonous miasmas into our lungs, why should we any more lightly give room in our mind to the poison of despondent thought? Melancholy works slowly and heavily, hence it is not so difficult to combat as the hotter passions. When we feel it beginning to press down on us, we should meet it promptly. So far as possible we should keep actively occupied, preferably in manual labor, to stimulate our physical and moral circula-

tion. Then, remembering that attention is the lever by which we regulate the mind, we should fix our attention on some triumphant example of bigness and buoyant heroism and hold it there, until the constructive influence of the example catches us on its current and sweeps us out of stagnant waters into the free-flowing midstream again. We learn a poor lesson from the stripes and buffetings of the saints and Saviours when we use them merely to console us for our own miseries. We derive profit from them only when we imbibe the spirit with which these spiritual heroes bore their hardships and thus learn from them to rise superior to our own.

Not by exercise of will can we make ourselves strong or important. Character is an organic growth and builds itself. Our only part in the work is to remove ourself from it. We do this by holding our thought resolutely on higher levels. "I shall lift mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help." Character draws its sustenance from the heights always. It staggers and swoons in the closed-in valley of petty material concerns. When we consecrate ourselves whole-heartedly to a noble ideal, through contact with it the deeper forces of our nature are set in motion and within us rises from day to day a new Temple for the living God. We may not know it, but others see it and the world is richer for it.

O insensate care of mortals, how faulty are those arguments that make thee downward beat thy wings.

—Dante. Il Paradiso.

The senses are not capable of Divine blessings; hence if thou wouldst be happy and wise, be silent and believe, suffer and have patience, be confident and walk on; it concerns thee far more to hold thy peace and to let thyself be guided by the Hand of God, than to enjoy all the goods of this world.

—Michael de Molinos.

THE MAN OF SUPERIOR MIND

Teachings of Confucius

The minds of superior men trend upward, those of inferior men trend downward. The superior man keeps his eyes fixed on virtue; the common man, on earthly things.

The man who may be regarded as moving towards perfection is one who, seeing some advantage to himself, is mindful of righteousness; who, seeing danger, risks his life; and who, if bound by some covenant of long-standing, never forgets his pledge as time goes on.

Respecting Tsz-chai, the Master said that he had four of the essential qualities of the superior man:—in his own private walk he was humble-minded, in serving his superiors he was deferential, in looking after the material welfare of the people he was generously kind, and in his exaction of public service he was just.

Some one asked the Master about his attendant, a youth from the village of Keish, whether he was improving. The Master said: "I note that he seats himself in places reserved for his superiors and that when he is walking he keeps abreast with his seniors. He is not one of those who care for improvement; he wants to be a man all at once."

Superior men are modest in their words, but lavish in their deeds.

The man of superior mind is placid and composed, the small-minded man is in a constant state of perturbation.

The firm, the unflinching, the plain and simple, the slow to speak, these accomplish their duty towards their fellowmen most truly.

Not even when he eats his meals will the superior man forget what he owes his fellowmen. Even in hurried leave-takings, even in moments of greatest confusion, he keeps true to his standard of conduct.

Be courteous in your private sphere, be serious in any task you undertake, be loyal-hearted in your intercourse with others. Even though you were to go among the savage tribes of the hills, it would not be right to neglect these duties.

The wise escape doubt; the good-hearted escape trouble; and the courageous escape fear.

Admirable indeed was the virtue of Hwuy. With a single bambu dish of rice, a single gourd dish of drink, and living in his mean narrow lane, while others could not have endured the distress, he did not allow his joy to be affected by it.

It is no light thing to endure poverty uncomplainingly and no easy thing to bear wealth without growing arrogant.

Those who keep within restraints are seldom losers.

Once the Master said: "Would that I could dispense with speech!" "Sir," said Tsz-king, "If you were never to speak, what would your pupils do?" "Does Heaven ever speak?" the Master said. "The four seasons come and go, and all creatures live and grow. Does Heaven ever speak?"

Now we see that a carpenter by learning certain things becomes a carpenter; and a pilot by learning certain things becomes a pilot. Probably, then, it is not sufficient merely to be willing to be wise and good; but it is also necessary that certain things should be learned. The philosophers say that we are first to learn that there is a God, and that His providence directs the whole; and that it is impossible to conceal from Him, not only our actions, but even our thoughts and emotions. We are next to learn what the Gods are: for such as they are found to be, such must he who would please and obey them to the utmost of his power endeavor to be. If the Deity is faithful, he too must be faithful; if free, beneficent, and exalted, he must be free, beneficent, and exalted likewise; and, in all of his words and actions, behave as an imitator of God. —*Epictetus.*

REPORT

In all public work there is an inevitable ebb and flow, and one soon learns not to measure growth by the maximum or decline by the minimum of interest and attendance. Keeping to the mean line, however, there can be no doubt that the Vedanta Centre of Boston has entered upon a new period of growth. What a year ago was the maximum attendance at the Sunday Services has now become the minimum, while the Tuesday class has doubled in size. Many more also are eager to enter the students' class on Thursday, but this is now open only to regular members who have been attending the other meeting for some time and have acquired a certain understanding of the teaching. In addition to the regular classes and Services during February, the Centre gave an informal tea on Saturday afternoon, the tenth, in order that the students and friends of the work might have an opportunity to see the various improvements in the house beyond the entrance and Chapel. The chief point of interest was the sun parlor, which every one entered with a cry of admiration. It is built on the fourth floor over the circular tower-like corner of the house. The entire circle forming two sides of the room is made up of casement windows, through which one looks out over the park, with its winding stream, to the long line of Greek columns of the Art Museum, on up to the towering spires of the large Mission Church belonging to the Redemptionist Fathers, and still beyond to the slopes of Parker Hill, sparkling with lights at night. The sweep of the view follows the whole course of the sun, so that one sees both the sunrise and the sunset from the windows. The green wicker furniture, the prevailing tones of green in the rugs and the row of blooming plants on the window-sills, give one the impression, facing in one direction, that one is out of doors; while at a turn of the head the pale grey walls and white woodwork, the

well-stocked book case and a bright open fire remind one that one is under shelter and safe from the weather. It is undoubtedly a rare privilege near the heart of the city to have a quiet spot so full of fresh air and sunshine as this.

Swami Paramananda spent the week of February 12th lecturing in Ohio. On the 13th he spoke for the Club of Applied Psychology in Cleveland and held a class there on the following day. Wednesday and Thursday were devoted to Akron, where again he lectured before the Psychology Club and held a class. On Friday he spoke at Canton, as the guest of the Psychology Club of that city. Over six hundred people gathered to hear him and as elsewhere great interest and enthusiasm were manifested. In order to reach Boston in time to conduct the Service on Sunday morning, he was obliged to spend the greater part of Friday night travelling in motor across icy country roads to catch the express at Cleveland; but the President of the Club was glad to make this long cold ride to Cleveland and back, considerably over one hundred miles, in order to secure for the Canton Club the privilege of hearing the Swami. There was also great demand for the literature in both Akron and Canton. It is gratifying to see how eagerly the psychology movement, which has swept the country and dotted it with clubs, links its eminently modern point of view with the age-ripened teaching of Vedanta. Impartial students are coming more and more to recognize that the root soil of the various phases of thought which have sprung up in recent years is to be found on the lofty heights of the Himalayas, where in far ancient times the Indo-Aryan sages evolved the practical science of higher development known as Yoga, and the subtlest system of metaphysics and psychology known to the world even to-day. Any touch with this older system cannot fail to impart added power to these younger movements.

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Apr. 2nd	*Soul's Potentiality*
9th	*Even-mindedness*
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16th	*Reincarnation and Resurrection*
23rd	*Self-Knowledge*
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NOTICE

Certain volumes of "The Message of the East" are becoming rare because some numbers in the issues of these years are exhausted and no longer available for further volumes. If any one who has copies of these special numbers cares to return them to us, we shall be glad in exchange to send them any single lecture by Swami Paramananda mentioned in our list of publications. The numbers specially desired are: January 1912; May 1913; June 1914; April, May, August, November of 1915; February, May and November of 1916; March 1918; November 1919.

THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

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

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

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THE CREATIVE POWER OF SILENCE

By Swami Paramananda

What sleep does for our body and nervous system, silence does for our mind and spirit. All the discordant conditions in our life are greatly due to our lack of co-ordination of both physical and mental forces. Until we can learn to think and act with calm and unruffled attitude, we cannot make our life productive. The practice of silence is a very great help for acquiring evenness of mind and tranquillity of body. The silence which leads to efficiency, however, is not a negation, a state merely of sitting and doing nothing. It is experienced only when the whole being has been unified and is flowing through one channel in perfect rhythm.

The productiveness of our activity depends entirely on what we put into it and in order to put our best into each thought and action, we need to order our mind, to gather up all its scattered forces, to establish our equilibrium; and we cannot do this unless we withdraw at intervals from the haste and noise of outer occupations. That is why Yogis and those who are seeking earnestly for light look upon the practice of silence as essential to their spiritual progress. In the first place it enables us to store up a great deal of life force which now we expend unwisely in needless talking. We wear ourselves out, disturb others, and say much which might better be left un-

said when we talk constantly. We also dull the mind and lessen its power of penetration. All spiritual vision and deeper understanding are unfolded in the hours of silent reflection. It is in the moment of silence that we hear the voice of the Infinite. When our ears are listening to the loud voices of the world, we cannot know that another voice is speaking in our heart. Therefore, those who have obtained direct vision of Truth are not inclined to make their own voice heard.

The productive life is always a silent life. When a man is creating something, he is not inclined to talk. He becomes rapt in thought and gradually through his concentrated thought he gains access to the hidden recesses of nature. He does not squander his forces by telling each little revelation as it comes to him. Sri Ramakrishna gives us the parable of the pearl oyster. It comes to the surface of the water to catch a rain drop falling at the auspicious moment when the star *Svati* is in ascendancy. Then it goes down to the bottom of the sea and remains there until the pearl is formed. The same is true of the genuine seeker after wisdom. As soon as he has found his access to God, he becomes deep and silent.

Silence is considered so necessary in India that there are great sages who become *Munis,* or silent ones. Some of them take the vow of complete silence and direct all their physical and mental forces towards spiritual illumination. Others refrain from speaking of non-essential matters. Through the observance of the vow of silence they become gifted in prophecy and power to bless others. Even the atmosphere of the place where they live is charged with a definite spiritual force. An example is given in one of our sacred books of a youthful sage, radiant with illumination, sitting in meditation under a Banyan tree. A disciple, old and weary with life's cares, approached him with mind and heart full of doubt and depression. The disciple asked many questions, but even though

the teacher ever remained silent the doubts of the disciple were destroyed and he went away in peace. This shows us that if the Light of Truth shines within us clearly without obstruction it will reach and enlighten others.

Yet you may say, what can a silent man do? His scope of usefulness must be very limited. The greatest amount of good in the world is not done by the talker or even by the worker who is constantly busy with his hands and feet; but by the one who has found the true centre of his being. His very existence throws radiance on countless numbers of people. We may have a great desire to help others, but if we have not found the remedy for evil in our own life, even our best intentions will not do much for them. These *Munis* may not speak, but they have the burning effulgence of the spiritual light within themselves. Their life itself is an expression of Truth, and whether they speak or not, they are constantly shedding their holy influence on others.

If we would help ourselves and our fellow-beings, therefore, we must take certain hours when we can shut out the noise of the world and commune with the Infinite. The deeper themes of life we can discover only when our mind is not disturbed by worldly agitations. Even a scientist, a musician, an artist must have communion with his ideal, and this cannot be done without silence.

The practice of silence, however, does not mean merely refraining from speech. It means stilling the vital energies so that there is a cessation of all activity both inner and outer. The body must be without motion, the mind must be serene and heart tranquil. We cannot accomplish this by merely withdrawing to a secluded spot. It is an interior quality rather, although outer conditions may aid us tremendously in attaining it. But without the inner poise it is impossible to reach.

Our thoughts grow undisturbed and uninterrupted on the

silent soil of the mind. We are able to think better and we are able to express our ideas through our outer actions more effectively. When we cultivate this we gain not only greater efficiency, but also fortify ourselves with wonderful blessing of serene attitude. People who are used to talking much, it is better for them to cultivate talking less and less, and learn to act with more quiet and composed bearing. Almost invariably we find that people who talk in excess are those who think less clearly and collectively. An idle tongue is one of the greatest curses. It not only hurts the person who is directly responsible for it, but disturbs the peace of mind of many others. Sri Chaitanya, one of India's foremost saints, taught his disciples never to take part in gossip. He said that they should not only refrain from making gossip, but never even listen to any idle talk, for by doing so they only encouraged the mischief-mongers. We cannot possibly conceive any lofty thought or lift our prayers to the Divine until our mind and heart are full of serenity.

The practice of physical silence restores our body and sense organs. The practice of mental silence refreshes our mind and quickens all our inner faculties. The power gained through it is tremendous. When we undertake anything hastily and nervously, we make mistakes and have to do it over, thus wasting our time and energies. Without deliberation and balance we can accomplish nothing worth while, and a moment of silence before each task enables us to maintain our balance. Its physical benefit is apparent at once. If we learn to bring ourselves to a state of absolute stillness, checking all unnecessary expenditure of energy, our whole body is refreshed and strengthened. This reacts on the mind and makes it alert and free. Even from the point of view of worldly advantage, therefore, it is wise to practise silence. The majority of people have a very false standard of life. They imagine that

when two or three human beings are together, they must always entertain each other. Often nature is providing us with inspiration and we miss it, because of this foolish habit. Why should we suppose that whenever we are with others we must always talk? It means that our mind is empty. The noble mind is one that is filled from within and does not need continual diversion from without. It is not dependent or demanding. Its thought is calm and deep and still. Only as we become more and more silent will our inward life unfold.

Whenever we have conceived an idea, if we put it into words, the greater part of its strength is dissipated and its success is rendered doubtful. Is not the logic of this evident? As soon as we draw our mind away from the idea itself and begin to discuss it, we set up counter currents of thought, our mental strength is expended to combat these and little is left to carry our idea to fulfillment. If we would be successful we must conceive in the silence, work in the silence and achieve in the silence. Great things are always done silently. Whenever a life is fruitful, we shall always find that it is a silent life. If we would make our endeavor more productive, we must try never to talk unnecessarily. It is a wonderful thing to have a controlled tongue. When we have established balance at this point, we shall find that the other parts of our being will become balanced and our whole life will gain a new rhythm and illumination. In India they adopt the simple practice that before they eat, or drink, or study, or go to sleep, or undertake any business, they sit in silence for a moment and try to unite themselves with the centre of their being. When we are distracted by outer conditions or concerns, we lose our sense of proportion and we cannot do well what we have to do. As long as our physical eyes lead us to see the many, we cannot see the one; so the devotee closes his outer eyes that he may open his inner eye and with it perceive the deeper

realities within. He closes his outer ears that he may hear the voice of the Infinite in his heart.

The practice of silence has a profound significance when we embrace the spiritual life. As only still waters reflect the perfect image, so only on the surface of the silent heart do we receive the unbroken image of Truth. Knowledge always destroys our ignorance and unrest, and we cannot increase our knowledge until we go down into the quiet recesses of our inner being. We must give ourselves a chance. There is not one who is not hungering for perfect health, for perfect peace and happiness; but these cannot come to us unless we create the right conditions for them. If we learn to live right, to think right, to make our life balanced and tranquil, we shall reap the result in a fuller expression of spiritual perfection. Now our ears do not hear the voice of the Supreme. The great teachers tell us to listen to that voice, to be guided by that voice. The ordinary man, however, says that he cannot hear the voice; it is all an imagination; but the mystic hears it, because he has made his outer being silent and has found access to the inner shrine of his soul.

When we begin to live the spiritual life, we touch a deeper note and we cease to judge from the surface. All differences are to be found only on the surface and one who lives constantly on the surface does not see the connecting link between man and man, between one soul and another; but one who has learned to live below the surface sees unity everywhere. He is not dependent on human judgments; he is not influenced by the world. He is wholly guided and protected by the Divine. In all his undertakings he is led by the hand of God. To him God is more real than any creature of flesh and blood. He walks with God; he talks with God; he lives with God. His whole being is centred in God, so that, whether he speaks or does not speak, he expresses the thought of God. He does not

have to use words to do it. Rather he knows that the Infinite can never find full expression in finite words. Therefore in the Vedas it is said that the glory of the Supreme is beyond mind and speech.

It is the ignorant man who claims loudly that his belief is the only belief, his path the only path; but one whose vision has become expanded through a larger realization grows dumb and his silence is the most eloquent expression of Truth. Let our lips sometimes be dumb that our heart may sing the glory of the Infinite. Let us give our inner being a chance to listen to the voice which is too subtle for the physical ear to hear. If for a few moments only each day we can still the noisy energies of our mind and body and learn to practise true silence, it will create a dynamo of spiritual power and elevate our whole being to the lofty heights of a new consciousness.

Certainly, in our own little sphere, it is not the most active people to whom we owe the most. Among the common people whom we know, it is not necessarily those who are busiest, not those who, meteor-like, are ever on the rush after some visible charge and work. It is the lives, like the stars, which simply pour down on us the calm light of their bright and faithful being, up to which we look and out of which we gather the deepest calm and courage. It seems to me that there is reassurance here for many of us who seem to have no chance for active usefulness. We can do nothing for our fellow-men. But still it is good to know that we can be something for them; to know (and this we may know surely) that no man or woman of the humblest sort can really be strong, gentle, pure, and good, without the world being better for it, without somebody being helped and comforted by the very existence of that goodness. —*Phillips Brooks.*

PREPARATIONS FOR HIGHER LIFE

Extract by Swami Vivekananda

The first thing necessary is a quiet and peaceable life. If I have to go about the world the whole day to make a living, it is hard for me to attain to anything very high in this life. Perhaps in another life I shall be born under more propitious circumstances. But if I am earnest enough, these very circumstances will change even in this birth. Was there anything you did not get which you really wanted? It could not be. For it is the want that creates the body. It is the light that has bored the holes, as it were, in your head, called the eyes. If the light had not existed you would have no eyes. It is sound that has made the ears. The object of perception existed first, before you made the organ. In a few hundred thousand years, or earlier, we may have organs to perceive electricity and other things.

There is no desire for a peaceful mind. Desire will not come unless there is something outside to fulfill it. The outside something just bores a hole in the body, as it were, and tries to get into the mind. So, when the desire shall arise to have a peaceful, quiet life, where everything will be propitious for the development of the mind, that will come,—you may take that as my experience. It may come in thousands of lives, but it must come. Hold on to that, the desire. You cannot have the strong desire if its object is not outside for you already. Of course, you must understand, there is a difference in desire and desire. The master said: "My child, if you desire after God, God will come to you." The disciple did not understand his master fully. One day both went to bathe in a river, and the master said, "Plunge in," and the boy did so. In a moment the master was upon him, holding him down. He would not let the boy come up. When the boy struggled and was exhausted, he let him go. "Yes, my child how did you feel

there?" "Oh, the desire for a breath of air!" "Do you have that kind of desire for God?" "No, sir." "Have that kind of desire for God and you shall have God." That, without which we cannot live, must come to us. If it did not come to us life could not go on.

If you want to be a Yogi, you must be free, and place yourself in circumstances where you are alone and free from all anxiety. He who desires a comfortable and nice life and at the same time wants to realize the Self is like the fool who, wanting to cross the river, caught hold of a crocodile mistaking it for a log of wood. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Unto him comes everything who does not care for anything. Fortune is like a flirt; she cares not for him who wants her; but she is at the feet of him who does not care for her. Money comes and showers itself upon one who does not care for it; so does fame come in abundance, until it is a trouble and a burden. They always come to the master. The slave never gets anything. The master is he who can live in spite of them, whose life does not depend upon the little, foolish things of the world. Live for an ideal, and that one ideal alone. Let it be so great, so strong, that there may be nothing else left in the mind; no place for anything else, no time for anything else.

That is the one great first step,—the real desire for the ideal. Everything comes easy after that. That, the Indian mind found out; there, in India, men go to any length to find truth. But here, in the West, the difficulty is, that everything is made so easy. It is not truth, but development, that is the great aim. The struggle is the great lesson. Mind you, the benefit in this life is struggle. It is through that we pass,—if there is any road to Heaven it is through Hell. Through Hell to Heaven is always the way. When the soul has wrestled with circum-

stance, and has met death, a thousand times death, on the way but nothing daunted, has struggled forward again and again and yet again,—then the soul comes out as a giant and laughs at the ideal he has been struggling for, because he finds how much greater is he than the ideal. I am the end, my own self, and nothing else, for what is there to compare to my own self. Can a bag of gold be the ideal of my soul? Certainly not! My soul is the highest ideal that I have. Realizing my own real nature is the one goal of my life.

There is nothing that is absolutely evil. Our mistakes have places here. Go on! Do not look back if you think you have done something that is not right. Now, do you believe you could be what you are to-day had you not made those mistakes before? Bless your mistakes, then. They have been angels unawares. Blessed be torture! Blessed be happiness! Do not care what be your lot. Hold on to the ideal! March on! Do not look back upon little mistakes and things! In this battle-field of ours, the dust of mistakes must be raised. Those who are so thin-skinned that they cannot bear the dust, let them get out of the ranks.

So, then, this tremendous determination to struggle, a hundredfold more determination than that which you put forth to gain anything which belongs to this life, is the first great preparation. And then along with it there must be meditation. Meditation is the one thing. Meditate! The greatest thing is meditation. It is the nearest approach to spiritual life—the mind meditating. It is the one moment in our daily life that we are not at all material,—the soul thinking of itself, free from all matter,—this marvellous touch of the Soul!

Seek for the noble Pearl; it is much more precious than this whole world; it will never more depart from you: And where the Pearl is, there will your heart be also: You need not here

ask any further after Paradise, Joy and the Heavenly Delightfulness; seek but the Pearl, and when you find that, then you find Paradise, and the Kingdom of Heaven, and you will be so taught, as being without it you cannot believe.

Jacob Behmen.

THE LIVING FLAME OF LOVE

By St. John of the Cross

O Living Flame of Love,
That woundest tenderly
My soul in its inmost depth!
As Thou art no longer grievous,
Perfect thy work, if it be Thy will,
Break the web of this sweet encounter.

O sweet burn!
O delicious wound!
O tender hand! O gentle touch!
Savouring of everlasting life,
And paying the whole debt,
By slaying Thou hast changed death into life.

O lamps of fire,
In the splendours of which
The deep caverns of sense,
Dim and dark,
With unwonted brightness
Give light and warmth together to their Beloved!

How gently and how lovingly
Thou wakest in my bosom,
Where alone Thou secretly dwellest;
And in Thy sweet breathing
Full of grace and glory,
How tenderly Thou fillest me with Thy love.

HOLY SIMPLICITY

By Sister Daya

It is impossible to conceive of holiness apart from simplicity. Throughout the ages the lives of Eastern sage and Western saint have burned with the fires of renunciation. Always the first sign of spiritual awakening has been this desire to strip away every non-essential, to stand naked before God. Modern civilization, based as it is upon the gratification of desire, naturally repudiates renunciation as something which strikes at its very life, and yet in spite of this it has played ever and again with the idea of simplicity. Sermons are preached upon it, little books are written about it till the individual harassed by the endless complexities of life cuts out a luxury here or a necessity there, in sporadic attempts at simple living. The trouble has been that we have no real standard of simplicity. When we strive for it we know not how to begin or where to end, or even what it is that we are seeking. We look upon simplicity as a mode of life, a thing of calculation, something that we can put on or take off. That is why we never achieve it. Our simplicities are relative merely, never final. But there is a final simplicity and it is that which the mystics knew.

Centuries ago in India, Kabir, the rug-weaver sang: "In simplicity I will unite with the Simple One, my love will surge up." God, the Root of all, One without a second,—The Simple One! The heart that unfolds to that One is the simple heart; the mind that meditates upon that One is the simple mind; the life that knows union with that One is the simple life. Such was the Christ-life and the Buddha-life and the life of every Saviour no matter where it has been lived, in what age or in what land or by what name it has been called. Misunderstood by all but the few, it has cruelly suffered at the hands of imitators. Again and again have they dragged its joyous spirit of renunciation down into a harsh asceticism until

now it is associated in many minds with pain. Especially is this so in the West where the shadow of the crucifixion lies across the mystic way. The truly illumined, having gained the Kingdom need nothing less. Fanatics, misinterpreting this, discard everything in their lives that is lovely or gracious, hoping that by thus giving up the outer they may gain the inner. They mistake barrenness for simplicity and hold themselves in this prison-house by the force of their lower wills. Acting largely from selfish fear or at best from a purely mental concept, they flee the world because they are still its slaves. Strange perversion! When even the faintest glimmering of that one indwelling life brings bliss.

"The embodied," says the Gita, "through the practice of abstinence can deaden the feelings of the senses, but longing still lingers in the heart; all longings drop off when he has seen the Supreme."

The renunciation of the Blessed is but a falling away from their lives of the unreal, a spontaneous turning towards those things which are not bent or twisted by man's will but are fresh from divine creation, as it were. They do not know they have renounced, they only know that they have found. They go singing with glad face and the heart of a child. This is what it means to become as little children. It means that we become children of God, playing with Him in His universe, possessed of all His beauty from the stars to the stones, without being owned or enslaved by anything. The true mystic goes forth as says the French poet of the child, *"Ouvrant sa jeune ame comme une fleur au monde,"*—Opening his young soul like a flower to the world. And yet to blinded eyes he will seem but a homeless wanderer upon the face of earth.

Among the followers of Christ there were great saints but none, perhaps, so radiantly simple as il Poverino, St. Francis of Assisi. His simplicity sprang from its true source and

therefore it was full of bliss. The lady Poverty with whom he wed was not in rags, she had all nature for her wedding dress. So deep was his sense of Divine Presence that he cherished the dust beneath his feet and worshipped the flames upon the hearth. He sang of "brother sun, sister moon, brother wind, and sister water." He preached sermons to his little brethren the birds and had singing contests with the nightingale.

Once when he and Friar Masseo were travelling through the country, they came to a town and being hungry they took their begging bowls and went each by a different street, meeting later at a beautiful fountain. When Francis saw that Masseo, who was far more beautiful in body than he, had received plentifully where he Francis had received only a few mean scraps he rejoiced exceedingly and said, "O, Friar Masseo we are not worthy of so great treasure," and Friar Masseo said, "O Father, how can you speak of treasure when there is such a great poverty and lack here of everything needful. Here is neither tablecloth nor knife, nor trencher nor porringer, nor house nor table, nor man-servant nor maid-servant." And St. Francis answered: "And this is that which I esteem great treasure, where there is nothing prepared by human industry, but that which there is, is prepared by Divine Providence as may be manifestly seen in the bread which we have begged, in this beautiful table of rock and in this clear spring. Wherefore I pray with my whole heart that He make us to love the so noble treasure of holy poverty which hath God to servitor."

Every race has had its flowers of the spirit; every religion can furnish glorious examples of holiness, but above and beyond them all stands India as the true mother of the soul. Her children draw in the ideal of renunciation with their first breath and they die with the name of God upon their lips. Not oppression or want, or famine or plague has

been able to shake their allegiance to true poverty. For this reason practically all their heroes are spiritual heroes.

Five hundred years before Christ, Prince Siddartha fled from his pleasure palaces, fled from love and luxury, from pomp and power in search of Truth. He had glimpsed, not God, but the tragic impermanence of human life, and his heart wrung with pity for the world, urged him forth to find the remedy. Not till he attained Nirvana did the Great Peace come to him, the radiant simplicity. As the Lord Buddha he returned home to his royal city of Kapilavastu, clad as a mendicant and carrying a begging bowl. When his father in a fury met him and asked him how the son of a king could so debase himself before his subjects, he replied that it was the custom of his race. "Thy race!" exclaimed his father in amaze. "Thy race counted a hundred thrones from *Maha Sammat* but no deed like this!" "Not of a mortal line, I spake," answered the Blessed One, "but of the race of Buddhas. Of these am I and what They did I do."

In the fifteenth century there swept across the face of India like a fire of love, Lord Gouranga, the Golden One, the Light of Nadia, known sometimes as the Indian Christ and the Indian St. Francis. Beautiful as few have been beautiful, brilliant, honored, the adored of countless hearts, when the madness for God seized him, he forgot everything, food and raiment, friends and comforts, and wandered stript into the wilderness at the call of the Beloved. His mere word or touch sufficed to raise a soul to the ecstacy of vision. Thousands were eager to lay their all before his holy feet, and yet when one who had been his wife, Vishnuprya, came to him and begged her share in the blessing in the shape of some little thing of his to treasure, he said: "But you see I have nothing," and she replied: "Lord, there are your sandals," and he gave them to her and she put them upon her head and worshipped them.

Simplicity, true simplicity is a state of consciousness, not a mode of life, but few there are who can live in the midst of luxury untouched. Only to the extent that our soul is free can we do it and with most of us sooner or later, the world will enter and take possession of our soul.

"It is not life and wealth and power that enslave men" said the Buddha, "but the cleaving to life and wealth and power." It is our desires which involve us in the complex, binding us by a thousand chains of hope to the petty and the personal, the easy and the pleasurable. Not till all our desires are fused in one desire, not till all our longings are lost in one mad longing, not till our whole being flows in one undivided stream towards God, will the confusion of life fall away from us and we shall renounce not so much the things of the world as the valuation which men put upon those things.

Till then can there be no simplicity for us? We are not Saviours; we have not had the great vision; we even cling to what binds us; how then may we find peace? We can find it through the gift of ourself. The Simple One dwells always within us but our realization of His Presence will be only in proportion to our consecration. Consecration makes the heart single, and the mind one-pointed and the body full of light. It leaves no room for multitudinous desires, for all the griefs and hates and heart-aches and envies which follow in their train. There never was a great life that was not a consecrated life, never a consecrated life that was not simple. God-consecration is the supreme consecration and brings the supreme peace, but if there are some for whom that is as yet too vast, then let them fasten the forces of their being with utter devotion to some ideal. Surrender to the highest we know even though it be not the highest there is, will bring us glimpses of reality and a truer sense of values. Not until we have found something for which we are ready to die do we truly begin to

live. We must be utterly sincere; we must be steadfast, otherwise the voices of the world will call us back. We must not hear them even, be we poet or painter, musician or scientist, or the seeker after God.

Of the poet, Emerson writes, that he must abdicate the complex life, must be content to be thought the fool and the simple one by all but a few who love and understand; "And this," says he, "shall be thy reward, the ideal shall be real to thee; and the impressions of the actual world shall fall like summer rain, copious but not troublesome to thy invulnerable essence. Thou shalt have the whole land for thy park and manor, the sea for thy bath and navigation without tax and without envy. The woods and the rivers thou shalt own, and thou shalt possess that wherein others are only tenants and boarders. Thou true landlord! Sealord! Skylord!"

All real artists know this lordship. We may possess beauty but we cannot grasp it, for it is the garment of the Simple One, the Seamless Robe of God. Simplicity is the law of its being, the restraining power without which we would have a confusion of lights, colors and sounds, purposeless and undirected as are the vagaries of an insane mind.

In statuary it is the simple mass which is the sculptor's first concern, he sees it as a whole and adds his details later. The promise of great paintings is contained in the few bold lines of the original sketches. And as with painting and sculpture, so with music. It is the single theme, the motif, which binds together the vagrant notes into a mighty symphony.

The dedicated lives of countless scientists is bringing material science itself close to the basic simplicity of God. More and more is science seeking out ultimate substance and is looking for the final secret not in the many but in the one.

The great Simplifier is at work even in the camps of complexity. What is order and system in business but a form of

simplifying, a doing away with non-essentials? It is this which makes greater efficiency possible. Advertisers are proving the psychological appeal of simplicity. The complex could not exist were it entirely complex. It cannot draw itself utterly away from the Simple One and live.

We hear much of reform in education. We read of new methods of sense development of moral and mental discipline, but if we could give to the child through mystic suggestion a growing sense of the fundamental unity of life so that he could recognize the one Self shining at him from every pair of eyes, we would be doing more for him than all the schools and the systems. But the world does not as yet know this. It does not know that before unity can reflect itself in human relations it must be experienced as reality in the human heart and that without this inner realization brotherhood is but an empty word.

As all this is borne in upon our souls, we are amazed to see how close to us is the Simple One, how His hand is upon everything. There is nothing in this world or out of it that does not draw its being from Him. He is reflected in every drop of dew, in every shining atom. That is why if we succeed in penetrating to the infinite nature of anything, we touch Divinity. There is but one Teacher, one Saviour, one Poet, one Artist. There is no illusion that does not owe its glamour to Him, no reality that does not owe its truth to Him. He is "The Silence of secrets;" He is "The Wisdom of the wise." He binds and He makes free.

Why then should we fear to fasten our heart to Him Who is so eternally present? If desires blind our eyes let us worship Him in our desires. Does He not beckon us from every side? What life have we ourselves apart from Him? How can we forget Him even for a moment?

When such remembrance comes, when such surrender, the

Simple One Himself will break our chains, it is His promise: "I am the Origin of all, everything evolves from Me. Knowing this the wise worship Me with loving ecstacy. To these ever steadfast devotees, I give that Yoga of wisdom by which they come unto Me. Out of pure compassion for them I, dwelling in their hearts, destroy the darkness born of ignorance, by the effulgent light of wisdom.

NATURE OF TRUE PRAYER

By Girolamo Savonarola

He who prays to God ought to address Him as if He were present, for He is everywhere, in every place, in every man, and especially in the souls of the just. Seek Him not therefore on the earth, or in heaven, or elsewhere—seek for Him in your own hearts; do as did the prophet who says, "I will hear what God the Lord will speak." In prayer, a man may be attending to the words, and this is a thing of a wholly material nature; he may be attending to the sense of the words, and this is rather study than prayer; and lastly, his whole thoughts may be directed to God, and this alone is true prayer. It is unnecessary to be considering either sentences or language,—the mind must be elevated above self, and must be wholly absorbed in the thought of God. Arrived at this state, the true believer forgets the world and its wants, he has attained almost a foreshadow of celestial happiness. To this state of elevation the ignorant may arrive as easily as the learned. It even frequently happens that he who repeats a psalm without understanding its words utters a much more holy prayer than the learned man who can explain its meaning. Words in fact are not indispensable to an act of prayer; when a man is truly rapt in the spirit, an uttered prayer becomes rather an impediment, and ought to yield to that which is wholly mental. Thus it will be seen how great a mistake

those commit who prescribe a fixed number of prayers. God does not delight in a multitude of words, but in a fervent spirit.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA

Excerpt of Address by Swami Paramananda

(Delivered at Commemorative Birthday Service)

It is said in India that when the lotus blossoms it no longer needs to invite the bees, they come of their own accord and partake of its sweetness. The life of Sri Ramakrishna was like that. It was gentle, it was not filled with adventure or with incidents which we call great and glorious; it was more like the perfume of a flower, but it drew to him people from all over the world, and even the most learned were like little children when they came before him.

Some of you, perhaps, do not know very much about Sri Ramakrishna. He was born of humble parentage; his education amounted to almost nothing, that is his secular education, but right from the beginning he had a yearning to gain something higher, more satisfying, from a source that could not be questioned.

He entered the life of the priesthood and as he went through the outer forms of worship a madness seized him to know for himself the truth of what lay behind them, to have absolute contact with God. In his searching he became utterly forgetful of his own physical life, he suffered and he strove, but he came out victorious with this tremendous vision: that there is but one Deity. Men conceive Him differently, worship Him differently, but He is the final goal of every path. Because of this realization he was able to meet all men on their own ground, to see the self-same ideal manifesting through all. This idea of universal tolerance is not new. I do not think any of the great teachers or saviours bring anything new.

They bring a fulfillment of the old. In Vedic conception we find it again and again repeated that there is but one God, one Deity, and all the different ideals are manifestations of that One. But Sri Ramakrishna became a living interpretation of it. He realized it and constantly lived it. His teaching is so simple that even a child can understand it; it is like a fresh spring just bubbling with new life.

India is noted for cults and sects and the people from many different sects came to Sri Ramakrishna. There was always welcome in his heart for every truth-seeker. Even Mohammedans came and thought he was one of their prophets. Christians and members of the Brahmo-Samaj gathered around him and remained spellbound in his presence. One of the Brahmo leaders said that all he had read about Jesus of Nazareth, of Buddha, of Lord Gouranga, and of the other great saints, he saw fulfilled in the life of this simple, aspiring devotee. But Sri Ramakrishna would not accept any worship. He always shrank from any show of reverence towards him, because his attitude was that God was all, he was nothing but a mouth-piece. He never regarded himself as a grown-up person. He called his Deity Divine Mother and he was always Her little child. Whatever he said, whatever act he performed, he would always first have communion with Her.

In the Occident you observe the birthdays of your political leaders, your war heroes. In India they observe the birthdays of their spiritual heroes no matter how humble these were in the worldly sense. In the same way Sri Ramakrishna's birthday has become a sacred day. Because he did not believe in caste or creed, when his birthday is celebrated at the head monastery of the Ramakrishna Mission on the banks of the Ganges, nearly fifty thousand people of all creeds and castes and nationalities gather there to do him homage. There is no special ceremony, but all day long a spontaneous outburst of

feeling. People form in groups and sing their devotional songs; they bring portraits of this great prophet and make other demonstrations. Then they are all fed. In India feeding a lot of people is a gigantic undertaking because of their caste feeling, but here it melts away before the gentle power of this wonderful character. Countless poor are fed on this day throughout India. Help is given to the helpless, and all this is done with humble spirit of service, for the devotees feel that when they render service to the destitute and suffering children of God, they pay their highest tribute to Sri Ramakrishna, who was an embodiment of love and humility. Service is the dominating spirit of the Ramakrishna Mission, and out of this spirit have grown many and varied activities quite different from what we understand by charitable institutions. *Seva Ashramas,* they are called, or Homes of Service. I think it is a very much sweeter name than hospitals and dispensaries. Homes of Service, where thousands and thousands of people are helped every year. If they are sick, they are given medical help; if they are homeless, they are given a home. Wherever there is famine or fire or flood, always Mission workers go and give voluntary aid. Sri Ramakrishna considered himself the servant of all and his followers, inspired by his lofty example, freely give themselves, because they love, because they see God under every form and serve Him in the form of the lowly, in the form of the poor, in the form of the helpless.

Thus we see how one who really manifests the spirit of God can live in a remote village or even in a mountain cave and become a beneficent power not only for his own community, but for humanity. That is the sum total of the blessing we find in the life of Sri Ramakrishna. He came gently, he lived humbly but he has left behind him a mighty influence for love, for tolerance, and for universality.

REPORT

During the month of March Swami Paramananda again responded to lecture calls from the middle west. He left Boston on the 5th of March for Cincinnati and spoke there on the night of the 6th before a large and appreciative audience. The following morning, Tuesday, he held a class at the Hotel Gibson, and that same evening gave an address at Dayton, Ohio, for the Dayton Club of Practical Psychology. On Wednesday morning, the 8th, he conducted a study class at the New Thought Temple. In the evening eight hundred people gathered to hear him in the Auditorium of the Chamber of Commerce in Columbus, Ohio. This resulted in a series of interviews the next day, lasting without intermission from 9 a. m. to 6 p. m., and leaving the Swami just time to prepare for a public lecture at 7:45 that night. This concluded his first tour.

The 19th saw the Swami Paramananda once more on his way, this time for Memphis, Tennessee, stopping en route, however, at Cincinnati, where on the night of the 20th he addressed a large meeting at the Unity Centre Auditorium, and on the afternoon of the 21st gave a practical class lesson to about seventy-five students. On the 22nd he reached Memphis and that night spoke at the Goodwin Institute on "The Conquest of Fear" to an audience of about one thousand. Thursday morning, March 23rd, at eleven, there was a study class conducted by the Swami at the Hotel Gayoso. "Concentration and Right Thinking" was his subject for the evening when another large public meeting was held at the Goodwin Institute. He had still two more meetings in Memphis and eight engagements to fill in other cities when he was called home by an unexpected development at the Boston Centre. It was with the deepest regret that the Swami was forced to cancel his obligations and disappoint those who had gone to

much trouble and expense in preparation for his coming. He hopes at some future time to be able to make it up to them.

In addition to these two tours, the Swami accepted an invitation from the Applied Psychology Club of Providence, Rhode Island, to speak there on March 14th. The meeting was held at the Church of the Mediator, and there were about eight hundred people present. Providence being only a short run from Boston, the Swami was able to go and return the same evening.

On the 26th of February, at the request of Dr. Wm. Norman Guthrie, the Swami Paramananda spoke in New York City at St. Mark's-in-the-Bouwerie. His subject was "Sri Ramakrishna, Prophet of Universal Tolerance," and the occasion, a religious celebration in honor of India. As the Swami's visits to New York are rather infrequent, this gave him a chance to renew his connection with many old friends.

* * * *

During Swami Paramananda's last trip to New York he had the pleasure of visiting the new home of the Vedanta Society there. The New York Society was one of the first works established in this country by Swami Vivekananda. Its work for the last several years has been carried on in rented quarters, but through the earnest and steadfast efforts of Swami Bodhananda, the present head of the Society, it has now secured a permanent home. This will undoubtedly prove a great impetus to the Vedanta work in New York.

* * * *

The Vedanta Society of San Francisco has just published an attractive booklet, "The Inner Consciousness, How to Awaken and Direct It," by Swami Prakashananda. It is written clearly and simply, an excellent little book which puts a big subject within the mental grasp of the ordinary reader. It is now many years since the establishment of the San Francisco Society. Its growth has been steady, and under Swami Prakashananda's wise guidance it is not only extending the influence of Vedanta, but is ever becoming more firmly rooted in the hearts of its members.

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GIFT

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

VEDANTA MONTHLY

The Message of the East



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In Memoriam

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Swami Paramananda

of India in charge

FOURTEENTH SEASON—1922

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May 7th	*Can We Change our Fate?*
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NOTICE

Certain volumes of "The Message of the East" are becoming rare because some numbers in the issues of these years are exhausted and no longer available for further volumes. If any one who has copies of these special numbers cares to return them to us, we shall be glad in exchange to send them any single lecture by Swami Paramananda mentioned in our list of publications. The numbers specially desired are: January 1912; May 1913; June 1914; April, May, August, November of 1915; February, May and November of 1916; March 1918; November 1919.

THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

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

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

Published monthly except in August and September

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THE REDEEMING POWER OF LOVE

Love is not a theory, or a speculation, nor is it a form of study or investigation. It is the supreme feeling of the human heart made divine by its radiance. Love is all. It permeates all things. When we unite ourselves with the spirit of love, we include all that we can think of and that we are incapable of thinking, for it is the greatest force in cosmic life and universe. It is life itself; it flows through all, unites all, expressing through the highest and the lowest. Its impelling power is greater than any power the human mind has ever conceived. It heals all our inharmonies and ailments. It gives our mind freedom without which it can have neither happiness, peace nor repose.

Let us think of every one our mind can encompass with a heart full of love, compassion and tenderness, and feel the greatness of Divinity manifesting through all living beings. Let us abandon selfishness and pride for they are detriments to the expression of true love. They make us narrow. They make us bound. They make us forfeit our right to Divinity and partake of what is vulgar and material.

Let us strive with inward fervor and strength of will to free ourselves from the bonds of egotism and selfishness that we may taste at least in some measure the nectar of love, which is the Supreme Himself. In this realization we are made whole and made one with Him from Whom we have descended.

THE VALUE OF FOOD IN SPIRITUAL UNFOLDMENT

Lecture by Swami Paramananda

The value of food is not limited merely to our physical well-being. It is true that food builds up our body and strengthens our muscles, but also at the same time it produces in us certain definite characteristics. If we are keen enough to analyze different human beings, their stature, countenance, expression and general disposition and relate these to their habits of life, especially their mode of eating, we shall be astonished to find what a vital part food plays in their destiny. In the Upanishad it is declared, "All creatures are produced from food; they live by food and in the end they return to food." Of course this implies only the physical constitution of man, but we naturally have to deal first with the physical before we can find our access into spiritual realities.

Our body is the most immediate and imminent reality to us at the present time and in order to make this vehicle efficient, healthful and fitting for our spiritual advancement, we must take utmost care of everything which contributes towards its well-being. The primary object in partaking of food is to draw nourishment to sustain our physical body and our nervous system, and to quicken our thinking faculty. In order to accomplish this effectively we must use discernment, for every kind of food has not the power to bring this about. Therefore we must necessarily discriminate carefully in regard to what we eat. Food has the power to produce in us distinct qualities. According to Indo-Aryan conception, our bodies are composed of three different elements which they call the *Gunas* or qualities: *Sattwa,* the quality of fineness, lightness and intelligence; *Rajas,* that which gives rise to ambition and excessive zeal; and *Tamas* which overpowers one with lethargy, inertia, indiscrimination and ignorance. We all have these qualities in varying proportion. They prevail in us making us feel some-

times dull, sometimes restless and then again full of peace. Because of this also we see such great variety in human temperament.

In the Gita, Sri Krishna gives a very definite description of the three types of people in whom these three *Gunas* or qualities are dominant and shows how they even crave different kinds of food, for foods are also of three-fold nature and are liked by each of these according to the *Guna* which predominates. Likewise they have a tendency to produce similar effect in those who partake of them. "The foods," says the Gita, "which increase life-force, energy, strength, health, joy and cheerfulness, and which are savory, soothing, substantial and agreeable, are liked by the *Sattwica* nature. The *Rajasica* nature likes foods which are bitter, sour, saline, overhot, pungent, dry, burning, and which produce pain, grief and disease. That which is stale, insipid, putrid, cooked over night, even leavings or unclean food is liked by the *Tamasica* nature." We can sum up the idea of these three qualities in our modern and more accustomed language as matter, energy, and intelligence. The Sanskrit word *Tamas* is typical of dense matter and is identified with heaviness and flesh; *Rajas* typifies energy and action, often lacking in proper sense of moderation, resulting in restlessness and uncontrolled passions, while *Sattwa* represents higher intelligence and spiritual attributes of gentleness, self-control, poise and wisdom.

In India the first marked change in a man when he takes up the spiritual life is a complete readjustment in his outer mode of living because he cannot expect to have a higher power of perception until he has purified his bodily instrument. Nothing plays so great a part towards this end as diet. In one of the Upanishads it is proclaimed: "Through pure food *Sattwa* element becomes purified." The idea of pure food, however, varies among different peoples. According to Indian

Scriptures there are three causes which make food impure: *Jati-dosha,* inherently impure, such as onion, garlic, red meat and all forms of gross food which produce *Tamas*—heaviness and inertia in the system; *Nimitta-dosha,* impurity caused by presence of alien objects such as dirt, hair, insects, etc. Through the presence of such objects the food becomes unclean and unsuitable for eating. The third defect arises through evil contact. This is called *Ashraya-dosha,* when touched by wicked persons, or when food is cooked by an unclean and impure hand. It is comparatively easy to avoid the first two, but the third one is difficult to control. How can we be responsible for our cook's evil temper and bad habits? It is true that this is a very difficult problem, but perhaps by making ourselves more spiritual and gentle we can set a higher standard and eventually reform the cook.

These are, however, more or less technical ideas of food. The most important and spiritual idea that saturates almost all religious scriptures of the world, especially those of India, is of non-killing. "Cause injury to none." This of course includes not only humanity, but all forms of life. From the early dawn of the Vedic revelation to the more modern scriptures of India, everywhere it is given with dynamic insistence, "one who desires to attain beatitude let him abstain from animal food," for no cruel person can ever attain a high degree of refinement, either physically or morally. We must remember the question of food is not merely what we throw into our system, but the effect it produces. Through our own keen observation, we know that certain kinds of food and drink produce heaviness in us. After partaking of such things we feel unfit in a short time either for any energetic physical activity or for clear thinking. Then again there are things which create restlessness of both body and mind, because certain foods contain elements which can heat our blood and disorganize our whole

nervous system. Then there is a kind of food which is by quality energizing, and at the same time soothing, producing a lightness of feeling in the body and invigorating our mental faculties. Although we may find a distinct type of food which has marked value, yet without proper discrimination and sense of moderation we can easily produce ill effect even from the finest regime, and this is often seen in the case of over-zealous, hasty adaptation of vegetarianism.

To-day the superior merit of non-meat diet is almost conclusively proved by eminent dieticians and men of science. My feeling is that we derive a great deal of benefit in regard to diet through other people's observations and their suggestions, but we must always apply these principles according to our individual need because it is almost impossible to have any set rule of diet for the entire humanity. In the first place people are not all constituted alike, and in the second place the climates, environments and occupations have a great deal to do with our physical need. Therefore, we have to use our common sense even when we are applying the most elevating ideal of non-meat-eating. I never advise any one to make a radical change in diet. For instance, people who all their life have been used to flesh food in a large measure should not give it up suddenly, but should by degrees reduce it and also find proper substitute for it.

Many meat-eaters have the notion that if they give up their accustomed habit, they cannot find proper nourishment any other way. This is an erroneous idea because grains, nuts, fruits and vegetables contain just as much nutriment, only perhaps they do not possess as much stimulus. Dr. Haig, one of the great authorities on diet, says: "It follows, also, that quite an exaggerated and erroneous estimate has been formed of the power of meat to produce force, because its stimulating effect has been mistaken for power and the depression which follows

has either been overlooked or later has been counteracted by alcohol, tobacco, and other more harmful stimulants; but the man who gets his albumen from a less stimulating source, having no early stimulation has also not subsequent depression, and so probably never feels the want of any alcohol at all. Hence it comes about that those who take alcohol or tobacco on a flesh diet, generally very soon give it up when they give up flesh, having no craving for any stimulant." Diet is in great measure a question of habit. An average person becomes a slave to his habit and shrinks from any change.

The idea of abstaining from meat-eating was not only prevalent among the Hindus and Buddhists, but it was strongly advocated by the ancient Greek philosophers, such as Pythagoras, Plato, etc. Pythagoras laid great emphasis on pure and abstemious diet, and it is supposed that he gathered his inspiration largely as he came in contact with the Oriental nations and their culture. Apart from all religious sentiment the great virtue of non-meat diet is effectively demonstrated by some of the recent scientific experiments, putting people under different regimes, such as strictly meat diet, meat and vegetable diet, and purely vegetable diet; and in all athletic contests such as running, walking, etc., the non-meat-eaters have always proved their greater endurance and ability.

It is not true that we cannot have adequate strength unless we partake of animal food, because some of the strongest people are among the vegetarians. Indian Sikh soldiers are a glowing example of this—stalwart and possessing remarkable physical strength, valor and endurance. We also read in Rollins' Ancient History: "In the most heroic days of the Grecian army, their food was the plain and simple produce of the soil. The immortal Spartans of Thermopylae were, from infancy, nourished by the plainest and coarsest vegetable aliment; and the Roman army in the period of their greatest valor

and most gigantic achievements subsisted on plain and coarse vegetable food. When the public games of ancient Greece—for the exercise of muscular power and activity in wrestling, boxing, running, etc.,—were first instituted, the athletae, in accordance with the common dietetic habits of the people, were trained entirely on vegetable food."

Another important factor in non-meat diet is the agility and flexibility that are produced in the body. Sometime ago a very interesting article appeared in regard to the mode of living of the Russian dancers who created such wide-spread sensation by their remarkable agility and suppleness, and it was found that they were all without any exception strict vegetarians. Indian Yogis who observe rigid diet, subsisting mostly on roots and fruits, sometimes even renouncing all cooked food, acquire superhuman power of mastery over flesh, proving their endurance in heat and cold and absolute control over all physical propensities and appetites.

Prof. Wiener of Harvard University tells us that "looking at vegetarianism in the light of comparative anatomy, it is self-evident that man was designed to be a vegetarian and nothing else. Quadrupeds are divided into classes according to their foods and with the single exception of man, no animal as a class has ever varied from the design of nature. These classes are: the carnivorous, or flesh-eating, the fruit-eating, the grass-eating, and the omnivorous. Each of these classes has distinctive organs adaptable to the digestion of the kinds of food it eats and to no other kinds. Man has artificially become an omnivorous animal in spite of the fact that anatomically he is a fruit-eating animal." One of the most obvious facts in regard to this is that the teeth of the flesh-eating animals are fashioned very differently from ours and frugivorous creatures. History shows that non-meat-eaters are as a rule peace loving people because they are finely organized physi-

cally, and have different mental caliber. Food has the power to produce these effects among nations. People who live mostly on flesh food are more susceptible to violent emotions such as jealousy, anger and hatred. This is noticeable even among animals. You may go to a menagerie and verify this fact. Tigers, wolves and hyenas which are fed exclusively on meat and blood, see how restless they are,—nervous and ferocious, creating most unquiet atmosphere about them and emitting a very foul odor. Then you may watch the elephant. He is an herbivorous animal, yet he excells others in strength and intelligence and is always gentle and calm.

It is strange that the majority of people who are so easily upset at the sight of blood and mangled flesh never stop to think that the meat they eat is directly connected with such unpleasantness. For instance every one shrinks from a butcher because he is regarded as unclean and cruel and yet when it comes to non-meat-eating, people are prejudiced against it. I have known cases where these unpleasant phases shocked their aesthetic sense so violently that they were cured of their hankering for meat. Once we were passing by a slaughter-house and the foul odor which emanated from it was so strong that we all enquired of each other wherefrom it was coming. When we discovered the cause of it a little child who was with us asked what the slaughter-house was for and when she found out that animals were killed there and that beef was animal, she was so horrified and saddened by it that she refused to eat meat again.

I do not hold that unless one becomes a complete vegetarian there is no salvation. If that were so, certain grass-eating animals would surpass us. There are people who live a very austere life, refraining from meat and all other forms of physical indulgence, and yet who exhibit feelings of arrogance, conceit and hatefulness towards others, especially those who do

not follow their rule of living. If through pure diet we fail to develop gentler feelings for our fellow-beings, we have missed the aim of non-killing, and are attaching more importance to the merely mechanical side of diet than to kindness, lovingness, tolerance and compassion. Even a lofty ideal can thus be dragged down by those who follow only its outer form.

It is most unfortunate that when children refuse to partake of flesh food, because it is repulsive to them, parents should force them to eat such things, thereby destroying their finer faculties. This is often done with good intention because parents worry for fear their children may be under-nourished, but they never consider the matter from a higher and more spiritual point of view. A child does not refuse certain foods without proper reason, and if only we are able to handle the situation with delicacy of feeling and greater wisdom, it would give the inherent nature a chance to manifest a higher type of manhood and womanhood.

Once a prominent clergyman told me that he was a vegetarian not for any religious or ethical reason, but because he found that without meat his mind worked better. Often people say they cannot think, they feel so heavy and dull and the mind does not work. Nine times out of ten this is caused by over-eating quite as much as by wrong diet. Greed takes the upper hand, and what is the result. We take in more than our system can assimilate and then we suffer. The result may not come at once, but ultimately we suffer both physically and spiritually, for greed is a great barrier to higher attainment. The main object of food is to make the body stronger, but if we take too much of even the most nourishing food, it weakens us and draws on our reserve force. People suffer not nearly so much from under-eating, as they do from over-eating. Nourishment is not a question of quantity, but of choosing the food which our system can most quickly and completely assimilate.

There is no written book that can control our appetite. Our greed and gluttony no one can check. We must always avoid both over-eating and under-eating. Our own system must be the judge and by degrees we must learn to develop this sense of just proportion. There is an excellent saying in India,—"Eat according to your own taste and dress according to the taste of others." If you do not dress according to other people's liking, you may make a caricature of yourself, but in eating you cannot follow somebody else's view because no one knows either your appetite or your capacity. But this is certain that if we can avoid over-eating, our body will feel light, our mind will feel light, and all our faculties will be at their best.

The idea of the consecration of food also plays a very vital part in the upbuilding of our spiritual nature, because this body is the holy temple of God, and only that which is suitable to God should be offered unto it. This is not an old-fashioned sanctimonious idea, but it contains a very deep spiritual principle, for when we eat food without the sense of consecration, merely to gratify our physical appetite, it will produce a very different effect than when we take it with a sense of dedication. In the Bhagavad-Gita, Sri Krishna gives this warning: "He who enjoys the objects given by the gods, without first offering to them, he is indeed a thief. The righteous, eating the remnants of *Yajna* (spiritual sacrifice) become free from all sins, but the unrighteous, who cook for themselves, eat sin and live in sensuality." Does not the Supreme Being bestow on us all our blessings? Why should we not then show our sense of recognition and humble gratitude? These ideals form the basis of all spiritual observances, such as asking a blessing, saying grace or prayer. The custom of fasting and prayer which exists in many of the religions is not without a just cause. It is good for us to fast once in a while even from the physical

standpoint, because it is most cleansing. It absolutely washes out the interior and then we enjoy our food more and assimilate it better. But if we add prayer and meditation to it we naturally obtain greater benefit.

Some people are interested in vegetarian diet purely for the upbuilding of health, and that is an excellent hypothesis because as we become healthier physically, our inner faculties have greater opportunity for quickening and we have much better chance for spiritual advancement. If we carefully avoid all eccentricities and going to extremes, we can derive great benefit through wholesome diet, for clean food produces purity of body and mind, and through purified body and mind the power of Truth shines forth unceasingly.

Harmlessness as the first flower; restraint of the wandering senses as a flower; compassion for all beings as a flower; forbearance or forgiveness as a most special flower; knowledge or wisdom unto salvation as a flower; penance or self-restraint as a flower; meditation as a flower; and truthfulness as a flower; these eight as flowers shall prove acceptable to the Omnipresent.—Prapanna Parijata.

Who knows if love and its beatitude, clear manifestation as it is of the universal harmony of things, is not the best demonstration of a fatherly and understanding God, just as it is the shortest road by which to reach Him? Love is a faith, and one faith leads to another. And this faith is happiness, light, and force. Only by it does a man enter into the series of the living, the awakened, the happy, the redeemed,—of those true men who know the value of existence and who labour for the glory of God and of the Truth. Perhaps it is through love that I shall find my way back to faith, to religion, to energy,

to concentration. . . . Believe, then, in a fatherly Providence and dare to love.—Amiel.

MERIT OF NON-INJURY

Laws of Manu

He who injures animals that are not injurious from a wish to give himself pleasure, adds nothing to his own happiness, living or dead.

While he who gives no creature willingly the pain of confinement or death, but seeks the good of all sentient beings, enjoys bliss without end.

He who injures no animated creature, shall attain without hardship whatever he thinks of, whatever he strives for, whatever he fixes his mind on.

Flesh-meat cannot be procured without injury to animals and the slaughter of animals obstructs the path to beatitude; from flesh-meat, therefore, let man abstain.

Attentively considering the formation of bodies and the death or confinement of embodied spirits, let him abstain from eating flesh-meat of any kind.

The man who forsakes not the law and eats not flesh-meat like a blood-thirsty demon, shall attain good-will in this world and shall not be afflicted with maladies.

He who consents to the death of an animal; he who kills it; he who dissects it; he who buys it; he who sells it; he who dresses it; he who serves it up; and he who makes it his food; these are eight principles in the slaughter.

Not a mortal exists more sinful than he who, without an oblation to the manes or the gods, desires to enlarge his own flesh with the flesh of another creature.

By subsisting on pure fruit and on roots, and by eating such grains as are eaten by hermits, a man reaps not so high a reward as by carefully abstaining from animal food.

PYTHAGORAS AND PYTHAGOREAN DISCIPLINE

By Sister Daya

Self-discipline is the basis for achievement. Body, mind, heart,—all must be tuned up if a man is to manifest something more than the ordinary in any walk of life. And if this is true in secular occupation, it is preeminently true in spiritual endeavour where the whole human instrument has to be sublimated and prepared to receive and handle the infinitely subtle forces of the spirit. Because of this, spiritual aspirants everywhere have always approached the mysteries of God by the path of self-discipline. The heart of this discipline is never contained in a formula, but there are certain fundamental requirements which may be recorded and it is just such a record as this that has been handed down to us from the school of Pythagoras at Crotona in Italy. Our chief testimony as to the life and work of Pythagoras comes from Diogenes Laertius, Iamblicus and Porphyry. M. Dacier, a Frenchman, gives us the essence of these writings in a quaint little volume published in the early part of the 18th century. The extracts which I will quote are from him and from Iamblicus.

Towards the XLVII Olympiad or about the year 570 B. C., a merchant from the Island of Samos, Mnemarchus by name, "a few days after his marriage, went with his wife to Delphos, there to sell some goods during the feast; for he was a graver by trade and dealt in rings and other trinkets. During his stay there, he received an oracle from Apollo, who told him that if he embarked for Syria the voyage would be very pleasant and fortunate to him, and that his wife would there bring forth a son who should be renowned for beauty and wisdom, and whose life would be useful to all posterity. After so plain an oracle, Mnemarchus failed not to go into Syria. But first he changed the name of his wife, and instead of Parthenis, called her Pythais, in remembrance of this oracle of Apollo,

who was surnamed *the Pythian.* At Sidon, Parthenis or Pythais, was brought to bed of a son, who was called Pythagoras because he had been foretold by this oracle of Apollo. Mnemarchus being come back to Samos, expended the greatest part of the money he had got in his voyage, in building a temple to Apollo, and took care to breed up his son answerably to the great hopes he had conceived of him."

Even as a youth, we are told, the young Pythagoras was god-like in nature and in appearance so that he was "reverenced by the multitude as one under the influence of divine inspiration." His fame spread abroad to neighboring cities and everywhere he was celebrated as the *long-haired Samian.* The most illustrious of philosophers gave him welcome, men such as Thales at Miletus, and Bias at Priene, so that he could even then have announced himself as a philosopher and teacher, had he so desired. But nearly forty years of preparation still lay ahead of him and it was not till his fifty-sixth year that he felt himself ready to take up his great work. In that long interval he travelled extensively, delving into the sacred mysteries of many peoples.

Under Thales he learned among other things the art of conservation of time and "for the sake of this," writes Iamblicus, "he entirely abstained from wine and animal food, and still prior to these from voracity, and confined himself to such nutriment as was slender and easy of digestion. In consequence of this, his sleep was short, his soul vigilant and pure, and his body confirmed in a state of perfect and invariable health." Having been urged by Thales to go to Egypt, he embarked from Phoenicia on a chance ship that touched its coasts and it is written of him that he remained silent during the entire voyage and for two nights and three days sat in the same unmoved state without food or drink or sleep. The sailors who had plotted to seize him and sell him as a slave were completely

conquered by his deific appearance and actions so that "they concluded that a divine daemon had in reality passed over with them from Syria into Egypt. Hence speaking both to Pythagoras and to each other with greater decorum and gentleness than before they . . . . at length happily landed on the Egyptian coast."

For twenty-two years he remained in Egypt where he underwent without flinching the terrific disciplines with which the Egyptian priests jealously guarded their secrets, "and was initiated, not in a superficial or casual manner, in all the mysteries of the gods." He was finally brought by the soldiers of Cambyses as a captive to Babylon where he had opportunity to study under the Magi and perfect himself in mathematics, music and other disciplines. After twelve years with them he returned home to the island of Samos. His own people received him with reverence but did not respond to his philosophic instruction as they should, and because of this and other considerations, he left Greece and went into Italy, ultimately arriving at the noble city of Crotona where he soon had a following of at least six hundred philosopher disciples and thousands of other disciples known as auditors or *acusmatici.*

All of these associated under him in a community which for its magnitude resembled a city and was known as Magna Graecia. There they dwelt together in unbroken concord, owning everything in common, and receiving laws and mandates from Pythagoras as they would receive them from a god. Indeed he was considered by many to be Apollo himself and it is recorded of him that he could subdue even wild animals by his voice for it is said that he "detained the Daunian bear which had most severely injured the inhabitants, and that having gently stroked it with his hand for a long time, fed it with maize and acorns, and compelled it by an oath no longer to touch any living thing." He ordained that his disciples should

show justice not only to men but to animals, especially those of similar nature to themselves and "commanded them to consider these as their familiars and friends, so as neither to injure, nor slay, nor eat any one of them." Savage animals he corrected and instructed through words and deeds rather than by punishment.

But not merely for the sake of mercy and justice did Pythagoras forbid certain meats to his disciples. "Each kind of food that is introduced into the body, becomes the cause of a certain peculiar disposition. Hence it requires great wisdom to be able to know and perceive what kind and what quantity of food ought to be used." For this reason not only was almost all animal food prohibited, but also those foods calculated to produce intemperance and mental sluggishness. He held that "nutriment greatly contributes to the best discipline, when it is properly used and in an orderly manner. Universally, therefore, he rejected all such food as is flatulant and the cause of perturbation, but he approved of the nutriment contrary to this. Hence likewise he thought that millet was a plant adapted to nutrition. But he altogether rejected such food as is foreign to the gods; because it withdraws us from familiarity with the gods. He likewise exhorted them to abstain from such things as are an impediment to prophecy, or to the habit of temperance or of virtue. And lastly he rejected all such things as are adverse to sanctity, and which obscure and disturb the other purities of the soul."

It was the effort of the Pythagoreans to keep their bodies always in the same condition and without variation as regards weight. "In a similar manner also with respect to the mind they were careful that they might not be at one time cheerful, and at another sad, but that they might be mildly joyful with uniformity. . . . . If at any time they were in a rage or oppressed with sorrow or anything else of this kind, they sepa-

rated themselves from the rest of their associates, and each by himself alone, endeavoured to digest and heal the passion. This also is said of the Pythagoreans, that no one of them when angry, either punished a servant or admonished a free man, but each of them waited till his mind was restored to its former tranquil condition. They accomplished this waiting by employing silence and quiet."

By means of music Pythagoras was wont to heal the body and to banish unclean passions of the soul. He used appropriate melodies to turn aside anger, envy, jealousy, hate and to induce that gentleness and elegance of manner for which the Pythagoreans were noted. "When his disciples were retiring to sleep," writes Iamblicus, "he purified the reasoning power from the perturbations of the day by certain odes and peculiar songs and thus procured for them tranquil sleep and few and good dreams. When they rose from bed he again liberated them from the torpor and heaviness of sleep by songs of another kind." They always arose before sunrise and after arranging their beds in an immaculate manner were not supposed to lie down upon them again during the day. Sleep at noon was especially prohibited.

After arising "they walked alone in secluded and charming spots where there were temples and groves," for Pythagoras held that "there was nothing more prejudicial to the tranquillity of the soul than to go early in the morning into company, and plunge one's self into the hurry of affairs, e'er by the help of music, or meditation and of prayer, we have calmed and composed our mind, and brought it into the state and harmony that is most becoming and most worthy of man." A little later he assembled with them in the Temple, after which "they used a little exercise for the sake of their health and then din'd on a little bread and honey without wine; when dinner was over, they minded the publick or their private affairs, and when they

had dispatched their business they took a walk as in the morning, bath'd themselves, and supp'd before sun-set, (never more than ten assembling together for this purpose). Their supper was generally some bread, some herbs, a small pittance of the victims of the sacrifice, seldom any fish, (which for certain reasons was not useful to them) and a little wine. At the end of the meal they made the libation, which was followed by some good lecture, that the oldest at the table, as President, made the youngest perform. The lecture over, they made another libation, and the President dismissed the assembly, giving them as a task to meditate on some symbol of their Master."

In the Pythagorean school there were, however, many different grades of disciples and to each was allotted his own peculiar discipline. Thus the contemplatives were forbidden the use of all animal food and all wine; nor were they permitted to sacrifice animals to the gods nor to injure them in any way. Pythagoras himself lived after this manner but "he permitted others whose life was not entirely purified, sacred and philosophic, to eat of certain animals; and for these he appointed a definite time of abstinence. The following apothegm was always employed by him in every place,— . . that we should avoid and amputate by fire and sword, and all various contrivances, from the body, disease; from the soul, ignorance; from the belly, luxury; from a city, sedition; from a house, discord; and at the same time, from all things, immoderation."

Small marvel that disciples crowded to a man such as this but he did not admit them lightly into his confidence. "First he considered their physiognomy, and from thence drew probable tokens of their inclinations; he observed their discourse, their laughter, their gait; he informed himself of their conduct, of their trades and occupations, and examined with great care to what they were most addicted." After having made these

observations concerning them, he neglected them for three years in order to test their stability and true love of learning. "If he had reason to be satisfied with their perseverance, he admitted them into his noviceship which was indeed very severe. . . . Pythagoras at first enjoined his disciples a five years' silence, during which they were only to hear, without daring to start the least question, or propose the least doubt. These five years' silence were sometimes reduced to two, in behalf of those he found to have any extraordinary qualifications. While this probation lasted these disciples were called *Hearers;* and when they were thought to be sufficiently instructed in this so difficult a science of Hearing and being silent, they were permitted to speak, to propose their doubts, and to write down what they heard; and then they were called *Initiated in the Sciences.*

But what deserves our observation, from this silence they often proceeded more expert and more learned than they generally do from the schools. . . . So true is it that silence is the ready way to instruction. Long before Pythagoras, King Numa, knowing the advantage of silence, commanded the Romans, particularly to honor one of the muses, under the name of the *Silent Muse,* thereby to recommend silence to them. . . . When Pythagoras had set at liberty the tongues of his disciples, he gave them not leave to speak without bounds and without measure; for he often said to them, 'You ought either to hold your peace, or to say things more worth than silence. Choose rather to throw a stone at random than an idle or useless word. And say not a little in many words but much in a few.' " If any of the disciples tired of the life and desired to forsake it, all his personal fortune was returned to him from the common fund with generous increase, and his fellow disciples raised a tomb to him and considered him as dead.

"As dyers previously purify garments," comments Iambli-

cus, "and then fix in the colors with which they wish them to be imbued, in order that the dye may not be washed away . . . . after the same manner also that divine man prepared the souls of those that were lovers of philosophy, so that they might not deceive him in any of those beautiful and good qualities which he hoped they would possess." As a result his disciples chose rather to lay down their lives than to transgress his mandates. "This also is a beautiful circumstance, that they referred everything to Pythagoras, and called it by his name, and that they did not ascribe to themselves the glory of their own inventions, except very rarely. But all the purifying disciplines in the world could not have produced Crotona without the living presence of Pythagoras. It took more than a good and great man to do what he did. It took one with the Divine quality, capable of inspiring such love and devotion in the hearts of his followers that everything else was forgotten in that. They were united in him and through him. For them he was the ideal made real, in whose sublime atmosphere all warring thoughts must perish. Because of this the final disruption of the colony was due not to inner dissension but to the blind malice of a powerful man who had been refused admittance into the school. He pursued the Pythagoreans with implacable hatred till but few were left alive, and he hounded Pythagoras from city to city till he finally died of starvation, so it is held by some, in the Temple of the Muses whither he had fled for refuge. The recorded life of Pythagoras is overlaid with much of the miraculous, but no miracle can be greater than the miracle of his successful colony at Crotona which retained to the end its harmony and lofty ideals, becoming a mighty tradition of all that is noble and beautiful in Grecian life and thought.

Friend, I learn as long as I live.—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

KINDLINESS, COMPASSION AND SOBRIETY

By Jan van Ruysbroeck

(Flemish Priest and Mystic. 13th Century.)

By gentleness and kindness, charity is kept quick and fruitful in man, for a heart full of kindness is like a lamp full of precious oil; for the oil of mercy enlightens the erring sinner with good example, and with words and works of comfort it anoints and heals those whose hearts are wounded or grieved or perplexed. And it is a fire and a light for those who dwell in the virtues, in the fire of charity; and neither jealousy nor envy can perturb it.

Out of kindliness springs compassion, which is a fellow-feeling with all men; for none can share the griefs of all, save him who is kind. From this compassion springs generosity; for none can be generous in a supernatural way, with faithfulness and good-will towards all, save him who has a pitiful heart —though a man may often show generosity to a particular person without charity and without supernatural generosity.

By generosity of heart all other virtues are increased, and all the powers of the soul are adorned; for the generous man is always blithe in spirit and untroubled of heart, and he flows forth with desire, and in his works of virtue, to all men in common. Whosoever is generous, and loves not earthly goods, how poor soever he be, he is like God: for all that he has in himself, and all that he feels, flow forth and are given away. And in this way he has cast out the fourth mortal sin, which is covetousness or avarice. Of all such Christ says: Blessed are the merciful.

Out of this generosity there spring a supernatural zeal and diligence in all virtues and all that is seemly. This zeal makes a man grow in reason and prudence, and practise the virtues, both of soul and of body, in righteousness. Through this supernatural zeal all the powers of the soul are laid open to God,

and are made ready for all virtues. And the conscience rejoices, and the grace of God is increased; the virtues are practised with joy and gladness, and the outward works are adorned.

From this zeal there spring temperance and sobriety, both inward and outward; for none can possess the right measure of sobriety save him who is greatly zealous and diligent to keep his soul and body in righteousness. Sobriety divides the higher powers from the animal powers; it saves a man from intemperance and from excess. Sobriety wishes neither to taste, nor to know, those things which are forbidden.

A man should keep his senses in sobriety and should restrain the animal powers by means of the reason; so that the lusts of the flesh do not enter too far into the savouring of food and of drink; but he should eat and drink as the sick take their physic, because it is needful to support his strength, that he may serve God therewith. This is sobriety of body. He should also observe method and moderation in doing and in leaving undone, in words and in works, in silence and in speaking, in food and in drink, according to the custom of Holy Church, and after the example of the saints.

By inward and ghostly temperance and sobriety a man preserves firmness and constancy of faith, purity of intelligence, that tranquillity of reason necessary to the comprehension of truth, an impulse towards all virtues according to the will of God, peace of heart, and serenity of conscience. And herewith he possesses an enduring peace, in God and in himself.

And by temperance and sobriety of the outward bodily senses, a man often preserves the health and the soundness of his natural body, the dignity of his outward life, and a good reputation. And thus he lives in peace with himself and with his neighbors; for by his temperance and sobriety he draws to

himself and pleases all men of good-will. And thus he casts out the sixth mortal sin, which is intemperance, greed or gluttony. Of all such Christ says: Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God.

LIGHT WITHOUT MEASURE

By Jacopone da Todi

(A Franciscan Monk of 14th Century)

Love beyond telling, Good unimagined, Light without measure, shine now in my heart.

Vast, ineffable Light!
Great Sun—and undiscovered
Save by the lone souls darkly led
Through night's obscurity.

Mock'd by a rush his sight,
Who, "Lo 'tis here" doth certain call,
And claims to measure all
Its height and mystery.

This know I only, night
Is day resplendent; but no strength
Have I to prove its breadth and length,
Its shining verity. . . .

In midst of this great vast
Abyss, thou findest never more
Or landing-place or shore,
Or any path or clue.

Self has forgot its past.
Thou art—but say, what meaneth "thou"?—
Reborn and all transformed now,
And clad in raiment new.

IN MEMORIAM

A cablegram from India brings the sad news that Swami Brahmananda, the President of the Ramakrishna Mission, breathed his last on the eleventh day of this April.

After Sri Ramakrishna left the world, when the Mission was first organized by Swami Vivekananda, the choice of a head inevitably fell upon Swami Brahmananda, the specially beloved of Sri Ramakrishna who always looked upon him as his spiritual son. Later when the illustrious founder, Swami Vivekananda passed away, the Mission was able to sustain the blow received, because of Swami Brahmananda's great and illumined presence; for his presence was a constant blessing to those who worked under him and to the thousands who came to him from all parts of the world. He was neither lecturer nor preacher, but like the Northern star, fixed and immovable, shone with a steady radiance upon all who looked to him for light. He was indeed a pillar of the Mission and his passing is for it an irreparable loss. He will be mourned everywhere by those who love and reverence him throughout India and around the world.

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The Message of the East



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Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

Published monthly except in August and September

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DIVINE GIVER.

By Swami Paramananda

O Thou unasked, unceasing Giver,
Thou hast given me Thy endless blessing,
Thou hast drawn me close to Thy heart.
Thy bounty runs through my life to over-flowing;
Yea, tender Lord, by Thy magic charm
Thou hast driven away all my past wretchedness.
Can we with all our might offer Thee
Aught worthy in Thy blessed sight?
Can we ever make our heart so free
Of mundane stain that Thy light of love
May shine and glow unceasingly?
Thou art ever merciful to the lowly,
We bring Thee our humble hearts;
No merit have we save our faith
In Thy infinite compassion.
Do Thou make of us Thy tools
That at all hours, in work and play,
We may revolve in Thy safe-keeping.

This little invocation is humbly and reverently dedicated to the sacred and beloved memory of Swami Brahmananda, the late president of the Ramakrishna Mission.

THE UNIVERSAL MESSAGE.

I have now come to a stage of realization in which I see that God is walking in every human form and manifesting Himself alike through the sage and the sinner, the virtuous and the vicious. Therefore when I meet different people I say to myself: "God in the form of the saint, God in the form of the sinner, God in the form of the righteous, God in the form of the unrighteous."—*Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna.*

Renounce injustice and violence; never utter harsh words that wound the heart. Be generous whatever happens, O soul of my soul; let thy tongue outrage no one! To wound thy brother to the heart is the worst of sins, the greatest of all iniquities. Labor with ardor to raise up those who have fallen; wouldst thou desire to overthrow the throne of the Lord?—*The Counsels of Nabi Efendi.*

Let this truth be present to thee in the excitement of anger, that to be moved by passion is not manly, but that mildness and gentleness, as they are more agreeable to human nature, so also are they more manly; and he who possesses these qualities possesses strength, nerves, and courage, and not the man who is subject to fits of passion and discontent.—*Marcus Aurelius.*

Soft speech acts like water on the fire of wrath. Do not the soldiers on the battle-field wear armour consisting of a hundred folds of silk? O friend! be humble when thou dealest with a fierce foe, for gentleness will blunt the sharpest sword.—*Bustan of Sadi.*

He whose mind is not agitated in calamities and who has no longing for pleasure, free from attachment, fear and anger, he indeed is said to be a saint of steady wisdom.

He who is free from all attachment and neither rejoices on receiving good nor is vexed on receiving evil, his wisdom is well-established.—*Teachings of Sri Krishna.*

I have heard that he who possesses the secret of life, when travelling abroad, will not flee from rhinoceros or tiger; when entering a hostile camp, he will not equip himself with sword or buckler. The rhinoceros finds in him no place to insert its horn; the tiger has no where to fasten its claw; the soldier has no where to thrust his blade. And why? Because he has no spot where death can enter.—*Sayings of Lao-Tzu.*

Invent not evil reports, neither do ye repeat them. Carp not, but look for the good sides of your fellow-beings,—that you may with sincerity defend them against their enemies.

Waste not the time with gossip, but speak to the purpose or keep silence. Covet not, nor envy, but rejoice at the fortune of other people.

Cleanse your heart of malice and cherish no hatred, not even against your enemies; but embrace all living beings with kindness.—*Teachings of Gautama Buddha.*

Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven.

For He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?

And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so?

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.—*Teachings of Jesus the Christ.*

POWER OF LOVE AND NON-RESISTANCE.

Lecture by Swami Paramananda

"Let a man overcome anger by love, let him overcome evil by good; for hatred does not cease by hatred at any time; hatred ceases by love; this is an old rule." This admonition of Gautama Buddha is not peculiar to Buddhism only as he himself says that it is an old rule. Prior to the rise of Buddhism the same principle stands out throughout the Vedic revelations of the ancient Indo-Aryans. Glowing examples of all-conquering love, forgiveness of enemies, and super-human endurance of adversities are ever exemplified in the lives of the holy rishis and saints of India.

Jesus the Christ taught His disciples not to follow the idea of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. "Resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also, and if any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also." Christ proved it, Buddha proved it, St. Francis and other saints and mystics throughout the ages have proved it by their lives. You can also prove it,—that through love man has power to conquer all. Non-resistance was the very foundation of early Christianity and her saints and martyrs drew their sole inspiration from this supreme teaching and bore bravely all the trials and tribulations that their enemies imposed upon them. All the great world teachers have laid special emphasis on the power of love and non-resistance, and yet to-day there are very few who really believe this to be a practical theme. This has naturally caused great conflict in the minds of men. They ask how can they accept a teaching unless it is practical. Some try to explain by saying that it is not practical for this age. Why should not a profound spiritual teaching be practical for all ages? It is practical, but it does not seem so to a person who is impatient for an immediate return, who wants gratification of his desires at once.

It makes very little difference whether we call ourselves Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, or by any other name, if we do not believe absolutely in the fundamental essential points of our faith, if we are not strong enough to follow and prove to ourselves the practical value of our spiritual conviction, we have not entered into the realm of true religion. We may use big-sounding words, we may have many doctrines and dogmas, we may set out to conquer other people and convert them, but we have not converted ourselves to the true faith. Conversion is not accomplished through violence. If we want to impress any one with our great mission we must do so by our superior love, by our superior character, forgiveness and nobility. This is the only practical way.

On the material plane things move very rapidly—just come and go. One who has focussed his whole life and interest on the physical and whose mind is absolutely overpowered with bodily consciousness is not willing to wait patiently for the working out of spiritual laws. If a person strikes him he thinks the only way he can take revenge is to strike back—a natural impulse. If a person treats him hatefully, in order to get even with him he feels that he must hate in return, perhaps with stronger hatred; a person takes advantage of him and he thinks he must also take equal or even greater advantage. Thus the whole scheme of life is on a superficial and perverted basis and has no connection whatsoever with spiritual ideals. A man may think he is very strong because he is yielding to his anger, is striking back forcibly, but he is really weak because he has not the power to control his lower propensities. The true hero who follows the path of God demonstrates his control over anger, over hatred, so much so that he will refuse even to hear ill of his enemies. A great Sufi mystic tells us, "I have heard that the heroes in the path of God will not distress the hearts even of their enemies. How canst thou

attain this dignified station who art at strife and warfare with thy friends?" Non-resistance of evil is never found practical by a moral coward. It requires spiritual strength to stand on this higher and loftier sphere of life and remain unbaffled even in the midst of the most adverse circumstances.

There are two factors in our life: one the physical, "the eating, drinking, sleeping man," as Emerson calls it, and the other, a deeper and more profound being within. When we are overwhelmed with the consciousness of the eating, drinking, sleeping man we cannot connect ourselves with anything bigger. We think our whole life is circumscribed by this little span of existence, and unless we take advantage of every moment and look after our own interest it will be lost. It is for this reason that we are so impatient. We are impatient to gain something, impatient to revenge whenever any harm is done to us, but this way we defeat our true aim.

To hate another does more harm to one's self than to the person against whom hatred is directed. This is true even on the ordinary plane. A person who broods with revengeful spirit injures himself physically as well as morally. He may become sick and his whole system poisoned, while mentally he is not able to do so much because he has shattered a certain amount of his moral fibre. And how ignoble one feels when one yields to these lower propensities. You may say that they come in a moment. In a moment they come, but these moments are the result of all other moments spent idly, thoughtlessly, or with thoughts that are ignoble. A very simple logical statement is given in almost all the great Scriptures of the world,—that as a man thinketh, so is he. If he turns his mind towards good things he becomes good; if he lifts his mind to holy things his life becomes holy. And yet strangely enough man reverses this order at every step. The things which are hateful, degrading and harmful, such thoughts absorb his mind and in-

terest more often, more persistently than the things that make for nobility, strength and upliftment. As man goes deeper within his nature he cannot find any satisfaction in living this way. Then is the beginning of his spiritual life. In order to gain our access to higher realities, in order to become truly helpful to humanity, we must find our way to these deeper aspects of life.

People often say: but what can the individual do when even the great organizations fail to apply non-resistance successfully? Therein lies the whole secret. Individuals bring the great power. The individual silently living the life of consecration creates a power within himself. He it is who sets a great spiritual victory in motion by his own achievement. It is through individuals that the destiny of human life is moulded. Here and there you find instances of a man refusing to strike back. At first you think he is a fool because others will take advantage of him, but in the deeper spiritual sense no one can take advantage of him, no one can really rob him. Material things may be taken away from him, but no one can take from him his dignity. There is great joy in endurance. A man may find actual happiness and exaltation in enduring injury, discomforts and all manner of afflictions from his enemies. There is great benefit for every soul that bravely meets these ordeals. Our characters are formed by such sublime experiences. We must learn to direct life's latent forces in such a manner that things which are proving evil now may become of infinite good. When love governs our life and becomes a ruling passion, when no other motive but this actuates our entire thought and action, then no harm can befall us or any one else through us.

It is the motive that counts. Non-resistance is not what we merely do with our hands and feet. It depends mostly upon our motive. While we never need harm any one physically, or

otherwise, while we must always hold loving thoughts, sometimes the appearance of resistance may be necessary, especially in connection with the ignorant. Non-resistance is not a question of mere passive and morbid forbearance. Sometimes it may become necessary to make a show of resistance in order to prevent a foolish man from doing a greater wrong. This is seen in the lives of great men who often express righteous indignation. For instance, some one comes and speaks ill of your friends, or tries to blaspheme a holy character. If we morbidly listen to such people we not only desecrate our ears, but also we do them harm, because we encourage their evil ways. This we can prevent without entering into a dispute or quarrel. For instance, we can easily withdraw ourselves from such company silently, or can speak with such decisiveness as to avoid all possibility of a quarrel. We are always justified in making a show of resistance in order to prevent a greater evil, provided our heart does not bear any malice.

Our great Master, Sri Ramakrishna, gives a vivid parable illustrating this. Once a venomous snake dwelt in a certain place which no one dared approach for fear of being bitten. One day a holy man was passing that way and the boys warned him of the venomous serpent. But he of tranquil heart had no fear and when the snake approached him it lost all its wrath, being overcome by the gentleness of the holy man. The sage admonished it for its evil conduct and asked it to harm no more. The snake was chastened by this experience and tried to lead a life of non-injury, but in a short time the neighboring children took notice of the sudden change in it and thought that it had lost its venom. They pelted it with stones and whirled it ruthlessly by its tail. It was in a miserable state, but fortunately the sage returned that way and asked it the reason for its sad plight. The snake replied, "Holy sir, following your advice I do not injure any more, but the children

not knowing my motive tried to harm me." Then the sage rebuked it. "I only asked thee not to bite, why didst thou not hiss to protect thyself from the ignorant children?" This is a fine distinction between hissing and striking. One may make a show of resistance and yet keep his heart free from the contamination of wrath and hatred. Living in the world and having to meet as we do with all kinds of perplexing situations, complete non-resistance may not seem possible and practical in our every day life, especially for the average layman. But certainly every one of us can cultivate absence of anger, absence of calumny, absence of hatred. By doing so we may prepare for ourselves and for our fellow-beings a better and more glorified humanity.

Love is a tremendous force. If we are not impatient it will work at every turn, but do not always begin by looking for results. To-day you have held a loving thought towards some one and to-morrow you are trying to see if it has brought the full measure you expected. Expect nothing and your return will be greater. Love because you believe in love, because it is the greatest ideal to follow and when your whole heart and soul and mind are consecrated it will become a mighty power in your life. First we may begin loving only the people with whom we live, and who are related to us and who are pleasing to us; then we may succeed in extending our love to cover an entire community, then a country, then the whole of humanity. A flower when it blossoms gives its fragrance to all regardless of personalities. The same way there are characters so pure, so lofty, so free from all selfish thought that they give because they feel God's bounty within them; there is no fear that they may lose, there is no calculation that they may be poverty-stricken because they are giving a little too much. They feel an endless, inexhaustible reservoir welling up from within. Such people can love freely; love even their enemies and they

conquer them. There are many instances in the lives of holy men who vanquished brute forces by no other means than the power of gentle love and holy humility.

In India often the holy men live in the jungle unprotected and surrounded by tigers, snakes, lions, and all kinds of ferocious animals, but they have no thought of self. They have no idea of harming, nor have they any sense of fear because they believe absolutely in God and they remain in His safekeeping. In consequence these animals come to them and forget their ferocious nature. We can find this even in connection with birds and little squirrels in the park. They understand your motive and according to that they react towards you. But these things are not accomplished by mere theory. Non-resistance is a power we evolve through our own life. Love is not just in words. It is a power which we possess and demonstrate. Some say, I want power and if the power of love conquers I will give it a chance. It is not merely a question of giving it a chance, setting a limited time, trying it for a few hours or a few days. We cannot do these things in such cut and dried half-hearted way.

There is a little parable about a man who thought he had absolute surrender to the will of God. One day when he was molested by an enemy he said, "O Lord Thy Will be done, I surrender myself wholly to Thy Will," and kept on repeating this; but as his enemy still did not let him go, he began to feel a little anxious and doubtful as to whether the Lord was coming to his rescue and so started to defend himself. Now, according to the story, the Lord was coming to save him, but as he took the matter in his own hand, it was no longer necessary. How often we find this true in our own life.

Love is also healing. It not only heals the bodily wounds, but it heals especially the moral wounds which cannot be reached by any other means. For instance when a man is mor-

ally injured and falls into the path of evil the world looks down on him and makes him conscious of his sinfulness and degradation. This only accentuates his hopelessness and helplessness. But sometimes a child's unquestioning love redeems him and transforms him, while all other efforts to reform him may prove fruitless. How often in life even a kind and loving word performs a miracle for one who is crushed by life's weight. It seems to bring new courage, new hope, and gives a fresh start, because it is actuated by love. Love is the greatest cure. It succeeds when all else fails. But do not look for immediate results; they may come now, they may come eons later.

Love for love's sake is the noblest motto. Sri Krishna taught this in India,—that we should love for the sake of loving, and not bring a spirit of bargaining into it—that we want something in return—but because love is the redeeming power in life. This was the supreme secret in the lives of the great Saviours. They asked nothing for themselves. They had no ulterior motive; they had no axe to grind; they had no fear, and their love was unbounded. It was not merely directed to the people who were good, it was also for the miserable, the wretched, for all are from the same source. We love freely when this consciousness dawns in our heart,—that God abides within us just as He abides in all. When a man is aware of this he becomes irresistable, he no longer needs to resist evil; evil melts away before him just as the ice melts before the sun.

Spiritual life expresses itself through our daily actions, thoughts and feelings. We cannot afford to take chances with our spiritual life. No one becomes a saint suddenly. It is through the sum total of all that we think, all that we aspire for. But unless our motive is pure and consecrated, our actions will be empty and devoid of any meaning. Therefore at every moment we should direct ourselves wholly with a sense of consecration so that however small and insignificant our life

may seem, we may place it unreservedly in God's hand, that He may use it and find it worthy to scatter His blessings of love.

The secret of non-resistance is this,—that one who does not think for himself and is only filled with the thought of God and his fellow-beings is protected by God and His creatures. "Those who worship Me and meditate on Me without any other thought, to these ever steadfast devotees I secure safety and supply all their needs." One whose holy life and love resemble infinitude, no one can ever harm. Can you hit the sky? Try. It only hurts you. The sky is an example of the characters who practise non-resistance. No evil can reach them, because they have transcended in their consciousness the material plane of anger, jealousy, hatred and malice. It is only when we overcome these evils by love that we find the practicality of non-resistance and are made impregnable by its mighty power.

OVERCOMING DIFFICULTIES

Selection from Mahabharata

Yudhisthira said,—"Creatures are seen to be afflicted by diverse causes and almost continually. Tell me, O grandsire, in what way can one overcome all those difficulties!" Bhishma said,—"They that never practise deceit, they whose behaviour is restrained by salutary restrictions, and they that control all worldly desires, succeed in overcoming all difficulties. They that do not speak when addressed in evil language, they that do not injure others when injured themselves, they that give but do not take, succeed in overcoming all difficulties. They that always give hospitable shelter to guests, they that do not indulge in malice, they that are constantly engaged in the study of the Vedas, succeed in overcoming all difficulties. Those persons who, conversant with duties, adopt that behaviour towards parents which they should, they that abstain from sleeping during the day, succeed in overcoming all difficulties. They that do

not commit any kind of sin in thought, word, and deed, they that never injure any creature, succeed in overcoming all difficulties. They that always speak truth in this world even when life is at stake, and that are examplars for all creatures to imitate, succeed in overcoming all difficulties. They whose acts never deceive, whose words are always agreeable, and whose wealth is always well spent, succeed in overcoming all difficulties. They that have checked all the qualities that appertain to passion and darkness, are possessed of high souls, and practise the qualities that are called good, succeed in overcoming all difficulties. They of whom no creature stands in fear and those that do not fear any creature themselves, they that look upon all creatures as their own self, succeed in overcoming all difficulties. Those that are good, that are never inspired with grief at the sight of other people's prosperity, and that abstain from all kinds of ignoble behaviour, succeed in overcoming all difficulties. They that bow to all the gods, that listen to the doctrines of all creeds, that have faith, and that are endued with tranquil souls, succeed in overcoming all difficulties. They that do not desire honor for themselves, that give honor unto others, that bow down unto those that deserve their worship, succeed in overcoming all difficulties. They that restrain their own wrath and pacify the wrath of others, and that never get angry with any creature, succeed in overcoming all difficulties. They that abstain, from their birth, from honey and meat and intoxicating drinks, succeed in overcoming all difficulties. They that eat for only supporting life, that seek the companionship of women for the sake only of offspring, and that open their lips for only speaking what is true, succeed in overcoming all difficulties. They that worship with devotion that Supreme Lord of all creatures, that origin and destruction of the universe, succeed in overcoming all difficulties."

RESIST NOT EVIL

By Count Lyof N. Tolstoi

Jesus said, simply and clearly, that the law of resistance to evil by violence, which has been made the basis of society, is false, and contrary to man's nature; and he gave another basis, that of non-resistance to evil, a law which, according to his doctrine, would deliver man from wrong. "You believe" (he says in substance) "that your laws, which resort to violence, correct evil; not at all; they only augment it. For thousands of years you have tried to destroy evil by evil, and you have not destroyed it; you have only augmented it. Do as I command you, follow my example, and you will know that my doctrine is true." Not only in words, but by his acts, by his death, did Jesus propound his doctrine, "resist not evil."

Believers listen to all this. They hear it in their churches, persuaded that the words are divine; they worship Jesus as God, and then they say: "All this is admirable, but it is impossible; as society is now organized, it would derange our whole existence, and we should be obliged to give up the customs that are so dear to us. We believe it all, but only in this sense: That it is the ideal towards which humanity ought to move; the ideal which is to be attained by prayer, and by believing in the sacraments, in the redemption, and in the resurrection of the dead."

"Resist not evil." They are very simple, these words; but they are, nevertheless, the expression of a law divine and human. If there has been in history a progressive movement for the suppression of evil, it is due to the men who understood the doctrine of Jesus—who endured evil, and resisted not evil by violence. The advance of humanity towards righteousness is due, not to the tyrants, but to the martyrs. As fire cannot extinguish fire, so evil cannot suppress evil. Good alone, confronting evil and resisting its contagion, can over-

come evil. And in the inner world of the human soul, the law is as absolute as was even the law of Galileo, more absolute, more clear, more immutable. Men may turn aside from it, they may hide its truth from others; but the progress of humanity towards righteousness can only be attained in this way. Every step must be guided by the command, "resist not evil." A disciple of Jesus may say now, with greater assurance than did Galileo, in spite of misfortunes and threats: "And yet it is not violence, but good, that overcomes evil." If the progress is slow, it is because the doctrine of Jesus (which, through its clearness, simplicity, and wisdom, appeals so inevitably to human nature), because the doctrine of Jesus has been cunningly concealed from the majority of mankind under an entirely different doctrine falsely called by his name.

SONGS OF KABIR

Behold what wonderful rest is in the Supreme Spirit! and he enjoys it, who makes himself meet for it.

Held by the cords of love, the swing of the Ocean of Joy sways to and fro; and a mighty sound breaks forth in song.

See what a lotus blooms there without water! and Kabir says "My heart's bee drinks its nectar."

What a wonderful lotus it is, that blooms at the heart of the spinning wheel of the universe! Only a few pure souls know of its true delight.

* * * * *

The flute of the Infinite is played without ceasing, and its sound is love:

When love renounces all limits, it reaches truth.

How widely the fragrance spreads! It has no end, nothing stands in its way.

The form of this melody is bright like a million suns: incomparably sounds the vina, the vina of the notes of truth.

PAY HOMAGE TO TRUTH

Extract by Swami Vivekananda

In these days we have to measure everything by utility,—by how many pounds, shillings and pence it represents. What right has a person to ask that truth should be judged by the standard of utility or money? Suppose there is no utility, will it be less true? Utility is not the test of truth. Nevertheless, there is the highest utility in this. Happiness we see is what every one is seeking for, but the majority seek it in things which are evanescent and not real. No happiness was ever found in the senses. There never was a person who found happiness in the senses or in enjoyment of the senses. Happiness is only found in the Spirit.

Therefore the highest utility for mankind is to find this happiness in the Spirit. The next point is that ignorance is the great mother of all misery, and the fundamental ignorance is to think that the Infinite weeps and cries, that He is finite. This is the basis of all ignorance, that we the immortal, the ever pure, the perfect Spirit, think that we are little minds, that we are little bodies; it is the mother of all selfishness. As soon as I think that I am a little body, I want to preserve it, to protect it, to keep it nice, at the expense of other bodies, then you and I become separate. As soon as this idea of separation comes, it opens the door to all mischief and leads to all misery. This is the utility, that if a very small fractional part of human beings living to-day can put aside the idea of selfishness, narrowness and littleness, this earth will become a paradise tomorrow; but with machines and improvements of material knowledge only, it will never be. These only increase misery, as oil poured on fire increases the flame all the more. Without the knowledge of the Spirit, all material knowledge is only adding fuel to fire, only giving into the hands of selfish man one more instrument to take what belongs to others, to live upon

the life of others, instead of giving up his life for them.

Is it practical? is another question. Can it be practised in modern society? Truth does not pay homage to any society, ancient or modern. Society has to pay homage to truth, or die. Societies should be moulded upon truth, and truth has not to adjust itself to society. If such a noble truth as unselfishness cannot be practised in society, it is better for a man to give up society and go into the forest. That is the daring man. There are two sorts of courage. One is the courage of facing the cannon, and the other is the courage of spiritual conviction. In the Mutiny of 1857, there was a Swami, a very great soul. A Mahomedan mutineer stabbed him severely. The Hindu mutineers caught and brought the man to the Swami, offering to kill him. But the Swami looked up calmly and said: "My brother, thou art He, thou art He!" and expired.

What good is it to talk of the strength of your muscles, of the superiority of your Western institutions, if you cannot make Truth square with your society, if you cannot build up a society into which the highest truth will fit? What is the good of this boastful talk about your grandeur and greatness, if you stand up and say, "This courage is not practical." Is nothing practical, but pounds, shillings, and pence? If so, why boast of your society? That society is the greatest, where the highest truths become practical. That is my opinion, and if society is not fit for the highest truths, make it so, and the sooner, the better. Stand up, men and women, in this spirit, dare to believe in the Truth, dare to practise the Truth! The world requires a few hundred bold men and women. Practise that boldness which dares know the truth, which dares show the truth in life, which does not quake before death, nay, welcomes death, makes a man know that he is the Spirit, that, in the whole universe nothing can kill him. Then you will be free. Then you will know your real Soul!

LIVE PEACEABLY

By Thomas a Kempis

Keep thyself first in peace, and then shalt thou be able to pacify others. A peaceable man doth more good than he that is well learned. A passionate man turneth even good into evil, and easily believeth evil. A good peaceable man turneth all things to good. He that is well in peace, is not suspicious of any. But he that is discontented and troubled, is tossed with divers suspicions: he is neither quiet himself, nor suffereth others to be quiet. He often speaketh that which he ought not to speak; and omitteth that which were more expedient for him to do.

First, therefore, have a careful zeal over thyself, and then thou mayest justly be zealous also towards thy neighbour. It were more just that thou shouldest accuse thyself, and excuse thy brother. If thou wilt be borne withal, bear also with another.

Behold, how far off thou art yet from true charity and humility, which knoweth not how to be angry with any, or to be moved with indignation, but only against its own self. It is no great matter to associate with the good and gentle; for this is naturally pleasing to all, and every one willingly enjoyeth peace, and loveth those best that agree with him. But to be able to live peaceably with hard and perverse or undisciplined persons is a great grace, and an exceedingly commendable and manly deed.

There are some that neither are in peace themselves nor leave others to be in peace: They are troublesome to themselves. And there are that keep themselves in peace and study to bring others unto peace.

Nevertheless, our whole peace in this miserable life consisteth rather in humble sufferance than in not feeling adversities. Whoso knoweth best how to suffer will keep the greatest peace.

VICTORY OF LOVE

An incident from the life of Lord Gouranga, the Light of Nadia.

Compassion is an attribute of every real spiritual teacher, but there are some great beings who seem the very incarnation of love. Thus it is written of the Indian saint, Lord Gouranga, the Light of Nadia, that he had within his heart such burning love for all creatures, such tender mercy, that he would grieve more bitterly over some wayward soul than a mother would over a lost child. Even to hear of a man's misdeeds caused him intense anguish. On finding himself face to face with the evil-doer the tears would stream from his eyes and so heart-rending was the sight of his divine grief that the man would fall prostrate before him crying, "Lord, Lord do not weep I can bear to suffer hell, but I cannot bear to see the anguish of your heart for my unworthy self. Henceforth I shall try to deserve thy blessing."

Once when Lord Gouranga was wandering in South India he heard of a most cruel and rapacious robber chief, who was terrorizing the whole countryside. He sought him out instantly, going alone to his stronghold. The chief greeted his holy visitor in amazement. "What! a saint here in the midst of robbers?" he asked, and the Lord replied: "I come to pay my homage to you who are also a saint." "I, a saint?" exclaimed the chief. "I am only a robber!" "That may be," said the Lord, "but I see a gem of divine love shining within you which will make of you a saint." These simple and fervent words went straight to the heart of the robber. For the first time in his life he heard some one speak to him with real love and trust. It roused in him a new feeling. He became aware of his higher nature and realized that there was good in him. The tears of repentance came. Flinging away his sword he offered himself at the Lord's feet and followed him humbly for the rest of his life as his disciple.

BUDDHA THE COMPASSIONATE

(Dramatic adaptation of "The Light of Asia" by Georgina Jones Walton, now known as Sister Daya.)

SWAN SCENE

(*Gardens of King Sudhodana's Palace. King and Viswamitra, his prime minister.*)

King.—Oft in the hunt
The prince will pause and let the deer pass free
Or yield a half-won race because his steed
Fetches a painful breath.
Viswamitra.—Our Sakya lords
Are wont to show forth kindness and calm ways.
(*Enter Sidhartha—afterwards known as the Buddha—and Devadatta.*)
Devadatta.—We'll bag some royal game to-day, a deer
Or two,—perchance a swan—Come cousin!
Sidhartha.—Nay!
I have no heart in this, I cannot slay
In idle sport. (*He throws himself down*).
King.—Viswamitra, did you mark him then?
It is that gentle trend which troubles me.
Viswamitra.—He is but resting, King.
King.—But this is something more, a brooding fate—
Thou dost remember when my son was born
Asita spoke, and the dream-readers told,—
That there would come a day when he must choose
Between two widely differing paths, one path
The way of glory and of kings, and one
The path whereon the beggars walk. I fear
Sidhartha dreams about this lesser path.
Viswamitra.—In all his life our prince hath never seen
A beggar; can he choose a thing he knows not of?
King.—He must not choose it, nay it shall not be!

Sidhartha, dearer than my own heart's blood,
To tread this sad and lowly path of pain,
Gaining who knows what good when all is lost
Worth keeping; when he could be if he would,
A king of universal dominance
Trampling the neck of all his enemies,—
A king of kings,—(*Enter Sidhartha bearing swan*)
Look now, what does he there?
Viswamitra.—He bears a bird.
Sidhartha.—O, it was cruel to wound thee so, fair swan;
That arrow point must be most stinging sharp.
(*Enter Attendant*)
Attendant.—Thy pardon, noble sir, my prince has shot
A swan which fell among the bushes there
He bids me pray you send it—will you send?
Sidhartha.—Nay! I will not. Were the bird dead
To send it to the slayer might be well
But the swan lives; Devadatta hath but killed
The God-like speed which throbbed in this white wing.
(*Devadatta has entered quietly.*)
Devadatta.—Has he indeed, my cousin? The wild thing
Living or dead is his who fetched it down
'Twas no man's in the clouds, but fall'n 'tis mine,
Give me my prize!
Sidhartha.—Thou shalt not have the bird.
King.—What is the reason for this loud dispute?
Devadatta.—This swan! I shot it, Sire; it must be mine!
He speaks of killing but the God-like speed!
What Sakya Lord can find a reason there?
Sidhartha.—If life be aught, the saviour of a life
Owns more the living thing than he can own who
Sought to slay. I claim the living bird.
King.—(Sternly) Sidhartha, 'tis well to be kind-hearted,

But this goes too far and smacks
Of woman's weakness. (*To Devadatta*)
Boy, the bird is thine.
Sidhartha.—(Gently) My father, it sought refuge here with me.
King.—Wilt thou oppose my will?
Sidhartha.—Forgive me, Sire, I must.
Viswamitra.—Undutiful!
King.—Dost thou forget it is thy father speaks?
Viswamitra.—Also thy King!
Sidhartha.—My father, thou art a King
Of the great warrior caste—the Kshatrya—
Whose law it is to shield all wounded things
I am a Kshatrya, and I shield this bird.
Devadatta.—(Snatching at bird) Thou feeble soft heart—'tis a subterfuge.
(*Sidhartha repels Devadatta and keeps the bird*)
King.—Leave us Sidhartha!
Devadatta go!
And shame on both of you!
Devadatta.—It is not just
It makes a mock of all our Sakya sports.
(*Devadatta glares at Sidhartha and exits. Sidhartha walks quietly away.*)
King.—How may we lure him from these brooding thoughts
And turn his stubborn will to kinglier things
Than wounded cygnets?
Viswamitra.—Maharaja, love
Will cure these thin distempers; weave the spell
Of woman's wiles about his idle heart.
Find him soft wives and pretty playfellows.
King.—It shall be so! Command a festival
Where the realm's maids shall be competitors

In grace,—The prince shall give the prizes
To the fair—There's surely one whose beauty's lure
Shall win him to the joy he knows not of
So may we choose for love with love's own eyes
And cheat his Highness into happiness.

(*King and Viswamitra exeunt*)

(*Sidhartha kneels by pool and washes the bird's wound*)

Sidhartha.—Poor hunted thing of the wild forest
Am I the only one who grieves for thee?
Hark how the thickets rustle with small life
Of lizard, bee, beetle and creeping things
Pleased at the spring. Yet lizard feeds on ant
And snake on him, and kite on both. It is
A rage to live which makes all living strife;
My heart is heavy with this world's dumb woe.

REPORT

Good Friday this year had special significance for the Vedanta Household in Boston. The day before, word came from India of the passing of a very holy personage, Swami Brahmananda, beloved president of the Ramakrishna Mission. Therefore it was with deep feeling that they observed Good Friday by fasting and prayer before the Sanctuary. Perhaps because of this the public Service at five o'clock was peculiarly impressive.

Swami Paramananda spoke on the true meaning of the crucifixion. Many were present and all seemed aware of an unusual depth and tenderness in Swami's message. Owing to lack of space, this address could not appear previously in the magazine, but it is hoped that at least a portion of it will be printed in some later issue.

Eastertide was celebrated at the Vedanta Centre with spirit of holy joy. Both Shrine and Chapel were fragrant with lovely spring blossoms. Glorious red tulips in the Shrine win-

dow caught the morning sunlight in their cups and glowed with the splendor of the Holy Grail.

Swami Paramananda spoke upon "Reincarnation and Resurrection." "Resurrection", he said, "was not just from the grave. Even here in this life we can raise ourselves from the burial ground of matter, and after that even the last enemy, death, loses its power over us. That is the significance of the spring awakening. The feast of resurrection reminds us that we must not sleep in ignorance, buried in material consciousness and overwhelmed with the thought that we are only of the flesh. On the contrary, it should remind us anew with greater clearness that our real life is of eternity. It is knowledge of the Infinite that helps us to rise from the bondage of the finite. That is the spiritual interpretation of the resurrection of the soul from the body."

At the close of the Service the Swami made an important announcement which may have far-reaching effect on the work. Holding in his hand a small piece of paper, he said that contrary to his usual custom he was going to refer to an urgent business matter. The paper, he said, was a cheque, an Easter offering from a friend who gave it with the hope that it might prove a nest egg for the new Temple. He explained further that in spite of the extensive enlargements recently completed, the Centre had already outgrown its present quarters. Sunday after Sunday, this season, the Chapel had been crowded to the utmost, making plans for the future imperative. How soon the Temple materializes depends entirely on the co-operation of friends and members. In the meantime, Swami begged the congregation to be patient and not mind the inconvenience of being crowded. Inspired by the Swami's announcement one of the members has created a beautiful minature temple with carved columns and gold-tipped dome. This stands in the entrance hall, a constant reminder to all who come of the growing needs of the work.

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REINCARNATION AND IMMORTALITY

By Swami Paramananda

Continued existence of the soul after the death of the corporeal body opens before us a field of endless speculation. As far back as we are able to go, penetrating the dimness of the remote past in every country and in every age, the theme of the soul has been of the most absorbing interest to all thinking minds. Concept of soul's immortal nature is not peculiar to any particular religion or philosophy, but it forms the cornerstone of all religions and philosophies. Even physical science is ever in pursuit to solve the question of soul on a plausible scientific basis. We are at once inclined to ask why this age-long problem has not been solved conclusively by the great minds of the wise, and then again if it has not been solved for so long, is it not futile for us to venture it at all? It is one of the ideas that we are incapable of putting aside, for our living here, surrounded by other lives, constantly brings before us the problem of soul and its destiny. Whether our vocation is material, intellectual, scientific, philosophic or religious, we are confronted afresh at every turn of life with the problem of the soul.

"These bodies are perishable, but the dwellers in these bodies are eternal, indestructible and impenetrable. No one is ever able to destroy the immutable soul." This ancient saying of the

great mercy of Divine Providence causing us to forget, and helping us to start afresh with each new life.

Another valuable idea which is connected with the soul and its destiny is that of evolution. And evolution pre-supposes pre-existence; that is, something cannot be evolved out of nothing. Our present life is evolved from another form of life, but it is certain that it did not spring up out of nothing. In India the theme of evolution was not limited merely to the physical aspect of life; it was inter-related with the intrinsic spiritual essence, without which no life is possible and no evolution is practical. For instance, there may be perfectly good soil and you may water the soil faithfully, but that will not produce a harvest. In same manner there may be abundance of material substance which is essential for creation, but without the co-ordination and co-operation of the Spirit no creation is possible. Inert matter can never move of itself, nor can it ever evolve to any grandeur without the aid of the spiritual essence. The soul of a saint has evolved not suddenly, but through experience. The mind of a genius has also reached its present state after having travelled through many roads of success and failure. Evolution is not limited to the mineral kingdom, or vegetable kingdom, or animal kingdom, or merely to human heights. It continues until ultimate perfection is reached, and this is not possible in a short duration of time. However much we may strive, one little span of existence proves insufficient to fulfill our high aspirations, and in order that we may complete our course and that we may reach our highest ideal, we are given opportunities afresh, and reincarnation of the soul gives these opportunities for the soul's evolution.

Reincarnation is not as is supposed by many hasty thinkers, a pagan doctrine; it has its roots in the very foundation of the spiritual world. It explains the incongruity of life in light of reason. It offers us consolation in the deepest sense. It

makes clear that our disadvantages and our sufferings are not imposed upon us by an arbitrary hand, but are the fulfillment of just laws. Also it teaches us that our lost opportunities are not taken away from us forever. We are given new chances that we may learn, that we may evolve, that we may set free our soul from the bondage of ignorance, and every time we are born into the flesh we bring with us added knowledge, added power from our previous life. Nothing of real value is ever lost, nor our misdeeds, our cruel and treacherous acts, forgotten until we have atoned for them. It is not that some being is keeping account of our thoughts and deeds, but we ourselves keep a complete record of even the things we do in the dark and the thoughts that we entertain secretly in our heart, and we reap the sum total of these thoughts and deeds in our every embodiment. We obtain our body, mind, brain, senses, our gifts, our merits and demerits,—all—in accordance with our deserts. As we evolve spiritually we obtain higher and higher opportunities for our self-expression. Even our body and senses evolve greater powers of purity, subtlety and keener perception, for evolution takes place in every department of our life. There is organic evolution, mental evolution and spiritual evolution.

Here some may think, why is it not possible to explain all the intricate problems of life through the law of heredity, for children inherit their qualities from their parents. To a certain extent this may be proved true, but often we are unable to associate their gifts with parents or grandparents. Children may resemble their parents in a great many ways, physically, mentally, and in some of their habits, but often-times we are unable to relate them in their deeper instincts. For instance, we are frequently puzzled to find an explanation for a child genius, a born musician, or an artist. When we begin to investigate we find that neither in his father, mother, nor in

his grandparents, can we trace any of his qualities, and yet it is not through accident that he is born of those parents and placed in that environment. There are soul connections which are not apparent on the surface, for there is the law of attraction. Like attracts like. Our setting is given to us according to what is best for our evolution, and sometimes our adverse circumstances we have to accept because we have deserved them by our misdirected thoughts and deeds. How often we feel great indignation that an innocent soul should be born of criminal parents, but if we can look deeply into that soul and its heritage, we shall find that it is the past which links it to its present condition and surroundings.

The theme of metempsychosis or transmigration is very grossly misunderstood and misinterpreted. It is at once connected with rebirth in animal forms. We are not compelled to return in animal bodies, or in any kind of bodies. We create our chain of circumstance by our own thoughts and deeds which hold us bound to certain moral retribution. This does not necessarily mean punishment, but it implies that we must fulfill our unfulfilled desires, we must complete our uncompleted tasks, and in order to accomplish this we are given what is most suitable to such ends, and also what we are most deserving of. It is not necessary for a wicked and cruel person to be born in the animal kingdom, but there are many who exhibit animal instincts in their thoughts and deeds, even though they wear the human garb. There may be extreme instances when the soul degenerates itself to a lower plane of existence through its vile inhuman conduct, but that is only a temporary state in its evolution to give it an opportunity to learn certain lessons before it can continue its onward march in the course of evolution.

Reincarnation is not purely an Indian doctrine—Hindu and Buddhistic—but it permeates almost all the great religions of

the world. Nor is it opposed to the teaching of Christ, although many are inclined to think so. It was believed by the early church fathers as one of the most potent themes of life, and even in the life of Christ we find traces which strongly suggest its ascendancy at that time. "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" asks the Christ. "And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets."

Our salvation is not in any way dependent upon our belief or disbelief in reincarnation, but it is a great help to find a rational and logical explanation of life and all its happenings so that we may work with conviction, so that we may direct our forces fortified by the power of Truth, and thus not only upbuild our own life and destiny, but lend our helping hand to our fellow-pilgrims who are struggling along, carrying their cross and weight of life. In order to be able to do this successfully we must not always turn the eye of our intelligence to outer life, but we must form the habit of contemplation, for it is in the light of spiritual meditation that these deeper mysteries of the soul are made clear to us, and once we see and feel its reality, we are made impregnable to the influence of materialism and doubt. If we can only remember that our life here is not an accident, a mere chance, but for a definite mission, ordained to us by the Supreme Power, and that as we are consciously and constantly able to ally ourselves with that Power, then are we freed from the rounds of birth and death, disease and calamity, and thus our soul shall attain its final beatitude.

The curtains of yesterday drop down, the curtains of to-morrow roll up; but yesterday and to-morrow both *are*. Pierce through the time-element, glance into the Eternal. Believe what thou findest written in the sanctuaries of man's soul, even as all thinkers, in all ages, have devoutly read it there.

—*Thomas Carlyle.*

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

We must infer our destiny from the preparation. We are driven by instinct to hive innumerable experiences which are of no visible value, and we may revolve through many lives before we shall assimilate or exhaust them.—*Emerson.*

Man is not a product of the world of sense and the end of his existence can never be attained in that world. . . . All death in nature is birth, and precisely in dying the sublimation of life appears most conspicuous. There is no death-bringing principle in nature, for nature is only life throughout. Not death kills; but the non-living life which is hidden behind the old, begins and unfolds itself. Death and birth are only the struggles of life with itself to manifest itself in ever more transfigured form, more like itself.—*Fichte.*

Birth is not a beginning; death is not an end.—*Chuang Tzu.*

Those who, in the season of prosperity experience pain and grief, suffer them on account of their words or deeds in a former body, for which the Most Just now punisheth them.
—*Zoroaster.*

Do ye not remember that all pure spirits who are in conformity with the divine dispensation, live on in the loveliest of heavenly places, and in course of time they are again sent down to inhabit sinless bodies, but the souls of those who have committed self-destruction are doomed to a region in the darkness of the underworld?—*Josephus.*

It was in India and among the Aryas that the doctrine of the pre-existence, the immortality, and the individuality of the soul first arose. Recent researches in Egypt have failed to show any trace of the doctrines of an independent and individual soul existing before and after the earthly phase of existence. Some of the Mysteries were no doubt in possession of this idea, but in those it has been traced to India.—*Swami Vivekananda.*

HISTORY OF REINCARNATION

By Sister Daya

The idea of reincarnation or rebirth is not associated with any one race or epoch, it is coincident with the history of human reason. Of this ancient concept James Freeman Clarke writes in his "Ten Great Religions,"—"It" (reincarnation) "was taught by three great religions, that of Egypt, of Brahmanism, and of Buddhism; by Pythagoras, Empedocles, and Plato among Greek philosophers; by the Neo-Platonists, the Jewish Kabala, and the Arab philosophers; by Origen and other church fathers; by the Gnostics, the Manichaeans, the Druids; and in recent times by Fourier and others."

Let us go as far back as possible in human tradition and discover if we can the earliest mention of this theory of spiritual evolution. Although there are many discussions as to the priority of this Bible or that, it is safe to assume that the Vedas of India are sufficiently ancient to be ranked among the first of holy books. At any rate they are the oldest Aryan heritage that we have. The date of the Vedas is given as about 2000 B. C. These Scriptures consist chiefly of childlike hymns in worship of nature. They are songs of praise almost entirely—but they are vibrant with the sense of endless manifesting life and consciousness, which later developed into the grand and more organized concept of the soul's round of births and deaths as it is set forth in the Upanishads, the Bhagavad-Gita, and in practically all the great Indian epics and Scriptures. In fact reincarnation is the very warp and woof of Hindu life, socially, philosophically and spiritually. As the oldest sacred books refer all their knowledge to a teaching infinitely more remote, it is fair to assume that it was an ancient idea with the Vedic Rishis.

Egypt comes next in our consideration. Herodotus states that "the Egyptians are the first who propounded the theory

that the human soul is imperishable and that where the body of any one dies it enters into some other creature that may be ready to receive it, and that when it has gone the round of all created forms on land, in water and in air, then it once more enters a human body born for it; and that this cycle of existence for the soul takes place in three thousand years." He likewise says that "some of the Greeks adopted this opinion, some earlier, others later, as if it were their own." Egypt undoubtedly must have had a very profound philosophy to have held such minds as that of Pythagoras for instance, who spent many years in Egypt delving into her deepest mysteries. But to-day we lack the key which would unlock for us these mysteries so jealously guarded by her priests. As a result her religion appears to us confused and often grotesque, while her idea of rebirth through animal and other forms seems a perversion of the pure Indo-Aryan concept. The true wisdom of Egypt is often conveyed to us by the Greeks who came under its influence, notably Pythagoras. He likewise seemed to teach the descent of the soul into the bodies of beasts. But this is declared by some of his later followers to be merely symbolic.

Plato's great name has always been associated with the idea of rebirth. Aristotle also makes reference to it. Nemesius emphatically declared that all the Greeks who believed in immortality believed also in reincarnation. Greece was constantly in touch with Oriental thought and receptive to its influence. Thus Neo-Platonism which arose around the first century and was contemporary with the Alexandrian Gnostics, sought to combine the doctrines of Pythagoras, Plato and Buddhism. Ammonius Saccas, Plotinus and Porphyry in the third century, Iamblichus in the fourth, Hierocles and Proclus in the fifth and Damascius in the sixth were among the great Neo-Platonists, who helped establish the idea of reincarnation in the West. The Alexandrian Gnostics likewise taught it. They sought to

furnish young Christianity with an adequate philosophy and echoes of their influence sound through the Fourth Gospel. Christianity was most powerfully affected by these ancient ideas. Especially did reincarnation cause her disquietude. It was too reminiscent of the pagan world. Origen and many of the early church fathers held to it. Origen's master, Clemens Alexandrinus taught it as a divine tradition, authorized by St. Paul himself. Ruffinus in his letter to Anastasius says that "This opinion was common among the primitive fathers." Heretical sects such as the Manichaeans, were rife with it and handed it down to medieaval times where it was perpetuated in the teachings of the Bogomiles, Paulicians, Priscillians, and many others. Mr. Walker in his book on "Reincarnation" states that "It was an essential part of church philosophy for many centuries in the rank and file of Christian thought." Its prevalence can be gauged by the fact that at the Council of Constantinople about 550 A. D. the Church pronounced it Anathema.

That there must have been a strong Hebrew influence upholding it is more than likely although it does not seem to be included in the Old Testament. Some of the Apocryphal books refer to it as does the Talmud and the Kabala. The Jewish Therapeutae of Egypt and the Essenes of Palestine from whom some claim Christ received His early teaching, were imbued with it. There is nothing in the New Testament opposed to it and certain statements of the Christ Himself more than implied it, showing it to be a prevailing tenet of the day. There is little question that Persian thought added its stream of influence to those streams flowing in from Greece, Egypt and India. The Magi, so intimately connected with the birth of Christianity, brought it as one of their gifts.

But because of church bigotry on the one hand and materialism on the other, the Christian West seems to have dropped the

idea of the soul's evolution, without which its much vaunted physical evolution is an empty husk. But this is only "officially speaking." It would take many pages to recount the utterances of occidental thinkers, upholding the idea of rebirth. Italy of the middle ages had her voices which proclaimed it. Giordano Bruno's for example. Many sects and societies secretly held it. The troubadours and mimes are thought by many to have conveyed under romantic imagery the most profound truths of the human soul.

The German philosophers gave it their serious attention: Schopenhauer, Lessing, Hegel, Leibnitz, Herder, and Fichte the younger. Richard Wagner long had it in mind to write a great opera around the theme of Buddhism, while the Scandinavian mythology from which the legends of "The Ring" are derived included metempsychosis or reincarnation. Jacob Boehme, Swedenborg, Paracelsus and other great mystics adhered to it. The Cambridge Platonists, conspicuously Henry More, spoke for it. It captivated Fourier and Leroux. Poets and fiction writers have used it as a theme and many refer to their belief in it. Even in the modern church it has had its defenders. Bishops in England and Ireland have not hesitated to promulgate it. Especially since modern means of transportation have brought about closer contact with the Orient, has this age-old conception renewed its hold on our imaginations. It has been recently calculated that among the orthodox movements in this country, such as Theosophy, New Thought, etc., there are at least 12,000,000 followers, and of these very many hold to the idea of reincarnation. In fact in the world to-day the majority of the human race believe in it. All the countries which have welcomed Buddhism, such as Ceylon, Burma, Java, China, Japan, Tibet, Central Asia, Siberia and even Swedish Lapland, come under its influence. The primitive heart and the philosophic mind find equal satisfaction in it. It encircles

the world and has left its traces everywhere. It is making belief in immortality again possible for the skeptical West. As the materialistic philosopher Hume states in his essay on "The Immortality of the Soul," "The soul, therefore, if immortal existed before our birth, and if the former existence noways concerns us, neither will the latter * * * Metempsychosis is therefore, the only system of this kind that philosophy can hearken to."

THE REBIRTH OF KATSUGORO

From "Gleanings from Buddha-Fields" by Lafcadio Hearn.

(The following story is an exact translation by Mr. Lafcadio Hearn of an old Japanese manuscript. The writer of the story, Matsudaira Kwanzan Dono, Daimyo, or lord of a province, states in a letter to a Buddhist Priest, that it is an accurate account of the rebirth given as he heard it from the lips of the boy's grandmother. Mr. Amenomari, a friend of Mr. Hearn's, discovered the manuscript in the library of Count Sasaki of Tokyo. It was very much signed and sealed and contained besides the account here given, several letters and depositions all attesting the genuineness of the story.)

Some time in the eleventh month of the past year, when Katsugoro was playing in the rice-field with his elder sister, Fusa, he asked her,—"Elder Sister, where did you come from before you were born into our household?" Fusa answered him: "How can I know what happened to me before I was born?" Katsugoro looked surprised and exclaimed: "Then you cannot remember anything that happened before you were born?" "Do you remember?" asked Fusa. "Indeed I do," replied Katsugoro, "I used to be the son of Kyubei San of Hodokubo, and my name was then Tozo—do you not know all that?" "Ah!" said Fusa, "I shall tell father and mother about it." But Katsugoro at once began to cry, and said: "Please do not tell!" * * * Fusa made answer, after a little while: "Well,

this time I shall not tell. But the next time that you do anything naughty, then I will tell."

After that day whenever a dispute arose between the two, the sister would threaten the brother, saying, "Very well, then—I shall tell that thing to father and mother." At these words the boy would always yield. This happened many times; and the parents one day overheard Fusa make her threat. Thinking Katsugoro must have been doing something wrong, they desired to know what the matter was, and Fusa, being questioned, told them the truth. Then Genzo and his wife, and Tsuya, the grandmother of Katsugoro, thought it a very strange thing. They called Katsugoro, therefore; and tried, first by coaxing, and then by threatening, to make him tell what he had meant by those words. After hesitation, Katsugoro said: "I will tell you everything. I used to be the son of Kyubei San of Hodokubo, and the name of my mother then was O-Shidzu San. When I was five years old, Kyubei San died; and there came in his place a man called Hanshiro San, who loved me very much. But in the following year, when I was six years old, I died of smallpox. In the third year after that I entered mother's honorable womb, and was born again." The parents and the grandmother of the boy wondered greatly at hearing this; and they decided to make all possible inquiry as to the man called Hanshiro of Hodokubo. But as they all had to work very hard every day to earn a living, and so could spare but little time for any other matter, they could not at once carry out their intention.

Now Sei, the mother of Katsugoro, had nightly to suckle her little daughter Tsune, and Katsugoro therefore slept with his grandmother, Tsuya. Sometimes he used to talk to her in bed; and one night when he was in a very confiding mood, she persuaded him to tell her what happened at the time when he had died. Then he said: "Until I was four years old I

used to remember everything; but since then I have become more and more forgetful; * * * but I still remember that I died of smallpox; I remember that I was put into a jar; I remember that I was buried on a hill. There was a hole made in the ground; and the people let the jar drop into that hole. It fell *pon!*—I remember that sound well. Then, somehow, I returned to the house, and I stopped on my own pillow there. In a short time some old man,—looking like a grandfather—came and took me away. I do not know who or what he was. As I walked I went through empty air as if flying. I remember it was neither night or day as we went; it was always like sunset-time. I did not feel either warm or cold or hungry. We went very far, I think; but still I could hear always, faintly, the voices of people talking at home; and the sound of *Nembutsu* being said for me. * * * I remember also that when the people at home set offerings of hot *botamochi* before the household shrine, I inhaled the vapor of the offerings. * * * *

After that I only remember that the old man led me by some roundabout way to this place—I remember we passed the road beyond the village. Then we came here, and he pointed to this house, and said to me: "Now you must be reborn; for it is three years since you died. You are to be reborn in that house. The person who will become your grandmother is very kind; so it will be well for you to be conceived and born there." After saying this the old man went away. I remained a little time under the Kaki-tree before the entrance of this house. Then I was going to enter when I heard talking inside; some one said that because father was now earning so little, mother would have to go to service in Yedo. I thought, "I will not go into that house;" and I stopped three days in the garden. On the third day it was decided that, after all, mother would not have to go to Yedo. The same night I passed into the house through a knot-hole in the sliding-shutters;—and after that I

stayed for three days beside the *kamado*. (The cooking place in a Japanese kitchen, L. H.). Then I entered mother's honorable womb. * * * I remember that I was born without any pain at all."

The grandmother told Genzo and his wife what Katsugoro had related to her; and after that the boy would often say to them; "I want to go to Hodokubo. Please let me make a visit to the tomb of Kyubei San." Tsuya went with Katsugoro to Hodokubo; and when they entered the village she pointed to the nearer dwellings and asked the boy, "Which house is it?—Is it this house or that one?" "No, answered Katsugoro,—it is further on—much further,"—and he hurried before her. Reaching a certain dwelling at last, he cried, "This is the house!"—and ran in, without waiting for his grandmother. Tsuya followed him in and asked the people there what was the name of the owner of the house. "Hanshiro," one of them answered. She asked the name of Hanshiro's wife. "Shidzu," was the reply. Then she asked whether there had ever been a son called Tozo born in that house. "Yes," was the answer; "but that boy died thirteen years ago when he was six years old."

Then for the first time Tsuya was convinced that Katsugoro had spoken the truth; and she could not help shedding tears. She related to the people of the house all that Katsugoro had told her about his remembrance of his former birth. Then Hanshiro and his wife wondered greatly. They caressed Katsugoro and wept; and they remarked that he was much handsomer now than he had been as Tozo before dying at the age of six. In the meantime, Katsugoro was looking all about; and seeing the roof of a tobacco shop opposite to the house of Hanshiro, he pointed to it and said: "That used not to be there." And he also said,—"The tree yonder used not to be there." All this was true. So from the minds of Hanshiro and his wife every doubt departed.

GLORIFYING PAIN AND ADVERSITY

By Swami Paramananda

(Excerpt of address given on Good Friday at the Chapel of the Vedanta Centre, Boston.)

There are certain great fundamental lessons in life which are true not only once, but at all times. Crucifixion—the significance of Good Friday—is such a lesson. Many people bear a cross because it is thrust upon them, but only the few master spirits of the world know how to take a cross and make it a symbol of spirituality. Pain is a wonderful thing in life, a mighty blessing if it does not sink deep down to our root and distort our vision. Crucifixion can kill one, can destroy one physically, morally and spiritually, and also it has the power to make one immortal. That is the symbolic meaning of this celebration. It is what we find in the lives of great saviours—in the life of Christ—a glorifying of pain, a glorifying of adversity, bitter opposition met without force, without supplication even. When the disciples and friends of the Christ wanted to protect Him you all know His attitude: What need have I of protection from the human? Can I not pray to the Heavenly Father?

We are here in this world for no ordinary purpose. There is deep significance in life, and it is not the man who merely seeks to escape from adverse circumstance who attains the high and the glorious, but rather he who suffers all and yet remains above it, who when pain comes is not crushed by it, but transcends it. It seems that there must be another life within this life. There is—the life of the spirit, but we fail to reach it because of our ignorance, prejudice, superstition and lack of feeling. The only way we find our access to it is by opening our hearts simply with faith, with feeling, with love. Love does conquer everything. It is the only glorifying essence in our existence. We can bear any amount of pain through love; we can surmount any degree of opposition through love; its

victory is everywhere. It is only those who are spiritually blind who fail to perceive its significance, its magnitude, its undying quality. This is one of the fundamental virtues and without it no one can become a true follower of any religion. For it was not only Christ who brought us a living example of this, but the Christ-Spirits throughout history. If we would follow them we must do as they did.

It is not enough on Good Friday merely to pray or fast or go through certain ritualism, although this has its uplifting effect. There is a deeper significance and it is in the living of it. I do not mean that we should invite a cross in order to be tormented. There is no need for that. Life itself offers us constant, unlimited opportunities to prove our spiritual worth. Do we not meet almost every day with something that is unendurable, something that is unjust, something that arouses within us the feeling of antagonism, hatred or anger? These are the feelings that we must overcome through the glowing example of the crucifixion. As these experiences come to us, these trials and tribulations, let us prove our strength by trying to conquer them not by force, not by scheming, not by shrewdness or unkind thoughts, but by love. Is not that the way of the Christ? Christ had no enemies. He exalted His life and the Spirit of God by refusing to recognize enmity.

Now can we pray with our whole heart for those who do not belong to us? It is an excellent practice for Good Friday. By doing it we help ourselves infinitely more than we help others. It is easy to love people who love us and feel towards us as we would like to have them feel, but to pray for those who do not feel kindly towards us is not so easy. The greatest gift that man can bring to himself and to his fellow-beings is the spirit of forgiveness—love conquering all, always. It is this which gives the key to Christ's character. He suffered all and yet caused suffering to none. Did He not again and

again implore His disciples to love one another as He loved them? It was almost His last appeal to them and even though they afterwards forgot and denied Him there was never anything in His heart for them but forgiveness and love. Surrender was the dominant factor in His life—Thy Will be done in life, in death, in torment and in glory, under all circumstances. Why can we not feel this? We are too faint-hearted. Why are we so faint-hearted? Because we do not believe in the Spirit. We believe more in the flesh and there is always fear when we believe in the flesh too much. When we cling to it, foster it and try to make it the exclusive concern of our life we cannot help but suffer. Every man and woman, every soul should strive to transcend the flesh by the Spirit, by thinking of the Spirit, by clinging to It, by learning to love It.

Religion is very wonderful when it becomes living,—wonderful for the individual who lives it and wonderful for those who see it lived. It becomes a glowing factor in our life. All the mysteries, all the vagueness vanish and we see light everywhere. We see light in our own life, we see the same light above and below and all about us, and that is the Spirit of God. When that enters into us we do not need to fear. If we have much to bear we know that the more we have to endure, the greater the opportunity to prove our spiritual wisdom. When we have achieved that spiritual light and love, whatsoever we touch in life is glorified. The Spirit is so dominant in us that in spite of all the things that are wrong and detrimental we can stand up with undaunted courage. That is why wise men pray that they may have little in the world so that they may never forget the most vital thing of life. The mother of Arjuna, the hero of the Bhagavad-Gita, was a great devotee, a very wonderful character in Indian history. She prayed to the Lord not just for her own safety and the safety of her children, but that He might not fail to send her trying circumstances. "Test

me," she prayed, "place me in difficulties so that I may never forget Thee." People generally pray when they are in trouble so that they may be rescued, but a wise soul does not desire that kind of rescue; what he wants is to be given greater understanding that he may glorify the spirit of God.

That is to me the significance of this day. It is not to mourn. Rather is it for us to mourn when we fail to take up our burden and bear our cross with a valiant heart. The great Saviours of the world would rather be crucified and tormented and misunderstood than fail to uphold that which is true. If we can feel this, then have we found real religion in our soul; then have we found a rock upon which we can stand,—the stability which the sages and wise men speak of,—an island of security which no wind can reach, no storm or element disturb. You may ask, why then did Christ weep? Perhaps His heart was especially heavy for the world which was so ignorant, for the world which was so dense that it could not accept anything so delicate, so exquisite, so highly organized. It was that, perhaps, which saddened Him more than anything else. It is not the personal loss or suffering which grieves the great soul. Rather is it when his life, his motive, his love fail to reach the hearts of men. That is why we should always pray for a heart that is true and open, so that the Spirit may enter into it in such a way as to exalt us and glorify us and strengthen us, that we may never forget that our supreme duty is to serve and to love and even when needful to lay down our life with undaunted courage and absolute faith in the Supreme. This is what gives the true foundation for the spiritual life. That is the example that Christ set for us in the crucifixion.

Let us in this hour when our hearts should rise to higher things try to lift our inmost prayers to that One Who alone can fulfill our desires. O Lord, Thou art ever present in our hearts; Thou art ever near; it is only through our ignorance

that we fail to hear Thy voice, to feel Thy presence. Do Thou, All-compassionate Being, destroy our ignorance, our delusion, that we may learn to take all experiences, sweet and bitter, with the same feeling and with a spirit of thanksgiving, for Thou art the Giver and Thou art the Gift—all things come from Thee. Make us true children, free from all egotism and self-seeking, that every hour, in every condition, we may humbly look up to Thee. Thou art the strength and Thou art the Strength-Giver. Give us strength that may never fail us. Oh Thou All-seeing, Thou knowest our failings and shortcomings; make us fervent, make us true, that ever with undaunted courage and unwavering faith we may serve Thee and Thy children. May the Infinite Spirit, Who manifests Himself in Christ and through all the great Saviours of the world, bestow upon us His loving and abiding protection and keep us ever in peace.

FIRE OF DIVINE LOVE

By Swami Paramananda

Thy flame of love touched my garment.
I was startled and affrighted
Lest all my possessions and cherished hopes
Be burned to nothingness.
I fled for fear of life, but Thy unquenchable fire
Ever followed me.
With troubled heart and misgiving
I opened my eyes only to find
That Thy bright and blazing flame
Was not of destruction.
It burned, yet destroyed it naught.
Oh, Thou effulgent spark,
I fear Thee no more,—I love Thy presence;
My soul delights in Thy presence;
Thy presence is my supreme joy!

TWELFTH ANNUAL DINNER

The June activities of the Vedanta Centre of Boston swung chiefly around the 12th annual dinner given by Swami Paramananda to his friends and students upon the evening of June 15th. This is a peculiarly happy occasion for the Swami as it affords him opportunity to pour out his warm spirit of welcome upon many faithful hearts. Considering as he does that an offering made to his guests is the same as an offering made to God, he lovingly prepares every dish with his own hands. To cook for over a hundred people is no light task. During the day of the dinner, hour after hour, the Swami stood and stirred huge cooking pots, creating new variations of such favorites as *Bhuni Khichuri, Curry Unity in Variety, Paramannam,* etc., etc. In referring to these preparations, in his little after dinner speech, the Swami said that when he saw the great quantity of greens arranged and waiting to be cooked, he felt as if he had come across a nice little vegetable garden which he hoped was now in its proper place.

As usual the library was transformed into a banquet hall with two long tables connected at the upper end by a transverse table where the Swami sat. In the entrance hall, recently enlarged, was space for two extra tables where late comers were placed. June is the month for flowers but this June the floral offerings were more than usually profuse and beautiful. Back of the Swami's seat hung an orange silk Indian *Chadar,* against which was outlined the delicate tracery of green leaves with glorious white peonies in the foreground. Peonies pink and peonies white, laurel, roses and other blooms softened the austere beauty of the rooms with their warm glow and radiant coloring. The whole house was sweet with their fragrance.

After the actual dining was over the Swami called on various speakers. Mr. John Orth, the noted musician, proposed Swami's health at which all the guests rose. Following him

Miss Beresford, Miss Shepherd and Prof. Perrin of the Boston University, expressed their gratitude to the Centre. There were guests who had come for this occasion from Louisville, Ky.; Cincinnati, Ohio; Rochester, N. Y.; New York City, and from other places nearer Boston. Mrs. Macherlein, of Rochester, and Mr. Murray, of Cincinnati, both responded to the Swami's greeting with warm words of appreciation. The youngest speaker of the evening was little Miss Burton who gave two poetic recitations. One of the Swami's oldest friends, Dr. Allen, who has just returned from a trip around the world, spoke with deep feeling of the Ramakrishna Mission in India and of the indelible impression made upon him by his visit to its *Seva Ashramas* or Homes of Service in Benares and Calcutta. He told of the warmth of hospitality extended to him, the efficiency of the service rendered to all who had need, and above all of the spirit of love, the true Christ spirit, which he felt active in the work and in all the workers of this great Mission, of which the Vedanta Centre is a branch.

Mr. Ennis, a Boston member, touched a deep spiritual note in his simple and sincere tribute to the Swami and his work. Mr. Ennis said in part: "For some years I was privileged to be a minister in the radical church—the Unitarian—and I was thinking as Swami spoke, if only I could do what he does I would go back to the pulpit. I can't tell you what he does because it does not need to be put into words. The nearest I can approach it is by the one word feeling. Since I came here something has taken place in me. I am working—I am a roofer—I am not thinking, but oh, how rich is that one thing—that feeling—I can't express it! Feeling of what? Sympathy does not say it. Perhaps the Swami has encompassed the meaning in the beautiful word which so often falls from his lips—unity—unity of everything. These flowers here, how much they are my friends; even the hum of the fan—the light

here in the candles—the beautiful flavors in our food; what is it? Why unity. The chair under my hand with sharp edges and dark color—that solid surface, how beautiful! You feel related to it. Is that pantheism? If it is, then I want more. We belong nowhere; we belong everywhere. It is this feeling that the Swami gives us,—this feeling that makes people want to be what down deep in their hearts they must recognize that sometime they are going to be."

These yearly dinners like all other established customs of the Boston Centre, are the result of spontaneous growth. They were never planned. The very first gathering was in 1910, in the city of Washington, when the Swami drew thirty-five of his friends around him to celebrate Christmastide. When he returned to Boston he gave a similar entertainment for his Boston students and inevitably the "Swami's dinner" grew into its present proportions. People travel sometimes thousands of miles to be present, for it is far more than a physical feast and the food the Swami prepares is not merely material. Many nationalities come and are made conscious only of their spiritual kinship. This was especially notable during the great war when guests from various warring nations sat down together and did not even remember to forget their differences because under the fusing influence of the Swami's universal spirit, they had for the moment, no differences to forget. The President of the Browning Society who was present, pointed out the deep significance of this fact and remarked that over the Vedanta Centre was flying the white flag of peace.

REPORT

The Vedanta Centre of Boston will hold its Services as usual during the summer months and Swami Paramananda will remain in Boston to conduct them. Owing to the length and heat of the day at this season, the hour of the Sunday Vesper Service has been changed from five in the afternoon to eight in the evening.

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VEDANTA MONTHLY

The Message of the East



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INSPIRATION

By Swami Paramananda

Inspiration, Thy coming is like the falling of noiseless dewdrops on unopened flowerbuds, not conscious of their heavenly heritage.
Thou divine Magician,
Transformer and Transmitter of beauty,
Thou dost change all earth's harsh notes into heaven's unspeakable sweetness.
At Thy touch a broken reed sounds divine harmony,
And mortal voice sings immortal song.
When all is covered by the blank sheet of darkness and naught is seen,
Thou enterest unaware with Thy all-filling light,
Transforming gloom into brightness.
The touch of Thy holy hand is my sole adornment.
A glance from Thy smiling eyes hath poured upon me a shower of countless blossoms.
Now I gather these scattered flowers day and night with ecstatic joy,
For they bear the blessing of Thy divine fragrance.

Thou art the enchantment of song,
Rhapsody of rhyme,
Intoxication of ecstacy!
Thou art the might of the mighty,
Sanctity of the saint,
Melody of the musician!
Thou all-glorious Spirit of transcendent loveliness,
In awe and dumb wonderment
I adore Thee!

THE RAMPARTS OF WISDOM

Excerpt from Dialogues of Seneca

Will there be no one who will try to do an injury to the wise man? Yes, some one will try, but the injury will not reach him; for he is separated from the contact of his inferiors by so wide a distance that no evil impulse can retain its power of harm until it reaches him. Even when powerful men, raised to positions of high authority, and strong in the obedience of their dependents, strive to injure him, all their darts fall as far short of his wisdom as those which are shot upwards by bow-strings or catapults, which, although they rise so high as to pass out of sight, yet fall back again without reaching the heavens.

Wisdom leaves no room for evil; to it, the only evil is baseness, which cannot enter into the place already occupied by virtue and honour. If, therefore, there can be no injury without evil, and no evil without baseness, and baseness cannot find any place with a man who is already filled with honour, it follows that no injury can reach the wise man; for if injury be the endurance of some evil, and the wise man can endure no evil, it follows that no injury takes effect upon the wise man. All injury implies a making less of that which it affects, and no one can sustain an injury without some loss either of

his dignity, or of some part of his body, or of some of the things external to ourselves; but the wise man can lose nothing. He has invested everything in himself, has entrusted nothing to fortune, has his property in safety, and is content with virtue, which does not need casual accessories, and therefore can neither be increased or diminished; for virtue, as having attained to the highest position, has no room for addition to herself, and fortune can take nothing away save what she gave. Now fortune does not give virtue; therefore she does not take it away. Virtue is free, inviolable, not to be moved, not to be shaken, and so hardened against misfortunes that she cannot be bent, let alone overcome by them. She looks unfalteringly on while tortures are being prepared for her; she makes no change of countenance, whether misery or pleasure be offered to her. The wise man therefore can lose nothing of whose loss he will be sensible, for he is the property of virtue alone, from whom he never can be taken away. He enjoys all other things at the good pleasure of fortune; but who is grieved at the loss of what is not his own? If injury can hurt none of those things which are the peculiar property of the wise man, because while his virtue is safe they are safe, then it is impossible that an injury should be done to a wise man.

Consequently, no one can do either harm or good to the wise man, because divine things neither want help nor are capable of being hurt; and the wise man is near, indeed very near to the gods, being like a god in every respect save that he is mortal. As he presses forward and makes his way towards the life that is sublime, well-ordered, without fear, proceeding in a regular and harmonious course, tranquil, beneficent, made for the good of mankind, useful both to itself and to others, he will neither long nor weep for anything that is grovelling.

See then, Serenus, that the perfect man, full of human and divine virtues, can lose nothing; his goods are surrounded by

strong and impassable walls. You cannot compare them with the walls of Babylon, which Alexander entered, nor the fortifications of Carthage and Numantia, won by one of the same hand, nor the Capitol and citadel of Rome, which are branded with the marks of the victors' insults; the ramparts which protect the wise man are safe from fire and hostile invasion; they afford no passage; they are lofty, impregnable, divine.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Four kinds of virtuous men worship Me; the distressed, the seeker of knowledge, the seeker of material prosperity and the wise. Among them the wise, ever steadfast, devoted to the One (to Me) excels; for I am supremely dear to the wise and he is dear to Me. Noble are all these, but I regard the wise as my very Self; for with soul ever steadfast, he is established in Me alone as his supreme goal.—*Bhagavad-Gita.*

Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established: and by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches. A wise man is strong: yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength.—*Proverbs.*

A wise and just man could be as happy in a state of slavery as in a state of freedom.—*Plato.*

Tsze-Kung asked saying: "On what ground did Kung-wan get that title of *Wan* (accomplished)?" The master said: "He was of an active nature and yet fond of learning, and he was not ashamed to ask and learn of his inferiors. On these grounds he has been styled *Wan.*—*Confucian Analect.*

The Deva asked: "Now I have only one doubt to be solved; pray, clear it away: What is it fire can neither burn, nor

There are spiritual personages and saintly characters who perpetually feel a definite connection with the Source of being. Plotinus defines this type by saying: "Perhaps we ought not to speak of vision; it is rather another mode of seeing; an ecstasy and simplification, an abandonment of oneself, a desire for immediate contact, a stability, a deep intention to unite oneself with what is to be seen in the sanctuary. . . . Such is the life of the gods, and of god-like and blessed men; a liberation from all earthly bonds, a life that takes no pleasure in earthly things, a flight of the alone to the Alone. In knowing God, the Spirit knows also itself. . . . to see is to become oneself the thing seen. . . . True being knows no gaps, no developments, no progress, no extension, no before or after. The One is everywhere and nowhere. Even here, a wise life is the most truly grand and beautiful thing. And yet here we see but dimly. Yonder, the vision is clear. For it gives to the seer the faculty of seeing, and the power for the higher life; the power, by living more intensely, to see better and to become what he sees."

Not only are these great souls conscious of this alliance with the Supreme Intelligence but they have made themselves over wholly to that Power,—body, mind and soul. They possess wisdom and are possessed by wisdom. They possess God and are possessed by God. But this possession by the Holy Spirit is entirely different from obsession, for one is the outcome of pure and holy living, and the other is caused very often by morbid and melancholy brooding and unclean, abnormal habits of living. For this reason we are required to live in the right rhythm. If we think unkind thoughts, if we live ignoble lives we make ourselves susceptible to evil influences and the only power to which we can open ourselves will be detrimental,—not the power of the good, not the power of the holy.

At the present time there is great interest in this phase of

psychic phenomena. People have gone mad over the idea of spirit communication through the means of seances, ouija board, automatic writing, etc. It is quite possible to come in contact with the departed as it does not require any degree of spiritual development. Some people are so constituted that they can easily make themselves receptive for psychic messages. Often these experiences instead of proving beneficial are rather disastrous. Merely departing from this physical life does not necessarily give one access to higher knowledge and power, and if therefore we in our over-credulous zeal connect ourselves with an undesirable spirit, it can be a very great hindrance to our higher development. If a man was not noble while on earth, if he did not have access to truth, if he was bound by ignorance and selfishness, do you suppose that he can suddenly become a saint, a master, a free spirit, that he can at once gain entrance to the eternal storehouse of wisdom? If he told untruth in life he will probably do likewise after death.

People sometimes drift into these things through idle curiosity. They think,—how lovely to be able to communicate with the departed! It would be very wonderful if we could communicate with some lofty soul who could give us transcendental knowledge and free us from our bondage; but through idle curiosity we make ourselves morbid and come in contact with spirits who are not pure, whose motives are not free and unselfish, and thus we may become obsessed by a power which we cannot control. There was once a poor man who conceived the idea that if he could only get command over some spirit or ghost all his miseries would cease. So he went about with eager expectancy to find some one who could give him such control. One day he came upon a certain wise sage. The poor man implored and besieged him saying, "Sire, help me to find a ghost." The sage tried to dissuade him from this foolish notion, but he was determined. Finally the wise man gave him

moisture corrode, nor wind crush down, but is able to reform the whole world?"

The Blessed One replied: "Blessing! Neither fire, nor moisture, nor wind can destroy the blessing of a good deed, and it will reform the whole world."—*Gospel of Buddha.*

How should you be a lamp when you yield no light to what is close beside you?—*Akhlaq-i-Jalali (Sufi).*

We need only obey. There is guidance for each of us and by lowly listening we shall hear the right word.—*Emerson.*

Strive to see God in all things without exception, and acquiesce in His will with absolute submission. Do everything for God, uniting yourself to Him by a mere upward glance, or by the overflowing of your heart towards Him. Never be in a hurry; do everything quietly and in a calm spirit. Do not lose your inward peace for anything whatsoever, even if your whole world seems upset. Commend all to God, and then lie still and be at rest in His bosom. Whatever happens, abide steadfast in a determination to cling simply to God, trusting to His eternal love for you; and if you find that you have wandered forth from this shelter, recall your heart quietly and simply. Maintain a holy simplicity of mind, and do not smother yourself with a host of cares, wishes, or longings, under any pretext.—*St. Francis de Sales.*

The man immersed in worldliness cannot attain Divine wisdom. Does the muddy water ever reflect the sun or any surrounding object?

As the troubled surface of the water does not reflect the full moon perfectly but in broken images, so the mind disturbed by worldly desires and passions does not fully reflect the light of God.—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

SPIRITUAL MEDIUMSHIP

Lecture by Swami Paramananda

The idea of mediumship is generally associated with spiritualism or with what is known as spiritualistic mediums who are supposed to be in touch with the departed and are capable of conveying their messages. But in reality the term mediumship has a much wider significance. It is perhaps through a peculiar trend of circumstance that we are inclined to connect this idea entirely with seances, trances, etc., but this is only a narrow and one-sided concept. Mediumship to my mind means simply instrumentality. Whenever any force, idea or thought is conveyed, whatever conveys it becomes the conveying medium. It means becoming a channel through which a power may flow unobstructed. We can become an instrument through which God Himself may express His highest and sublimest love, truth and potentiality, and also we may make ourselves a vehicle for evil forces. It all depends upon the fitness of our instrument and this implies both mind and body.

In one sense we are all mediums because we are always conveying to the world through our physical and mental vehicle what we are capable of transmitting. So do we consciously and unconsciously radiate our inherent nature which is continuously under process of composition through our cherished ideas and ideals. As air is the conductor for odors both good and noxious, similarly the mind is our most potent and efficient medium for both higher and lower influences. But even the physical body plays a tremendous part. According to its fineness, according to its purity, according to its clearness it becomes either fit or unfit for higher expression. Every one of us can become a conveying medium for spiritual forces. If we live in right rhythm, with a sense of holy consecration and love of Truth, in course of time we become so absolutely in tune with higher powers that both knowingly and unknowingly we transmit them to others.

a magic word and told him that if he repeated it a certain number of times he would gain his heart's desire, but also he warned him of its peril.

The man went his way and repeated the magic word. At once a giant-like form appeared saying, "I am conquered by your magic; now you must keep me constantly busy else I'll kill you." Then the man said, "Cut down this forest." It was done. He asked the ghost to build him a palace; that was also instantly done. He asked for money; the money was there. But when the ghost demanded more work the man began to be frightened as he was not able to cope with his rapidity. So he ran in haste to the sage and sought his protection. He was trembling with fear as he saw the dreadful figure approaching him. The sage out of compassion showed him a dog with a curly tail and said: "Give him that curly tail to straighten out." The ghost carefully worked on it, but no sooner did he let go than it curled up again. Once more he tried; again it curled. Finally utterly exhausted he begged the man to release him from the magic charm. Unfortunately we do not all possess the readiness of wit to find the curly tail when the undesirable complications arise. We pray with our whole heart for our desires to be fulfilled, but very often the fulfillment of desires brings unexpected and unhappy results which we are not always able to avoid.

Perhaps you have lost dear ones—a son, a brother, a father, or a mother. Naturally you want to get in touch with them, but how do you know it is good for them? How do you know it is good for you? They have their work there as much as they had here. If you love them, then you must be willing to leave them free. We interfere with God's laws when we assert our own will in regard to these things and the result is not wholesome. The only kind of mediumship that is wholesome for us individually and collectively is the mediumship that

comes from opening ourselves to such influence as will make us more wise, more true, more pure, more conscious of the spiritual realities. We can do this quite naturally by living in accordance with higher laws. It is not by any artificial means that we become spiritual mediums; it is by purifying ourselves. No book or formula can give this to us; no creed or dogma can give it. It is by losing ourselves that we find it. We acquire it through complete self-abandonment.

Meditation plays a tremendous part. No evil spirit can take possession of us when we are fortified by lofty thought, by spiritual prayers, by a consciousness which is pure, definite and dynamic. When we have made of ourselves a channel through which God's power can flow constantly, then we are fortified without any calculation even. Let your light shine. Why do you make it so dim? Why do you cover it? You say, I have no light. Of course you have the light of the soul burning within you; you have the light of God within yourself. To deny it is to deny God, to deny your own life and true happiness.

We do not begin to use our natural heritage—the power of the Spirit—all that is embedded in us. Many people are unconscious of possessing it, but we can become conscious possessors of that great power, that light and life which is ours, ours because we are part of it—the Infinite. We are all His children. It is a very sweet, natural and normal consciousness for us to carry. Whatever religion we may be indentified with, this is the fundamental fact, that we are children of God. If we can face this fact in our actions and thoughts, in all our modes of living, then no evil can creep into our life and we shall be incapable of doing anything harmful. We find some people becoming so pure that they have supernormal sight; they see more than the average person. An intellectual man sees more than a man who is engrossed in the physical. He

has developed his mind, he knows how to use his brain and to scheme, yet the spiritually minded man without all these efforts sees far more clearly because of his greater power of penetration.

Physical happiness comes and goes, prosperity comes and goes; praise and blame revolve; we cannot have one without the other, but the wise do not rise and fall with all these small temporary waves of life; they have fastened their heart to something that is eternal. Sometimes it is better for us that we still these outer activities at certain intervals during our daily round. It is needful not merely from the spiritual point of view, but even from the physical. A person who is over-active sooner or later becomes nervous. He loses all his control; he accomplishes less and less and eventually he becomes a wreck. But that is not the case with one who has given himself spiritually. He who does not depend wholly on the material aspect of life naturally has greater resources to draw from. These are lessons we must learn; we must not blind ourselves to higher realities.

Every one of us would like to have a spiritual guide, a guardian angel to watch over us and protect us. These ideas are not mere fancies; there is profound truth behind them. We can have a guardian angel and also we can be haunted by an evil spirit, and we open ourselves either to the one or to the other. There are some people who become like living and moving receiving stations for high and spiritual communion. They consciously and definitely ally themselves with the Divine Source. The mystics, for instance, wipe out all self-consciousness, all littleness, all pettiness. They refuse to raise their own voice so that the voice of the Infinite may speak through them. One of our great teachers, Sri Ramakrishna, who lived in the latter part of the 19th century, was a remarkable example of this. He made himself so completely a mouth-piece

that whenever he spoke it was with the full consciousness that it was his Divine Mother (as he termed the Deity) speaking through him. He completely wiped out the idea of "I, me and mine". He never took any praise to himself when people came and offered him worship. He was always aware that he was only a little child completely dependent on his Mother, incapable of doing anything himself, but as the Divine Mother guided him, so would he act. Words of wisdom poured out of him, yet he had no book-learning whatsoever. His channel was so clear that at every moment of his existence he was directly connected with the Fountain-head and whatever flowed through him was peculiarly full of blessing and upliftment.

Such utterances are very different from the average talking and teaching, because what comes directly from the Fountain-head is soothing, refreshing, enlightening. The only way we can make ourselves a channel for the supreme Power is by purifying and cleansing ourselves inwardly. One may cleanse one's body with soap and water; one may rub and scrub and make the outer life shining, but the inner can be made fitting for spiritual manifestation only by living,—living the Truth. You say: What is Truth? You do not need any definition of Truth; no one needs it, because we are part of it, it is that which we possess, that which we know absolutely. If we want to accomplish anything we should seek our alliance with that, we should have conscious union with that.

The aim of religion is to bring spiritual reality into our daily life, to make us better instruments, better children of Divinity. This is not accomplished by belonging to a special creed, but rather by belonging to our intrinsic divine nature, because there we find absolute unity, the fullness of love, the fullness of life and the fullness of wisdom. When we descend from there we fall into confusion and division. We hear so many voices and these voices differ; but when we go to the Fountain-head we

find but one great Power permeating all, radiating all, sustaining all,—and that is our Ideal.

One way or another we are all seeking. It is a splendid thing that people have convincing proof in regard to the existence of the soul; but it does not interest me very much because I do not think the soul requires any proof. I do not need any proof from a medium to convince me of its existence; you do not need it either. There is a sight within you which will show you if you are but willing to open it in your hour of silence, in your hour of purity, in your hour of prayer. You do not need any book, or any preacher or any medium to prove to you that you are a child of God. The only thing you need is to come into direct contact with your spiritual being. That which you know indistinctly, vaguely; that which you carry within yourself without having full possession of it,—to know that definitely, to carry it definitely, is the fulfillment of life. When people come into a heritage without being aware they have inherited a fortune, it does not do them much good. The same way if we do not know our spiritual heritage, if we do not know that we are direct possessors of the Infinite, we go on weeping through life. We blind-fold ourselves and we think that we are petty and small and puny. That is the reason for all suspicion and misery. It is only when we can make ourselves direct channels of Divinity that we find unending power. Power flows through our body and through our mind,—all our faculties become quickened.

In India instead of believing in a personal devil they believe that the personal devil is already with you in the form of ego. If you begin to draw a picture of it you will see the resemblance. It is egotism that makes us intolerant, that rouses in us anger. It is the egotistic man, the man who is unjust, unloving, ugly, who causes war, who creates hideous conditions through his selfishness. When we banish the ego and establish

our definite alliance with God-head, then we live truly in a heavenly atmosphere. These are the things of the real spiritual world. We find its fulfillment in our mortal world. After we have made our contact with the Spirit, after we have made ourselves susceptible to the Spirit, open, so that it may flow through us, our material life is filled with its radiance and we do not lack for anything.

There is one question that will come. What can we do to rescue ourselves from wrong conditions? Often a person says, I am haunted by an evil influence; what can I do? Shall I fight it? Your angel, your guardian angel, will fight for you. All you need to do is to keep close to the light of the Spirit. Whenever you are aware of any defects in your nature, you can pray or meditate. If you are crushed by them, ignore them; if you find it very difficult to ignore them, ignore them more, and the best way you can ignore them is by filling yourself with wholesome thoughts,—thoughts of cheerfulness. You say, how can I make myself cheerful? As soon as you know you are a child of God it fills your whole heart with cheerfulness and radiance. As long as you feel you are a lost soul, it throws you into the abyss of despair. It is not the light of the sun that makes your day bright; it is the definite sense that you are near that infinite Power, that that Power is within you, that you have made yourself so clean and pure and fitting that it always accompanies you.

Our heart is like a mirror. Sometimes it becomes so covered with dirt and dust and all the things we accumulate on the outside that whatever it reflects is distorted. When we have cleansed it, when we have so polished it that there is not a blemish or a speck of dust anywhere, then we have a clear reflection of Truth, and that is the true spiritual mediumship. The Truth shines forth from within so clearly, so definitely that we have no more room left for doubt. And we are able

to convince others, not so much by what we may say, but by the radiance of our own life, for our life becomes the commentary of what we have found. This is my concept of spiritual mediumship, and it is a very beneficent thing to possess. A man may possess it silently, but he becomes a great power and his elevating influence is not limited to his immediate surroundings. It extends far beyond to his community, to his country, to all humanity.

WORKINGS OF THE SPIRIT

From the Letters of Isaac Penington

English Quaker Mystic. 17th Century.

O my friends and brethren in the pure life! be faithful to the Lord in returning to Him all the incomes of His Spirit; follow on in every drawing of His love, while any of the virtue of it lasts upon your spirits. Walk with Him all the day long, and wait for Him all the night season. And, in case of erring from Him, or sinning grievously against Him, be not discouraged; for He is a God of mercies, and delighteth in pardoning and forgiving much and very often. What tender mother can be more ready to forgive and embrace the child that appears broken and afflicted with her sore displeasure!

It is a wonderful thing to witness the power of God reaching to the heart and demonstrating to the soul the pure way to life, as in His sight and presence. Surely, he that partakes of this is therein favored by the Lord and ought diligently to wait for the giving up to the leadings of His Holy Spirit in everything; that so he may travel through all that is contrary to the Lord, into that nature and spirit which is of Him.

And be not careful after the flesh, but trust the Lord. What though thou art weak, and little; though thou meet with those that are wise and knowing, and almost every way able to reason

thee down; what though thou hast not wherewith to answer; yet thou knowest and hast the feeling of God's pure Truth in spirit, with a desire to have the life of it brought forth in thee, and so, to witness the change and renewings which are by His power.

O dear heart! herein thou art accepted of the Lord, and here His tender love and care will be over thee, and His mercy will daily reach to thee. Yea, thou shalt so feel the Lord to help His babe against the strength of the mighty, in the seasons of His good pleasure, as shall exceedingly turn to His praise; and so, thou shalt experience, that whom God preserves, all the gates of hell shall not be able to prevail against.

Therefore, look not out at men, or at the words and wisdom of men; but keep where thou hast felt the Lord visit thee, that He may visit thee yet again and again, every day, and be teaching thee further and further the way to his dwelling-place, and be drawing thee thither, where is righteousness, life, rest and peace forever.

The Lord keep open that heavenly eye in His children and servants, which looks over this world with the affairs and concerns thereof, to that which is immortal and invisible; where our life is hid from others, though made manifest in and felt by us from the living spring which quickens, nourisheth and refresheth.

If thou come to know God's Spirit and to receive it and feel it work in thee, and its pure light shine from the fountain and spring of life, thou wilt have a quicker sense and discerning therefrom, than can arise either from words written, or from thoughts; that is, the Lord will show thee the way whereof thou doubtest, quicker than a thought can arise in thee; and the Lord will show thee evil, in a pure sense of the new nature, quicker than thou canst think or consider of anything.

O my Friend, look not out at what stands in the way; what

work. It is foolish for us to suppose that we can work for God. We can only be channels through which He does His work. What can we do for Him when He is all-perfect? We cannot help God. It is He Who is doing everything. It is He Who makes the baby weak, but it is also He Who gives a loving mother to care for it. So whenever He creates a need, He also creates the means to satisfy it. Work means self-amelioration. The ordinary work we do chiefly benefits ourselves, and Swami Vivekananda was right when he said that the receiver should stand and permit, the giver should kneel down and give thanks that the needy man has given him an opportunity to unfold himself. This is no exaggeration. It is literally true, for what happens when you do good to another? You actually expand your own heart and grow more unselfish. But suppose there were no needy people then to help, what would happen? You would become a selfish brute.

We are all fallen from our Divine state and we need to serve others in order to lift ourselves up out of this degeneration; so we should be grateful to those whom we help for making it possible through service to raise ourselves out of this degraded state. That is the chief good that comes out of all we do for others. We make ourselves strong. We must not, however, waste any time in grieving over our shortcomings and failures. The idea that we have committed a sin is one which we should never dwell upon. The only sin is to call a man a sinner. Remember always that by our real nature we are pure, we are perfect, we are Divine. A man may mistake a rope for a snake, but any amount of imagination will not turn the rope into a snake. So we may think that we have committed a sin, but nothing can ever change our real, pure, divine nature. That remains always the same and we are always that.

This was the peculiarity of our Master, Sri Ramakrishna.

He never told us that anything was wrong. On the contrary He knew there was nothing wrong in these enjoyments of the world, but by tasting them He felt sure that His children would come to realize their worthlessness and then be satisfied only with higher enjoyments. He was not merely the protector of the good. He also was the protector of all the wrong-doers. He tolerated all sides. He was literally too pure to see iniquity. He only wanted all His children to be happy; and if one of us came with the least shadow on his face, He could not bear it and He would at once scold us.

We are like the bird on the tree about which the Upanishads tell us. The tree is full of hundreds of luscious fruits and the bird, seeing one, thinks: "Oh! if I could only taste that one, I am sure it would give me pleasure"; so he goes nearer and although he may have to thrust his head through thorns, still he takes a bite out of the fruit; but alas! he finds it very bitter. So with perhaps twenty or thirty fruits, until he is almost discouraged and is about to give up. Then he happens to taste one that is sweet. This gives him new expectation and again he starts out searching for another sweet fruit, perhaps tasting ten or twelve bitter ones before he finds one sweet one. Only when no more taste sweet to him is he ready to give up.

How has evil come into the world? A man comes to sell sugar candy—a sugar man, sugar mango, sugar doll. A little boy looks at them and says, please father buy me that bird because I believe the bird will taste sweeter, but in reality all are the same. In the same way man looks at the world and says this is good and this is bad, but as a matter of fact it is all made out of the same substance. One must get everything from inside or from Nature. Nature is God's book and blessed is the man who knows how to read it. There is a vast difference between man-made books and God-made books. The first tell only relative facts and the second tell the absolute Truth.

if it look dreadfully as a lion, is not the Lord stronger than the mountains of prey? but look in, where the law of life is written, and the will of the Lord revealed, that thou mayest know what is the Lord's will concerning thee.

And learn but in quietness and stillness to retire to the Lord, and wait upon Him; in whom thou shalt find peace and joy, in the midst of thy trouble from the cruel and vexatious spirit of this world. So, wait to know thy work and service to the Lord every day, in thy place and station; and the Lord make thee faithful therein, and thou wilt want neither help, support, nor comfort.

Flesh should be silent before Him. Alas! what room is there for His Spirit and power, when there is such a multitude of thoughts and workings and reasonings, such a noise of flesh in many hearts and spirits. Happy is he who feels flesh silent, who comes to an end of his own willing and running, though that is a time of great distress, when the full mind is emptied and brought low; but, He that shows mercy is near, and the day of mercy is not far off to that soul. The Lord raise up that in thee, which is of Him; and so guide and order thy heart, that it may long and cry after Him, and be heard and satisfied by Him.

KNOWLEDGE

By St. Cadoc. 6th Century.

Without knowledge no power
Without knowledge no wisdom
Without knowledge no freedom
Without knowledge no beauty
Without knowledge no nobleness
Without knowledge no victory
Without knowledge no honor
Without knowledge no God
The best of attitudes is humility.

ATTAINMENT OF POWERS

By Swami Ramakrishnananda

The Scriptures say that as long as man cares for powers he can never attain salvation. Evolution means rolling out; that is the inner powers become more and more manifest. Man is made in the image of God; he possesses all the powers of God, only in a miniature form. Development means getting more and more—increasing our power. But say we have at the end of this year ten times more power than we have now; at the end of two years one hundred times more, and so on until we may have a million times more power than at the present time, still the quantity is limited and a limited or finite quantity, however great, compared to infinity, is infinitesimally small or zero. So by the development of powers we can never hope to attain to God; for powers must always remain finite while God is infinite.

Can there be any conception that is not based on the experience of the senses? No. Every finite conception pre-supposes sense perception and for that reason they are all deceiving and false. Truth is the only reality. It is the only real thing of which all other things are qualities. All things are based on this one Truth; but it is not possible to conceive the Truth, for it itself is the conceiver. All these conceptions are mere reflections of the Truth; but because they have that little reflecting light of Truth in them, we take them to be true. We can never *know* Truth, but we can *be* Truth; for the finite can never know the infinite. However, we can no doubt have some intellectual perception of what Truth is; if that were not the case, why should we be so eager to know it? To a simple mind Truth is much more conceivable and forcible than to a mind which has been given a definite shape by much reading and study.

Only a man can do a man's work and only God can do God's

If we would know the Truth therefore, we must go directly to the book of Nature. God is the only existence that is real and all other existences are unrealities, behind which God exists as the reality.

PASSING OF A GREAT SOUL

Once again the hand of death has been laid upon the Ramakrishna Mission, and again it has summoned one of the most dearly beloved. On July 21st, only four months after the loss of the Swami Brahmananda, first President of the Mission, Swami Turiyananda, another disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, entered into Mahasamadhi,—the final supreme vision,—as the passing of an illumined soul is called.

The fragrance of a holy life cannot be conveyed by words, the best we can do is to indicate the facts of that life that they may hint at the spirit within. When Sri Ramakrishna gave up his physical body, he left behind him an ardent group of youthful Sannyasins or monks, young men absolutely consecrated to the ideals of renunciation and service as laid down to them by their divine Master, and all on fire to spread them abroad among men. Swami Turiyananda was one of this little company of disciples. He labored with them, endured with them and gloried with them when the great Mission of Ramakrishna was only a seed in their hearts, and he lived to see its tender healing touch laid upon the heart of the Motherland and its benign influence reach the farthest shores of the world. He was by nature endowed with the "divine properties", a rare combination of devotion and wisdom balanced by action. Indeed Sri Ramakrishna said of him at their first meeting that he was "a yogi of the type described in the Gita".

He accompanied Swami Vivekananda to the West on his second trip to America, and was left in charge of the newly established Vedanta work in San Francisco. No one could

have been better fitted than he to lay its spiritual foundations. And they were laid so quietly and unobtrusively. Perhaps his most potent influence radiated not so much from the headquarters in San Francisco as from the retreat in the hills where he spent many months surrounded by earnest and devoted hearts. These students built for him with their own hands a small log house and around this clustered their tents. Even the furniture was hand-made, being constructed out of packing boxes and barrels. The life both outer and inner was one of absolute simplicity and suggested the forest life of the early Aryan teacher and his pupils. It was the majestic calm of nature sanctified by a holy presence. None who lived there with the Swami can ever forget it. Many souls in the West are still vibrant with his influence and to this day his name is spoken with deep feeling even by those who made but a passing contact with him.

On returning to India he was greeted with the news that his adored brother sannyasin, Swami Vivekananda had been drawn back into the Master's heart. The thought that he would never see him again in this life struck very deep and in his sacred grief he went for a time into retirement. All the remainder of his life was spent in India and for the last five years he lived in the holy city of Benares. It was there that he died. His final release was not unexpected for his body had been gradually breaking, but none save the Swami himself knew that the end was so near. On hearing that Swami Brahmananda had gone, he predicted his own departure in about three months. Soon afterwards a physical trouble developed which made his words come true. Five days before the end he said: "Five days more shall I remain with you." And again on the night before, "To-morrow is the last day."

An American lady, a pupil of Swami Vivekananda writes: "I stopped off at Benares twenty-four hours to see dear Swami

Turiyananda. Alas, he died on July 21st and was like Swami Brahmananda, triumphant to the end. His bed was surrounded by loving disciples. About thirty monks had come to Benares on account of his serious illness, for to the Hindu to be at the death of a great Sadhu or Saint, is a blessing, and relays of these monks were privileged to wait upon and serve him day and night. As soon as I arrivèd I saw and talked to him. Such a welcome was alone worth coming for to India! Then the next day before I left, early in the morning, he sent for me. He seemed like a lion, conquering, fearless. Rousing himself from the pain he seemed to forget it and his body."

It is thus great souls bless even in dying, for true holiness can so sanctify pain and disaster as to make them seem the rarest gifts of life. Some of this blessing is conveyed to us in these lines from Swami Saradananda, Secretary of the Mission. He says: "His physical suffering was terrible for a whole month, for it was impossible to find a comfortable position to rest the body. But never have we seen anything like the way he bore all that, not only with patience and calmness but withal with joy! He would forget all his sufferings as soon as any one would speak of the Master or the Swami Vivekananda and he was heard sometimes to say, 'Who is suffering? Do I care for the body and its ailments!' On the morning of the last day he told Swami Akhandananda 'A good and blessed morning, we are Divine Mother's and the Mother is ours!' Calling all by his bedside a little before he passed away, in the afternoon he made them repeat the words 'Brahman (Absolute Being) is true, the world too is true, life, (prana) is established in truth.' Then the Swami Akhandananda chanted 'Brahman is Truth, Knowledge and Infinitude—Brahman is supreme Knowledge and Bliss' and the great soul passed away chanting those supreme words:" "No sign of pain or anguish on his face, it was filled with heavenly bliss."

REPORT

For over a year now Swami Paramananda, head of the Vedanta Centre of Boston, has given his time almost exclusively to the Boston work. He has made no extended trips either to California or abroad and has seldom been absent over a Sunday, even when on lecture tour in the Middle-West last Fall and Winter. For the past seven months he has not been away at all. As a result of his continued presence, the work in Boston has shown a marked increase. All through the quiet summer months the attendance at both the Sunday Services and at the Tuesday evening classes has been uninterruptedly large. During August, perhaps the deadest month in the year, the Chapel was always crowded, even upon holidays such as Labor Day when thousands leave the city. An unusual number of visitors have come from all parts of the country, often making special pilgrimage to the Centre, thereby strengthening its lines of connection with Cincinnati, Louisville, Rochester, Cleveland, Washington, D. C., and the states of New Hampshire and New York.

A new and lovely feature has been introduced into the Sunday evening Service,—the reading by Swami Paramananda of his own poems which are now in the hands of the printer and will be out in book form by the first of November. This has drawn many people Sunday after Sunday who would not miss the rare privilege of hearing the Swami's voice in these poems.

In the latter part of September a long cherished dream of the Centre came into actual being. A printing press was installed and was put into immediate and successful operation, turning out the month's lecture announcement for the Sunday Services and weekly classes. Although publication has always been a vital part of the Centre's activities, up to this time the technical work connected with it has been done outside.

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The Message of the East



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HOW TO CULTIVATE JOYOUSNESS

By Swami Paramananda

One of the most beautiful names man has ever given to the Supreme is Anandam—Bliss. The Vedic sages in India from the early days of their spiritual revelation defined the one absolute Being by a three-fold name, Sat-chit-anandam, which means Absolute Existence, Absolute Knowledge and Absolute Bliss. When man reaches his Source he obtains these three aspects of Divinity which make for complete happiness, complete wisdom and complete security in life. For in the Absolute there is no death or fear of death; in the Absolute there is no error or ignorance, for the power of evil cannot prevail against It. In the Absolute there is unbounded life and fullness of joy.

We are all directly or indirectly aiming for this one end,—to gain unbroken happiness. We may not always admit this, but if we sum up our entire philosophy, our devotion to life and its activities, we shall find that in one way or another we are reaching out for that which promises happiness. Some try to acquire happiness by unjust means, but all their efforts bring only contrary reactions. A thief robs, a murderer kills in thirst for happiness, but their misguided zeal brings upon their soul only gloom and bitterness. It seems strange that we aim for one end and obtain another. It is because we do not utilize

the God-given power of discernment. We cannot afford to pursue the wake of every selfish impulse for soon we discover that self-love is the cause of all our bondage, and self-seeking lies at the root of all our misery, and only as we learn to discard these from our heart is it filled with the unfailing light of Truth and unending bliss.

If God is Bliss, then His children must have full share in it and must always radiate that blissfulness, and if they fail to radiate it, then there must be something wrong, some condition that obstructs its free manifestation. When a person allows himself to fall under the sway of worries, depression and sadness, he loses his grasp on this fundamental principle of life. He believes more in his physical reality than he believes in the power of Truth; in fact instead of depending on the all-ness and all-pervading power of the Infinite he depends on his own limited strength of bodily life, and as a natural result of this limited consciousness he soon gets into a great tangle and not being able to liberate himself from this, he settles down into a morbid sense of failure and becomes a prey to all kinds of anxious thoughts.

Through the ages we find that the followers of a certain type of religion form the habit of an unwholesome sadness; they think they must not have any sense of buoyancy or gladness of heart, especially when they enter a place of worship. But a child of God should always have a heavenly smile upon his face. However, we cannot wear this smile unless we cultivate that joyousness within. This means that we have to go deep down to the very foundation of life. Also such joy is contagious. If we possess it we can impart it; if we have it not, pretending gives nothing to us or to any one else. A person may smile and that smile may scorn another. It must be wholehearted, it must be from within, and this smile of joy from within is our birthright and we can all manifest it.

There are some people who say, how can we be happy when this world is merged in misery? Why should you be unhappy and add to the burden of the world? Did you ever remove any one's unhappiness when merely out of sympathy you began to weep with him. If you possess the true spirit of joy, then alone can you lift the veil of despair from another.

A great principle of the Indian philosophic system is that one should always practise contentment and cheerfulness of heart, for without it the spiritual path is very arduous and one is easily discouraged. You may ask how can we be content when we have so little, we could be satisfied if we had a fortune. It is not a question of fortune or of misfortune. There are some people who are never contented. If they have a little they are discontented, if they have more they are still discontented. They always find some reason to be unhappy. This is a very serious disease of the mind; also it is infectious. They breathe an unhappy morbid atmosphere and they fill the radius of their life with unhappiness so that others feel it. You know what a tremendous drag it is in a household when one of the members is always melancholy and depressed. There is nothing one can do to help him but he can help himself.

It is the same mind which reflects both happiness and unhappiness; it is the same mind which recognizes bondage and freedom. By the power of that God-given heritage we are able to rise, to lift up our head and also by means of it we can drag ourselves down to the very depths. There is great value therefore in cultivating a sense of joyousness, of lightness of heart. It helps one physically, it helps one mentally and morally, and it lays the foundation for our spiritual life. It is not anything we can buy. Is is something that we earn. Good deeds earn one happiness and good deeds we can perform just as readily as we perform bad deeds. An unselfish act brings one happiness at the time and also it leaves the flavor of happi-

ness; the fragrance of it lingers long after the act, but it must come from within one's own soul.

There is a beautiful little incident in connection with the Buddha's life. Once when he was wandering as a mendicant he came to a house. A servant was cutting the grass in the meadows nearby. When the servant saw this holy figure approaching he knew that he came for alms, so he ran to the house and begged for his share of the food. It was given. Returning to the Buddha he offered it all to him without thinking of himself, and the Buddha blessed him. The daughter of the household, witnessing his act said, "That is well done, Amabhara thou hast earned merit." "Indeed," the man replied, "I feel full of happiness because of it." When the master of the house heard of this he said: "Won't you share your merit with me?" The servant went to the Buddha and asked: "May I share my bliss with my master?" In reply the Buddha told him a parable. He said: "Once there was a village with hundreds of houses but with only one light. All the villagers came and lighted their lamps and torches from it, but although that one light gave birth to many lights and made the village brighter, it was none the poorer. Give thy merit then to another. Thou mayest give without losing." Amabhara returned to his master and said to him: "I gladly share my merit with you." His master offered him a sum of money in return but Amabhara replied, "Not so, my lord, if I accept your money it would be selling my share. Bliss cannot be sold."

Those who have found their joy of God within are not reluctant to share with others. It is only those who have not found their inherent treasure who rob and cheat and plan and scheme that they may have for themselves; but they never find anything because that is not the way to happiness. How often we see a man of untold wealth in such depths of misery that sometimes he commits suicide. It is not money that makes for

happiness, not material possession, but the quality of mind. A person may be buoyant, happy, exalted, full of usefulness to his community and yet have nothing, while another who has much and can easily lend a hand to his fellow-beings does not, but thinks he ought to have more and is filled with dissatisfaction. We do not have to make a study of philosophy or religion to understand this; we see it every day before our very eyes, and yet we do not learn because we are led by the thirst for the external. It does not give us what we really seek, but nevertheless every individual is seeking, is reaching out, nor can he stop until he finds his life's ideal.

If we have found access to that light which can illumine our heart, which can destroy our darkness and heaviness, then we give, just like that parable. Others may come and light their torch and their candle and their lamp, and yet we lose nothing by it. Even though we may perceive many things, even though we may use high-sounding words of charity and giving, our gift is very meagre. We are always calculating what we may get from it. But a lover of God, a knower of Truth, he does not calculate because he has reached the inexhaustible Source. God is Bliss. When a man finds Him all his miseries vanish, and until he has found Him he cannot get away from misery. When we approach that light, darkness departs, because the nature of light is to dispel darkness. The same way when we reach the universal Spirit—the heart of Truth—all our burdens fall away.

You say, how may we attain this? We have to attain it gradually. We have allowed our mind to become saturated with all kinds of worldly thoughts and feelings, selfish thoughts and desires. If we once more want to implant something high and holy, we must do so with patience and perseverance. Whenever any one, even in a small measure, finds that he has within himself something higher, greater and more satisfying

than all that the outside world can give him, will he not then be freed from all feverish unrest and grow quiet and serene-hearted? Will he not add to his own happiness and to the happiness of his household, his friends, and his fellow-beings? There are those who even in the midst of storm and turbulence, maintain their equilibrium. This cheerfulness is not mere pretence. They have found the right value of life because they no longer live on the surface. People who live altogether on the surface have ups and downs. It is unfortunate that we depend so wholly on the exterior. Our outer life and experience would be far more rich and effective if we always tried to draw from our spiritual resources.

This life gives us countless avenues through which we can earn our happiness and share it with our fellow-beings, and also it has perplexities and complexities by which we may mar our happiness, yet all we do when misfortune comes is to blame others and say,—I would be happy, I would have great power, I would be successful if only other people did not interfere with me. Spiritual joy is unconditioned; it is not dependent on any one, on what others may say or do. No one has any power to mar our inner happiness once we have found it. There is no one who has any access to it. In fact we should not allow any one to have access. It is the place of Divinity. The altars and sanctuaries which the religions have evolved according to their different concepts are but the outer forms and symbols of that which every one should carry within himself. Each living being should have an altar in his heart where he can see the face of the Divine,—a secluded corner which no turbulence can reach. You say, how can we do this when we are so busy? We have to think of our bread and butter, our families, our obligations. No one is asking you to refrain from thinking of these things. You may think of them, but it will bring a sense of satisfaction into your life and you will

look after your duties with greater efficiency if you have the higher guidance. There is no mortal who is self-sufficient, but this does not mean that a person is always dependent on others. One must find joy within. There are certain people who always have to draw on somebody else for their recreation, their happiness, their strength. They cannot be left alone one single moment; they feel weighted by life. We must never allow ourselves to fall into a state in which we are not capable of taking care of ourselves. We should be glad when circumstances offer us opportunities for aloneness, that we may reflect silently deep down within our own soul and cultivate the love of high ideals.

We can be a blessing and also we can be a curse to ourselves and to others. It is not what a man says, but what he is. If he has that great love in his heart, if he has that sense of rest and recreation within, which can only come with spiritual upliftment, he radiates it just like a flower which gives its fragrance regardless of who receives it. Such a person, whether he is travelling or at home, walking or sitting, talking or silent, is imparting something vital and valuable to those around him. His very being, his very expression inspires one, electrifies one with hope, inspiration and courage. Another person who has shut his door to these blessings, finds much unhappiness in his own soul and he invariably and involuntarily thrusts his gloom and his burden upon others. These are facts we have to cope with in every day existence and real spiritual teaching is to help us lift the burden from our daily life. As we learn to do this we build a heaven for ourselves, and as we always share our possessions, we find that we are also building a heaven for others. Therefore no matter what our vocation is, no matter how we are placed, we must try to lift up our head, not with aggressiveness and arrogance but with a sense of spiritual dependence.

Behind us there is the Infinite; before us there is the Infinite; all about us there is the Infinite and we live, move and have our being in that Infinite Life. We cannot trust in the Divine and be faint-hearted at the same time. The nature of misfortune is to crush, but the spiritually minded transform calamity into blessing and find their exaltation in crucifixion, danger and difficulty. They have found the secret of life. It is not the opportunities we have but how we utilize them,—the secret lies in that. If we have found our access to Divinity, then our whole life must testify to it. In the commonest word that we may utter, in the most ordinary task that we perform,—everywhere do we carry that great Spirit with us because He is present everywhere from the atom to the Infinite. He is the Light, the Source of all happiness and when we do not have happiness it means that we do not possess Him consciously. One of the attributes of all spiritual teachers is their great joyousness, their cheerfulness under all circumstances. "The Knower of Truth is ever fearless and is ever full of bliss" say the Upanishads. The Knower of Truth is indeed full of bliss and free from all fear, not an aggressive fearlessness, but a fearlessness which is undaunted because there is no selfishness behind it. There is absolute trust in the Divine.

When we have found our home in Truth we have a true home to which we can welcome all, our friends and fellow-beings, and we can relieve them from their sadness and gloom. When we live in the higher life we can always adjust lower conditions. In the morning when we rise our day need not appear gloomy because the sun is not shining on the horizon, but if we are not able to find our spiritual connection, then indeed is it a gloomy day. If we learn to carry that unfailing light always with us on all occasions, we shall never fail to find abundant life and joy.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Man is born in this world with two tendencies,—the tendency towards liberation and the tendency towards world and bondage. When born, both tendencies are in equilibrium like the scales of a balance. The world soon places its enjoyments and pleasures on one scale, and the spirit its attractions on the other. If the mind chooses the world, the worldly scale becomes heavy and gravitates towards the earth. But if it chooses the spirit, the spiritual scale rises towards God.—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

If thou didst but know the pleasure of abandoning pleasure thou wouldst never more talk about the pleasures of sense.—*The Dabistan.*

Let the oxen work merrily; let the men work merrily; let the plough move on merrily. Fasten the traces merrily, ply the goad merrily.

Let the ploughshares turn up the sod merrily, let the men follow the oxen merrily. May Parjanya moisten the earth with sweet rains. O Soma bestow on us happiness.—*Rig-Veda—Hymn dedicated to the Lord of the Field.*

I, Lord, went wandering like a strayed sheep, seeking Thee with anxious reasoning without, whilst Thou wast within me; I wearied myself much in looking for Thee without, and yet Thou hast Thy habitation within me, if I long and breathe after Thee. I went round the streets and places of the city of this world, seeking Thee, and found Thee not; because in vain I sought without for Him who was within myself.—*St. Austin.*

If you do not wish for His Kingdom, don't pray for it. But if you do, you must do more than pray for it; you must work for it.—*John Ruskin.*

Remember that you are an actor in a drama, of such a kind as the author pleases to make it. If short, of a short one; if long, of a long one. If it be His pleasure, you should act a poor man, a cripple, a governor, or a private person, see that you act it naturally. For this is your business, to act well the character assigned you; to choose it is another's.

If you ever happen to turn your attention to externals, so as to wish to please any one, be assured that you have ruined your scheme of life. Be contented then in everything with being a philosopher; and if you wish to be thought so likewise by any one, appear so to yourself, and it will suffice you.—*Epictetus.*

We can't choose happiness either for ourselves or for another; we can't tell where that will lie. We can only choose whether we will indulge ourselves in the present moment, or whether we will renounce that, for the sake of obeying the Divine voice within us, for the sake of being true to all the motives that sanctify our lives. I know this belief is hard; it has slipped away from me again and again; but I have felt that if I let it go forever, I should have no light through the darkness of this life.—*George Eliot.*

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

The enjoyments which are born through contact with sense-objects are ever generators of misery; they are with beginning and end. The wise do not seek pleasure in them.

He whose joy is within, whose pleasure is within, and whose light is within, that Yogi, being well-established in Brahman, attains to absolute freedom.—*Bhagavad-Gita.*

CONVERSE WITH GOD

By Fenelon. 17th Century.

You do not yet know the attractive, happy side of religion. You see what it takes away, but you do not see what it gives: you exaggerate its sacrifices without perceiving its consolations. No indeed, it leaves no void in the heart; it will only draw you to that which you will learn to prefer to all that has so long enthralled you. If the world never exacted anything but what your heart could accept lovingly, would it not be a better master than it is? But God will take heed for you, wait for you, prepare you, give you the will before He asks you to act. He loves you better than you know how to love yourself. He pursues you in mercy, and disturbs your heart in order to conquer it.

What does He ask of you, save to be happy? Have you not realized that one is happy in loving Him? Have you not felt that there is no other real happiness, whatever excitement may be found in sensual pleasures, apart from Him? Be cheerful, as one who has found his real treasure and has no further need of anything. Take the day as it comes, without anxiety; each day, as our Lord tells us, will "take care for the things of itself." Each day brings its own grace and help as well as its troubles and temptations. Talk freely with God; be simple as a child with Him. The more your will is dead to all the vain longings and unholy pleasures of the world, the more you will be alive to that innocent, childlike happiness which is far beyond the most gorgeous scenes vainly devised by the great ones of this world for their satisfaction. How weary and bored they are, poor people, amid their splendour! You will laugh at their folly, miscalled wisdom, in your true wisdom, which asks naught save God, and can enter in all simplicity into the joy of the Holy Spirit.

A man becomes lifeless and without heart directly that he is

without the indescribable something which sustains, upholds, renews him hour by hour. All that which the mad lovers of this world say in their frenzy is literally true after a fashion. To be without love is not to live, and to love feebly is rather waste than growth. God made us to live through Him and His love. We were born to be fed and consumed by that love, like as a torch is wasted while it gives forth light. This is the blessed flame of life which God has kindled in the bottom of our heart; all other life is mere death. We must love.

What will you love? This body of clay which fetters our reason, and subjects the soul to present sickness and approaching death? What then? Will you love nothing? Will you drag on a lifeless existence rather than love God Who loves you, Who seeks your love, and would have you to be wholly His, only that He may give Himself wholly to you? Do you fear that you should lack aught, possessing such a treasure? Do you not believe that the Infinite God can fill and satisfy your heart? Put not your trust in yourself or in anything created; it is all a mere nothing, which can never satisfy the heart of man, made as it is for God. But never mistrust Him Who contains every good thing in Himself, in order to bring you forcibly back to Himself.

Make it your habit to speak with God, not of the set thoughts you work out, but of the warm feelings with which your heart is filled. If you feel His Presence, and are kindled by His love, tell Him so; thank Him for drawing a soul so unworthy of His love. At such times of sensible sweetness you will find no difficulty in pouring out your heart. But what, you will ask, are you to say in seasons of dryness, coldness and weariness? Still say what rises in your heart. Tell God that you cannot feel His love, that you are empty and cold, that He wearies you, that His Presence does not move you, that you would fain leave Him for the idlest pleasures, that you will

never be easy till you are far from Him and full of self. Tell Him all that you know is wrong in you. Do you ask what to say to Him? Is this not subject-matter for plenty to say? While you are telling Him your troubles you are praying Him to cure them.

There is no need to say much to God. One often does not talk much to a friend whom one is delighted to see; one enjoys looking at him, and one says some few words which are purely matter of feeling. The mind has little or nothing to do with it; one says the same thing over and over again. One does not so much seek interchange of thought as rest and communion of heart with one's friend. Even so it should be with God, Who vouchsafes to be our tenderest, most cordial, most familiar Friend. . . But with respect to God, a word, a sigh, a thought, a feeling, says all. Nor is it needful to be always in a state of excitement and emotion; often a very dry, bare, insipid, lifeless goodwill may be most acceptable in God's sight. After all, we must be content to offer Him His own gifts: a kindled heart, if He kindles it; or a heart faithful and steadfast amid dryness, when He denies it warmth and sensible sweetness.

ECSTASY

By St. John of the Cross

Rapt in oblivion, the soul
Doth in a single moment learn
More than the busy brain and sense,
With all their toil, could ever learn.

Mirrored within its God, it views
To-day, to-morrow, and the past,
And faith sees here in time the things
That through eternity shall last.

CONTENTMENT

Reflections of Marcus Aurelius

Wilt thou then, my soul, never be good and simple and one and naked, more manifest than the body which surrounds thee? Wilt thou never enjoy an affectionate and contented disposition? Wilt thou never be full and without a want of any kind, longing for nothing more, nor desiring anything, either animate or inanimate, for the enjoyment of pleasures? Nor yet desiring time wherein thou shalt have longer enjoyment, or place, or pleasant climate, or society of men with whom thou mayst live in harmony? But wilt thou be satisfied with thy present condition and pleased with all that is about thee; and wilt thou convince thyself that thou hast everything and that it comes from the gods; that everything is well for thee and will be well, whatever shall please them and whatever they shall give for the conservation of the perfect living being, the good and just and beautiful, which generates and holds together all things? Wilt thou never be such that thou shalt so dwell in community with gods and men as neither to find fault with them at all, nor to be condemned by them?

Whether the universe is atoms or Nature, let this first be established, that I am a part of the whole which is governed by Nature; next, I am in a manner intimately related to the parts which are the same kind with myself. For remembering this, inasmuch as I am a part, I shall be discontented with none of the things which are assigned to me out of the whole; for nothing is injurious to the part if it is for the advantage of the whole. For the whole contains nothing which is not for its advantage; and all natures indeed have this common principle; but the nature of the universe has this principle besides, that it cannot be compelled even by any external cause to generate anything harmful to itself. By remembering, then, that I am a part of such a whole, I shall be content with everything that happens.

LIMITING ADJUNCT OF MIND

Extract from Conversation by Swami Vivekananda

Man is man because qualified by the limiting adjunct of mind. With the mind he has to understand and grasp everything and therefore whatever he thinks must be limited by the mind. To argue from the analogy of his own personality, the personality of *Ishvara* (God) is the natural way of man. Man can only think of his ideal as a human being. When buffeted by sorrows in this world of disease and death, he is driven to desperation and helplessness; then he longs for a refuge, relying on whom he may feel safe. But where is that refuge to be found? The Self-existent, omnipresent *Atman* is the only Refuge.

At first man does not see this. He comes to know it when discrimination and dispassion arise in the course of meditation and spiritual practice. But in whatever way one may progress on the path of spirituality, one is unconsciously awakening the *Brahman* (the Supreme) within him. The means, however, may be different in different cases. Those who have faith in the Personal God, have to perform spiritual practices, relying on and holding to that idea. If there is sincerity, from that will come the awakening of the lion of *Brahman* within. *Brahmajnana* (knowledge of *Brahman*) is the one goal of *Jivas* (individual souls); the various ideas regarding it are the various paths to it. Although the real nature of *Jiva* is the *Brahman*, still so long as he has identification with the qualifying adjunct of mind he suffers from doubts and difficulties, pleasure and pain. But every one, from the *Brahma* (the Creator) to a blade of grass, is advancing towards the realization of his real nature. Obtaining human birth, when the desire for freedom becomes very strong and is combined with the grace of a person of realization, then man's desire for *Atmajnana* (self-knowledge) becomes very powerful; otherwise the mind of men, given to

desire for wealth and lust, never inclines that way. He who has the desire in his mind to attain wealth, fame, and to be bound up within the narrow circle of life, how will the search for the knowledge of *Brahman* arise in him? He who is prepared to renounce all, who is calm, steady, balanced and awake to Reality in this strong current of duality—good and bad, happiness and misery—such a man endeavours to attain to Self-knowledge. He alone by the might of his own power tears asunder the net of the world and breaking the barriers of Maya, emerges like a mighty lion.

Always ponder that this body is only an inert instrument. The self-existent *Purusha* within is your real nature. The adjunct of mind is His first and subtle covering, this body is His gross covering. The unbroken, changeless, self-effulgent *Purusha* is lying hidden under these veils; for this reason your real nature is unknown to you. The mind now directed towards the senses has to be turned within. The body is gross; it dies and dissolves in the five elements. The bundle of *Samskaras* or mental impressions which make up the mind does not die soon. It remains for sometime in seed-form and then sprouts and grows into a tree; then obtaining a physical body, it goes round the wheel of birth and death until Self-knowledge arises. Therefore do I say that by meditation and practice and by the power of philosophical discrimination plunge this mind in the ocean of Absolute Existence and Bliss.

Will you sit and wait for this? At once set to work digging the channel which will convey the waters of spirituality to your life. Sri Ramakrishna used to urge the giving up of all lukewarmness, as in such thoughts that religion will come gradually and there is no hurry for it. When real thirst has come, can a man sit idle? Does he not run about searching for water? Because your thirst for spirituality has not come, therefore you are sitting idle. The desire for knowledge has not become

strong; for that reason you are living absorbed in the little thoughts of household life. The end and the means are all in your own hands, I can only stimulate your desire for knowledge

DIVINE COMMUNION

From the Maxims of Brother Lawrence

What offering is there more acceptable to God than thus throughout the day to quit the things of outward sense, and to withdraw to worship Him within the secret places of the soul? Besides by so doing we destroy the love of self, which can subsist only among the things of sense, and of which these times of quiet retirement with God rids us well-nigh unconsciously.

In very truth we can render to God no greater or more signal proofs of our trust and faithfulness, than by thus turning from things created to find our joy, though for a single moment, in the Creator. Yet, think not that I counsel you to disregard completely and for ever the outward things that are around us. That is impossible. Prudence, the mother of the virtues, must be your guide. Yet, I am confident, it is a common error among religious persons, to neglect this practice of ceasing for a time that, which they are engaged upon, to worship God in the depth of their soul, and to enjoy the peace of brief communion with Him.

Great would be our surprise, if we but knew what converse the soul holds at these times with God, who seems to so delight in this communion, that to the soul, which would fain abide ever with Him, He bestows favours past numbering; and as if He dreaded lest the soul should turn again to things of earth, He provides for it abundantly, so that the soul finds in faith a nourishment divine, a joy that has no measure, beyond its utmost thought and desires; and this without a single effort on its part but simple consent.

THE CONQUERING SWAN

Rendered from the Mahabharata

There lived on the other side of the ocean a Vaisya possessed of wealth and grain and a good heart. He had many sons whom he loved and he was kind to all creatures. These well-behaved young children of the Vaisya were accustomed to give the remains of their food to a crow that lived in the neighbourhood, so that he fared well on curds and milk and sugared milk with rice and honey and butter. Thus fed, he grew arrogant and came to look down upon all birds that were equal to him and even upon those that were his superiors.

Now it chanced that certain swans of cheerful heart and great speed came to that side of the ocean. The Vaisya boys beholding them, urged on the crow. "O ranger of the skies," they cried, "thou art superior to all winged creatures!" Hearing these ignorant words the crow, swollen with conceit and folly, believed them. Proud of the refuse upon which he fed, he alighted in the midst of those kingly birds of tireless wing and challenged their leader to compete in flight. The assembled swans began to laugh and one replied, "We are swans, having our abode on the holy lake Manasa in the eternal snows. We traverse the whole earth and none can out-distance us. Being as thou art, only a crow, how canst thou, O fool, challenge a swan? Tell us, O crow, how shalt thou fly with us?"

The boastful crow, repeatedly finding fault with the words of the swan, at last gave this answer: "I shall without doubt fly, displaying a hundred and one different motions,—rising up and swooping down and whirling around and coursing straight and proceeding gently and performing diverse courses up and down in a slanting direction. I shall presently rise into the sky. Point out duly, ye swans, by which of these motions I shall course with you through supportless space." "O thou of red eyes," answered the swan, "fly thou in any kind of manner

that thou likest. I shall, however, fly according to that one motion known to all birds, for I do not, O crow, know any other."

Then those two, the swan and the crow, rose into the sky, challenging each other. They began to soar and alight repeatedly, coming down and rising up from tree-tops and the surface of the earth till the crows were filled with great joy and began to caw loudly. The swans also laughed in mockery, uttering many remarks disagreeable to the crows. The swan, however, with that one kind of slow movement with which he was familiar, began to traverse the skies and for a moment seemed to yield to the crow. "The swan is falling behind!" screamed the crows. At this, the soaring swan flew westward with great velocity towards the ocean. Then fear entered the heart of the crow. He became almost senseless when he saw no island or trees whereon to perch when he grew tired. For what is a crow to the ocean? Its waters are as limitless as space.

The swan, having in a moment covered a great distance, looked back at the crow, and though able to leave him far behind, would not do so. Out of compassion he waited for him. Completely exhausted by his flight, the crow struggled to come up to the swan, who desirous of rescuing him asked, "Why dost thou repeatedly touch the water with thy wings and beak? What is the name of this new kind of flight that thou art practising?" Sinking with fatigue the crow made answer: "We are only crows. We wander hither and thither crying *caw, caw!* O swan, I see no limit to this watery expanse. Without thy aid I am surely lost,—save me!"

Seeing him at the point of death the swan spoke with pitiful heart: "Thou that wouldst fly in a hundred different courses, thou that art superior to me,—alas, why then art thou tired and fallen on the waters?" With his *caw, caw!* ever growing

feebler, drenched by the waves, repulsive to look at and trembling with fear, the weeping crow replied: "Proud of the leavings on which I fed, I regarded myself as thy equal and looked down upon all other birds. I now, however, place my life-breath in thy hands. Take me, O swan, to the shores of some island and I will cast off all pride and arrogance. Never again will I scorn another." Without a word, the swan took the crow upon his snowy back and quickly carried him to that island from which they had flown. Placing him on dry land he comforted him and then, fleet as the mind, soared into those lofty regions which were his home. But the crow, conquered by the swan, henceforth lived near the earth, a life of humility and peace.

PRAYER OF THE CHILD-SAINT DHRUVA

Translated from the Sanskrit of the Vishnu-Purana

O God, I am only a little boy, how can I sing Thy glory, Whom even the great sages, learned in the eternal Vedas, have not been able to know fully? My heart is filled with devotion to Thee, O Sovereign Lord! Do Thou grant me such understanding that I may be able to lay my humble praise and adoration at Thy Feet.

Thou abidest in all, Thou art all. Thou assumest all forms. All are from Thee. Thou art the Soul of all. Glory unto Thee, Lord of all beings.

As Thou art the Soul of all, the Lord of all, the Origin of all, what can I say unto Thee Who knowest already the innermost thoughts of my mind, since Thou abidest in the heart of every living being?

Thou knowest all creatures and their desires; Thou, Who art the Soul of their soul, the Lord of creation.

O Supreme Ruler of the universe, by Thy Grace has my prayer been heard of Thee. Fully hast Thou blessed me, since Thou hast revealed Thyself unto me. All Glory be unto Thee, Eternal Lord of all.

SONGS OF NATURE

By Swami Paramananda

(Reprinted from "Soul's Secret Door")

Coming of the Morn

How lovely and fragrant is the coming of the morn!
How tenderly it wakens the Lord of day to His dawn!
How sweetly it sings its heralding!
How quietly it opens the mansion of its King!
How gently it rouses the flowers from their night's repose!
My soul delights at the coming of the morn;
My heart sings at the approach of dawn.

Awake Brother

The tree-tops are glistening with beaming smile as they are lightly touched by rays of the rising sun.
They rose early to bathe in the pool of sweet dew-drops,
And awaited eagerly to pay homage to their Lord.
Now they are greeting all the early risers with refreshed spirit of joy.
O awake, brother! Linger thou no more!
Come and see this newness and freshness of love, life and joy!

Happy Chorus

A choir of sweet voices awoke me from my dreaming.
It was the hymn of praise of the birds
To Sun, the Lord of Light.
They sang their heart's thanksgiving
For their night's rest and safe-keeping.

SOUL'S SECRET DOOR

Review by K. F. Sherwood

When we heard that the Nobel prize had been awarded to Rabindranath Tagore, a native of that far away land, India, the Western world awoke to a new idea. The poems were widely read and appreciated and when later "The Songs of Kabir" came to our notice we opened our eyes and wondered. Now we have a new volume of exquisite verse from the hand also of a Hindu, one in our very midst,—Swami Paramananda, the head of The Vedanta Centre, which he established in Boston in 1908 for the spread of Vedic ideals and which has grown to proportions undreamed of at that time. The poetic tendency of the Swami's lectures and writings has been frequently remarked upon, but this outpouring of deep devotional verse is something which has come within the last six months. The present volume—"Soul's Secret Door"—just published, containing seventy-two poems worthy to be ranked with the best of its predecessors, was completed within the short interval of ten weeks.

When one reads these poems the direct appeal to one's own deeper nature and the uplift that comes with the reading are a proof of the inspirational quality of the verses themselves. Following the modern form—the *vers libre*—discarding the obligation to rhyme considered necessary in previous periods, it links the present with the distant past when great thought in devotional lines gave us epics and lyrics which time has never dimmed.

To speak of special numbers in the present volume is difficult. Each one sounds a peculiar note and the variety of the subjects is almost equal to the number of poems, while through them all is the undercurrent of deep understanding which unites them. When we read "Wouldst Thou dwell in this house of mine, O Thou King of the great universe?" how our hearts

expand! And then how the words, "Brother, thy load is heavy and thou art weary," and all that follows puts us in touch with our fellow-beings and the suffering of the world, while in "Soul's Physician" when we read, "My life's wounds are healed at Thy touch" we feel a peculiarly human sympathy. How gently we are rebuked when told "Do not touch the altar flowers with unwashed hands," a rebuke to our lack of reverence, but given only with the remedy "Bathe thyself in the water of life, The earth water cannot cleanse thy stain."

In that exhortation to the ego to depart, "Come thou no more into this house of mine, Nor do thou bring thy companions" there is no uncertain language, while in "the Cave of My Heart" and in "My Lowly Cottage," The Wondrous Lover who is to take its place is offered a retreat and a dwelling. In contrast to these, a differentiation rather, we have the Nature Songs, putting us in touch with the beauty around us, the trees, the flowers, day-time and night. What more exquisite than the words "How lovely and fragrant is the coming of the morn!" and in the "Spirit of Rose": "Thy sweet perfume hath spoken to my soul its language of love." In the "Welcoming Host" we feel the true spirit of the mighty tree: "Motionless tree, speaking its welcome with a living tongue to the tired birds at nightfall, offering them shelter." One of the most beautiful in the collection is "Thy Holy Lamp." It is a complete picture of the life of a spiritual teacher and one can see him standing patiently waiting to have his teaching recognized. How one pities him when he says: "My heart grew anxious and I called aloud." Knowing the value of the holy lamp which he holds, again he says: "O unhappy fate that leads the weary travellers from light to dark." Not a word too much; no verbiage; each poem is complete in its idea and form and expression, a second reading giving one a deeper sense of its meaning than the first.

The most lofty heights are reached perhaps in the "Dedication" and "Inspiration". In the former we have the spirit of consecration of the author when he says, "To Thee Whose holy hand kindled my heart with this fire of love, I consecrate my soul's outpouring," and in the latter, "The Hymn of Adoration" is voiced complete comprehension of what inspiration is: "Thou art the enchantment of song, Rhapsody of rhyme, Intoxication of ecstasy!"

In all there is that spirit of universality, neither East nor West, neither Hindu nor Christian, neither "Jew nor Greek", but an outpouring of that which underlies them all and which all are seeking. So we have a volume of seventy-two poems rich in ideas, clothed in perfect language and uplifting to the soul. Surely such poems come from no other source than that whence comes all true inspiration. The world of letters has had an addition that is really valuable, which is not only a gem of literature, but contains a message for many hearts.

RELIEF WORK IN BENGAL

Inspiring reports of the relief work of the Ramakrishna Mission have reached us. A letter from one of the workers gives a vivid picture of its activities during a recent flood in Eastern Bengal: "The distress of flooded areas cannot be described; homeless, helpless, moneyless, foodless are the villagers! They have lost their everything. Many of them are suffering now with fever and other maladies so you can imagine their distress. The Ramakrishna Mission has opened six or seven relief centres. They are rebuilding the houses and supplying the inhabitants of the afflicted area with rice, clothes, money and all other necessaries." The Mission workers not infrequently swim through the flood to carry aid to those who are cut off by the waters. According to a recent traveller from India, in every disaster they are the first to come and the last to go. Any contributions sent to the Vedanta Centre of Boston will be thankfully received.

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The Message of the East



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THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

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

"Light shall come again from the East"
Tyndall.

Published monthly except in August and September

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CHRISTMAS REFLECTION

At this holy season as I reflect on the import and significance of the Christmas feast, my mind pictures the Christ of the East, the incarnate spirit of love and wisdom radiating divine majesty in human flesh, a messenger of unfailing light shedding its beneficence upon all, withholding its blessing from none. It is this universal spirit of Divinity who loves without hate. Can we not for a moment forget our differences of belief and creed and other small affairs of human life and think of that One who loves without hate? Can we not by reflecting on the great examples of divine compassion forgive our transgressors? Before we are swept by the outer feasting of Christmas, let us bring to the holy Christ-child our first offering of a pure, loving and gladdened heart.—*Paramananda.*

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Sacrifice to this or sacrifice to that god, each god is but His manifestation, for He is all gods.

Lord of the Universe, glory to Thee! Thou art the Self of all, Thou art the maker of all, the enjoyer of all; Thou art all life, and the lord of all pleasure and joy. Glory to Thee, the tranquil, the deeply hidden, the incomprehensible, the immeasurable, without beginning and without end.—*Upanishads*

O Truth who art Eternity! And Love who art Truth! And Eternity who art Love! Thou art my God, to Thee do I sigh night and day. When I first knew Thee, Thou liftedst me up, that I might see there was somewhat for me to see, and that I was not yet such as to see. And Thou streaming forth Thy beams of light upon me most strongly, didst beat back the weakness of my sight, and I trembled with love and awe.—*St. Augustine.*

God is a kind Father. He sets us all in the places where He wishes us to be employed; and that employment is truly "our Father's business." He chooses work for every creature which will be delightful to them, if they do it simply and humbly. He gives us always strength enough, and sense enough, for what He wants us to do; if we either tire ourselves or puzzle ourselves, it is our own fault. And we may always be sure, whatever we are doing, that we cannot be pleasing Him, if we are not happy ourselves.—*Ruskin.*

To whatever worlds He carries our souls when they shall pass out of these imprisoning bodies, in those worlds these souls of ours shall find themselves part of the same great Temple; for it belongs not to this earth alone. There can be no end of the universe where God is, to which that growing Temple does not reach,—the Temple of a creation to be

wrought at last into a perfect utterance of God by a perfect obedience to God.—*Phillips Brooks.*

In whatever way men worship Me, in the same way I fulfill their desires. In every way men follow My path.

Fill thy mind with Me, be thou My devotee, worship Me and bow down to Me; thus, steadfastly uniting thy heart with Me alone and regarding Me as thy Supreme Goal, thou shalt come unto Me.

I am the Origin of all, everything evolves from Me. Knowing this, the wise worship Me with loving ecstasy.

With their heart fixed on Me, with their life absorbed in Me, mutually enlightening one another, and perpetually singing My glory, they are contented and rejoiced.

Out of pure compassion for them, I, dwelling in their hearts, destroy the darkness born of ignorance, by the effulgent light of wisdom.—*Bhagavad-Gita.*

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.—*Jesus the Christ.*

To love and serve all men is to delight in God.—*Mencius.*

I am a man, and nothing that concerns human beings is indifferent to me.—*Terence.*

The universe is but one great city, full of beloved ones, divine and human, by nature endeared to each other.—*Epictetus.*

CHRIST OF THE EAST

By Swami Paramananda

As we stand on the watch-tower of life and observe the up-grade and down-grade of human destiny, we are at once struck forcibly what an impelling power religion holds over human life and what influence it exerts on civilization. On one hand nothing is more potent than religion to unite human lives, and on the other hand nothing has greater power to divide the human family into separate groups. What is the cause of this dual aspect of religion? Religion itself, in its wide sense, is not dual. Its aim and objective are always the same, but our acceptance and application of what we call our particular religion creates endless diversity. It is due to this multiplicity of non-essentials that we are separated into so many distinct groups. It will not be necessary for me to seek far to illustrate this, for here in Christendom there are ample examples to be found through its varied expression of Christian denominations. Do they all follow the path of Christ? They all claim to do so. Yet keen observation and scrutiny will show us that they have little connection with one another except in name.

Ritual and dogma do not make religion, though religion sometimes finds these useful in its practical application. And yet what grip dogma has upon most religious creeds. Perhaps it is due to this that we find greater division than unity even in the same religion. When one wants to learn of Christ one's natural inclination is to go to the institution which bears His name. But how difficult it is! Some represent Christ as a militant aggressor, some as a social reformer, some as an intolerant leader, and still others, according to their special prejudice. There arises even a greater difficulty when we try to find a point of contact between the personality of Jesus of Nazareth and those who claim to represent Him. So if we are earnestly seeking to solve this problem, we have no small difficulties to overcome.

Let me draw before you a picture of the Christ as He is conceived in the soul of the East. The mind of the Easterns conceive Him as a messenger of light. They clothe Him with robe of gentleness, bearing majestic by divine right; they picture Him as the incarnate Spirit of love and divine loveliness,—lowly of heart, mighty of Spirit, Brother, Friend and Saviour of man! You may say these very attributes are also applied by the Christians. What is the difference? There is one very great and vital difference. Orthodox Christianity exalts Christ to the exclusion of all other divine manifestations, while the Eastern soul receives Him as the cosmic Light, blending its harmony with both past and present. Whichever concept we hold will have a marked influence upon our life and destiny. For the one invariably works for the destruction of what is not its own and the other for the preservation and assimilation of what may not seem at first sight to be its own. The one holds to the dogmatic Christ, the creed-bound Christ of organization and institution; the other looks to that Christ Who is the Soul of Divinity, Who cannot be partitioned off any more than we can partition off the infinite sky. If the East feels any rebellion, it is against dogmatic Christianity.

If you were to ask me, are you a Christian? I should say no. If you were to ask me, are you a Buddhist? I should again say no, and yet I can say sincerely from my heart that I am a devout follower of both these ideals, and to me there is no difference between them. All great faiths are the expression of the one great cosmic Spirit coming down to man to show him his relationship with the Divine. The difficulty comes when we fail to bring these ideals into our life, then we can see nothing but differences. We even destroy each other in the name of God. Is this religion? Is it the theme of any religion that man should strike man, should destroy man, should create enemies and disturb the balance of the universe?

There was a time when people believed that if the whole world were converted to one religion, it would be saved. There are still those who believe that the salvation of the world depends on its being converted to Christianity. But the last war has proved it to be otherwise. Was it fought by the Christians in their religious zeal against the non-Christians? No, it was Christian brothers, for the most part, cutting each other's throats, and Christian minds scheming by diabolical means to annihilate one another. And what does it mean? That it is not the sectarian acceptance of any faith, no matter how lofty, that is going to bring saving grace to the world. It would be wonderful if all people could be converted to the lofty and beautiful teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of the Orient, the lowly, prayerful, devoted, yearning Christ Who seeks divine grace above all other things, Who shows man that his first and foremost duty is to find God, to live for God, and to make God a living presence in his life.

This is not to give you a picture of another Christ. It is not to prove to you that Christ went to India for a period of time and studied there. God forbid! These things are of very little importance. Wisdom is never confined to any corner of the world, although it is true that the Orient has become symbolic of religion. Great Saviours and Seers have risen from the East. It is natural that they should because the Eastern heart yearns primarily for spirituality.

In India if a man comes with a message hundreds of people will eagerly listen to him. If however he teaches love and exhibits hatred in his actions, if he preaches brotherhood and condemns with bitterness those who do not agree with him, at once they will say, if your religion is true why do you not practise it? Prove your faith by your life and we will die for it. It is here the Eastern heart beats. It is here that we find the great difference between life and creed. A man who has

touched the heart of God has touched the universal heart. He is no longer capable of being petty, small and fanatical, of being jealous or hateful. In India there is a parable that if base metal is brought in contact with the philosopher's stone, it is transformed into gold and is no longer base. Even a sword brought in contact with that stone is at once transformed so that it can no more harm any one. The same is true of us.

Suppose we believe that we have a higher ideal than another? Are we going to conquer him by inferior means, by fighting him? Can we force him to change his ideal? The only way we can influence him is by our superior quality. In this way true religion becomes the most dominant factor in evolution. It does not go with gun and sword to destroy. By the means of destruction we never can do any good. If we have something, let us prove it by our life. What does Christ teach? He teaches love—love which overcomes hatred, not the love that sometimes loves and again hates, but the love which overrules all afflictions, all dualities and becomes the ideal. Is this ideal merely for those who profess Christianity? No, it is a world ideal. There are people in India who have never come in contact with the Christian teaching, but who exemplify it in their lives. God's spirit is cosmic, universal. It is the common heritage of humanity. One becomes a good Christian not by clinging to an especial creed, but by living. Living the life is the basis of all religions.

Can man ever say that his God is infinite and then limit Him? Could it please his Deity for him to turn away from any one, to shun any one, to condemn any one? Would there be room in his heart after that for Divine love? Would his prayers be acceptable to God? How often Christ told His disciples to go and make peace with their brethren before placing their gifts on the altar. Though we may have the biggest church conceivable, though our altar may be glittering with

gold and diamonds, our offering will not be acceptable to God if we have in our hearts aught against any one.

There was a little cartoon which appeared some years ago in Florence, Italy. The import of it was that Christ came into the world to-day and naturally went to His own churches, churches which bore His name, which claimed to be founded upon His teaching. He entered them but the people were so engaged with ostentation that they had no time for the lowly Christ; he was unable to draw their attention because they were too busy with what they called Christianity and its propagation. Then He went into the streets but the people were too occupied with their own affairs to have time for Christ. Even the poor people were so absorbed in their poverty that they were not looking for religion. So the lowly Christ went weeping and walking through the wilderness.

Can we say Christianity is a failure? Some one once remarked that it had not yet been tried. It is not that we should find fault with any religion. We can never realize the ideals of any faith in its externals. The heart of every religion is vibrant with life, but we have to reach that heart; then do we find that it is always the self-same Truth flowing through different channels. India has never yet rejected a Divine Incarnation and the reason is this: in the Bhagavad-Gita, one of her most holy and ancient Scriptures, the Lord declares: "Whenever and wherever virtue declines and vice prevails then I embody Myself. For the protection of the good and for the destruction of the evil and for the re-establishment of religion, I am born from age to age." The Lord's promise is not confined to India, or to any particular place or locality. All are His children. This God of the Vedic conception is universal and infinite. He has only one heart and in that heart there is love for all.

This Vedic ideal of God saturates the whole of India's prac-

tical life. As soon as we begin to live our ideal a strange transformation takes place: our heart grows quieter and more understanding. We become incapable of doing anything ignoble. The example of the bee is given in India. The bee makes a great noise until he has found the heart of the flower. Once he has tasted the honey, he is quiet. The same way it is with all the intolerance and sectarian wars that are going on in the world,—it is because man has not touched the heart of religion. We never find the great spiritual teachers coming with aggressive spirit to convert the world. They live gently; their appeal is very lowly and tender. But how often zealous followers distort their message of love and gentleness. We always make a mockery of our ideal unless we live it.

Non-resistance of evil, one of the vital themes of Christ's teachings, can only be proved by our life. It is beautifully exemplified in the story of the Indian religious mendicant who was set upon and beaten by an ignorant man. He fell to the ground unconscious and lay there till his brothers from the monastery came and picked him up. They took him home and nursed him and as he was returning to consciousness one of them asked: "My brother, who is caring for you?" and he replied: "Verily, the same one who beat me." It was that feeling of oneness, that refusal to recognize any but the One which animated him. Indian conception does not admit two forces, one God and the other devil. There is only one infinite, all-abiding Spirit Who dwells within the hearts of all. When we worship Him, love Him, and draw close to Him, then do we find the fulfillment of life and its great realization dawns within us. When the sun shines, the darkness vanishes; when the light of Spirit dawns within us, the bondage of materiality breaks.

The life of the world can be enriched by the life of the individual. We either bring a discordant note or we bring a

note of harmony into this great universe by our life. We do not have to become a preacher to spread the great Gospel of Truth, but we have to live, and as we live we create an atmosphere. A person feels exalted or he feels depressed on coming near us. Unconsciously we can hurt others and also unconsciously we can do them good. That is the Christ example. Let a man live, let his light shine so that his Father in Heaven may be glorified through him. We should not act with any other motive. We should not pray to God merely because we are in despair. That is not the highest flight of religion. When we really feel hungry for it, thirsty for it, when we feel suffocated by materiality, then we naturally want to breathe in the open, and that is the aspiration of the soul. We become spiritual because we are hungry for spiritual things. As a man thinks so is he. If we hunger for the spiritual, it makes no difference where we live, we shall find the radiance,—the light that shines from Christ and from Buddha and from all the other Saviours.

It is only through superior living that we make converts. Not by argument or logic or any other material power do we conquer human hearts, but always through gentleness. Our love, our spirituality radiates. That is my conception of Christ. He brings inspiration because He comes from God. He lives in God. He makes no compromise. He lives the life. That is His appeal. It not only brings benediction upon a few but upon all, because what is good for the individual is good for the whole, and we cannot progress unless we are equally concerned in the welfare of our fellow-beings. There is no selfish happiness. That is the supreme example in the lives of all great teachers. Christ brings the message of love and it must be realized through love. If we are able to love so much that we recognize no hatred at all in our hearts, then we shall indeed feel the Christ heart within us, we shall truly be-

come a glowing example of that ideal. Even without word of mouth we shall be able to fulfill our mission. What have we to give to the world with words unless our thoughts are the product of spiritual realization? As we are dragged into the whirl of outer life and scatter our forces we become more and more impoverished spiritually. That is the great lack of to-day. We have all the things that are outer, but we need the inner.

We should not change our faith; we do not need to change it because each faith is part of the one great faith. Every church, every creed, every religion, has at its heart the glowing light of spiritual reality. The Indian Banyan tree is a very wonderful example of the spiritual life. It keeps on spreading and spreading till it becomes a mighty forest. The same way it is in the cosmic universe. There is only one God, one religion, but it has many aspects. Should we destroy any one of these because we are incapable of understanding it? In realizing the heart of religion, the spirit of it, we give a deathblow to all fanaticism and pettiness.

We should never lose faith either in Divinity or in humanity. Faith is a precious light and we should never be without it. It helps us to walk safely through the darkest hour of life. When we place our faith in Him Who is the Source of All; when our mind and heart are filled with the consciousness that we are children of the One, should we not be capable of doing greater good to our own kinsmen? For when we realize our divine heritage, our common Parent, we are invariably related to each other as we are related to Him, and this becomes the practical basis for true and ideal brotherhood.

We are by nature inclined to love mankind. Take away love and benevolence, and you take away all the joy of life. Men are born for the sake of men, that they may mutually benefit one another.—*Cicero.*

THE DIVINE PROMISE

From the Buddhist Psalms of Shinran Shonin

(Japanese Apostle of Buddhism. 12th Century.)

Only to Him who is above all things is known the glory of the Land of Peace. Wide as the sky and boundless is it spread forth.

Whoso believeth in the power of the Divine Promise shall verily be at one with the holy Essence, even as the turbid stream is clear and pure within the ocean depth when they have flowed together.

The heavenly spirits and those souls freed from illusion, they who are born in the land of purity from the wisdom deep as the ocean of the Divine Promise, differ not the one from the other in their powers. Pure are they as the air is pure.

He whose heart is great and who shall attain unto the true enlightenment is he also that desireth the salvation of all living, and verily the true faith given of that Blessed One is salvation.

The single heart perceiveth the true faith, and so doing is strong and clear as the diamond, and this strength is the wisdom of the supreme that strengtheneth us.

By the merit of His Infinite Light, when we attain unto that faith divine and omnipotent, the ice of illusion shall melt into the water of perfect wisdom.

No other way is there of attaining unto the Perfect Enlightenment save only by birth into the Land of Gladness, and therefore have all the Enlightened Ones exhorted men that they should receive the Doctrine of the Kingdom Purity.

There is no way unto the Kingdom of Gladness save only by attaining unto the true faith through that Holy Name, the very Jewel of Wonder.

When the new birth through the clearness of the Divine Promise is attained in the Eternal Kingdom, it is not like unto

the birth of this world; then is there no inferiority even in those that in this world were sinners, for they have entered into Paradise.

Unto us hath our Father given those two spiritual gifts. Of these the first is the Virtue whereby we attain unto His Kingdom, and the second is the Virtue whereby having so attained we return into this world for the Salvation of men.

The One true freedom is the Highest, and the Absolute is perfect freedom. And when we attain unto that freedom, for us shall desire and doubt vanish away.

When every man is beloved of us, even as the son of our own body, there is the Universal Mind made perfect in us.

UNVEIL THY SOUL

By C. Christians

In the silence of prayer an inner voice spoke: My child, give up all selfish desires. Look not for thy personal benefit. Think only of the Lord and His work. Do not perform thy duties to gain the praise and good will of others; but perform them for the sake of Him. Make thy thought His thought; thy word His word; thy deed His deed. Do thou the Will of the Lord at all times, for He abideth within all and speaketh through all. Thou wilt neither err nor lose power through surrender to Him, but thou wilt find glory in Him. Envy not those who have blessings which thou sharest not in. It is His Will thou shouldst not have them now.

Trust in Him, go to Him, confide in Him thy heart's yearning for His contact. Do not despair when thy prayers are as dead. Have faith! Pure and earnest supplications are never lost nor does the Lord fail to hear. Through gentle love and holy obedience unveil thy soul that the Blessed Lord may reveal Himself in Thee.

CHILD CHRIST AND CHILD KRISHNA

By Sister Daya

There are two main ways by which the heart of man has ever approached the Divine. One way is that of supplication, soul-hunger, need. We draw near to holy feet in order to receive their blessing, to gather strength and peace from their contact, to find an abiding place and a safe refuge. In supreme worship our heart goes out to That which can so infinitely bestow and our life seems a small thing to give in return. Always on this Path we are the yearning, helpless children, receiving aid and blessing from the Father-Mother God.

The other way is just the reverse. God becomes to us the essence of all that is tender, defenceless and appealing. The sweetness of babyhood, the fragrance of young flowers, the helplessness of every tiny thing is wrapped up for us in the form of some infant Saviour. Our one thought is to cherish and to protect, to give our very life-blood if necessary, in order to make the way smooth for the little feet, to keep all wounds from the trusting heart; to enfold the precious life with our last vestige, if need be, of love and strength, that it may never be bruised by our thoughts or stabbed by our actions. Though we may call it the baby Christ or the baby Krishna, deep down in our souls we know that it is the seed of all beauty, of all love, and of all joy, sowed by God in the hearts of men.

Of these two paths the most selfless and the most joyous is the last. We do not come because of need, we are drawn by pure love. Life becomes a marvellous play in which we sport blissfully with the Divine Child and all unconsciously are lifted up to His Divinity. The mother-love in all hearts, in the hearts of men and women alike, is here given its ultimate expression. The human relation of parent and child is but a faint reflection of this supreme relationship. Nothing is omitted; even the mischief that makes the human child ador-

able is enacted in this holy play and our hearts are ensnared by the divine naughtiness of the little Lord. He delights in bewildering His devotees by sudden flashes of infinite power and then, before the mind has grasped the wonder, to reassume His smiling, dimpled aspect. He is a teaze and a darling and a play-fellow, bewitchingly beautiful, yielding to all, yet forever elusive. The hearts that would follow Him must be girded with delicious mirth and utter self-forgetfulness.

There is hardly a religion in the world that has not its sacred play-room. Peeping from behind the stately figures of the World-Teachers are the smiling faces of Their baby counterparts,—the wistful Christ-child, the grave little Buddha, lovely and laughing Gopalam or Krishna. Even from ancient Egypt comes the picture of the little Horus looking up into the eyes of Mother Isis,—"Queen of Heaven", "Star of the Sea", "Immaculate Virgin".

But among them all, baby Krishna and baby Christ stand out supreme. In India the pranks which Gopalam played thousands of years ago in the forests of Vrindavana, still enthrall the hearts of His people. They recount with glee how He stole the milk and curds from the neighbouring villagers (out of pure mischief, for His foster-father was king of the shepherds) and fed them to His friends, the monkeys and the birds. When His mother sought to tie the little hands in punishment, she could not find a cord long enough to go around the small wrists though she pieced the lengths together endlessly. Finally Gopalam out of pity for her efforts, removed the spell and then the first short cord easily served the purpose. When He was very tiny, her darling was into everything. Poor mother Yashoda could not find time to do her work, make her butter and cheese and attend to her household duties. So she tethered that bad little Krishna by a long rope securely fastened to an old cart-wheel, and went about her affairs with a peace-

ful heart, just as mothers do to-day. But that baby, so the people hold, was God, and He dragged the cart-wheel after Him as if it were a pebble. Finally it caught between two great trees. One little gentle pull and down they came crashing to the ground, at the same time releasing two souls who had been imprisoned there thousands of years by a magical spell. Hearing the noise, mother Yashoda came on the run, only to find her baby unhurt and smiling innocently just as though He had done nothing.

These tales are dear to the Hindu heart and it has treasured them through the ages. In India, tiny charms are sold of baby Krishna, round and dimpled, sucking His big toe, even as we of the West depict our Christ babe in its mother's arms. Krishna with flute in hand and peacock feathers on His head, romping all the days through with His comrades, the little shepherds and shepherdesses, is still a living concept to India's millions. The call of His flute would draw His playmates from any distance, for it was the call of His love, the call of the Divine to the human. He was their King and they would each take the place He assigned them. They had mad games of hide and seek when they would search for Him distractedly, the flute mocking them from a hundred places at once. All nature adored Him, so the legend goes. "Even the grazing animals had a special love for the Lord, and lowed happily whenever He caressed them or came near, gathering about Him in a ring to listen whenever, standing with feet crossed beneath the beautiful *Kodumbha* tree, He played upon his flute. Some say, indeed, that at such moments the lotus-buds lying on the Jumna waters opened and the river itself bent out of its straight course."

Over the child-hood life of Jesus hangs a veil of silence. Yet there are legends of Him, sprung from what far source who can say. Just as Yashoda looking into the mouth of the

infant Krishna, beheld the universe, so did Mary perceive by many wonders that her little Son was infinite in His being. Like Sri Krishna He was greatly beloved by His simple neighbours and always had many play-fellows of His own age. He too, was sometimes naughty and full of mischief, but His mischief ever proved a blessing..

"On a certain day also, when the Lord Jesus was playing with the boys and running about, he passed by a dyer's shop whose name was Salem. And there were in his shop many pieces of cloth belonging to the people of that city, which they designed to dye of several colours. Then the Lord Jesus going into the dyer's shop took all the cloths and threw them into the furnace. When Salem came home and found all the cloths spoiled he began to make a great noise and chide the Lord Jesus, saying, 'What hast thou done to me, O thou son of Mary? Thou hast injured both me and my neighbours, they all desired their cloths of a proper colour, but thou hast come and spoiled them all.' The Lord Jesus replied, 'I will change the colour of every cloth to what colour thou desirest.' And then he presently began to take the cloths out of the furnace, and they were all dyed of those same colours which the dyer desired." For this reason, even unto this day, such shops in Persia are called "Christ Shops."

The supremacy of Jesus was never questioned by his comrades. "In the month Adar, Jesus gathered together the boys, and ranked them as though he had been a king. For they spread their garments on the ground for Him to sit on; and having made a crown of flowers, put it upon His head, and stood on His right and left as the guards of a king; and if any one happened to pass by, they took him by force and said, Come hither and worship the king that you may have a prosperous journey."

Once the boys hid from Him and Jesus hunting for them

asked some women where they were. They replied they knew not. "Who are those ye see in the furnace?" asked Jesus who knew they were there. And they answered, "Kids of three years old." Then Jesus cried out aloud and said, "Come out hither, O ye kids, to your Shepherd!" And presently the boys came forth like kids and leaped about Him. The women trembling besought Him to restore the boys to their former state. Then Jesus said, "Come hither, O boys, that we may go and play," and immediately in the presence of these women, the kids were changed and returned into the shape of boys.

This is strangely reminiscent of an incident in the life of Sri Krishna. All His comrades and their cattle were thrown into an enchanted sleep and locked in a cave. Not being able to find them, the Lord created duplicates of them from His own being, so that the parents never realized that it was not their own who returned to them that night. They even loved them with a more intense love than they had ever felt for them before. After a year, the spell was lifted and the children restored without any one being the wiser.

Again and again both Christ and Krishna performed miracles of healing. Some of the play-mates of Krishna were stung by a serpent and He "casting upon them an eye of divine mercy, they immediately arose". Once Christ healed James, the son of Joseph, from the bite of a viper, by blowing on the wound and at another time He caused a snake to come and draw forth its poison from a boy, after which the snake burst asunder and the boy recovered. Of Christ and Krishna also it is told that they caused death by their displeasure. But to the Lord where is the difference between life and death. They are equally part of His play and His blessing flows through both alike. Thus the soul of a great serpent-demon which Krishna slew, is said to have attained the regions of the Blest, "for the touch of the Lord ever brought salvation

even though to the body He might mete out death".

To the Hindus every legend of Krishna is precious, but to the Christian peoples these tales of the boyhood of Christ are little known and less believed since they are not included in the authorized Gospels. One picture contains it all for them: the Christ baby in the manger, the arms of Mary around Him, the cattle looking down on Him, light all about Him and the Star over His head. This to the West has become the symbol of nascent spiritual life, of all that is unresisting, pure and eternal. The truly devout behold the new-born Christ as ever blessing with His tiny hands, ever placing Himself at the mercy of mankind. In truth, there are not two Christs, the Child and the Saviour. There is only one,—the holy babe who lay in the manger and who hung upon the Cross. Human beings may change but the Divine Incarnations are changeless and carry with Them through the years the undying enchantment of youth.

Gopalam or Christ-Child, what matter the name! Once we take Him as our own, not in fancy but in fact; once we feel His living presence within us and without, all harshness, all heaviness, all weariness will fall away from us. As we eat with Him and play with Him and live with Him, never again will our arms be empty or our hearts sad. For He will fill them utterly and forever with His ineffable sweetness, and He will satisfy our life's greatest need,—the need to love, to worship and to give.

HIDDEN CHRIST

By Jalaluddin Rumi

In each human spirit is a Christ concealed,
To be helped or hindered, to be hurt or healed;
If from any human soul you lift the veil
You will find a Christ there hidden without fail.

SELF-LOVE AND GOD-LOVE

By St. Francis de Sales

We forget how the saints tell us that we ought daily to begin anew our endeavours after perfection; if we did remember this we should not be so surprised at finding so much that is wretched and needs correction in ourselves. The work is never done; we must perpetually begin afresh, and always begin heartily afresh. What we have done so far is good, but what we are going to begin will be better; and when that is finished we will begin again better still, and so on, until we leave this world altogether, to begin another life, which will know no end, inasmuch as there can be nothing better. So we must not begin to weep because we find things going wrong with us, but we must rouse up fresh courage to go on anew, never stopping to look back; and where it is necessary to cut off superfluities, we must remember that "the word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow."

Self-love often dazzles us, and it is very difficult to see ourselves fairly. Therefore it is that the great apostle exclaims, "Not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth." Self-love may be mortified, but it never dies within us; from time to time, and on sundry occasions, it puts forth fresh shoots, which prove that though cut down, it is not rooted up. This is why we do not find the satisfaction that we ought to have in seeing others do well; we do not altogether rejoice in good works which are not to be found in ourselves, whereas we greatly admire all that is our own, and that because we love ourselves so exceedingly. But if we had a perfect charity, which causes us to be of one heart and soul with our neighbor, we should rejoice unfeignedly in whatever of his is good and perfect. Self is forever seeking self, self-

will and self-love; but if we were perfect in the love of God, we should prefer to obey, because in obedience there is more of God and less of self.

We must never be surprised to find self-love alive within ourselves; it is ever there. At times it sleeps like a crafty fox, but then suddenly it dashes out anew. We must keep a steady watch over it, and be always on the defensive, though gently and patiently. If sometimes self-love wounds us, and we are forced to unsay what we have said, to disown what it has made us do, we shall be partly cured.

A TRIBUTE

By Katherine F. Sherwood

(Written after reading the poems of Swami Paramananda.)

Whence comes this feeling in my heart—
my heart so long quiet and dead?
My whole body vibrates with emotion;
I feel uplifted from the dead level of cities
and books and thoughts.
It is the singing of a new bard—
Bard or bird, which is it?
Straight from heart to heart comes the song,
and oneness gives the thrill.

O Bird of Spring, sing on!
Tell me yet more from out the recess of thy
heart
Where lies that blissful store.
Sing from those fields
Where man has never been;
From tree-tops tall
Which eye has never seen;

Sing with that voice
More rare than earthly bird,
Sing yet a theme
That man has never heard,—
Music that thrills
And words beyond compare
Waking our hearts
To feel that God is there!
Sing on sweet Bird
Nor stay thy rapturous song.
Be free, and warble
All the daylight long
Songs of the dawn
Or evening's silent close;
Songs of the heart
To quiet all our woes.
Oh may we listen with attentive mind
And take such blessing which is hard to find!
Sing on, Sweet Bird!

REPORT

It is difficult to convey in the words of a report the living spirit of joyous hospitality which was vibrant in the home of the Vedanta Centre of Boston, on the evening of November 9th. Officially speaking, it was a reception, given for the purpose of introducing to friends and the friends of friends, Swami Paramananda's first volume of poems, "Soul's Secret Door", just out upon that day. But in reality it was far more than that, it was thanksgiving and rejoicing for the precious gift that had come to us in these poems of mystical exaltation, —come, so the Swami feels, not from him but from the one divine Source and given to him merely in trust for others.

This feeling of holy giving went into every detail of preparation. The rooms looked as though October herself had been invited in, for they were bright with autumn leaves and golden crysanthemums. These were arranged with special profusion at the end of the Chapel in front of the platform, climbing up in amber and ruby colored masses to a beautiful drooping fern set high on a concealed column, which formed, as it were, the crown of some strange tropical tree outlined against the flaming sunset tints of a silk Indian chuddar, used as a background.

Very many came; every space was filled. More than a few were utter strangers to the Centre, unfamiliar with the Swami and his work. Yet in spite of this, the quiet was profound when the Swami began to read. As he stood before the flower-garlanded book-shelf, someone remarked that it seemed like a door-way through which he had just stepped, and another suggested that it was the "Soul's Secret Door". One lovely poem after another he gave, the deep attention and appreciation of his listeners drawing them forth. At the end came a surprise: a real song of dawn with music as well as words by the Swami, who sang it without any accompaniment, quite spontaneously, the members of the household adding their voices in an intermittent refrain. This brought a dear and close friend of the Centre, Miss Katherine Sherwood, to her feet with some lovely verses written by her in tribute to the Swami after reading his poems. The repeated line,—"Sing on, sweet bird!" seemed a peculiarly fitting close to the Swami's song.

Sister Devamata then spoke a few words in deep appreciation of "Soul's Secret Door". The poems, she said, had seemed to her like flashes of light from behind grey clouds, carrying her through many long hours of pain. Rythm, she said, had always had great power over the minds of men from

the time of the ancient Hymalayan sages down to the present day. As the poems were read to her, the lyrical beauty of the lines seized upon her mind. Soon she found herself meditating in them, thinking in them, praying in them. They had the peculiar power of remaining with her after one reading, showing that they came from a Source beyond memory, from that realm in which one does not remember but in which one *knows*. They were Scriptural in quality. She added that the Swami's inspiration had not been intermittent, often as many as five or six poems coming in one day.

While refreshments were being served, the Swami was kept busy autographing copies of his book for many eager friends. Even those at a distance were represented, a wire having been received from eight or nine of the Swami's students in Cincinnati, ordering between them 109 copies of "Soul's Secret Door". This small group feels especially close to the Boston work, several of them having visited the Centre this past summer and heard the poems from the Swami's lips, before the book was published.

On the 13th of November the Swami spoke by invitation before the Brookline Teachers' Association, at the Brookline Public Library. His subject was "The Value of Relaxation and Concentration". A member of the Association writes: "Great interest was shown by the unusually large attendance, nearly the entire membership being represented and, what was not customary with them, staying till the end. The Swami's address was filled with inspiration and helpful suggestions. As one absorbed listener remarked, "What practical help he has given us! Where can we hear more from this speaker?" There were similar words of deep appreciation from all sides. At the request of the President, the Swami closed his address with a few selections from his poems.

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