"Truth Is One, Men Call It By Various Names." —RIG VEDA

VEDANTA QUARTERLY

Message of the East

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THE MIST OF PREJUDICE

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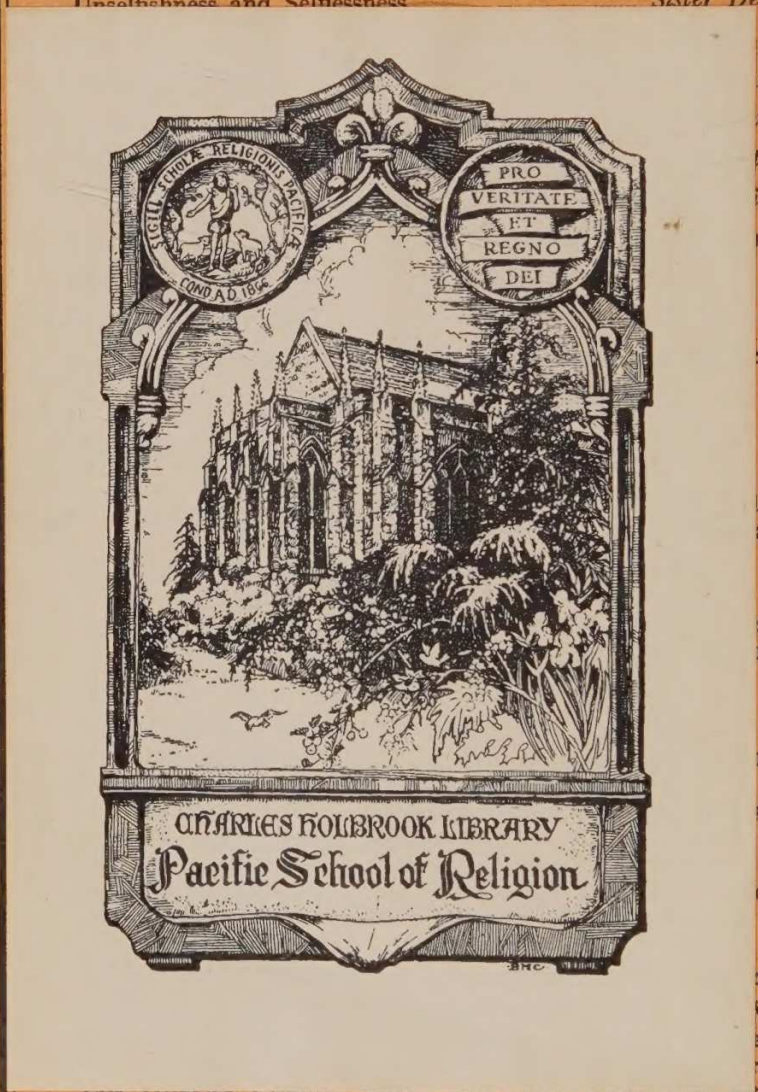
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Message of the East

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

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

VOL. XXVIII 1939 No. 1

HOLBROOK LIBRARY PACIFIC SCHOOL OF RELIGION

LORD OF ALL CREEDS

By Swami Paramananda

O LORD of all creeds,
Giver of safety and peace!
We come to Thee for guidance.
None have we but Thee
To give us Light!

In worlds of diverse thoughts
We wage war with ourselves
And with our brother-man—
Forgetting Thou has given
To each and all Thy wholeness.

Can man partition or divide
What Thou hast made whole
With Thine own being?
What lack hath he
Who hath Thee for his own?

Out of Thine infinite compassion
Thou hast given us
This universe unbounded
That we may live and serve
And thus attain our wholeness.

O give us pure desires!
From greed and lust unfetter Thou our minds.
Expand our hearts with love and thoughts of Thee
That we may move unhampered on our course
By petty thoughts of self.

Keep minds and hearts, O Lord,
So filled with love and light
That thoughts of selfish self
May never trespass this—
Thy holy shrine.

CURE FOR BIGOTRY

By Sri Ramakrishna

"As with one and the same substance namely gold, various ornaments of different names and forms are made, so one and the same God is worshipped in different countries and ages under different names and forms.

"Though He may be worshipped in diverse ways according to varying conceptions and modes—some call Him Father, some Mother, some Friend and others as Beloved, some again as the innermost Treasure of their heart, and others as their sweet little Child—yet it is one and the same God that is worshipped in all these variously conceived relations.

"There are several bathing *ghats* (steps leading to a bathing pool) in a large tank. Whosoever goes down directly through whichsoever of these *ghats* to take a bath or to fill his vessel, reaches the water, and it is useless to quarrel with one another by saying one *ghat* is better than another *ghat* leading to the same body of water. Similarly, there are many *ghats* that lead to the waters of the fountain of Eternal Bliss. Every religion in the world is such a *ghat*. Go directly with a sincere and earnest heart through any one of the *ghats* and

you will reach the water of Eternal Bliss. But say not that your religion is better than another.

"Many are the names of God and infinite the forms through which He may be approached. In whatsoever name and form you worship Him, through that name and form will you realize Him.

"As one can ascend to the top of a house by means of a ladder, a bamboo, a staircase or a rope, so also there are diverse ways and means of approaching God and every religion in the world shows one of these ways.

"God is one but His aspects are many. As the master of a house is father to one, brother to another, and husband to a third and is therefore called by different names by different individuals because of the manner of his relationship with them so God is worshipped in various ways and by different names according to the particular aspect in which he appears to his worshipper.

"Let a man be a Christian in the matter of mercy, a Moslem in the matter of strict observance of external forms and a Hindu in the matter of universal charity toward all living creatures.

"Every man should follow his own religion. A Christian should follow Christianity, a Mohammedan Mohammedanism and as for the Hindu, the ancient path of the Seers is his natural path.

"A truly religious man should think that all other religions are also paths leading to the Truth. We should always maintain an attitude of respect toward other religions.

"Dispute not as you rest firmly on your own faith and opinon. Allow others also equal freedom to stand by their own faith and opinion.

"By mere argument, you will never succeed in convincing another of his error.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Grow in gladness over others' welfare for as you do so, aversions and intolerance will pass away. —*Buddhism.*

He comes to ruin who says that others are not equal to himself. He who believes only in his own views becomes smaller. —*Confucianism.*

He who sees all beings in the Self and the Self in all beings, he never turns away from the Self. He who perceives all beings as the Self, for him how can there be delusion or grief, when he sees this oneness everywhere. —*Isa Upanishad.*

May all beings regard me with the eye of a friend! May I regard all beings with the eye of a friend! With the eye of a friend, may we regard one another! —*Hinduism.*

All ye men under the heaven! Regard heaven as your father, earth as your mother, and all things as your brothers and your sisters that you may enjoy the divine country—free from hate and sorrow. —*Taoism.*

All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for, this is the law and the prophets. —*Christianity.*

As thou deemest thyself, so deem others. Then shalt thou become a partner in heaven. —*Sikhism.*

Him I call a first class person who is tolerant with the intolerant, mild with the violent, and free from greed among the greedy. —*Buddhism.*

A religionist who is possessed of carefulness should wander about, giving no offence to any creature. Having mastered the Law, and having got rid of carelessness, he should treat all beings as he himself would be treated. —*Jainism.*

If thine enemy hunger, give him bread to eat. And if he be thirsty, give him water to drink. And the Lord shall reward thee. —*Christianity.*

Do thou forbear with kindly forbearance. —*Islam.*

THE MIST OF PREJUDICE

By Swami Paramananda

(This is one of the most recent addresses delivered at the Chapel of the Vedanta Centre, Boston.)

As I was reflecting on the theme of my sermon this morning, one very definite thought came to my mind: that prejudice is the greatest obstacle to progress; and later on when I was looking up some references on the subject, I was startled to find a writer named Bovee had made the same identical statement. Every sincere well-wisher of humanity has felt that prejudice is a terrible curse to humanity. It exerts a truly hypnotic influence upon individuals who fall under its sway. Nothing so completely clouds our vision as thoughts of bias. They act like blinding fog and mist. Prejudice not only obscures but distorts man's clear vision. How difficult it is to reason with a mind that is armed with prejudice. Sydney Smith wisely says, "Never try to reason prejudice out of a man. It was not reasoned into him therefore it cannot be reasoned out."

Great ideas and ideals are born in the souls of men; they evolve in the hearts of humanity. They belong not to the individual nor to the nation, nor to any particular faith nor to any form of religion. No one has a monopoly over Truth. It is the universal heritage of man and its beauty and blessing are always realized by whosoever has like qualities in his soul. Man may try to pretend greatness or imitate holiness but pretense never works; there is always something lacking. There are many who are desirious of leaving their mark on the pages of history but they make the mistake of wanting to shine as great men without taking the trouble to develop the characters that go with greatness. We must be the thing not merely talk about it. Our words have very little weight unless our actions bear them out. Superficially clever remarks born of the intellect may catch the ears of men for a moment

but they are not abiding because there is nothing real or true back of them. Again, I repeat, we have to be the thing we are trying to express if our statements are to contain any real force or livingness. Soul force is the only real force. When we lack soul force—the inner Light—all our ideals and ideas pitifully fail. The mind that is well lighted up from within is incapable of narrowness, fanaticism or bigotry. It is only when our inner life is confused that we cannot escape confusion in our outer life in spite of all our theologies, ideals and ethics.

Now as we return to our theme, let me read to you what a great thinker has to say on the subject: "Prejudice is a mist which in our journey through the world often dims the brightness and obscures the best of all the good and glorious objects that we meet on our way." People who are prejudiced never can be made to believe they are guilty of false judgments. They are so engulfed in their own notions and ideas that they think their conceptions are the only true ones. How truly it is said, "Prejudice which sees what it pleases cannot see what is plain." I am reminded in this instance of a missionary who came to India. He was so full of zeal for his cause that he spent every moment of his time trying to convert and save Hindus whom he regarded as lost souls. Now, India always gives a hearing to anyone who comes in the name of religion so people crowded around him and listened to his message but they did not relish the fact that he condemned every religion but his own. A thoughtful Hindu, a devout soul, nurtured with the idea that all things have their origin in the same Substance, brought the missionary a selection from the Bhagavad Gita, the great Indian classic which Sir Edwin Arnold has translated into metrical English calling it, "The Song Celestial." "Please read this," said the Hindu, "and tell me if there is anything wrong with it. Is

it not very much like the 'Sermon on the Mount?' " The passage to which he referred reads thus: "He who hates no creature and is friendly and compassionate to all, who is free from attachment and egotism, equal-minded in pleasure and pain, and forgiving, who is ever content and meditative, self-subjugated and possessed with firm conviction, with mind and intellect dedicated to Me, he who is thus devoted to Me is dear to Me." The missionary read and his face clouded. "Yes," he said, "there is some truth in this but the devil borrowed it, somehow, before Christ was born. He knew Christ was coming to give this beautiful teaching therefore he stole it and put it into that form."

It is extraordinary that our minds can become so steeped in prejudice and our eyes so blinded by its mist that our judgment is warped and our viewpoint beclouded. Let us read what a Christian divine has to say on the subject. "He who is possessed of a prejudice is possessed of a devil and one of the worst kind of devils for it shuts out truth and leads to ruinous error." I want to share such thoughts with you and later show you how beautifully Truth can rise and triumph over prejudice even though there are conditions in the world today which convince us there are many who are not awake to such ideas. People often kill and destroy through prejudice. Bishop Butler says, "Prejudice may be considered as a continual false medium of viewing things. Prejudiced persons never speak well or think well of those whom they dislike." But fortunately for the world Truth can never be destroyed. As a matter of fact, we tear down and weaken our own religion when we condemn the religion of another. Religion in its essence has no room for prejudice. "One whose heart has become fixed in divine communion through concentration, beholdeth himself in all beings and all beings in himself, seeing the same God everywhere. He, who, abid-

ing in unity, worships Me (the Lord) as dwelling in all beings, that devotee, howsoever living, liveth in Me," says the Bhagavad Gita. I hope this gives you the same picture which it brings to my mind. When a man has truly sought and found his Ideal whether it is through the Catholic faith, Protestant faith, Hindu, Buddhist, Chinese or Egyptian, he knows that Ideal is not contained in the letter of the Scriptures but in their essence which is one and the same no matter what the outer form of the religion may be. Therefore he does not see other religions through glasses colored with prejudice and so misjudge and condemn the followers of such faiths even to the point of persecuting them. Is there any justification for persecution of any people at any time for any reason in the name of religion? Some of us have thought we have grown too civilized, too tolerant for such a thing to take place in this enlightened twentieth century but unfortunately just as it was possible in the past, so is it possible now and it will continue to threaten the future until men drop the prejudices which bind them.

Emerson was very broad-minded. He derived a great deal of inspiration from reading the Hindu Scriptures and Oriental classics. Once he spoke of them in a conversation with others. A gentleman said, "I have read all of these Scriptures of which you have spoken and I find in them nothing at all worth considering." Emerson looked thoughtful for a moment, then replied, "That only goes to show, my friend, how very narrowly you have read them." It is true that though a dozen people may read the same words, what they have read has to sift through the prejudices which cover their minds so that if they are questioned, they would give a dozen different interpretations of the same words. If we believe in the Saviours of mankind, why can we not imitate their broad viewpoint, their lovingness, forgiveness and tolerance instead

of living in ignorance and superstition, (which always proves lack of understanding) cruelty and hatred. Lord Buddha taught that, "Hatred is never conquered by hatred; it is conquered by love." You ask, "What has happened? Twenty-five hundred years ago he inaugurated that thought. Is mankind no better now?" You may even want to conclude that such teaching is not practical for this age. No, that is not true, but it is true that certain principles never seem practical to certain types of mentality. Such types become suffocated in their own wrong beliefs. They are really imprisoned in their prejudices and pre-conceived notions. Prejudice is not always directed toward others, it can be turned toward oneself. For instance, you think you cannot do certain things; that certain foods do not agree with you; that certain people do not approve of you and suddenly you find you have evolved "complexes," a name given by modern psychologists to fixed ideas. What does it mean but that you have allowed your mind to become saturated with the idea that you are helpless in certain directions. When this happens to a marked degree, such persons are taken to psychiatrists to see if there is any hope of releasing their minds from fixed ideas. What does the physician find? That the patient has become so biased, prejudiced and self-limited that he is as if chained by his own self-created ideas. It is really extraordinary how many really intelligent people entertain violent dislikes for certain things or certain people. I knew of a case where a man actually had brain-fever through his indulgence in hatred. I remember an English gentleman who used to tell me humorously at the outset of the war, "I am perfectly neutral, I do not care in the least who kills the Kaiser." It is by dwelling on an idea that people evolve dislikes and prejudices and complexes.

I am very grateful for the spiritual training I received in

India. I know I could never be satisfied with an Ideal whose very foundation principles were not love, tolerance, and absence of bigotry. Once I was exchanging my experiences with a Christian minister who had tried to inaugurate some broad ideas in his church. He said that a group of Unitarians who had come to visit and exchange views with him, exclaimed, "You belong to us—you are so broad-minded." But the clergyman answered, "If I joined you, I would put one foot in your circle and the rest of me would be out of it." That was his idea of liberal-mindedness.

As for myself, if through some turn of circumstance, I had been forced to subscribe to dogmas or creeds, every bit of myself would have been entirely out of it. But fortunately, I contacted Sri Ramakrishna's broad catholicity of thought—a living reality. This great modern Sage of India says, "Remain always strong and steadfast in thine own faith but avoid bigotry and intolerance." He did not believe in forms and rituals but in direct contact with his Ideal. He used to tell a humorous story of a frog that lived in a well. The frog thought the well was the whole world. One day another frog who had lived in a much larger body of water, a lake, fell into the well. The first frog was surprised. He said, "Where did you come from?" He was astonished to know that another being like himself existed. "I came from a very large lake," said the second frog. "Is it bigger than my well?" asked the first frog unbelievingly. He thought nothing could be larger than the well in which he lived and when the second frog told him of great bodies of water outside the well, he grew angry and wanted the visiting frog thrown out. "So are all bigots," said Sri Ramakrishna, "they cannot see anything greater than their special creed." This great Master of modern India was the very spirit of tolerance. People of different faiths often came to him and if they were God-

abiding and not creed-abiding, he would find great kinship with them. It has been in my destiny to experience the same thing when I have met men in far-away countries where I did not even understand their language nor they mine. I shall never forget a Japanese priest and the wonderful kinship I enjoyed with him. He came to the ship and waited all day for us as we had gone ashore early in the morning. After he had found us, he took us to some of the holy of holies, ancient temples, Buddhist monasteries even those where the Emperor worships. Because he knew I had come from the land of Buddha, he showed great feeling for me and took us to see many sacred things. No words were exchanged and none were needed for truly,

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

And as I walked with him, I realized that caste, creed, and all outer barriers melt away when we come face to face with realities and with Truth.

Swami Vivekananda once said, "No one form of religion will do for all. Each is a pearl on a string. No man is born to any religion; he has a religion in his own soul. Any system that seeks to destroy individuality is in the long run disastrous. Each life has a current running through it and this current will eventually take it to God. The end and aim of all religion is to realize God. If each man chose his own spiritual Ideal and stuck to it, all religious controversy would vanish."

The Bhagavad Gita reminds us, "There is naught higher than I. Like pearls on a thread all this universe is strung in Me." The text that is written on our altar, "Truth is one; men call It by various names," is an ancient Vedic thought of unity and universality. That men worship God in many

ways does not change Him. The substance water is not changed because it is called by as many different names as there are languages.

Tulsi Das, an Indian mystic poet, said, "Remain fixed in your own Ideal, listen to others, you will learn a great deal." We cannot do this if we allow prejudice to rule us. We must not permit our minds to rise up and say, "That is wrong; what I believe is best." If we did this continually, there could be no progress. Fortunately, scientific and intellectual training of our minds has opened up a new vista. Just as with the bringing of the light, darkness vanishes, so when pure Wisdom shines, all darkness, ignorance and prejudice vanish as mist is swallowed up by the sun.

We have considered at length the great disadvantages and detriments of prejudice but we must not conclude that it is an incurable state of mind which mankind must endure forever. Fortunately there are aspiring God-consecrated souls who are not satisfied with merely upholding their chosen faith and religion but who live so closely with their Ideal and who make their lives so vividly real and vibrant with their living consecration that, by sheer force of their spiritual conviction, they inspire the hearts of men and thus dispel the mists of prejudice. Cuthbert Hall, a distinguished divine, was such a type. His missionary work was not merely concerned with conversion but in conveying the spirit of Christ and the true brotherhood of man. Let us hear what he, himself, has to say on the subject; "I know not why it has pleased God from the beginning to knit my heart to India; so it has been, so it is. Four years ago, I landed here a stranger to find myself among brethren. The scenes that passed before my eyes were unfamiliar; the voice that welcomed me to a brotherhood of spirit was the old sweet voice of love. Is not this amazing? The Orient was a new world, yet in the compan-

ionship of the Oriental consciousness, I felt at home. Your attitude no less than your spirit made my way throughout India a path of privilege. Courtesy, patient hearing, the generosity of tolerance were your Godspeed to me everywhere. Of obstruction and opposition at your hands, I had no knowledge. You permitted me to speak without reserve not only of more general religious conceptions such as are our common treasures, but of distinctive forms and relations which those conceptions have taken on through the power of Christ and the Christian philosophy and ethics. By the measure of my love for that Christian philosophy and ethics and for that Christ Who is their Source is the measure of my affection and admiration for brethren of other faiths who could not only tolerate, but encourage my freedom of speech." But do not think that all people remain for all time under the cover of prejudice. If they did the world would never go far. Man would remain as primitive and as unenlightened as he was thousands of years ago or longer. We learn from others; our consciousness is unfolded. A man who is not ready to admit this, no matter what his position, his manner of living or his intellectual equipment, has a great deal to learn. The greatest men I have ever met have been the humblest. Knowledge always makes us humble, sweet and mellow. If the world were to go on at its present pace, and if there were not some men who remain true to their Ideal and who keep the fires of devotion alive, who knows what would happen. Today, we are surrounded by the light of knowledge and science. Science is the messiah of this present age and turned in the wrong direction, it can be its evil genius.

Suppose you are making a pilgrimage. Your guide takes you to a certain point then stops to tell you unless you take off your shoes, you may not enter some beautiful temple. You may be prejudiced; you may even think the request is

foolish but because you do not want to lose out, you follow the admonition of your guide. You may even have to wash your hands before you are permitted to enter the holy of holies. A prejudiced man might refuse on the ground that it is only an old superstition too foolish to follow while a more intelligent person would recognize the idea of fitness and sanctity and would not only observe the custom but learn something from the experience. "A prejudiced mind," said some one, "is an incubus against itself." Man not only throws the weight of his own biased, incorrect notions, beliefs and dislikes upon others but upon himself as well. He cannot be prejudiced against others to the point of bitter dislike without barring himself from upward progress. Prejudice, as I have said before, delays world advancement. The only remedy for prejudice is the unfoldment of true knowledge. It is quite useless to attempt to convince another against his will or through argument. You cannot cure his prejudice except by the force of your own example. Christ was an example for the cure of men's prejudices. What were the merits of those fishermen, simple, unlearned yet who are now considered Saints? At the outset they believed only in their own insignificance and unfitness but Christ cured them by the power of his faith in their capabilities. Our greatest difficulty is that we think when we get hold of some theory we have everything. As soon as some men lay hold on a theory, they want to write a book about it but unless such men have experienced what they write, it will be merely "words, words, words," as Shakespeare said. When a man has taken a single idea and has plunged into deep contemplation and has come out with blossomed, unfolded consciousness, he has something to say that is worth our hearing. Such men speak with authority. We need such speech sadly today. I have sometimes gone to a banquet. The conversation always tells me that each per-

son has about a dozen ideas in his brain. Put them all together and there is chaos. Every one is anxious to express an opinion. In our philosophy, we are taught to keep silent unless we really have something worth while to communicate. Suppose we follow that course for a few days. Suppose we do not express any ideas unless we have authority to express them. Understanding gives us that authority. "Ye shall know the Truth and the Truth shall set you free." Swami Vivekananda has said if we all devote ourselves to an Ideal, call it by any name—it makes no difference what—you will come out a finished product. Suppose your country produced a few of such men and that others were developed in other countries at the same time and those men met together. That would be the beginning of a beautiful understanding humanity.

Someone asked me not long ago if I thought Mahatma Gandhi's cause was lost. Why? Because he is silent? That, my friend, is all the more reason for believing he is accomplishing something. He often gives himself whole-heartedly to silence and prayer that he may have greater spiritual strength which is better than the might of great armies. This great soul believes in the cause of humanity and he also believes the only way to help men is through spiritual living and through creating a vibrant spiritual atmosphere. His motto is *Ahimsa,* non-killing, non-harming or non-injury. I have been requested to speak on that subject next Sunday. We have the idea if anyone does us wrong that we are showing strength if we strike back and that it is a sign of weakness to practice non-resistance. There again prejudice plays its part. If we have made up our minds that we must use violence in avenging a wrong, non-injury cannot work for us because we have thrown against it the tremendous weight of our mental force. We all have mental power. Even a criminal has a

tremendously concentrated and powerful mind. The whole trouble with it is that it is concentrated on wrong things. It only needs to be turned in the right direction to become a great power for good. Some of us may live with those who have seemingly incurable tempers and tendencies. Sometimes they need only a slight turn in the right direction in order to become a great force for good. No man really wants to go the wrong way though it often seems that his wrong actions are deliberate. Never forget that our prayers and our faith in such persons may be the means of setting them right. "I call that mind free which sets no boundary to its love, which is not imprisoned in itself or in a sect, which recognizes in all human beings the image of God and the rights of His children." I came upon this selection in the "MESSAGE OF THE EAST" of 1912. It is twenty-seven years old but its truth is as fresh now as it was the day the Message was printed. This is the highest Ideal of Vedanta teaching—to recognize the image of God in all beings and to respect the rights of His children. If we do this, we shall feel bigger, stronger and happier ourselves and we shall he helping in the laying of the foundation for peace for which the world is gasping today. All through these years, we have been using the "peace chant" in our services and classes. We shall never give it up. It is not mere repetition with us but it is a constant reminder of our duty to ourselves and to humanity. "Say peace to all! From me, no danger be!" Great men have died with the pronouncement of peace on their lips but they could not have done so had not their thoughts been full of peace during their life time. Without peace, there is no fruition in religion—peace to oneself, peace to our neighbors and peace to the world at large.

The present-day sickness of mankind is prejudice, also superstition and the like. The remedy is the light of the great

Sun, the spiritual Sun which knows no distinction of caste, creed or religious dogma. We stand in our own light. No wonder we doubt ourselves and other men with so much darkness enshrouding our atmosphere. When we wake up and realize we have been standing in our own light, how different the whole world seems. You know the story of Dickens' Christmas Carol—of the man who hated everyone and scoffed at the idea of Christmas. He thought it was only a waste of time and money. He even called it a mockery. But when he was suddenly released from his prejudice and wrong notions, the whole world changed for him. His consciousness was unshackled and he began to undo and make amends for his lack of understanding.

"Thy will be done." Until we can truly say these words, we have not prayed. We often say, "Thy will be done," but whether we know it or not, we are mentally adding, "But, O let Thy will be my will." It is only when man's mind is released from the dark shadows of prejudice that he can offer himself from the very depth of his being. The truly great minds of both East and West have done this in all ages. They have said, "I will make myself over unto Thee. Do Thou make use of me, my hands, my feet, all that I have and am without restriction." Man has great power for doing good and for raising humanity to a higher level.

Just as the prejudiced person is unable to see any good in an individual against whom he is prejudiced, similarly one whose mind has become released from this great obscuring element and whose heart has become inundated with the spirit of Love can see no evil anywhere in the universe. This was true of Sri Ramakrishna who exclaimed in his exalted moment, "I have come to a state of consciousness where I see God in the form of the sinner and God in the form of the saint."

Go home remembering that you carry divinity within yourself. You can be the interpreter of your own faith and you can help free your religion from the fetters of prejudice and ignorance by banishing them from your own life.

We are at times incapable of seeing any good in others but when we learn to see the Eternal Good infilling our own being, we come to see the same quality flooding all areas, all corners of the globe, and all the inhabitants of that globe and our whole being is filled with the peace of God.

LAWS OF MANU

Let a man say what is true, let him say what is pleasing, let him utter no disagreeable truth, let him utter no agreeable falsehood; this is the eternal law.

Let him bear patiently hard words; against an angry man, let him not in return show anger; let him bless when he is cursed.

Let him not, even in pain, speak words cutting to the quick; let him not injure others in thought or deed.

Let him practise, as he is able, and with a cheerful heart, the duty of liberality; if he be asked, let him always give, be it ever so little, grudging not; for a worthy recipient will be found.

Happiness hath contentment for its root; the root of misery is discontent. Even from poison nectar may be taken, even from a child, good counsel, even from a foe good conduct and from an impure substance gold.

That one plant should be sown and another be produced doth not occur; whatever seed be sown, even that kind cometh forth. Goodness is declared to have the form of knowledge, Darkness of ignorance, Passion of love and hatred. There is no fire like passion, no shark like hatred, no torrent like greed.

UNSELFISHNESS AND SELFLESSNESS

By Sister Devamata

If an artist should paint a masterpiece and hang it in a gallery, we would not feel free to take palette and brush and alter it; yet that is what we try to do constantly with this vast picture we call the Universe. It is the creation of a Master Hand—perfect in proportion, in color values, in perspective and balance—but we are not satisfied with it. We wish to substitute a deep shadow for a high light or a high light for a deep shadow, to paint out this object and insert another. We treat it as if it were our own creation and would change it according to our individual will and pleasure.

This is the origin of all our selfishness. Selfishness is not the outgrowth of evil tendencies in man's nature, it springs from smallness of vision and a distorted sense of proportion. We view the Universe as an assemblage of independent parts and strive to appropriate as many of the parts as we can. But the Universe is an indivisible Whole. It cannot be divided. When we would break it up and seize some part, the part slips from our grasp and we find it still in the Universe. Only as we leave it there and use it as belonging to the Whole can it be ours for a few brief moments. Such a thing as selfish possession may seem to exist, but compared with the timelessness of Universal, it is temporary and is bought at a high cost. We cling to wealth and health goes; we gain fame or glory and those who might enjoy it with us are taken from us. The Universe reminds us in one way or another that we are holding to something that does not belong to us.

Only when we realize the integral nature of Creation and surrender to it, are we able to rise from selfishness to unselfishness. Until then even our kindliest acts will bear the taint of calculation, and calculation lies at the very root of all selfishness. We shall expect gratitude, recognition, advantage of

some kind. We cannot be unselfish until the Whole becomes our unit of measure. By a mere act of will this cannot be done. We must readjust our entire outlook, rebuild the structure of our thought, and change the habits of our life. Thomas á Kempis gives a simple and definite rule for the accomplishment of this. He calls it "The way of peace and perfect liberty." He says: "Be desirous to do the will of another rather than thine own. Choose to have less rather than more. Seek always the lower place and to be inferior to all. . . . Give all for all, ask for nothing, require back nothing. Abide purely and unhesitatingly in Me. . . . Let this be thine endeavor, this thy prayer, this thy desire, to be stript of all selfishness, that thou mayest die to thyself and live eternally to Me."

The practice of these admonitions becomes natural and automatic when we realize that a unity of pain and joy runs through all creation; that to harm another is to harm ourselves, while the nameless distress we sometimes feel may be the pain of a wounded jungle creature in some far-off forest fastness. The ancient Chinese made the killing of a tree a cardinal offense; and Sri Ramakrishna would cry out if he saw someone break a twig or leaf, idly tear it up, and throw it on the ground. A pretty story is told by a modern Chinese writer of a couple who, returning from a day in the open, came upon a tree just bursting into blossom. They picked a blossom and tied it to their cart that, as they drove through the streets, the passer-by might know the latest news from the woodland.

Unselfishness is less an end in itself than a method of approach to a loftier expression of being; an exercise to prepare for the higher state of selflessness. This cannot be attained fully so long as we are on the human plane, since it is a purely spiritual quality; but the self can become so attenuated that

it influences little the thought and action. We get flashes of it when a mother plunges into leaping flame to save her child, or when men sacrifice their own lives that others unknown to them may live. To rise above the self, however, one must transcend personality. The personal plane is the plane of difference, of contrasts and shifting moods; the selfless plane is the plane of evenness, unity and quietness. One may be personal in outlook, yet be highly unselfish; but on the personal plane we cannot be selfless.

He who has attained selflessness seeks no return for his effort. Praise, gratitude, recognition, gift for gift, are to him like coin thrown to an underling. He serves, not for the reward he may gain, but for the joy of service. He loves because it is his habit, as it is the habit of the sun to shine. If a window is open the sun shines through it; if the curtain is drawn, it shines on the curtain; if a shutter is closed it shines on the shutter; but it continues to shine whatever the obstruction. So love pours from the selfless heart unceasingly, without thought of answering love. No special object calls it forth, it goes to all who come within the radius of its warmth. St. John of the Cross describes this sefless attitude thus: "He who acts out of pure love, not only does not perform his actions to be seen of men, but does not do them even that God may know of them. Such an one, if he thought it possible that his good works might escape the eye of God would still perform them with the same joy and in the same pureness of love."

The selfless man is a clear channel for the Divine. He does not bar the channel by pre-conceived ideas or prejudice. He does not criticize or condemn or resent. He does not pass judgment. He is a sage in wisdom and a saint in holiness. Blessing flows from his words and from his silence, from his action and from his idleness. No one can measure the reach of his power or influence. He is an empty vessel filled with God.

MAN'S LOSS OF THE SENSE OF WONDER

By W. W. Willard

G. K. Chesterton once said, "The world will never starve for want of wonders but only for want of wonder." As an implied indictment of modern civilization this is a literary stroke of genius. From the marvelous and truly great wonders of scientific invention to the gadgets that attract passing attention, we are living in a huge novelty shop where the wonders may be clever and a tribute to the ingenuity of the human mind, but seldom do we find wonder—that child of humility and high imagination in the presence of the all-enfolding mystery of the universe. It is a penalty of an age of wonders that humanity should lose the sense of wonder and be in danger of losing its soul.

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Wonder is an emotion, instinctive and universal, whether in the rudimentary form of curiosity or the exalted mood of the artist, the saint or the sage. The inquisitive puppy racing about with ears erect, nosing into every corner and cranny, quivering with expectancy in every atom of its body, is doing the same thing that Sir William Herschel was doing when sweeping the heavens with his telescope, seeking the secrets of the stars. In each instance, though on planes so widely separate, it is mind (whether puppy mind or human mind) seeking the what and the why of the universe. An unexplored land of wonder lies just beyond our most clever explanations and interpretations. Our greatest thinkers recognize this, and hence are invariably humble and reverent. Listen to Einstein:

"The fairest thing we can recognize is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion that stands at the cradle of art and true science. He who knows it not and can no longer

wonder, no longer feel amazement, is as good as dead, a snuffed out candle."

We are today facing an eclipse of wonder. We would not go back to the days of superstition when miracles were as common as cobblestones and when angel or devil might meet one around the next corner, but unless we can recover the sense of wonder, which is the source of high religion, of creative imagination and of all that is truly great in human life, we shall become spiritually dead though we may still continue to live as intelligent animals. When a man has lost the capacity to wonder as he gazes at the stars or as he looks into the face of the tiniest flower, when the profound mystery of a human face no longer moves him, when he ceases to wonder at the insoluble mystery of himself and is never wrapped in wonder at the mystery of the universe, he exists, but is not alive.

The world waits for a renaissance of wonder. Over-sophistication and material-mindedness have killed it. Suffering may help to restore it. The new researches of science into the mysteries of the unknown may assist in regaining sanity and humility. Be that as it may, at the long last, we are bound to hail the profound spiritual wisdom of that extra-canonical saying of Jesus (whether its authenticity be reliable or not), of which the following is a translation: "Jesus saith: Let not him who seeks . . . cease until he finds, and when he finds, he shall wonder, and wondering he shall reach the kingdom, and having reached the kingdom, he shall rest."

Chesterton was right whether he spoke as a devout Roman Catholic which he was or as a keen interpreter of human nature or its basic need—without wonder we and the world must starve. —*From Christian Register.*

Wonder caused men to philosophize. —*Aristotle.*

GLIMPSES INTO MYSTIC LIVES

BLESSED ANGELA OF FOLIGNO

As told by Lola Allison Haynes

Blessed Angela of Foligno was a member of the Third Order of St. Francis known as the Franciscan Tertiaries. The laity formed a very strong and vital part of the religious life of that period. Without renouncing the claims and duties of family life, men and women formed themselves into groups and gave themselves concertedly to high thinking and the noble type of service which is the natural outcome of such thought. The Franciscan movement among laymen and laywomen brought together thousands of devotees with divergent gifts of mind and soul. As rich and poor, talented and untalented worked and prayed side by side, the mission of the Poverello came to have many facets. It became a great leveler as all classes joined together in feeding the poor and in offering practical aid and spiritual solace to the lepers whom the world had always passed by with averted head and with skirts drawn carefully aside. No task was too humble to merit their whole-hearted attention.

St. Francis was a genius in that he was able to transmit his own burning enthusiasm for perfection and loving service to his followers. He loved humanity and very soon his disciples were enkindled with the same love and desire for active helpfulness. Even the lowliest and least among them found themselves rising to greater heights and living at a kind of "burning best." It is with small wonder that with all limitations forgotten, they became capable of noble deeds. Certain of them rose to heroic levels as they with St. Francis began to serve in entire forgetfulness of self. The fire of God spread from village to village. Men and women began to sing the "Canticle of the Sun" and soon they were living in chastity and obeying the simple Rule of St. Francis.

By the time St. Francis died, the Order had spread over the whole of Italy and even beyond the Alps. There was a spirit of romance in the Franciscan vocation which could transcend the suffering and misery of human life. There was also a sublime simplicity which could overcome all difficulties and an atmosphere of joyous freedom which made many people feel that this was the life for which they had inarticulately waited and prayed. Furthermore, the practical spirituality of the Rule made it not only an order of penance but also one of great joy.

The first companions of St. Francis were still living. Bernardo, Ruffino, Leo, Masseo, Illuminato—most of them had gone into retirement and it is not difficult to imagine in what veneration they were held. They had seen and known and talked with St. Francis, inspirer of one of the greatest waves of religious feeling the world has ever known. How natural therefore that one of the greatest contemplatives of the Order, later known as Blessed Angela of Foligno, should have sought their company and counsel. Franciscan mysticism never found a greater exponent than this woman whose influence traveled far and wide and is still strong in the world today. She must be numbered among the greatest mystics who have come out of the Christian church. Her spiritual experience like that of Sri Ramakrishna of India was strikingly complete. It was won by a relentless battle against her natural inclinations.

Born of wealthy parents in 1248, twenty years after the canonization of St. Francis, she was contemporary with Bonaventura, Margaret of Cortona and Jacopone da Todi. During her youth Umbria rang with the glorious message of St. Francis and she was fired by stories of "Il Poverello" and his selfless service as they fell from the lips of those fortunate enough to have been his close companions. Though a gay,

pleasure-loving woman of the world, she practiced a simple piety. She herself says of this period "I was a gay, vain, egotistic person. I painted myself in false colors and I was a dissembler within and without." Some of her more lenient contemporaries tell us her estimate of her failings was greatly exaggerated. There is no record of the exact methods and circumstances of her conversion. But we do know her marriage was an unsuccessful one and that she had a nature that craved affection above all other things.

In 1285, her husband, mother and children were all living but theirs was a worldly carefree existence empty of all that attracted Angela. She grew more and more impatient with frivolity as her spiritual sense made its slow but sure ascent within her. She began to lament the misspent years during which she had given so little time and thought to God and in agony of mind prayed to St. Francis for help. The next day while she was praying in the Cathedral, her own cousin, Fra Arnaldo, spoke to her. "Is this he for whom I have prayed," she mused, "why did I never have the impulse to seek him out before and consult him about my spiritual yearnings." For ten years Fra Arnaldo was Angela's director, guide and secretary and, we are told by Nesta de Robeck, no director, guide or secretary ever held such a difficult position for he, himself, had not advanced far enough to follow his pupil on her mystical flights. He was greatly harrassed because he could not write with absolute precision the flood of inspired words that fell from her lips after an experience of ecstasy and he disliked intensely the notoriety occasioned by her speech and actions which brought upon his head severe reprimands from his superiors. Two other friars took up the work of scribe when Arnaldo laid down his pen. They translated as best they could in sonorous Latin, the fiery Italian speech which fell from Angela's lips. It is to them and their

faithful records that we owe the vivid story of this great spiritual Light and the path she trod on her way toward God.

After her conversion, she experienced a time of peaceful relief from harassing thoughts. Later, she passed through a period called by the Christian mystics, "dark night of the soul." She prayed constantly but was entirely unable to make any contact with her Lord. Doubts crept in and she began to wonder if her conversion were a figment of fancy. Had she really been forgiven her wilfulness and her own personal selfishness, for had she not passed by those in dire need without a thought of sharing. Gradually she began to feel her penitence was complete and that she had found favor in the eyes of God. But her suffering was not yet ended. The next test was given to her by her own family. They ridiculed her saintly ways, showed open amusement at all she did and said and grew impatient with her renunciation of rich dress and food. It requires heroic courage for a woman of middle age to give up her high station in life with its refinements and replace them with nun-like simplicity. Her mother was a very proud, vain woman, harsh in her judgments of her daughter's insane behaviour, as she called it. Later in her quaintly honest way, Angela wrote to some one: "My family stood in the way of my spiritual progress so stolidly that when they passed on, one after another, it was a distinct relief to me." The wording of this paragraph has often been quoted against her but we must be fair in our estimates and remember that she was tossed and tormented at that time by the awakening of tremendous spiritual powers which had hitherto lain dormant within her so that her reactions were bound to be violent and tempestuous. Every human tie irked her and seemed an obstacle in the path of the soul rather than a God-given gift capable of sublime sanctification. With her first glimpse into the world that lies behind the veil of sense came

the realization that she must give all for all. Her material possessions, earthly loves and personal desires must be sacrificed. "Naked serve I the naked cross," she murmured to herself a thousand times during days and nights of spiritual struggle. "How slowly the soul moves toward God, how heavy are the chains of the world," she exclaimed as she began making pilgrimage to holy places after selling even the country house she had so loved and distributing all her substance among the poor. Her friends tried to stop her manifold charities, but an increasing sense of God-nearness gave her the courage she sorely needed.

Early in 1291, she entered the Third Order. Soon afterwards, she made her first visit to the tomb of St. Francis. A few friends who were also devotees of the Umbrian Saint accompanied her. Angela fell on her knees in unmistakable ecstasy, quite unconscious of her surroundings. The friars hastened to see what was the matter and with them came her cousin, Fra Arnaldo, who tells us he was so thoroughly ashamed of the commotion caused by his cousin and spiritual charge whom he was still incapable of understanding that his feeling was one of angry impatience. Afterwards when he heard the full story from her lips, he thought he was dealing with a mad woman and it took some time for him to become convinced that she was not insane. Angela told him that as they came up the road leading from Spello to Assisi, she was praying fervently for grace to live the life as it should be lived by a true follower of Saint Francis. Suddenly she felt the Spirit of God infilling her mightily. In the silence of her soul, she heard a voice saying, "I will bear thee company and speak with thee all the way and thou wilt not be able to attend to aught but Me, thy Lord." Fearing she was being tricked, she looked out over the fields and vineyards but no matter where she turned, the voice pursued her. "I am also

in the vineyards," it said, "I am their fruitage and whereso-ever thou turnest, there am I. Even if the whole world came to thee now and sought to distract thee thou couldst not speak to it for the whole world is within thee." Arnaldo asked Angela what she saw. She replied, "What I saw I am not able to put into words. It was a perfect, an immense majesty which seemed to me to be the Highest Good. It said many sweet words to me as It withdrew slowly, evenly and with immense sweetness." Left to herself after the experience, Angela fell on the ground crying out, "O Love unknown, why hast Thou left me! Why! Why!"

She returned to Foligno another woman and from that day forward went through every known phase of spiritual test and struggle known to man. She lived for eighteen years after her first great mystical experience. As time went on they grew to such intensity that her body began to break under them. She now lived in comparative solitude with one or two chosen companions to administer to her needs. Later many disciples gathered around her. They devoted themselves not only to contemplation but to work in the local hospitals, especially among the lepers of the community. All strove to attain a state of "naughting" a crossing out of the ego as they served. Perfect naughting would of course result in a state known to Hindus as Samadhi. During this time her face became so luminous and shining that her companions com-plained of the attention they attracted in the streets while the supernatural radiance was upon her. Sometimes she made a pilgrimage to Assisi and there in the Portiuncula, she met the direct disciples of St. Francis and with them enjoyed the atmosphere of prayer and contemplation she craved. Her spiritual and mental poise and balance was undoubtedly due to their wise counsel and their careful gentle handling of one who had become such a remarkably sensitive instrument.

They taught her the wisdom of combining service with meditation. Only thus, they told her, would she be able to keep her balance and go forward. She was of the all-or-none type, so responded to the call of the spirit with all the ardor of her intense nature. She did not join the "Poor Clares"—hers was a higher vocation. As she went on with her spiritual investigation, secret doors were unlocked and inspiration poured forth mightily in her writings. More and more disciples came, drawn by "the splendour of her own radiant virtue" to use their own words. Gradually through them she became ever more and more widely known.

About this time, she heard the words, "I am the Divine Power. I bring thee grace which will help thee to serve others and help them." Thus ministering in any way she could soon became a passion with her and the group about her was greatly augmented. Rich and poor, high and low sat at her feet listening to the burning words that poured forth from her inspired lips. She gave all she could for the furtherance of the spiritual growth of those who depended upon her for guidance, and in so far as was possible set down in words the secrets of her hours of contemplation. She sometimes complained that Fra Arnaldo did not preserve all she told him when she was emerging from a state of ecstasy—then she would quickly make amends for her judgment of him as a scribe by saying, "But who am I to complain, I who cannot put into language what I see, feel, hear and experience. Before the Divine Goodness all words are futile and as a grain of millet seed in contrast with the universe. And of what happeneth when the soul communes with God, man can in no wise speak or even stammer." This is the complaint of the great Dante and of all other souls who try to communicate the secrets of their inner communing with their Maker.

No attempt was made to present Angela's teachings in

chronological order, and curiously enough the document loses nothing because of the scattered way in which it is presented. Human details are jotted down beside profound spiritual utterances. "There is no doubt that Angela perceived God as Absolute Reality, Universal Life and immovable Wisdom into the sea of whose Infinite Being, man can empty his little personality and find the rest and peace for which he has been feverishly seeking. She also saw God as Justice, Wisdom, Power, Goodness, Love, Beauty and Truth. She writes: "Truth opened straight before me. I saw it as a road on which were travelling those going toward God and those who were turning away from Him." She speaks of seeing "God holding and enfolding the universe" and in an ecstasy cried out, "The whole world is full of God." She saw Him as both personal and impersonal. One of the most impressive and interesting things about her teaching is her earnest attempt to show spiritual aspirants the "double abyss" as she calls it of God and of themselves. The abyss of riches untold which is God and of poverty unbounded, which is man before he has attained God in His fullness. This is the way of spiritual poverty, she said, of which the giving-up of worldly possessions is but a faint out-picturing or shadowing forth. To see the abyss of poverty in oneself and the abyss of riches in God is to prepare one's self to receive the riches of God. The final experience of Love came to her in great darkness which she found all Good, and she knew that she need never be without God again. She now knew that darkness and light are both alike to Him. Angela told Fra Arnaldo that in the state of absence of all light, her soul was ravished with sweetness. "I saw both all and nothing," she says in her chronicles, "and what I saw no tongue can tell, but this I know that everything is inferior to the Good I found in that darkness." The last time she was plunged into that state, she says, "I heard these

words—I am in thee and thou art in Me." Nesta de Robeck says, "In this ineffable experience of God, Angela touched the highest point a soul on earth can attain and at once she sweeps back our narrowed horizon as she shows us clearly that what she has done, we too may do if only we have the sincerity and strength of purpose." Here are some simple hints from her writings: "Never go through a single day without the exercise of vocal prayer. Do not think other things are better and therefore vocal prayer can be omitted. There are three kinds of prayer, vocal, mental and the state known as contemplation. But if vocal prayer is abandoned, there will come a time when we are overcome by sleep and laziness. Therefore use all three kinds of prayer—the vocal to keep yourself alert and awake. But in all your praying, never pray with the mouth. Mind and heart must enter into the prayer if it is to be effectual. Nothing is necessary to man but God. To find Him, we must concentrate on Him. That is, we must not have too much conversation with our fellows, too much speech and too much entertainment for these distract us from our purpose.

"There are three degrees of transformation of a soul fired with the love of God. The first is to be wholly united to the will of God; that is, to be truly able to say, 'Thy will not mine be done, O Lord.' The second stage is when the soul ardently desires to be like God or the Beloved and wishes to love all His creatures with a great and understanding love, and the third is when the soul is completely transformed into God. Perfect love is when the soul is given vision of the divine Being. Thereafter she loves all things with a great love for love of Him. The soul must become fused with God and it can only be so when there is a fire of love—a true holocaust.

"Love of God can never be idle. Action is the sign and measure of love—therefore those who have the spirit of love will always be bent upon good works.

"Let us pray as Christ taught us, and O let us seek in all things to make ourselves like unto Him who incarnated, taking on the misery accompanying a human birth that He might set us a glorious example. He became man that He might unite man to God. O Incomprehensible, for me Thou art become comprehensible! O Thou Uncreate, for me Thou art become a creature; O Thou Whom thought cannot reach, for me Thou hast become the Light of my mind; pure Spirit art Thou, yet Thou hast taken on a body which men may touch. O Lord, make me worthy to see the depth of Thy immense love in Thy most holy incarnation."

The two great Franciscan themes, the Passion of the Cross and Poverty are united in Angela's life. "The worst poverty is ignorance," she warned her disciples and at once I am reminded of a saying of Swami Vivekananda's, "The only sin is ignorance." What kind of ignorance is sin? Ignorance of God's greatness and man's nothingness (again the two abysses of which Angela spoke in such fiery terms). "True poverty is twin-sister to humility and charity," again Angela speaks, "The material poverty of the Christ was but the outer vestment of that poverty of spirit that was willing to be so nothing that it might be subjected to temptation, and that gave itself to be tormented of its fellow men as well as to the limitations of human life which is crucifixion to a free spirit. Christ appeared before the world as the Friend of the fallen and the ignorant; His poverty opens such a vista of humility that the human mind reels before it. O, if this unequalled and invincible humility could confound and annihilate the pride of our Nothingness. O, the immensity of our pride that after seeing the Poverty of Christ, we should dare to aspire for the riches of this earth."

Again she says, "O Divine Personality which makes our substance one with Thine own! Substance of Thy Substance,

Miracle of Miracles! Mystery of Mysteries—there is no human intellect which contemplating Thee does not stop short, baffled by its own impotence. But by Thy grace and Divine Light, we can feel and taste that same substance which we can never, while in the flesh, fully understand."

Before her death, Blessed Angela blessed her spiritual sons and daughters in these simple words, "Follow your Ideal in poverty and humility."

Thus ended the life of this great visionary and teacher who will always occupy a high place among mystics. She won many battles over herself. She has transmitted to many generations her own abundant spiritual energy and her message is as alive today as it was in thirteenth century Umbria.

Religion is a region in which the spirit unburdens itself of its finiteness, and relates itself to that which is unlimited and infinite, where its attitude is no longer that of dependence but of freedom, and where the individual has no longer to do with himself, but only with absolute Truth. The things which occasion anxiety and doubt, all petty cares and troubles, all narrow and selfish interests, we leave behind us on the sandbank of time. In this pure region, we penetrate through the external, deceitful shows and semblances of the world, and all things become revealed to us, transfigured in the pure light of Truth, and softened in its atmosphere of eternal peace and rest. —*Edward Caird.*

Let your religion be seen. Lamps do not talk but they do shine. A light-house sounds no drum, it beats no gong; yet, far over the waters, its light is seen by the mariner.

—*T. L. Cuyler.*

The call to religion is not a call to be better than your fellows, but to be better than yourself. —*H. W. Beecher.*

SAGES OF INDIA

By Swami Vishwananda

(The present leader of the Chicago Vedanta Society. The following address was delivered by him at the Chapel of the Vedanta Centre of Boston on the occasion of the birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna.)

I feel I am very lucky to be present on this day of festivity of the nativity of our great Master, Sri Ramakrishna, in this Boston Vedanta Centre Chapel. It gives me immense joy, to be with you all, and especially with Swami Paramanandaji on this occasion. You have all known him for years but I have been looking at him from a different angle of vision. Old students of the Vedanta Centre, especially Sister Devamata and Sister Satya Prana know well that he was the darling of Swami Ramakrisnananda, the head of our Order in Madras who was called the Granite Pillar of the Order of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda.

The beautiful hymns you have all just heard transported me to India—as I was listening, I became thoroughly homesick. It was good to hear the voices of Hindu women. I have come to this country not as a young lad so no wonder I always think a great deal about India. Hearing this music, this afternoon has made me especially homesick. But I am not here to give personal expressions of joy or sorrow or homesickness, but to pay my homage and salutations to the great Teacher and Master of new India.

You know that India is not an island thrown up by an earthquake. It is a very ancient land. An American gentleman in Chicago, a journalist, told me, "Your country is very fascinating." I said, "Please explain." He replied, "When I was in Delhi, I saw three milleniums of civilization all vanish into the bottomless abyss of the past and I realized how very old your country is and I was overpowered by the thought."

Those of you who are in touch with the trend of world thought and movements, may know that a discovery made fifteen years ago in the Indus valley has, beyond the shadow of a doubt, established the proof that the Indo-Aryan civilization is as old if not older than the Sumerian culture. They have even found men sitting cross-legged in meditative pose. One would like to know and understand the dominant note of this civilization. It is the hunger and thirst for the Infinite, the longing for life-everlasting. For generations, for centuries, for ages, the Indo-Aryan mind has clung to the eternal verities. The external world is beautiful, is real, is attractive; we all know this but the builders of the Indo-Aryan culture, the forefathers of the Hindu race felt that the world within was also real. The ideas and volitions which impel us to activity—are they not also real?

Far away from the din and bustle of city life, the seers and sages of ancient India lived in their forest homes and Ashramas, and that word reminds me of the beautiful hermitage which Swami Paramananda has built in this country, and in which he has turned the searchlight of Truth. It is in the midst of the beauties of Nature that man is most easily in tune with the Infinite. In these forest homes, the seers dived deep into the ocean of the mind and by so doing, they began to discover the great truths and laws of the inner world. A school boy today knows the laws that govern the physical world so there are laws which govern the inner man also—the moral, ethical and spiritual life of man. They are as definite as the laws of hygiene. It has been said by a great European critic that the Hindu mind revels in metaphysical subtleties. Hinduism does not center around one personality. These great seers were the discoverers of the laws of the spiritual world and these experiences and realizations of these sages are the bedrock, the foundation on which the Indo-Aryan

culture and Hinduism itself has been built. There have been many calamities and vicissitudes in the long and checkered history of India but the great truths of spiritual life are there. Sometimes they appear hidden but they are there just the same.

We had a prince in our country surrounded with all the luxuries and comforts that human mind covets and craves for. In the midst of all these luxuries, he was miserable. He renounced the royal throne and retired into the forest in the prime of his life and delved into the mysteries of spiritual life. He became the founder of a new creed, one of the doctrines of which is, "Anger cannot be conquered by anger, hatred cannot be conquered by hatred; it is love that conquers anger and hatred." I mean Buddha whom one third of the world worships today as a Saviour. I wish rulers of states and statesmen could practice a little of this teaching. We had a Queen in our country belonging to the most aristocratic class, the Rajputs, who for the sake of her Beloved, (the Lord) sacrificed everything. Her songs are sung in the villages of India from one end of the country to the other.

If you want to know what devotion and love for God are, I point to that lady—Mirabai. There has been an unbroken line of seers and sages whose experiences and realizations have inspired many seekers of Truth, who have borne testimony to a Being Who is the cause and explanation of all we see around us, of this mysterious universe in the midst of which we find ourselves.

It is not given to man to smile always, to have unalloyed joy in this vale of tears and the Almighty One out of compassion and love for humanity sometimes sends us Messengers and if you permit me, sometimes comes Himself. "He loved man so much that he sent His own Son." The Infinite comes to the plane of the finite, the Word becomes flesh in order

that the fallen man, the ignorant, imperfect man can grasp God who is invisible, and incomprehensible.

How can man remain satisfied forever with sense objects? The culmination of his hopes and aspirations is attained in the knowledge of God. The Messengers appear periodically and through them we find Divinity. The great Master and sage of modern India in whose name we have assembled this afternoon was certainly one of these. He appeared in India at a critical time. It was the moment when the hoary culture of India was being challenged, when this ancient race came in contact with the very powerful, aggressive and dynamic civilization. The Oriental civilization was established for peace and inner joy. It is the hand of Asia that has rocked the cradle of prophets. It is Asia that has produced sages and seers that have given to mankind the message of eternal peace and happiness.

Then there is the Graeco-Roman civilization which has given the world the idea of liberty and freedom. As I am studying your social and political institutions, I feel the efforts of two thousand years of Europe have been crowned with success in this country. The United States is the ideal democracy—where you have social and political equality. H. G. Wells pays tribute to your country, "Here is a new departure in the history of mankind." He makes an interesting remark about Benjamin Franklin who went to the court of France with his long hair and uncouth manner. "If a man is to be judged by his own worth and excellence of character then Louis the Fifteenth is not fit to be the valet of Benjamin Franklin." Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, Franklin and Washington were men of high ideals and exalted characters. Here we have the wonderful blossoming of the philosophy which began in Greece in ancient times.

I am a firm believer in the union of these two cultures, the

ancient stream of thought of India and this new freedom of this new world. Therein lies the salvation of mankind. Perhaps a new age, a new era will begin where the best of the East and the best of the West will combine.

You have heard many times from Swami Paramananda about the life of Sri Ramakrishna. I am not going into the details of that marvelous life. I will mention one instance. When a boy of ten, he was walking across a field one day. India abounds in meadows and fields. Eastern sky in Autumn is very blue and cloudless. As he walked gazing at the sky, he saw a flight of birds with white wings. That was a sufficient suggestion to raise his mind to the plane of transcendental reality.

When the whole world was discovering new laws in the domain of the physical world, Sri Ramakrishna used to be shut up in a Temple garden, a few miles from Calcutta. He began there his research in the inner world and discovered truth after truth and added realization after realization. His crowning realization was this that all religions are essentially the same; that all creeds are basically the same. That is a distinct contribution of Sri Ramakrishna to the modern world—a world sorely in need of this Truth. Men and women of different creeds and faiths are meeting in everyday life. Is the revelation of God confined to one book? If there is revelation in the Vedas, why not in the Bible and in the Zend Avesta? Sri Ramakrishna proved by his own realization that it was not a matter of theory that this is so. Luckily, he was not a University man. With him, it was all direct, immediate experience and revelation. On this day of the celebration of this great Master's birth, we who belong to different creeds and faiths should remember his great gift. Let us cultivate an attitude of fellowship and brotherhood to all races and nations of the world.

INDIA'S IDEAL WOMAN

By Gayatri Devi

(Continued from the last issue.)

Saradamani Devi, our Holy Mother, was only a young woman in her early thirties when she faced the great sorrow of her life. The Master was stricken with deadly cancer. Neither the pleading prayers of his countless followers and friends nor the best treatment of the leading physicians of the time could restore him to health. His work on this mortal plane was done, and following the example of the *yogis* of his land, he lay down his physical body like a garb which could no longer be useful to him.

During the previous months before Sri Ramakrishna's passing, or entering into *mahasamadhi*—the final union with the highest—Holy Mother and the other disciples of the Master had spent many strenuous and anxious hours. He was moved first from the Temple of Dakshineswar to Calcutta then to the suburb garden of Cossipur and placed under the best of care. Holy Mother also went there to take her place beside her beloved husband. Here in a house, she was the only woman in the midst of many men. This invariably created inevitable difficulties and inconveniences. Besides, we may well remember she was innately shy and retiring. However, Saradamani's whole heart and soul were bent upon nursing and caring for her loved one. To accomplish this, her own physical discomforts counted as nothing.

Together with the Master's young disciples, "his boys," as he often endearingly referred to them, Holy Mother attended to Sri Ramakrishna, prepared his special diet and poured out the strength of her body and soul, hoping against hope that her Lord would be spared yet awhile on his earthly pilgrimage. But all was in vain. The daily, watchful tender care and the nightly sleepless vigil ended on a quiet, breathless

hour of early morning. Sri Ramakrishna departed from the visible world leaving all the devoted hearts in utter darkness just as the sun vanishes to enlighten the other half of the globe.

Holy Mother naturally well-restrained did not make a display of her sorrow. She tried to bear it bravely and silently. Suddenly her entire life had changed, suddenly her whole existence seemed in vain. She who had been like a queen had suddenly become a beggar.

Here we pause to tell our Western readers a little about the state of widowhood in our part of India. To appreciate it, one must become well familiar with the thousand and one restrictions which guard her as if in a dungeon. It not only means God-ordained separation from one's loved-one but a life-long imprisonment in the house of ancient customs. To be frank in Bengal, India, women are not really free yet. (Perhaps conditions are somewhat different and more favorable today.) There a woman's prestige and status is practically determined by the name and position of her husband. Moreover, she has no economic independent security. Most women of middle class as well as of higher birth are totally dependent upon father, husband, son or relative. In such a country widowhood instantly lowers her status in life. Besides the age-long social order imposes upon the widow numberless ways of sacrifice, austerity and penance. Indeed, all this is in the name of a great Ideal. A widow must dedicate her whole life to the memory of her deceased love. She must practice absolute renunciation of desires and lead rather a strict life. This austere standard has undoubtedly helped keep our women chaste and pure. On the other hand it has been the cause of sin and degradation in many cases. The widow has no other choice in the matter but to accept her rigorous mode of existence. Although in her heart she is

neither suited nor willingly ready to follow this path, she must outwardly observe the forms as long as she lives.

For a very long time now, a widow's lot in certain sections of the country has been a pitiful one. She might be a young girl or even a child or a matured woman of experience with strength of character, but tradition demands of her not just temporary mourning but a life-long, complete withdrawal from the many natural enjoyments. For instance, as soon as the husband dies, a woman ceases to wear any bright colors or bordered garments (except *gerua,* the insignia of renunciation). She invariably appears in plain white and borderless *saris*. Moreover, she takes off from her person all kinds of ornaments and jewels which she might have heretofore worn constantly—never to use them again. A widow is asked to eat food which is considered most pure, vegetables, fruits, milk, prepared and cooked with special care and sanctity. Fish, eggs or any kind of animal food is absolutely forbidden. In some parts, widowhood is not looked upon as a good omen therefore even if she be a bride of a few days or months, she is not allowed to take vital part in certain social functions. These rigid formulas prescribed by man-made society have been in many an instance a heartless procedure. They have deprived young women of happiness and a hopeful future. Again they have been instrumental in stimulating the finest and deepest of religious instincts and have made widowhood inspiring and exalting.

However the restricted ways were not the cause of any real sorrow to our Holy Mother. Under the Master's spiritual training, detachment and renunciation had become her natural attributes. Outer joys and pleasures meant very little to her and now still less. She was not born to rebel against, to reform or to remodel the grand yet seemingly unfair, soul-expanding yet apparently confining social customs. She had

come to glorify them through her example. Saradamani never questioned nor disregarded nor looked down upon any of these old customary ways thousands of the women of her land have followed through centuries. But believing in them implicitly, she was able to revive and renew them and to make them vibrant and beautiful. She was always ready to fulfill to the letter the least injunction laid down to idealize widowhood.

A very strange event took place on the eve of the Master's passing. As Holy Mother was about to remove from her lower arms two lovely bangles which the Master himself had ordered made for her and which she had worn during his life time, he suddenly appeared before her and said, "Why are you doing this? Am I dead that you should appear like a widow? Why, I am still alive!" Then he was gone. After this experience, Holy Mother never dressed as an ordinary Bengali widow. Even the photographs taken during the latter part of her life show her arms adorned with the same gold bangles and her face framed by the narrow edge of a red bordered *sari*.

The first adjustment after Sri Ramakrishna's passing was by no means an easy one. Beside her personal sadness and loneliness, she suddenly felt like a boat without a rudder. For a moment, life lost all its purpose and meaning. Now there was no one to inspire or to protect or to absorb her in loving service. Other women find widowhood bearable through their interest in their children but the Master had not blessed her with any of her own. For whom should she live and work and give herself? There was barely any earthly tie to bind her to life. Saradamani tried to forget her grief and despairing thoughts and feelings of emptiness by consecrating herself more wholly to spiritual practices. Sometimes they brought her peace, then again she was inconsolable.

Although Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual sons were considered Holy Mother's children, they had not as yet taken up their definite vocation of spiritual life, the Order of Sri Ramakrishna had not been formed. Most of his disciples were burning with the fire of renunciation, so paid little or no heed to outer happenings. They were altogether unmindful of all else but their zeal for the highest attainment. It was only natural that these young lads were not always fully aware of Holy Mother's needs. Now that the Priest of Dakshineswar was no more, his wife had no reason for living at the Temple. Of course there was her father's and father-in-law's village homes at Jayrambati and Kamarpukur respectively but at that moment even the closest blood ties or the love of the dearest ones could not bring her any real solace.

It was decided Mother should go on a pilgrimage, she should visit holy places, absorb the sacred atmosphere of many shrines—sanctified and vibrant with the living presence of God. Thus she would be helped to forget her sorrow through the knowledge that God is omnipresent and her own Lord, Sri Ramakrishna, yet lived, not only in her own heart but in all the temples and sanctuaries, and in all the images and forms, she would be privileged to contact and worship.

Saradamani started on her journey accompanied by several of the Master's disciples. On her way to sacred Brindavan by the river Jumna, saturated throughout the ages with the blessed memory of Lord Sri Krishna, she paused for a few days at Benares where the Lord of the universe, Viswanath, is enshrined in the great temple—where sinners and saints pour in from all quarters of India to cleanse themselves in the sacred waters of the holy Ganges, and where the infinitely compassionate God, Shiva, redeems the sinful and distressed and gives them shelter in his own tender heart. Holy Mother

also spent a time at Haridwar—the gate of the Lord— a very beautiful place where, the legend tells us, the great God, Himself, released the river out of his matted locks. There the Ganges flows in crystal purity and reflects the serene natural loveliness of the setting. She also paused at other famous places of pilgrimage to make her oblations. These journeyings refreshed and restored Saradamani from the strain of the past months. Her mind too became more tranquil and peaceful. Finally, she came to Brindavan. Here she remained for a whole year remembering ceaselessly her Lord. There were moments when Sri Ramakrishna seemed very close to her. Again she would be poignantly conscious of the void and she would pass through anguish. Once at such a time, the Master appeared before her and consoled her, "Why do you weep and grieve so, I am not gone. There is only a partition between one chamber and another."

To a religious Hindu, the visitation of the supernatural is neither the unbelievable imagination nor the superstitious distortion of the human mind but an accepted fact. The body can be destroyed and transformed but the soul lives on. Although Sri Ramakrishna had laid aside his physical coil, he did not cease to exist. He became even more a tangible reality to all those who loved him. In his life-time he was looked upon as a God-man, endowed with the extraordinary power of awakening man spiritually even by a single touch; now he was beyond the reach of the senses. But his followers and devotees invoked him, prayed to him and worshipped him as God Himself. In the hour of their need, whenever his devoted ones called unto him, he was beside them, in the same garb as they had been accustomed to seeing him, wearing the same luminous smile as during his presence on earth. This helped Holy Mother again and again. Through her pure and powerful devotion, her own spirit attracted him unto herself.

She saw him frequently whenever she laid offering before the altar of his picture, she was aware he was actually there to receive it. She talked to him as she had done when they were together. She conducted the acts of worship and service with the same fervor and intensity as if he were physically present.

The thought of the Master became more and more constant with Holy Mother. In waking and sleeping, in work and in prayer, she carried her Lord in her consciousness, so much so that often she was seized with the deepest religious feeling and ecstasy. Gradually, her own spirit was merging more completely into that of the Master and the Master was taking full possession of her body and soul. Her natural tendency was to conceal and control her innermost experiences for she was never given to any superficial display. Once in a state of spiritual exhilaration, Holy Mother walked alone to the farthest bank of the river Jumna beyond the sand dunes. Her companions anxiously searched for her and brought her home. These moods came upon her quite frequently and at times, Sri Ramakrishna's presence was so vividly manifest in Holy Mother that even her human characteristics reminded one of the Master, and his particular way of doing or saying things.

How one and universal is the experience of all mystics throughout all lands! It is seldom colored or influenced by caste, creed or country. Saradamani's utter absorption in Sri Ramakrishna reminds us of one of St. Paul's outstanding utterances in the Christian Bible, "Not I but Christ liveth in me." Indeed, to make the disciple a fitting instrument for his perfect service, the Master must take sole possession of the servant's body and mind, intellect and heart. Just as Sri Ramakrishna had taught Saradamani with utmost care while he was in the flesh so even now he was preparing her for her life's mission. His physical absence could not in any way mar

the indelible impression his mysteriously powerful and manifold personality had made upon her consciousness. Hours of silent communion, conscious and unconscious thoughts of her unforgettable association with the Master, the faithful observance of fruitful practices of his teaching, opened every door and avenue of Holy Mother's innermost being, and she found her way again and again into the realm of unalloyed bliss where he had led her.

Sri Ramakrishna's enlightenment and realization, his breadth of vision and expanded consciousness, his infinite compassion and love were becoming more and more her own. In losing her life in him, she had reached that life and love which is limitless and inexhaustible. All this was according to a divine plan and purpose, for the Lord had chosen her as one of the leading apostles to spread the teaching and influence of India's modern Saint and to awaken and lift numberless souls to the plane of God-consciousness.

(To be Continued.)

BECAUSE OF THEE

By Rabindranath Tagore

Life of my life, I shall ever try to keep my body pure, knowing that Thy living touch is upon my limbs.

I shall ever try to keep all untruths out from my thoughts, knowing that Thou art that Truth which has kindled the light of reason in my mind.

I shall ever try to drive all evils away from my heart and keep my love in flower, knowing that Thou hast Thy seat in the inmost shrine of my heart.

And it shall be my endeavor to reveal Thee in my actions, knowing it is Thy power that giveth me strength to act.

—*Gitanjali.*

PRINCIPLES OF HOLY LIVING

By Nicholai Velimirovic

Be humble, for the worst thing in the world is of the same stuff as you; be confident for the stars are of the same stuff as you.

Our life is obscure, and our death is obscure. God is the only light of both. God is not hidden but our eyes are too small to see Him. When two blind men sit quarreling about the light, they are like two men quarreling about what is God.

Different languages are but the same prayer; different prayers but the same God. Never in prayer, try to teach God what He should do for you but rather ask Him what you should do for Him. God may be either accompanying you or pursuing you. It depends upon you.

To forgive the sins of men means nothing more for us than to confess our own sins. To forgive the sins of men means for God nothing less than to let events be without consequences.

There is no harvest without seed. We see after a harvest of evil the seed which time has concealed. By using our hands, we become strong; by using our brains, wise; and by using our hearts, merciful.

What is it to be a gentleman? To be the first to thank and the last to complain. It is better that your good deed be forgotten than that your evil deed should make you famous.

A lake at the foot of a mountain is a mirror for the mountain; just so is the past a mirror for mankind.

Men with little wisdom have much passion; men with much wisdom have great compassion and little passion.

A good custom hallows life and keeps men in brotherly unity.

Our bodies are only bridges over which our souls communicate with one another.

If a man cast clay at the sun, it falls back in his face; if he

casts stones against God, they fall on his head. Lift up your hearts to heaven. The foulest water is purified when it is lifted to the clouds of heaven.

All men that God created can live on the earth. God gave space and air enough for all, if men would only give good will.

Freedom is an atmosphere which makes the sun brighter, and the air clearer and the honey sweeter.

To die for the cross and freedom means two lives and no death. A wolf can never so cruelly enslave a brother-wolf as a man a fellow-man. It is not easier to live in freedom than to fight for freedom. One must fight for freedom like an archangel, but one must live in freedom as a saint. When you fight for freedom you are helping every slave in the world, not only yourself.

When men are quarreling about the land, God is standing among them whispering, "I am God."

He who does not rouse himself when it is time to rise, who, though young and strong, is full of sloth, whose will and thought are weak, that lazy and idle man never finds the way to knowledge.

Let a wise man leave small pleasures of the world that he may gain pleasures that are abiding.

Good people shine from afar, like the snowy mountains; bad people are not seen, like arrows shot by night.

If a man find a prudent companion who walks with him, is wise and lives soberly, he may walk with him, overcoming all dangers, happy but considerate.

If a man find no prudent companion to walk with him—one who is wise and lives soberly—then let that man walk alone, like a king who has left his conquered country behind, —like an elephant in the forest. —DHAMMAPADA.

QUESTIONS

Answered by Swami Paramananda

Our real fortitude comes only when we have mastered fundamental spiritual principles. We have not really known the things we understand intellectually and ethically until we have experienced them. In India a great distinction is made between a man of erudition and a seer. This is of course a new idea to you. We can count on the judgment of a man who is well versed in every department of life, but in regard to higher things we can only depend upon those who have had actual experience. They have known and seen and that is the reason they are called seers. In India such men are known as *rishis*. There is a vast difference between those who know directly and those who have only the knowledge of the letter.

Question. If it is true that everything is ordered and done by the will of God and that He directs man's movements, of what use is it for man to try to be good or to realize God?

Answer. Our faith in the Lord does not take away our desire to be good or to do the will of the Lord. Unless a man knows that everything is God's will, he cannot help but worry and suffer. Nor can he help being rebellious. This is the difference—Christ was able to draw beauty and blessing even out of the great ordeal of crucifixion because He knew that it was divine will. The human side of Him sometimes wavered but He fortified Himself with prayer and silent communion that He might never doubt the divine will. You have all read and absorbed the idea of crucifixion and there are some of you who think it is a great tragedy; but you must remember the divine will is not merely what is pleasing. Divine will may be something which brings an element of struggle and hardship. From this chapel, I once considered this question:—"If everything is divine will then why do

terrible things happen?" Sometimes out of tragic happenings, a person is redeemed. Frequently an individual is not awake to higher things until he has a severe shock. Suddenly you may find a selfish metallic person becoming quite human. He even exhibits tenderness and compassion. That is what the wise man who sees more deeply and more clearly than the average person understands. He submits every thing to divine will. In order to follow divine will, we have to tune our instrument, our thoughts, our feelings, and our higher aspirations, that we may not be misguided. The wise man knows that even his suffering comes from God.

We had a great saint in India called Pavhari Baba. He practically lived on air, eating very little solid food. He used to beg for the poor, prepare food for them with his own hands and feed them. He gave himself completely to meditation. One time, a venomous serpent was found in the cave where he used to meditate. His disciples were agitated and wanted to do something about it. The saint would not allow the serpent to be harmed. You see he had no element of hate or fear. His followers said, "Are you not afraid of this poisonous creature? Suppose he should bite you." He answered, "I should consider him a messenger from my Beloved; I should think my Beloved had sent a messenger in that form." Perhaps you cannot grasp this point of view. This holy man did not see any evil. Once he had fever. He said the fever, too, was a visitation from his Beloved. Is it not wonderful how evil can be transformed into beauty by an understanding soul?

In India, there lived a woman who was a great devotee. She prayed, "O Lord, send me tests and trials that I may never forget Thee." She felt such experiences brought her close to God. So you see it is a question of our understanding attitude. All is beautiful and lovely and beneficent for the seer. And everything is ugly and sordid for the one who lacks

understanding. Such a person cannot see the divine will while the wise man sees that God is leading him even through hardship and losses.

Often people say, "Thy will be done," but when they say it, they begin to analyze. Once a friend told me a story, rather humorous, about a man who was a miser. His house was on fire and he said, "I am losing everything, I wish I were dead." At that moment a brick fell on his head and he cried out, "O Lord, I did not want you to take me so literally." This is often the case with people who do not take such statements seriously. They do not want God's will to be fulfilled literally because they are afraid of hard conditions for themselves. We learn these lessons by degrees. Wise men say there is a pattern and the pattern is regulated by a great Power and that they would rather be guided by that Power than by a smaller agency. Sometimes people run into danger because of a nervous attitude of mind, but a man of vision remains tranquil and fixed in his purpose in the midst of storm and strain.

Question. What is the best way to rid oneself of egotism?

Answer. Sri Ramakrishna gives a practical answer to this question, "If a man is egotistic, if he has the impression that he is all-important, he cannot be happy. If he is suspicious when some one looks at him, if he is unhappy at home and in his business, he is like a slave to his own moods. If his ego does not want to subside, let it remain as the servant of the Lord." This is the right way to banish this evil entity. A great philosopher once said, "Man does not want to worship God, he wants to worship himself." In one of my poems, the Lord says, "Thy heart is My throne" but unfortunately man wants to place himself there. If you question him he will say he believes in God but really it is he, himself, whom he recognizes and worships. I have something here in this book from

Sri Ramakrishna: "O God, Thou art the doer—this is Knowledge and this is Wisdom. Be lowly, be humble, only thus can you rise. The lark builds his nest on the ground but he soars high when he sings. In the same way, human beings who are humble and lowly may be very high spiritually." "Blessed are the meek." This is a wonderful saying. Tyrannical, aggressive people do not believe in such a doctrine. There is an interesting Chinese saying, "One who goes forward aggressively shall fall backward." This is a spiritual law. We know that to anyone who does not want anything for himself, everything is given. Sometimes people say, "I will pretend," but if you pretend you will find it does not work. There is an Intelligence that cannot be deceived. You know the definition of the Lord, the All-conscious, Omnipotent Spirit, He who never sleeps. When all are in slumber, He remains awake. "Man loves and man hates, sometimes he seeks vengeance but He, the all loving, ever loves and never hates." Man soon realizes that when he is unwise enough to depend upon himself, he fails. Success comes only when he surrenders to the great Power. Christ said, "Not my will but Thine be done. I do not want my will fulfilled; help me to do Thy will." Sri Ramakrishna used to repeat constantly, "Not I, not I, but Thou, O Lord."

Question. If the same God reigns over the different religions why is He known, seen and named differently? Why does He not always appear in the same form and have the same appearance to all men?

Answer. This is the trouble with humanity. They think in finite terms. Suppose one person has a revelation and thinks that his vision is the only right one. If we say God is almighty that certainly means He is not limited. In India, we say, "O Lord, Thou art all that I see, Thou art man, Thou art woman and Thou art all that is unbounded. Thou art also

all that I am not able to see or touch. Thou art beyond mind and speech and Thou art personal and impersonal." If He were not an unbounded Power, manifesting in different forms, He would be like you, and you, and me. We are limited but He is everything, every form, everything movable and immovable, and all that is finite and infinite and vast. This knowledge saves us from bigotry and fanaticism.

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Every human heart has a strange desire to begin the New Year right. Those who have struggled and gone through hard experiences, wish with all their hearts that the coming year may change their destiny. Even those who have enjoyed happiness and good fortune feel that it is possible for the New Year to bring them far greater blessings, so they celebrate it with special ceremonies according to their own individual feelings and desires. There are others who believe fervently that a new step should always be preceded by spiritual dedication and prayer.

For some years past, Swami Paramananda has been observing this particular occasion with a deep feeling of spiritual sanctity on the hill top of Ananda Ashrama, La Crescenta, California. People look forward to this occasion and plan ahead to take part in it. Many ask if Swami Paramananda will be present as they do not want to miss the inspiration of his words in this holy hour. This New Year's Eve of 1939 was specially significant. The Swami had journeyed from the Vedanta Centre of Boston and had arrived at the Ashrama in California, the day before. There were so many people who wanted to spend the night at the Guest-house that they might greet the first day of the New Year in this place of sanctity and holiness. The weather was quite perfect and very mild for the winter season. At the evening household

Service at six o'clock, there was a large gathering in the temple made up of the Ashrama members and guests. Soon after seven o'clock, the banquet hall at the guest house was humming with human voices. A regular Hindu dinner was served to a very large number of guests and immediately following, there was community singing lead by Mr. and Mrs. Joseph whose beautiful voices were augmented by those of the major portion of the group present. Later, Mr. Ralph Waldo Trine, author of the famous book, "In Tune with the Infinite" spoke humorously. He also related some of the incidents in connection with his acquaintance with Swami Vivekananda. Mrs. Trine then gave a recital of poems. Altogether, it was a pleasing prelude to the Midnight Service to which all looked forward expectantly. About ten-thirty o'clock, the temple hill was lighted up and a big crackling fire was burning in the library giving a feeling of warm welcome and hospitality. There was also a fire in a brazier in the temple patio where many were standing or sitting about talking in happy whispers or quietly gazing at the stars which seemed so close—in meditative spirit.

At eleven o'clock when the chimes sounded, all gathered in the temple which was filled to capacity. It was amazing to see so many people gathered there in a place so far removed from the city at this late hour. Swami Paramananda opened the Service with a holy Sanscrit Peace Chant after which he gave an inspiring address in which he reminded his listeners that even the hard experiences of the past year have their place in making us all more humble and more ready to receive divine blessings. He also said when he saw with what earnestness people came from far distant places to worship at such a late hour, he had great hope for the destiny of mankind. People are not really materialistic at heart. Sometimes they seem so because they are distressed by the outer conditions of

life but as long as man has yearning in his soul, he will always overcome all difficulties and outer obstacles.

The music, the candle-light and the earnest, pleading voice of the Swami as he prayed for the good of many and the happiness of many—all created an unearthly calmness and an unspeakable serenity.

At the conclusion of the Service, the Swami asked his congregation to repeat with him:

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

In the hush of silence, the people moved softly out of the temple and one could not help hearing remarks of genuine enthusiasm and appreciation such as: "I would not have missed this experience for the whole world!" or "I would have come hundreds of miles for this," and, "What a wonderful way to begin the New Year."

HIGH LIGHTS OF EVENTS

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

On Sunday, January First, at eleven o'clock in the morning, Swami Paramananda spoke on "Beginning Anew," and at three-fifteen o'clock on "Right Resolutions." There was a very large attendance at both services.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S BIRTHDAY

On January twelfth, the birthday of great Swami Vivekananda was observed with special worship, meditation and prayer in the Temple of the Universal Spirit. A meditation class was held in the evening preceding which, Swami Paramananda shared with his listeners some of the intimate experiences of his early days as he was undergoing training for his spiritual career.

PUBLIC CELEBRATION

On January fifteenth the public was invited to participate in the two Services and a Hindu banquet in honor of Swami

Vivekananda. At eleven o'clock, the Swami spoke on Swami Vivekananda's influence on the lives of those with whom he came in contact. He related many personal reminiscences with loving and vivid realism. At one o'clock, a Hindu dinner was served to a large number of guests in the cloister patio. At three o'clock an extensive musical programme was given. There was an organ recital by Rev. Richardson, violin music by Mr. Roderick White and several vocal selections. There were also several guest speakers at the afternoon session. Swami Paramananda introduced them one by one, Rev. Miller an Episcopal minister from Pasadena, Rev. Halliday, rector of La Canada Church and Rev. Richardson of the liberal Catholic Church of Eagle Rock, and Ralph Waldo Trine. All spoke eloquently paying a high tribute to Swami Vivekananda and especially to the Ashrama for the splendid influence it has exerted upon the Occidental mind. Swami Paramananda brought the meeting to a close by telling the assembled congregation it was especially appropriate that so many clergymen were taking part in the celebration of the birthday of Swami Vivekananda whose very spirit was full of catholicity and universal harmony. His passion was to unite East and West in a bond of understanding and true fellowship. The Swami then offered his thanks to all the speakers and musicians who had a great part in making the occasion so very gratifying. The weather prophets had predicted bad weather but the miracle was that though Los Angeles was enshrouded in cold and fog the Ashrama had full benefit of the warm sun until the banquet was over.

ALHAMBRA

On the evening of January 19th, Swami Paramananda was invited to speak at the residence of Mrs. Wilhelm of Alhambra. A second address was given at the same place on the following Thursday evening. This time a very large number

congregated to hear the Swami who spoke with burning inspiration on the "Spirit of the Upanishads." At the conclusion of the lecture, refreshments were served and a very warm social hour followed.

OUT OF DOOR ACTIVITIES

In spite of his many strenuous activities, the Swami spent a great deal of his time during his stay of five weeks at the Ashrama transplanting trees, improving roads, gardens, etc., and in generally beautifying the Ashrama that has been spoken of many times by those who have contacted it as an earthly paradise.

MEDITATIONS

The Swami also inaugurated daily fireside meditations. They were at first intended only for the community or household of the Ashrama but many outside members begged to have the privilege of sharing in this inspiring occasion.

BOSTON VEDANTA CENTRE

It was a source of great joy and inspiration for the members of the Vedanta Centre of Boston that their leader Swami Paramananda, was able to observe Christmas, the greatest annual event of Christendom with them. The Swami had returned from his California Ashrama only a few days before.

Swami Paramananda has often been called by many of his old friends who knew him when he first arrived from India many years ago as the Christmas child or the Spirit of Christmas because he first set foot on these shores on the very eve of Christmas.

The Centre presented a beautiful picture with its tall Christmas tree glowing with many-colored lights. As one entered the Centre's massive portals, its breath-taking beauty was the first thing on which the eyes rested. There was a beautiful altar of the Madonna and Bambino made to look like Spring with a wealth of fragrant blossoms. As the Swami

softly entered the Chapel, many voices rang out in the Christmas carols so dear to all hearts. The Swami spoke with great simplicity and directness on the import of this world-wide celebration for, said he, "Is not the spirit of Christmas a symbol of love, charity and forgiveness toward all irrespective of caste, creed, nationality or dogma and was not the birth of the holy Child hailed as the advent of the Prince of Peace?"

In the course of his address he drew a vivid picture of his first Christmas Eve celebration in New England in the year 1908. It was held in Cambridge at the residence of Mrs. Ole Bull, widow of the famous Norwegian violinist. There was present on this occasion a distinguished group of men and women consisting of a number of Hindu students attending Harvard University and Technology together with some of their professors also the late Sir J. C. Bose, with his wife, Lady Bose, (Sir J. C. Bose was the great scientist who proved that plants have consciousness,) and Sister Nivedita (Margaret E. Noble) of the Sri Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Order who arranged the manger for the Baby Jesus and who also requested the Swami to officiate. It was indeed a unique event as Sister Nivedita read instead of the usual Scriptural chronicle of the nativity of the Christ child, the story of the birth of Baby Krishna from her own "Cradle Tales of Hinduism." Those present were astonished at the similarity of the two tales.

At the conclusion of the Service, the Sister produced a bottle of Ganges water and asked the Swami to bless every one with it. He hesitated a moment because he knew the gathering represented so many different faiths and creeds; for instance, Sir and Lady Bose were members of the Brahmo Samaj, the reform movement of India which is similar to the Unitarian movement of America, and there were orthodox Christians in the audience. But to the Swami's surprise every-

one sat with bowed head or knelt simply and humbly before him as he sprinkled the holy water on their heads. The Swami especially wished to share this incident with his congregation because it is so very closely related to his establishment of the Vedanta Centre in Boston.

After the prayer and benediction, carols were again sung and "Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas to all," resounded through the Chapel and under the dome where the Christmas tree stood.

NEW YEAR'S EVE

The devoted friends of the Boston Vedanta Centre are always greatly disappointed whenever Swami Paramananda is not able to be with them at the beginning of the New Year. The midnight New Year's Eve service was inaugurated in Boston many years ago and had come to be looked upon as a tradition. However the Swami had given his word that he would be present in California therefore his assistant, Sister Gayatri Devi who had returned to Boston shortly before Christmas, conducted the Service at eleven-thirty. New England winter had already set in. It snowed that evening making driving difficult as the roads were very slippery, nevertheless a faithful group gathered in the fragrant Chapel to take part in the simple, informal Service. It was conducted in the soft light of many candles and those who came with earnest spirit were grateful that the Centre provided such a setting of spiritual beauty away from the usual noise and gaiety of New Year's Eve. After the Service, everyone gathered in the reception hall to exchange greetings of good will and fellowship with each other as they partook of the refreshments.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S BIRTHDAY

Swami Vivekananda's birthday fell on January twelfth and was observed privately on that day with special worship and

devotion. A public banquet was held on the following day in honor of the occasion. A very large number attended. The striking portrait of Swami Vivekananda which hangs under the illuminated panels facing the entrance, dominated the scene and gave a sense of living presence. Nearly one hundred people sat at the tables extending from the door of the Chapel through the living room and even into the library. The many guests made the festival bright with their happy conversation and merry laughter.

Miss Eckert, a distinguished dramatic artist of New York City, came to Boston that she might be present on this occasion. She also wished to make an offering of her art to the Centre. In honor of the great Swami, she had chosen to enact her favorite dramatization of the life of St. Francis of Assisi, "The Troubadour of the Lord" as he was called all over Europe. The entertainment consisted of several parts. First she gave her reminiscences of Franciscan Italy where she spent several summers absorbing the atmosphere of Assisi, sacred with the memory of the Umbrian saint. His youth, gaiety, the divine call to the life of renunciation, his compassion for all creatures, his ecstatic communion and the crowning experience of his life—the receiving of the marks of the stigmata and his final release—all were beautifully depicted with deepest feeling.

As Miss Eckert recited the well known laud, "Canticle of the Sun," addressing sun, moon, fire, earth, air and water, all living beings, and life and death as his brothers and sisters, one became deeply conscious of the sanctity of this marvelous life. The audience sat spell-bound through the performance without any of the usual hand-clapping to mar the beauty of Miss Eckert's offering, and thus were able to go away carrying the profound impressions produced by the play.

The public celebration took place on Sunday the fifteenth

of January. Those who came to the Services were greatly inspired by Sister Gayatri Devi's soul-stirring addresses on the life and teachings of of the illustrious Swami.

ARRIVAL OF SWAMI PARAMANANDA

Swami Paramananda arrived in Boston on February fourth. The next day he spoke at eleven o'clock on "Impelling Power of Religion" and in the evening at eight on "Clear Mirrors." On Tuesday evening after the regular Class, a birthday reception was given to the Swami by his many friends and students. In spite of bad weather, the Chapel was overcrowded. Immediately after the class lesson, the congregation gathered in the hall where they sang together many beautiful popular songs, creating an atmosphere of warm fellowship. Through request, the Swami wore his orange turban. He was garlanded by Virginia Brand, one of his youngest friends and later a token of love was presented to him by little Yvonne Gagnon. There was also a big birthday cake with tall lighted candles which added an American touch to the celebration. Sister Gayatri Devi acted as master of ceremonies.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

February twenty-first seemed especially full of significance as the household of Vedanta Centre arose to take up the early morning duties for it was the birthday of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, the inspirer of modern India. The entire day was devoted to worship and prayer.

In the evening, quite a number came to partake of the *prasad* (blessed food) and Swami Paramananda in his regular class made frequent references to the life and teachings of this great Master. One of the high lights of the day was the fireside meditation for the members of the Vedanta Centre household and a few outside friends. These meditations are a vital feature of the Vedanta community life.

HINDU BANQUET

On the twenty-fourth of February a banquet was held in honor of Sri Ramakrishna and a very large number of persons attended it, taxing the seating capacity of the Centre. Rev. and Mrs. Kopf of the Mt. Vernon Church, Rev. and Mrs. Gysan of the Unitarian Church, Professor Rankin of Simmons and Radcliffe Colleges, Miss Blackwell, the head of International House of Boston, ten Harvard and Technology students from India and many out of town friends made up the interesting group that surrounded the beautifully decorated tables. It was a very vital occasion characterized by a spirit of joyousness. Immediately after the banquet, Mr. Einar Hansen, the distinguished Symphony violinist, delighted every one with his faultless rendition of classical music. Srimati Sumita Devi gave two numbers of interpretative Indian sacred dances which she had learned directly together with their accompanying songs from the great poet, Sir Rabindranath Tagore. Mr. Bhatt sang beautifully in Hindustani some of the songs especially associated with Mahatma Gandhi's Ashrama. Rev. Kopf gave a very hearty and enjoyable address expressing his appreciation and happiness in making his contact with the Vedanta Centre and its leader. Professor Rankin also expressed a feeling of great joy and gratitude that he was able to be present on such a significant occasion. Swami Paramananda spoke several times during the evening as he introduced the various speakers and musicians. And finally the evening was brought to a close with an ancient Sanscrit hymn sung by Sister Gayatri Devi and Srimati Sumita Devi.

PUBLIC CELEBRATION

On Sunday the twenty-sixth of February, Sri Ramakrishna's birthday was observed with three public Services. Swami Akhilananda of Providence spoke eloquently at eleven

o'clock on "Man of Realization". At three-thirty in the afternoon, Swami Vishwananda gave an inspiring lecture on "Sri Ramakrishna—the Sage," and in the evening at eight, Swami Paramananda gave the final address of the day on "Sri Ramakrishna, the Unifier." Due to the ice storm, the attendance was unusually small but as some one was heard to say the quality of the audience much more than made up for the numerical lack.

UNITARIAN YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONFERENCE

On Sunday, March 5th, Swami Paramananda spoke to an enthusiastic group of young men and women at the first Unitarian Church of Cambridge, Mass., on "Hindu Religion and Its Message to the West," "The Basic Ideas of Vedanta Philosophy," "Yoga, Karma, Nirvana, Incarnations, etc." and "Your views as a Hindu of Other Religions." The Swami handled his many subjects in masterly fashion—during the forty minutes allotted to him—giving a clear, concise exposition of each. He afterwards answered questions for nearly an hour. Out of this contact came an invitation to speak at King's Chapel to a similar group. Sister Gayatri Devi will accept and fulfill this engagement in Swami Paramananda's brief absence from Boston.

THANKFUL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We take this opportunity to express deep appreciation for the steadfast cooperation received from devoted friends and readers of "MESSAGE OF THE EAST" which has carried to the world, its message of unity and universality for the past twenty-seven years. We fervently hope we may continue to receive the active support of its many readers that its field of usefulness may be extended and its effectiveness increased during the years to come. May we request that those who have not already renewed subscriptions for 1939 will do so at once.

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"Truth Is One, Men Call It By Various Names." —RIG VEDA

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Easter Services, April 25th
Tues. 8 P.M. Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali
Srimati Gayatri Devi in charge

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By Swami Paramananda

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Daily Thoughts and Prayers — Secret of Right Activity

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Message of the East

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

—*Ezekiel*

"Light shall come again from the East."

—*Tyndall*

VOL. XXXII 1943 No. 1

DIVINE RESTLESSNESS

From "The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna"

(Translated into English by Swami Nikhilananda. Published by Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, New York.)

GOD cannot be realized by a mind that is hypocritical, calculating, or argumentative. One must have faith and sincerity. Hypocrisy will not do. To the sincere, God is very near; but He is far, far away from the hypocrite.

One must have for God the yearning of a child. The child sees nothing but confusion when his mother is away. You may try to cajole him by putting a sweetmeat in his hand; but he will not be fooled. He only says, "No, I want to go to my mother." One must feel such yearning for God. Ah, what yearning! How restless a child feels for his mother! Nothing can make him forget his mother. He to whom the enjoyment of worldly happiness appears tasteless, he who takes no delight in anything of the world — money, name, creature comforts, sense pleasure—becomes sincerely grief-stricken for the vision of the Mother. And to him alone the Mother comes running, leaving all her other duties.

Ah, that restlessness is the whole thing. Whatever path you follow—whether you are a Hindu, a Mussalman, a Christian, Sakta, a Vaishnava, or a Brahmo—the vital point is restlessness. God is our Inner Guide. It doesn't matter if you take a wrong path—only you must be restless for Him. He Himself will put you on the right path.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Ah, when shall all men's good
Be each man's rule, and universal peace
Lie like a shaft of light across the land,
And like a line of beams athwart the sea,
Through all the circles of the golden year.

—*Tennyson*

All the darkness in the world cannot put out the light of one small candle. —*Church Manual*

I must confront these Moros with a divine love which will speak Christ to them though I never use his name. They must see God in me, and I *must* see God in them. Not to change the name of their religion, but to take their hand and say, "Come, let us look for God."

A few days ago as we came on the priests, they were praying, in one boat wth thirty-five Moros, many of whom called to me to join. So I held out my hands and prayed with them, and as earnestly as any of them. One of them said "He is Islam," and I replied, "A friend of Islam."

—*From "Letters of a Modern Mystic"*

What else is wisdom? What of man's endeavor
Or God's high grace so lovely and so great?
To stand from fear set free, to breathe and wait;
To hold a hand uplifted over hate;
And shall not loveliness be loved forever? —*Euripides*

He whose heart is pure and good, who is without pride, is mild, persevering, simple and plain, who considers every creature as his friend, and who loves every soul as his own, who behaves uniformly to everyone with kindness and love, who wishes to do good, and has abandoned vanity—in his heart resides the Lord of Life. —*Vishnu Purana*

PSYCHIC UNFOLDMENT

By Swami Paramananda

"Let thine all be filled out of Him, albeit His whole cannot be contained in thine." —*Hugh of St. Victor*

"Thou that wouldst find the Lost One, lose thyself,
For naught but self divides thyself from Him.
Ask ye how I o'erpassed the dreary void?
One little step beyond myself was all."

—*Akhlaq-i-Jalali*

These utterances, simple and profound, find their commentary in our own understanding. We either understand them directly or we find them altogether too complicated. It depends upon the way we approach them. If we try to explain them by the light of ordinary knowledge, they seem full of inconsistencies and incongruities, but when we see them by the true light of spiritual illumination, they appear just the opposite.

"The eyes of my soul were opened," a mystic tells us, "and I beheld the plenitude of God whereby I did comprehend the whole world, both here and beyond. . . ."

This state of higher perception is not confined to any mechanical condition. We see more as we are capable of seeing more. A group of people may enter a room and look upon the selfsame objects, but when they go out and compare notes, every one has seen them differently. The same way it is in this world. People who have greater and more comprehensive vision of life, have it not because some special power has been bestowed upon them, but because, in the first place, they are desirous of seeing more, and, in the second place, they are willing to coordinate their whole life to that end. This gives them the power. Herein lies the difference between people. Fundamentally we all have practically the

same endowment, even physically we are all equally provided with eyes, ears, hands, feet, heart and brain and all the mental faculties, yet men differ very widely in what they perceive and understand. According to the adjustment of our instrument, according to its purity, according to the extent to which we have cleansed our organism, either we have clear vision or vision that is distorted. It all depends on our psychic unfoldment.

Now psychic unfoldment—that is, if the term is strictly used—means the unfoldment of mind and soul and all the inner faculties. When they open up within us we are able to see more, we are able to hear more, and, what is more, our vision is true, undisturbed and unobstructed. Unfortunately, however, the word "psychic," as it is used today, is tremendously perverted, and is used to designate the little, trifling powers such as mind-reading or prevision rather than the spiritual power which goes beyond, and is sustaining and unfailing. It is only as we avoid the trap of these smaller things that we may hope for the higher. The great Teacher, Sri Ramakrishna, was very strongly opposed to playing with these psychic phenomena. Not that he did not believe in them, but he knew them for what they are and how easily man becomes entangled by them.

The great safeguard is purity. As you purify your mind, as you purify your body, as you adjust all your sense faculties, naturally you will have greater vision. Vision is a natural power that we unfold as we learn to live in rhythm —with ourselves and with Nature. When you are trying to hear something very beautiful, such as music for instance, and people are making a lot of noise about you, although you may strain your ears you do not hear wholly, because of the confusion. The noise drowns out the subtle tones. So when the body and mind, the senses, the desires, the

aspirations, the whole constitution of a man become disordered and turbulent, the inner ears remain closed to the subtle, spiritual sounds. It is not that we wilfully bring about this condition; we may be unaware of it, but if our life and thought are not properly coördinated, we lose our control. Mind has the power of thought, yet when it is scattered it lacks strength and consistency. It is not able to carry any idea or ideal through to its conclusion. Then we say, "I have a weak mind; my mentality is not sufficient for higher vision," and we settle down to a state of negation and morbid brooding. We *have* the mentality, but the power cannot manifest unless the instrument is properly adjusted, and this lies with the individual.

Every thought and every action leaves its mark upon the body and the mind. An act can bring impurity to our physical system and likewise an act can bring an immediate sense of purification. Often unconsciously we allow our mind to be dragged down. For instance, we rise up in the morning under the depressing influence of some thought. At first we merely recognize its presence, but its influence grows till finally the whole sky of our mind is covered with its blackness and our entire atmosphere emanates a dull depression. Naturally whatever the mind conceives in that mood will be colored by that dullness. Nothing seems bright to a mind that has taken the color of darkness. On the other hand, when the mind has made its adjustment on the higher plane —the plane of spiritual brilliancy—no matter what is brought before it, even the most hopeless task, ceases to seem difficult, power manifests even through the body and one is successful in whatever one undertakes. Now these are not myths or poetic fancies; they are facts, and spiritual facts are just as real as material facts.

In the Bhagavad-Gita there is the following passage: "That

which is night for the mortals, therein the wise ones, the self-subjugated, are wide awake. . . ." Their vision is clear, there is no doubt, no darkness for them in that sphere. They see clearly and because they see clearly their faith is unbounded. Here on this mortal plane where we are most active, where we deal with the gross and believe in it so tremendously, here these wise ones are tranquil, because their vision is unfolded and they see beyond the fleeting conditions of material life. That is the reason why even in the midst of a tragedy you find them untouched and unshaken. It is not that they are unfeeling; it is not that they lack the sight with which to see the sad things around them, but they see from another angle; they know how to turn upon every object the spiritual light that dispels all gloom.

Understanding is due to inner vision. Eyes exist that we may look without and behold things and study and read, but we do not learn half so much by outward gazing as we learn by gazing within. You may say, "That is only a sentiment; when I close my eyes I see nothing." At first you may see nothing, but if you continue to keep your eyes closed to outer forms and distractions, gradually your mind will assume a new point of view and your vision will unfold till not only does the solution of your own life's problem become clear, but many other things besides.

Everything is recorded in the universe. According to the Vedic conception, every incident that is coming to pass is already written there, and if you have the sight you can read. People who have clarity of mind read spontaneously, and when they tell us what they have read we say it is a miracle. How does one acquire this supernatural gift? There is nothing supernatural about it; it is entirely natural. When the mind is like a crystal it reflects the Truth, but when it is covered with dirt and full of disorder, then it no longer

reflects Truth; rather it breaks the vision and distorts it.

In one sense there is no such thing as the unnatural or the miraculous. Everything that comes is the result of natural development. When our faculties are properly ordered, we find access, natural access, to the higher sphere of realities. Have we not seen how one person will spend hours seeking to solve a problem and even after giving all that time is unable to see clearly what he should do, whereas another only takes a moment to arrive at a right solution? Through what power does he do this? Through the power of vision, and that is an inward power and is never to be found on the outside.

The light of the soul is always burning, and if you want to read the true book of life, you must take the aid of that light. Therefore Christ said that the Kingdom of Truth is within. The average person does not really believe this. He tries to exhaust the outer world. When he wants happiness he seeks for it in the external; if he desires wealth, he runs around looking for it here, there and everywhere, and all the time the riches of the mind, the entire wealth of his life is within him. A man must find life's treasure within himself before he can truly enrich his outer existence. And this is the idea of psychic unfoldment. If we mean by this expression the unfoldment of our higher faculties, such unfoldment is good and beneficial. But if we mean the evolving, by this means or that, of something with a miraculous flavor, in order to take advantage of other people, or to satisfy our own vanity, or for any selfish purpose whatsoever, then it is dangerous. A weapon has its place but it may threaten our very lives if we do not know how to employ it. A torch in the hand of a child who does not know the proper use of it and is merely fascinated by its glow, may set a whole city on fire. Power should manifest only through

the right instrumentality. It is for us to adjust our body, our mind, our senses, and above all, our understanding, in order to be fit for it. Power in an ignorant hand is full of danger. Nature withholds the true power from the ignorant. Outer power the ignorant man may grasp, but never the power of the Spirit.

Here you may ask, "Why do we not all possess the same faculty for seeing? Why do we not all possess the same capacity for doing? There is no partiality shown. We possess according to what we are capable of possessing. There is just distribution throughout the universe. We must remember that. It will give us a sense of tranquility. People are forever complaining about the world, that there must be something wrong with it, that Divine Providence, perhaps, is unjust. Divine Providence is not unjust. There is everything for us here in this world, before us, behind us, above us and below us, but these things exist for us only as we become aware of them. For this reason, every individual, no matter what his vocation or how he is placed, must make his own self-adjustment, and that means a study of self; it means going within. The Kingdom of God is within.

There was a mystic who exclaimed, "For thirty years I sought for God, and when at the end of that time I opened my eyes, I found that He was seeking me."

We can easily blindfold ourselves and self-blindfoldment is the most treacherous thing there is. A man blindfolds himself when he thinks that he knows all, that he is always right and everybody else is wrong. Who is ever going to convince such a one that there is anything lacking in his understanding until he himself turns on his own soul light and gazes within? That is the beginning of spiritual life; it is the beginning of true vision.

Now the first sign that there is any spiritual unfoldment,

or if you like, psychic unfoldment in the strictly spiritual sense of the word, is that a person becomes more quiet. One who suddenly sees more deeply into the heart of things does not go and announce it in a loud voice. If he perceives something clearly, the next step, the logical thing is for him to work it out, and this means silent action. He has no time for noise; he has no time or taste for notoriety. His mind, his whole aspiration, even his physical faculties gradually become so tremendously concentrated that other things seem insignificant. If a person has not the will or the power to do this then his vision is shallow; it may have been just a little flash or imagination. Sometimes people even have hallucinations. This makes it very necessary for us not to confuse the ordinary powers with the higher spiritual forces which are always constructive for ourselves and for others. Furthermore we must have a sense of proportion and we must develop true discrimination. Suppose you do evolve certain lower psychic faculties, what is the advantage? Ask yourself in what way they will benefit you or your fellow beings.

Once there were two brothers entirely different in temperament and desire. One was practical, a householder, while the other gave himself over to austerity, but though he appeared to want nothing, secretly he was fascinated by the thought of psychic power. One day he retired to the forest and did not return again for twelve years. No one disturbed him, for in India absolute freedom is given in regard to spiritual things. If a man thinks he can attain great vision by standing upon one leg, there is not a soul who will interfere with him or even laugh at him, although in the Occident you would probably think he was crazy. So the ascetic brother was left in peace and after he had completed his psychic practices, he returned home. One of the first people he met was his brother. He greeted him and said, with an

air of superiority, "Come with me and I will show you what I have achieved." He took him to the river bank and leaving him there, began to walk upon the water. He went across the river and came back, filled with his own marvelous accomplishment. But his brother, who was full of common sense, exclaimed, "Why, I can go across the river by spending a penny. After twelve long years is that all you have attained?"

Here there is food for thought, food for reflection. Suppose a man evolves power along certain lines, if it is only for such trivial ends it cannot be of very great value. It is true that we do transcend our limitations both physical and mental. Our present capacity of seeing and hearing and all our sense experiences can be multiplied many times. Our sight can be made much more keen than now, and unerring; our power of hearing can be intensified, and the logical, practical way for the realization of this is the way of purity of purpose, concentratedness of thought and action, and meditation.

What is meditation? We all meditate consciously or unconsciously but every one does not meditate upon a pure object. Some people plunge into thoughts of hatred, anger, jealousy or material worries, and what is the result? They absorb these qualities. For whatever we think upon we become. Moreover our vision is sure to be colored in regard to other problems. Nothing will be clear. That is why we should cultivate as much as we can clarity of thought. It is a cleansing process. Every time you enter into a thought which is pure and spiritual, you are made clean and whatever you conceive in that hour of silence and meditation will be true. No untrue picture can be reflected in the mind which is pure and spiritually protected. Pure thought is one of the greatest safeguards in life, and though you must cultivate it

for the sake of itself without any calculation for your own protection or defense, yet you will always be preserved and protected.

You become invincible through no desire of your own but because you contain the essence of Truth in your heart. When a flower blossoms it does not have to ask the Lord to give it its beauty; its beauty is its natural heritage. It fascinates you by its loveliness; it attracts you by its fragrance. The same way it is with our life. When we have lived the right kind of life, when we have thought the right kind of thoughts, we manifest power even unconsciously, and that is the best way to manifest it. When you go about begging the Lord, "I want this," or "I want that," it means that there is always some motive and as a rule it is a selfish one. If you are not looking for any of these things, however, but rather have turned your whole spiritual aspiration toward the highest, the truest, the noblest, then whatever manifests through your life—body, mind, senses and intellect—will bring infinite blessing to yourself and to your fellow beings.

It is the work, the thought, it is the life, it is all that we continuously carry in our consciousness that moulds our whole being. There are those who even in the midst of miseries see the smile of Heaven. It is not imagination: they actually see it; they feel it; they enjoy it; they radiate it. Why is this? Because in their living they have looked to something other than material existence. We can do the same thing. If we do not confine our vision to these eyes we may behold the very countenance of Truth; if we do not confine our hearing entirely to these ears we may then hear the sound of the Infinite and the Voice of Truth guiding us.

It is the custom of practically all religions for the aspirants at certain hours to retire from the world of noise and activity in order to refresh their souls. For the soul needs refresh-

ment, and when we do refresh it we discover that the body is equally benefitted, and that even through the physical the power of the Spirit shines forth. Then we become invulnerable, then we are incapable of doing harm to any one. Then through our eyes Divinity shines; through our mouth He speaks; through our ears He hears and we find that our whole life has become absolutely united with the one great Power. Until we have manifested That we have not become true children of the Divine, though that is our heritage. Until we have known with our understanding—our purified and clear understanding—that we are His children and as such are united, we cannot know real unfoldment.

When a man can stand up in the midst of all diversity, all conflict, and hold before his mind's eye the picture of the Unchanging and the Vast, then he truly sees. That is the ultimate vision, the power which destroys all differences, and though we may not know it, we are placed here in this world that we may give our share, small or big, to bring about that great unity which exists in the heart of the Divine.

Sri Ramakrishna: Knowest thou what I see? I see Him as all. Man and other creatures,—they appear as veritable figures skin-bound with the Lord within, shaking the head or moving the hands and feet! I had once a like perception: One Substance I felt had taken the forms of the Cosmos with all living creatures; like a house of wax, with gardens, roads, men, cows and the rest, all made of wax and nothing but wax! . . . Ah me! what a vision!

Sri Krishna: Neither by the Vedas, nor by austerities nor by charitable gifts, nor by sacrifice can I be seen as thou hast seen Me, but by single-hearted devotion alone I can be known in this manner, O Arjuna, and perceived in reality and also entered into.

ONENESS

By Sister Devamata

The universe rests on oneness. Through the multiplicity and variety of created things runs a unity which binds them into a complete whole. In this visible variation there is no repetition; each object differs in some degree from every other. Every tree is an individual, each blossom has its special way of unfolding, every human being possesses a distinguishing personality. Yet science is able to classify and tabulate. This is due to the underlying oneness of all things. As the scientist in his research approaches this unity his inferences grow more defined, more illuminating, until no further adjustment in premise or equation is necessary and he uncovers an elemental truth.

In the realm of mind and intellect the same law obtains. At the outset of his study or intellectual research the student is chiefly concerned with the many. He reads many books, holds many arguments and discussions, uses many words, sees many differences. But as he goes deeper he begins to relate and coordinate. He reads and talks less and thinks more. Finally his thought becomes wholly unified and he grows silent. The Chinese philosopher Lao Tze declares, "The sage instructs without uttering a word, remembering how all things in Nature work silently together, fulfilling the purpose for which they are created without relying upon the help of others."

On the plane of spirit there can be no multiplicity. There must be oneness of ideal, oneness of purpose, oneness of method. The devotee must be steadfast and unified in both aim and effort. In a mediaeval manual of devotion the Lord gives this injunction: "Thou must make Me thy supreme and ultimate end if thou truly desirest to be blest. Refer all things

to Me in the first place for I am He who hath given all. Think of everything as flowing from the Highest Good, and to Me as their source all must be brought back again."

We take up the spiritual life entangled in the many—many interests and many attachments. Our task is to disentangle ourselves, that we may reach the One. We accomplish this by the practice of renunciation. This practice does not demand of us rigid privation or retirement to a cloister. It does not ask us to go out of the world, it asks us to go out of ourselves. If we do this wholeheartedly we can remain in the world, love and serve, and yet attain the heights. Renunciation means simplifying, giving up the non-essentials, building our life on a larger plan. We must rise superior to our body, superior to our surroundings, superior to our circumstances, superior to the opinion of people and to their attitude toward us.

We must begin with our immediate environment—simplify the furnishing of our home, our dress, the food on our table. Wherever spaces can be made, we should make them. We need not fear that the result will be bareness or unsightliness. In simplicity there is greater beauty and distinction than in abundance. In our reading and study also we should be more one-pointed. We read too casually—a book recommended by a friend, a book found by chance on the shelf in a circulating library, a book of the hour. This heterogeneous reading confuses the mind and disintegrates the deeper thought gained through meditation. We need not cease to read, but we must have a purpose in what we read. If we would advance toward oneness, we must unify our intellectual study and harmonize it with our spiritual practice. Thomas á Kempis tells us, "The more a man is at one within himself and becometh single in heart, the more and higher things is he able without labor to understand, for that he receiveth

the light of understanding from above." And again, "Only he to whom all things are one, who draweth all things to one, and who seeth all things in one, can be steadfast in heart and remain peaceable in God."

Passing from the many to the one, from multiplicity to unity, is the history of all religions. In their primitive stage they have many deities; every tree, every woodland, every mountain and valley has its presiding spirit; all the forces of Nature are personified and deified. As the religious consciousness deepens, there arises a God of gods, and the first glimmering conception of oneness is born. A further awakening transforms the minor gods into aspects of Deity. Oneness, however, is not yet attained; worshipper and worshipped are still separate. But in the virgin forests of India, in China, and Egypt, there arose great sages who proclaimed the union of worshipper and worshipped. The same truth is reiterated in the scriptural records of the time, as we see from such passages as this one, taken from the *Bhagavad-Gita*:

"The Supreme alone exists, enveloping all. . . . Unattached, yet It sustains all. . . . It exists within and without all beings; It is unmoving as well as moving, incomprehensible because of Its subtlety; It is far and also near. Indivisible, yet It exists as if divided in beings; It is to be known as the Sustainer of beings; It destroys and also generates. It is the Light of light, and is said to be beyond darkness. It is knowledge, the One to be known, and the Goal of knowledge, dwelling in the hearts of all. . . He who sees the separate existence of beings established in the One, and their expansion from That alone, becomes one with the Highest."

For thoughts alone cause the round of births; let a man strive to purify his thoughts. What a man thinks, that he is: this is the old secret. —*Maitrayana-Brahmana-Upanishad*

THE HOLY WITHIN*

By Thomas R. Kelly

Life is meant to be lived from a Center, a divine Center. Each one of us can live such a life of amazing power and peace and serenity, of integration and confidence and simplified multiplicity, on one condition—that is, *if we really want to*. There is a divine Abyss within us all, a holy Infinite Center, a Heart, a Life who speaks in us and through us to the world. We have all heard this holy Whisper at times. At times we have followed the Whisper, and amazing equilibrium of life, amazing effectiveness of living set in. But too many of us have heeded the Voice only at times. Only at times have we submitted to His holy guidance. We have not counted this Holy Thing within us to be the most precious thing in the world. We have not surrendered *all else,* to attend to it alone. Let me repeat. Most of us, I fear, have not surrendered all else, in order to attend to the Holy Within.

The life of every moment is a phenomenon of God's heart. Every task is the combustion of the flame of God. He greets us in the kitchen. He gazes intently upon us at the well-curb. In the bustle and hustle of the factory or when hanging on the strap in the crowded car we breathe God. When we lift the iron sledge and are hammering out the steel we are in God's bosom.

This is the mood of the true soul. To be drunk, not with liquor, but with God. To feast to one's heart's content, not on food, but on God. In dreaming and in waking hours, in sorrow and in laughter, to walk in a world flooded with light, this is a phenomenon experienced only by those who truly know the soul's art. —*Kagawa's Meditations*

*From "A Testament of Devotion"

A WHISPER*

By Jean du Bouillier

I am the winds that live beyond the hill,
I am the trees that stand so tall and still.
My breath is as sweet as spring, as tender—
My voice is like a bird that sings in stormy weather.

I am Eternal Life, Eternal Death reborn,
I am a drop of dew on the waving corn,
I am all the seasons rolled into one,
I am the peace of evening—after work is done.

I am of Earth and Heaven
And of everything a part,
I am that wee small voice
That whispers in everyman's heart.

I am as ageless as Time—
Yet I move through space.
My eyes reflect into dreamy waters
Through moonlight's tender grace.

I am Eternal goodness—
A power that none can see—
Yet I can head the faintest whisper—
Even a tremor—among the grasses,
Even a reed in the wind—as it passes.

I am the music of silent dream
Carried by winds in haste to thee!
I am the soul of Earth and Heaven—
For I am the Voice of Eternity.

*From "Patterns of Dream"

HOW TO BE A REAL MASTER

By Swami Ramakrishnananda

Man is born with a restless, discontented nature. He is ever aspiring to raise himself higher than where he is. A millionaire wants to amass more millions, a man well versed in all branches of knowledge does not rest satisfied but wants more. "Absolute rest is gained only in the grave", says a Western thinker. Human life is indeed a constant struggle against whatever tries to impede its onward flow. Sri Krishna says, "No one can live for a moment without action." Every man has to act involuntarily, forced by his nature. In the case of a lazy man his desire to enjoy better things does not cease. Passions and appetites have more dominion over him than over an active man, but he is so overpowered by sloth that instead of endeavoring to gratify them he somehow or other manages to live simply by imagining them. The wish to enjoy better, to know more, to be more and more free from all impediments which prevent the attaining of those things which they ardently desire, to be more a master than a slave, is the one raging passion in all human beings.

Now, therefore, it is clear that to be a master and not a slave is the one aim towards which all humanity is moving. The full or partial realization of this end depends upon the intensity of the desire as well as upon the effort to attain to it. No one wants to be put down or discomfited in any way. The masterly spirit in man always wants to assert itself. This shows that in our real nature we are masters. Although circumstances have bound us so hand and foot that we are compelled to believe that we depend upon this thing or that thing, this man or that man, for our existence, still we cannot help thinking that we are really masters. A slave in a court is a master in his own house. The common servant

of your house, drawing a very paltry sum every month which is hardly enough to keep the body and soul together, is a prince in his own cottage in a far away wayside village. So, however badly circumstanced we may be, the circumstances have no power completely to obliterate our naturally independent nature. We are sure to assert ourselves at some time or other. Surroundings merely hide our real nature from our view and force us to believe what we are not. A man may be a slave to a brother man who regards himself as the master of the slave, but, as we have seen, no man can be absolutely a slave; and it is also a fact that no tyrant can be a real master.

These considerations clearly show that since it is our nature to rule, it is always better to give this nature full scope to develop itself, to evolve masters and not slaves out of us. From our very childhood we hate restraint. No conventionalism, no formality, no etiquette, no manner can bind a child. Children profess no religion, admit no restrictions and therefore have no caste, for the nature of childhood is always and everywhere the same. Now the question is, should we leave our children to do whatever they like, for by so doing we give them perfect liberty and thus virtually make them masters, and not slaves to others? It is true that a child does not love restraint, but that does not prove that it is not restricted or circumscribed on all sides. In truth, we are bound hand and foot in all directions. We may love liberty but we have no liberty. We may love pleasure, but there is no pleasure for us which we can get without undergoing great labor, trouble and pain. We may hate pain but pain is the cheapest thing in the market of this world. A human child is the most forlorn and helpless creature on this earth and if it be allowed to be left alone to itself to do whatever it likes, is there any doubt that it will be kicked out of

existence by enemies such as ignorance, hunger, thirst, cold, heat, physical and mental weakness and disease? As when a plant is very young we put a fence round it to save it from being pulled out by mischievous urchins or grazed by the cattle, so should we limit the child to prevent its falling a prey to the enemies mentioned. This is the reason why a child should be made to go through a course of strict discipline before it is allowed to have any liberty. A boy or girl may not like restraint of any kind but it is necessary for his or her own safety and the attainment of future liberty and mastership.

If we want to be proof against all sorts of temptations we must first have a character of our own, and that character can only be gained by a man's sacrificing his own liberty and forcing himself to go through a regular course of discipline for a certain number of years. When that discipline becomes natural to him, that is to say, when it appears to him not as a tyrannical and detestable master, but rather as a most loving friend without whom he cannot do even for a moment, then he may know that his character has been formed. So long as we have no ideal to follow we shall have to heed the call of our passions and appetites; a characterless man is an abject slave to all worldly enjoyments. Passions and appetites have been compared to an insatiable fire; the more fuel you put into it the more lustily will it burn. There is no food here, on this earth, eating which we shall hunger no more, there is no drink here drinking which we shall thirst no more. One who follows the dictates of his senses will never be able to please them. No rest can such a slave ever expect to have; so abject a being can never hope to be a master. Unfortunately almost all human beings are such slaves.

Generally the word "master" is not understood in its higher

sense. People understand by the word a man whom some other men and women serve and follow, assuming that a rich man, a prince, or a king is the real master. A tyrant or conqueror is regarded by them to be a perfect master. As a baby depends for its protection and existence upon some one else, so a rich man's existence fully depends upon others. We are apt to regard a rich man as a master and his retainers as his servants, but in reality the servants are the true masters and the so-called master is a slave to them. What is true of a rich man is also true of a prince or a king. Conquerors like Napoleon and Alexander the Great were all self-reliant, and never trusted themselves wholly to the care of their men. Thy were not fond of luxuries but were always active and bold. Should we not regard such great men as masters? As much as they were self-helping so much were they really masters. But so long as a man wants anything he cannot properly be called a master. He should only be called a master who has enough for himself and for others, who wants nothing here on this earth, who is always full like the ocean which suffers no loss although the sun takes tons of water from it daily. The more a man wants, the more is he a beggar. Heroes and conquerors are never satisfied with anything; they are always restless. Ambition is their ruling passion. They are the worshippers of their own lower selves and do not scruple to deluge the world in blood to satisfy their senses. How can such men assume the noble title of master?

If we analyze our mind, we find it to be made up of thoughts, and in analyzing these thoughts we find that they are made up of our perceptions, sensations, and experiences, our desires, passions and appetites, all of which have their birth in our senses. So mind also is something which is separate from us. The nature of mind is restlessness. The nature of our pure Self is calmness for in it there cannot be any desire

and desire being the cause of all our activities there can be no activity. It is always one and the same. When it identifies itself with the mind then alone it wrongly thinks itself to be active, it wants this thing or that thing, always something better, and forgets its own masterly nature, and thus becomes a slave. The great sage, Sankara, says: What makes a man worthless and of no consequence? Begging. What makes him great and of great consequence? Non-desire and contentment. That discontented man, whether he be a very wealthy man, a prince, a king, or an emperor, is really a slave who has not been able to conquer his desire; and that contented individual whether he may own a cottage or not, whether he may cover his nakedness with a rag or not, whether he can daily procure some wretched food to keep his body and soul together or not, whether the world holds him very light or not, in all cases, reigns supreme over all circumstances, beyond the reach of the havoc of time. He is not mastered by desires, but desires are slaves to him, so they cannot move him. Thousands of rivers may flow into the ocean, but all of them lose themselves in it and it is always the self-same ocean. Similarly thousands of desires may flow into that great individual only to lose themselves in him. He is always the selfsame being, no change can come over him. Such a man is a real master.

Every one of us is such a master, only through mistake we identify ourselves with the mind and thus think ourselves other than what we are. To dispel this mistake should be our unceasing aim. We must struggle hard and long and in the end we are sure to realize our own true nature. "This highest self cannot be realized by a weak cowardly man, or by him who wants in vigilance or right meditation. But by him alone who is strong, and vigilant and meditates and thinks rightly, that highest world of Braham can be attained." So

to reach that height of a real master, the Vedas advise us to be strong, vigilant and meditative. We must have strength sufficient to resist all evil temptations. Temptations sometimes disguise themselves and assume the form of duties; we must be vigilant enough not to be deluded by those false appearances. Constant meditation on the real nature of our self makes us unmindful of the demands of our senses till at last they demand no more, and confirm the conviction of our masterly nature. Hence we should be always meditative.

Kings and emperors rule this world but for a few days. Their lives are limited and unsafe, their powers precarious. Not such is the case with true Masters. The world is always ruled by such high souls. Instead of living as kings and emperors these people prefer the life of abject poverty, and from that apparently lowly condition they rule over monarchs and conquerors. Their lives are not limited, their powers are eternal, their friends comprise the whole world, their bliss is perennial, their energies are always employed for the amelioration of their brother-men. The ancient sages of India used to live in cottages built in the midst of forests. Buddha walked all over India with his begging-bowl in hand, preaching to every one his noble doctrine intended to save people from birth, disease, old age and death. Jesus Christ had not a stone to lay his head upon. He was like the birds of the air, neither sowing nor reaping. Sri Chaitanya had the sky for his roof and the earth for his bed. And so also did many others who are the virtual rulers of the world. The paths which they have laid down are followed by all humanity.

Truth to them (the great prophets of the world) had become real. Peace and calmness and perfect purity became their own nature, after they had given up all these vanities of powers. —*Swami Vivekananda*

SONNETS OF GIORDANO BRUNO

from his "Century" in the Heroic Enthusiasts

DEDICATED TO SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

(Giordano Bruno's influence on his British friends was very important and has been too little noted. His astonishing mystic classic, "Gli Eroici Furori," dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney, started a little Italian Academy at the home of Sir Fulke Greville in 1583, in which Sidney, Edmond Spencer, Greville, Dyer and Temple were among the leaders.)

1.

GIORDANO CALLED TO BE A POET

O Muses, whom so oft I did repel
Importunate ye hasten to my pains,
Alone to comfort me in my distress,
With such-like verses, rimes and ecstasies
As never unto others ye showed forth
Who boast of myrtle or of laurel crowns;
Yours now my sailing breeze, anchor, and haven,
And if elsewhither I be forbidden disport,
O Mount, O Goddesses, O fountain,
Where dwell I, converse hold, and nourish me,
Where peace I ensue—pursuing arts of war:—
Heart, spirit and mind—I praise, quicken, adore,
And death and griefs and hell
Ye change to life, poesy and everlasting stars.

II.

GIORDANO ENNOBLED BY HIS OWN IMPARTED DIVINE NATURE

In place and fashion my heart is Parnassus-like,
Whither for refuge it behooves me ascend.
My Muses be my thoughts which at all hours
Make present to me beauties long revealed.
Hence oftentimes mine eyes do freshly shed
A many tears and lo, my Helicon!

By grace of such twin summits, nymphs and springs
As pleased Heaven was I a poet born.
Not then hath any king
Nor favorable hand of emperor,
Nor supreme pontif, shepherd of men's souls,
Such graces, honors, privileges decreed,
But with heroic laurel am I crowned
By my own heart, my thoughts, and my own shed tears!

XV.

LOVE'S MIRACULOUS FAVOR

Although through thee dire martyrdom I endure
Yet do I bless thee, and much do owe thee, Love!
That being such, art Lord yet of my heart,
By whom it cometh the Divine Living One
I adore in a fairer earthly image of God.
Let whoso will deem cruel my destiny,
Which though it slay my hope, quickenth desire!
Lo, I am nourished of my high emprise!
And though the desired end shall follow not
And hence my soul in contemplation waste,
Enough so noble a fire set me on flame,
Enough that Love uplifted me so high
Loosing my bondage to the ignoble herd.

XVI.

THE ECSTATIC "FUROR," OR INSPIRED ENTHUSIASM

Since I've the wings of my fair desire unfurled
The deeper under my feet the abyss of air
The more my pinions swift to the wind I spread,
Spurning the world, and fling me up to heaven!
Not the dire end of Daedalus' boy can urge
Me to swerve downward, but rather higher rise

Assured I'll fall to eath precipitate:
For what life ever could with such death compare?
My heart's voice in th'sheer zenith I overhear:
—"Whither wilt thou, deathless Spirit, so bear me aloft?
Rarely foolhardihood is from disaster safe!"
—"Nay, fear not thou," I answer, "exalted ruin,
Cleave the welkin care-free, and perish there content
If Heaven so illustrious death predestine thee!"

English without rime

WILLIAM NORMAN GUTHRIE

A few years ago, Charles P. Steinmetz went to Wellesley Hills to visit Roger W. Babson. In the course of conversation, according to a report in the *Utica-Observer Dispatch,* Babson asked his guest: "What line of research will see the greatest development during the next fifty years?"

The scientist was quiet for several minutes. "The great discoveries," he answered finally, "will be made along spiritual lines. We scientific men have spent our lives studying physical forces. And now—having made the most sensational discoveries in the history of the world—we learn that our knowledge has not brought people happiness. Material things will never bring happiness. Scientists must now turn their laboratories over to the study of God, and prayer, and the spiritual forces. Here is the field where miracles are going to occur. Spiritual power is the greatest of the undeveloped powers, and has the greatest future.

—From "Limiting God" by C. R. Dickey in "Destiny"

When you see another rich, see what you have instead of riches; for if you have nothing in their stead, you are miserable. But if you have the advantage of not needing riches, know that you have something more than he hath, and of far greater value. *—Epictetus*

OUR PART IN WORLD CRISIS

By Srimati Gayatri Devi

In these days of uncertainty our part is to fortify ourselves spiritually. We need to keep clearly before our eyes the vision of the Ideal we serve. No calamity can overtake us if we do not allow bewilderment and panic to cloud our understanding. Now is the hour to apply our faith and philosophy and to remain absolutely steady.

It is not sufficient to work relentlessly with our hands or to follow in quick pace the promptings of our mind. Behind our actions there must be thoughtfulness and spiritual preparedness that can withstand the tests of emergency and confusion. We must individually recognize our responsibility not only as workers, managers, organisers or leaders but also as spiritual human beings who are eager to remain utterly true to their high and exalted ideals.

There is no question in our minds that this is a moment of tremendous crisis. Let us welcome it with the knowledge that our strength is equal to the task before us. Difficulties never befall a man without a reason. The universe is not governed by anarchy or by a whimsical or tyrannical Providence. The present conditions of conflict and destruction are the result of man's ignorant and misguided desires and actions; therefore, it is within his power to avoid future catastrophies by altering his mode of thought and action. We must always pay the price for our wrong doing. We must humbly recognise our mistakes and move forward with determined resolution to fulfill our duty as befits the children of the Most High.

Above all else, let us be utterly fearless. Are we afraid to lose our material security or comfort? Are we overzealous in guarding our possessions and pleasures? Are we

apprehensive over pain, struggle, disease or death? Then let us sustain ourselves with the infallible wisdom that in this transitory world nothing endures. Life and death, suffering and misfortune are not novelties on our plane of existence. To bear attachment to one and aversion toward the other is to be ignorant, weak and bound. Let us be free and valiant and undaunted, remembering that the true spirit of man is above the dualities of life. When confronted with destruction, let us not forget that our bodies are perishable but the dwellers in the body are deathless. Our ability to carry this conviction will enable us to remain unperturbed in the face of danger and tragedy. We shall meet them with calm equanimity and inspire others to do likewise.

We should watch lest we fall prey to a soft, comforting and falsifying philosophy. Never say to yourself or to anyone, "Bear with the ills and hardships of today that you may enjoy luxury and ease in days to come." Should we desire and bargain for material ends? The spiritually sturdy of the world often impose discipline upon themselves in order to realise their inherent fortitude. If our share of rigor is thrust upon us by circumstances, we should become wise enough to utilize it to our advantage. Nothing moulds a character as readily as discipline. Our attitude should be that of one who daringly puts to the test his divine potentialities and rises to unexpected emergencies triumphantly. All this and more is possible unto us as we ally ourselves with the One within and above. Our capacity to draw from His infinitude makes us strong and invincible.

This is no time to be careless and negligent in our inner life. We must remain perpetually vigilant and armor ourselves against onslaughts of loss and separation and sorrow. Prayer, devotion, meditation, and unobstructed contact with the Divine will keep our minds clear and our hearts undis-

turbed and serene. Thus, limitless energy will flow through us for the execution of our specific role of service. The closer we live to the unslumbering Operator of the universe, the more assuredly shall we understand His purpose. We shall then move through life as unaffected by it as witnesses of a drama even though they are players in it.

The Almighty is not a sadist-God sporting with the misfortunes of man. He is ever the beneficent, all-loving, all-merciful Spirit whose play of dissolution is designed to speed forward His children's evolution—to purify and purge them of greed, selfishness and blindness. The sacrificial fire into which thousands of human lives are being poured as oblation today, will gradually and surely destroy the dross of pride, arrogance and self-delusion. The golden soul of humanity will lose none of its effulgence through the burning. It will only glow with brighter lustre. Out of the chaos and seeming darkness will emerge a world we shall call *His* and not ours, upon which will live people humble and selfless and godly, rejoicing in the happiness and achievement of their brother man. None of the anguish and disaster would be in vain if man through His grace, inspired by the love of His laws, can bring about such an order.

The most urgent need at the present moment is love in our hearts, not a sentimental or superficial emotionalism reserved for a few and susceptible to prejudices and bias—but a deep and earnest desire for the good and for the peace of all men everywhere in the world, irrespective of class, country or creed, friend or foe. Love is the direct power of God within our soul. Let us release it and in its pure waters wash away our hates, our bitternesses and grievances. Ours is not to listen to voices that whisper in the dark a message of ill will, resentment and revenge. Paying heed to such insinuations we may succeed in destroying the enemy but we will also

injure the moral fibre of our own being. We should uproot evil and demolish it but never at the expense of committing spiritual suicide.

The injunctions of the Saviours of the world given two or three thousand years ago have lost none of their significance through antiquity. Buddha and Christ taught man that the way out of evil was through the multiplication of goodness; that hatred could be abolished only through excess of love. They declared their teachings were eternal truths, applicable at all times. Shall we not make use of them in this hour of supreme test instead of discarding them because humanity has failed again and again to profit by them?

Perhaps mankind as a whole is not yet sufficiently evolved to value the efficacy of higher laws, nevertheless our brother's failure should not hinder us from practising and abiding by our convictions. Let us never lower our standards or make compromises regarding the vital issues of spiritual life. Imbued with unalloyed idealism and wisdom we can all move in our own sphere and render full measure of service. If our convictions are manifest in our outer life and action, ours will be the power to influence others convincingly. It is not possible to change or reform the world in haste. But we can at least strive to re-form ourselves. Let our love and good will grow so deep and all-inclusive that they may bury in their depths all the impediments of narrow, selfish nationalism, or international favoritism, and all the weight of racial and religious distinctions. Could we but make our consciousness pure, casting out the blemishes of fear and avarice, selfishness and wrath, greed and love of power, our hearts will be a fitting altar for Him Who is "alike to all beings," to Whom "there is none hated or beloved." We must remember that enemies and friends, the wicked and the righteous pray to the same Divine Being.

Shall we include in our prayers not only the needy; the stricken; the ones we love near and far; but also those who scatter want and pain and calamity upon man's path? Whenever we find ourselves incapable of praying for those who have harmed us, let us "ask Him to protect us from hating them." It is indeed a tremendous victory for the man who is able to see the divine spark behind the hideous mask of his blundering brother and still keep his faith in that hidden fire.

The mighty liberators of mankind, having conquered the lower forces in their own nature, understood the weakness of man. They warned us against the frailties we are apt to encourage within ourselves. Christ's advice to his followers is a challenge for our present world. Let us ponder carefully upon the words: "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them that 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 the unjust." Our capacity to carry out this precept in our life even fractionally will be a momentous gain. Out of this conquest will be born a peace that all the turmoil of the world cannot destroy.

In the dilemma of present crisis, it is quite natural for us to lose our bearings and to grow anxious. For this reason, we must stand upon the unshakable rock of faith—faith in God, in man and in ourselves. Instead of trying to shoulder the responsibility of putting the world in order, why not place all that we are in His hands that He may use us and through us fulfill His will? Once Sri Ramakrishna, India's modern seer, said to someone anxious and distressed, "Do you think that the Lord has gone to sleep forgetting His creation?" This simple commonsense and profound philoso-

phy should be remembered that we may shake off the weight of care which we through absence of surrender and understanding impose upon ourselves. He is doing His work—we are but channels through whom His truth, His light and His peace may flow freely.

St. Francis prayed: "O Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace." We can appeal to the Divine in the same manner. Instead of waiting for the day when turbulence will cease and the whole world be peaceful, we should find peace now, and carry it into our small or wide sphere of life where His hand has placed us. Epictetus tells us, "If you seek peace outside yourself, you will never be at peace for you seek it where it is not and refuse to set yourself to find it where it is." He continues: "Cleanse your heart, cast out from your mind, pain, fear, desire, envy, ill-will, avarice, cowardice, passion uncontrolled. These things you cannot cast out unless you look to God alone; on Him alone, set your thoughts and consecrate yourself to His command. If you try anything else less than that . . . then with groaning and sorrow you will find you are following a will-o-the-wisp. . . . What is the first business of the philosopher? Will nothing but what God wills. Then who shall hinder you, who shall compel you? You will be as free as Zeus Himself."

We may find infinite courage and comfort in the Roman philosopher's utterances, also in the fact that in our world there have been and always will be men who live for the Highest and the Highest alone. In stress and storm, in tribulation and dire disaster, they neither lose their point of view nor their hold on the Supreme. Their way should be our way. If we have lived the life of the Spirit before, we should do so with greater and deeper intensity now. Indeed the Eternal is the only dependable reality; there is neither safety nor security in external things. Why should we then rely on them?

Let God, the Truth be our impregnable Refuge. In the warmth and protection of that Shelter where we may dwell from moment to moment, our consciousness like a bird will grow wings. We shall learn to fly far away from this world's tumult and perch serenely upon the mountain-peak of realisation. Resting on that cloudless Height, we shall have unobstructed vision, so that we may look down upon the valley of life where humanity clamors for power and shrieks in pain; laughs aloud in the arrogance of ignorance and revels in the thousand meshes of attachment. The light and shadow; the horror and beauty, the cruelty and tenderness; the glory and emptiness—the ever-changing scene of Maya—illusion of the world below will no longer entice us or hold us captive. We shall know that substantial, abiding Existence by knowing which man becomes emancipated.

In the dense fog of everyday immediate realities we may sometimes lose sight of the Real or the demands of the world pressing from without may force us to drift far from our Centre. Yet we must return to It again and again. Let this act be an indispensable part of our daily existence. Let us by utmost urgency of spirit regain our vision and re-establish our consciousness in that Base wherefrom we replenish ourselves with fresh hope, fresh light, fresh love and fresh wisdom. This inexhaustible Supply is ever at hand. We must draw from It and being fed and nourished and revived, share with others Its bounty and blessedness. This, then, is our most important task. It deserves our whole-hearted interest and attention.

Absolute dedication to Truth and our ceaseless, humble, persistent efforts to fulfill Its complete and uncompromising demands will be a formidable safeguard against failure. Not having failed toward the noblest, the best and the sublimest in us, we cannot fail in our duty toward our country, our fellowmen or the world.

TO THE HOLY MOTHER*

Beloved Mother:

This morning, early, I went to church—to pray for Sara. All the people there were thinking of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and suddenly I thought of *you.* Your dear face, and your loving look, and your white *Sari,* and your bracelets. It was all there. And it seemed to me that *yours* was the Presence that was to soothe and bless poor S. Sara's sick-room. And—do you know?—I thought I had been very foolish to sit in your room, at the evening Service to Sri Ramakrishna, trying to meditate—why did I not understand that it was quite enough to be a little child at your dear feet? Dear Mother! You are full of love! And it is not a flushed and violent love, like ours, and like the world's, but a gentle peace that brings good to every one and wishes ill to none. It is a golden radiance, full of play. . . .

Dearest Mother—I wish we could send you a wonderful hymn, or a prayer. But somehow even that would seem too *loud,* too full of noise! Surely you are the most wonderful thing of God—Sri Ramakrishna's own chalice of His Love for the world—a token left with His children, in these lonely days, and we should be very still and quiet before you—except indeed for a little fun! "Surely the wonderful things of God" are *all* quiet—stealing unnoticed into our lives—the air and the sunlight and the sweetness of gardens and of the Ganges. These are the silent things, that are like you!

Do send to poor S. Sara the mantle of your peace. Isn't your thought, now and then, of the high calm that neither loves nor hates? Isn't that the sweet benediction that trembles in God like the dewdrop on the lotus-leaf, and touches not the world?

Ever my darling Mother, your foolish *Khooki,* NIVEDITA

(Holy Mother was the wife of Sri Ramakrishna, also his great disciple.)

*From the Prabuddha Bharata

IN MEMORY OF SISTER DEVAMATA

Sister Devamata has gone from our midst. She who for thirty-seven years was the trusted assistant of Swami Paramananda has passed beyond the noisy claims of this world, beyond days of weariness and nights of pain.

As was recorded in the last issue of the "Message of the East," she slipped out of her frail body very suddenly, following a brief illness which was but the culmination of years of struggle against severe physical handicaps.

To those who knew her only in these latter days, the fragile quality of her being seemed uppermost. For them she seemed like one whom a breath might blow away, a pathetic and gentle figure, wise and patient. To those whose memories go far back, however, to the early days of the Vedanta Centre of Boston, another picture flashes forth, different but no less compelling. They see again in their memory that small, active little figure animated by a dynamic mind, and a will that through the years transcended in one way or another every obstacle. They see the personality packed with power that was as unsparing—in its passion for perfection—in its own self-discipline as in its discipline of others.

The spiritual ideal was for Sister Devamata no plaything to be taken up or laid aside according to the whim or inclination of the moment. She exemplified in her sincerity and one-pointed dedication, as well as in the austerity of her view-point, those pilgrims in the poem of Tagore, to whom he cries: "All honor to you, heroic host of the interminable path!" Now like those pilgrims she has passed beyond the distant horizon and has vanished in the blue haze.

Lest I paint too stern a picture, however, let me tell you that this elder Sister had the gayest sense of humour and often at meals, or at other times, set the community laughing

with her anecdotes and repartee. Likewise her mind and heart were stored with countless tales and legends from Hindu sacred tradition, all bearing upon different phases of spiritual living, and these she shared constantly with other members of the household. Now these members, looking back through the years, are grateful indeed for the many lessons they learned through her.

Her background was intellectual. In her youth, as she herself often said, she had pursued culture through the capitals of Europe, studying at the Paris Sorbonne and at other centers of learning, her mind ever leading her on to fresh adventures in knowledge. It would seem, in view of all this, that her spiritual path would naturally have been Monistic Vedanta, especially as in the early days of the Vedanta movement in America, she had had the inestimable privilege of attending Classes conducted by Swami Vivekananda himself. Yet when the moment of choice came, it was the devotional path—the path of Bhakti that she chose, perhaps because her reactions generally were not so much of the mind as of the emotions.

The great Swamiji used to note the diminutive student who came and went so quietly, and one evening at the close of the lecture, he stopped her and said: "You come so faithfully yet you never speak a word." When he went with some of his followers for a short sojourn at Thousand Island Park, she was invited to be one of the party; but for some reason or another she decided against it. Thus does destiny give a turn to the life path which often determines the future.

She affiliated herself, however, with the Vedanta Society in New York where she gave yeoman's service and where, under the leadership of Swami Abhedananda she went through discipline and spiritual practice.

It was in the year 1906, the day before Christmas Eve,

that the Swami Paramananda came into her life. As he disembarked from the ship that had brought him from India, she was standing on the pier to welcome him, and even at that moment her heart must have told her, "This is He. This is the teacher I am destined to follow." Often she has said that coming as he did at that season, with his endless youth and lovely child-like devotion, he seemed to her like the Christ-child. The simplicity and purity of his nature and message helped to blend for her the mighty reaches of the Vedanta philosophy with the ideal and training she had received some years before as a lay Sister in an Anglican Catholic convent.

It was inevitable that her life, her intelligence, her talents all should be offered in the service of this young and radiant *guru* who had come from so far in order to give his word of beauty and peace to the bewildering West. But the Swami felt that this very eager aspirant should have the opportunities which India alone could give, especially at that moment when so many of the great disciples of Sri Ramakrishna were still living and active. The trip meant tremendous financial renunciation on her part but she did not hesitate, and he sent her forth with these words:

"You are going to the land of great souls. Go in freedom, and if you should meet with one whom you would rather have for your teacher, do not be bound by any thought of me."

The two years that followed were for her rich in unforgettable experience, of which an account has been given in her book, "Days in an Indian Monastery." She did indeed meet many great spiritual personages and had the privilege of their guidance and instruction; she sat at the feet of the one known as "Holy Mother" and lived for months under the direct supervision of Swami Ramakrishnananda, the mas-

ter of the "Monastery," a spiritual father and mother to Swami Paramananda, and the one chosen by Swami Vivekananda as the most deserving to wear the name of the divine Master whose devoted personal attendant he had been. In truth it was to take down and preserve the teachings of this great Swami that Swami Paramananda had originally been moved to send her to the land of his birth, and she performed her mission with skill and fidelity; returning in the end to her own teacher, her allegiance unimpaired.

She found the Boston Vedanta Centre in the process of formation and thriving greatly, being mothered by the Swami's new and ever-to-be-devoted friend, Miss Katharine F. Sherwood, while beside him, always faithful, was that other who had also welcomed him on the day of his arrival in America,—the one now known as Sister Satya Prana.

These three, the Swami's original workers, from that time on, each in her own way, helped weave the pattern of the work that the Swami was instrumental in establishing in Boston and later, at La Crescenta, California.

Sister Devamata became a most able platform assistant, the MESSAGE OF THE EAST was inaugurated, and was carried on largely by her; in fact so varied were her talents that there was little which fell outside the scope of her activities. Many felt the impress of her life and even in later years at the beautiful sunny Ashrama in California, when physically she was broken, she maintained her preeminent position. Always a center of power, she influenced many hearts through personal contact and through the written word. To those who knew her best, she will be remembered above all for her undeviating purpose, her loyalty, her unbreakable courage in the face of constant physical misery entailing endless outer frustrations, and finally for a gallantry and a gayety that carried through to the end.

Hers was a strong nature, and like all strong natures, it knew struggle. There were victory and defeat, success and failure and all those contending forces which, gathered up and unified in the consecrated heart, produce the mighty living symphony.

She went to sleep on Tuesday night, December 15th, at nine o'clock; almost on the anniversary of that day when first she met her teacher. It was just that—a drifting into slumber. Even as the songs and chants, so dear to her heart, sounded in her ears, her breath grew lighter and lighter and then ceased at last and forever. Her mind was clear and potent almost to the end. Even on the morning of the last day she spoke of her ideas for a new article, and to the moment when she drifted into unconsciousness, her eyes were fixed on the little wall-altar with its holy pictures, above the foot of the bed. It is hard indeed to realize that after so many years she is gone.

On Thursday morning, December 17th, according to her own wish, a private Service was conducted by Sister Daya in the Cloister patio, immediately outside the Sister's small private shrine. Sister Daya spoke from her heart on the release of death and its meaning in the light of expanded consciousness as well as of the significance of the life that had gone. In conclusion she read a letter of tribute from a dear friend, Glory Raye, which seemed to express with deep and tender understanding, what lay in so many hearts.

To the dear Sisters of the Ashrama: Little Sister has gone away! I shall miss her! She was so much a part of the Temple to me—like the candles on the altar—like the tiny blossoms in the Shrine. I shall always see her as an integral part of the Service. Her slow halting steps being led down the aisle, the fleeting little smile she would give me as she passed, the small orange pillow she sat upon, and the white veil that was so reverently placed behind her chair. Then her devotional attitude all through the Service. She seldom took her eyes from

the altar, yet I feel sure she was aware of every one in the Temple. There was the sweet smile of greeting she had for each one on leaving I can still see the last turn of her head like a little bird, as her frail steps were led away. "Nothing can rob us of our memories," and this beautiful little ritual will always remain with me.

Rare person! Devamata. Rare and unusual! She was like an exquisite old ivory, and she had the fragrance of dew-drenched lavender. I shall miss her! We shall all miss her! So quiet! So frail, yet so strong! She has left much behind her, and she has much to give where she has gone. I shall always see her in the Temple. I know she will always be there, sitting in the same chair with the orange pillow, the sunbeams from the stained window making one pale hand translucent, her white veil falling behind.

Om! Shanti, Shanti! Shanti!

Yours and Sister Devamata's

GLORY RAYE

On Sunday, December 20th, Sister Daya held a public Memorial Service in the Temple of the Universal Spirit. In spite of gas and tire-rationing, many climbed the hill to make their offering of love. Sister Daya spoke, as usual, extemporaneously, expressing the hesitancy one must feel in touching upon life and death and the human soul, especially the soul of one like Sister Devamata, dedicated to the realization of mighty Truth. Beautiful flower offerings filled the Temple with color and fragrance, while music—Sister Devamata's own compositions and the voices in song of those who loved her—completed the homage which Sister Daya could not put into mere words.

Physically the Sister has gone, but the fruits of her life and her gallant spirit live on.

Since Nature's works be good, and death doth serve as Nature's work, why should we fear to die?

—*Sir Philip Sidney*

BEAUTY IN COMMON THINGS

By Sister Amala

When we open our heart and see with understanding, we perceive hidden beauties subtly concealed in what we call common things. Beauty is everywhere—beauty of face, beauty of form, beauty of sound, beauty of light, individual beauty, collective beauty. God's beauty vibrates within every atom of the universe. It is seeing with the seeing eye, feeling with the feeling heart, that opens the door to finer perceptions.

With the morning stillness comes the dawn heralding the rising sun, calling us to a new day. The goddess of the morn rouses our hearts with rejoicing song as the sun swings from the horizon to its splendor. At the sunset hour the reflected lights mirrored on clouds, hills and valley, hold us breathlessly still, that we may capture the picture of the wondrous beauty our soul absorbs. At these rare moments God fills us with Himself. A new world opens to us; a new language speaks to our inner being. We discover a beautiful companionship everywhere.

Often we remain engrossed in trivialities, worries, or morbid moods which rob us of the loveliness encircling us. We allow ourselves to become so immersed in unimportant things that we sacrifice the consciousness of the beauty around us. God's gift is universal, His beauty infinite and unbounded, a bounteous blessing to all humanity.

Beauty does not lie merely without us, it lies within us. We see exactly what we have within ourselves. Insofar as we are alert to that which each one possesses—the power of observation, the power of appreciation, the power of feeling —we become attuned to the beauty of God—that ultimate beauty which is reflected in all that we see and hear and

touch. We respond to it in all its various aspects; beauty of thought, beauty of form, beauty of Nature, beauty of life, of death, and of eternity. All our thoughts, words and actions can be dedicated to beauty. We can make beautiful everything we touch. Beauty can exalt even the humblest action. We can be conscious of the beautiful as easily as of the unbeautiful.

Love of beauty draws us very close to its Maker. Through it we find our kinship with all living things and we realize the common unity between ourselves in others and others in ourselves. We become deeply conscious of the One in many and the many in the One. Beauty of face, beauty of form, beauty of soul; beauty of the unusual as well as familiar things is one; one in the Creator of all beauty; the Supreme Maker of the Beautiful. The seeker after beauty finally perceives that finiteness can never express the Infinite, that only in the Infinite is it possible to establish a firm seat, even as the Great Lord is seated enrapt in the beauty of His Eternal Meditation.

For mankind are one in spirit, and an instinct bears along
Round the earth's electric circle, the swiftest flash of right
or wrong;
Whether conscious or unconscious, yet Humanity's vast
frame,
Through its ocean-sundered fibres, feels the gush of joy or
shame:—
In the gain or loss of one race, all the rest have equal claim.

—*Lowell*

God is not a Mind, but the cause that the Mind is; not a Spirit, but the cause that the Spirit is; not Light, but the cause that the Light is.

—*The Divine Pymander*

IN ANSWER TO QUESTIONS

By Swami Vivekananda

(The final portion of a pamphlet containing Swami Vivekananda's Address on Vedanta, which was given before the Twentieth Century Club of Boston and was reproduced in the summer issue of the "Message of the East," 1942.)

This Vedantic spirit of religious liberality has very much affected Mohammedanism. Mohammedanism in India is quite a different thing from that in any other country. It is only when Mohammedans come from other countries and preach to them about living with men who are not of their faith, that a mob rises and fights.

The caste system is opposed to this religion. Caste is a social custom, and all our great preachers have tried to break it down. From Buddhism down, every sect has tried to preach against caste, and every time it has only riveted the chains. Caste is simply the outgrowth of the political institutions of India; it is an hereditary trade guild. Trade competition with Europe has broken caste more than any teaching.

One peculiarity of the Vedas is that they are the only scriptures that again and again declare that you must go beyond them. The Vedas say they were written just for the child mind; and when you have grown, you must go beyond them.

The individual soul consists of a man's thoughts, and they are changing every moment. Therefore it cannot be eternally real. It is real only in the phenomenal. The individual soul consists of memory and thought; how can that be real?

Buddhism did not really decline in India; it was only a gigantic social movement. Before Buddha, great numbers of animals were killed for sacrifice and other reasons; and people ate meat largely and drank. Since Buddha's teaching, drunkenness has almost disappeared and the killing of animals has almost gone.

PRAYER BEFORE ACTION

By Sergeant Hugh Brodie

(Of the Royal Australian Air Force; onetime Melbourne University student. Now missing in action.)

Almighty and all-present Power
Short is the prayer I make to Thee,
I do not ask in battle hour
For any shield to cover me.

The vast unalterable way,
From which the stars do not depart,
May not be turned aside to stay
The bullet flying to my heart.

I ask no help to strike my foe,
I seek no petty victory here,
The enemy I hate, I know,
To Thee is also dear.

But this I pray, be at my side
When death is drawing through the sky.
Almighty God who also died,
Teach me the way that I should die.

"I wish everybody on earth could see the things we see. Men would be a lot different if they could get away from the earth now and then. There was a great cloudhead today, rising ever so high and majestic, with the sun shining on it; and I flew past the face of it, not a mile away, and it towered to Heaven above me. You just couldn't breathe when you looked at it. You didn't have any physical sensations at all. You couldn't even hear the engine. You were all alone in a great, pure, holy, beautiful silence. It was like seeing God with His veil lifted."

—*From Ben Ames Williams' "Time of Peace"*

THE RELIGION OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

By Curtis W. Reese

(Reprinted from "Unity," Chicago, Illinois)

In revealing the potentialities and possibilities of the common run of human nature, Abraham Lincoln was perhaps the most significant character that ever appeared on the stage of democratic human action. By self-discipline and close application to chosen goals, he rose to the highest political position within the reach of his countrymen; and there, surrounded by the ablest statesmen of his generation, he became renowned as the exemplar of clear thought, constructive policy, and vigorous action.

The story of Abraham Lincoln, boatman and rail-splitter, lawyer and statesman, president and emancipator, has been the subject of world-wide fireside discussion, school-room study, and platform eloquence. Fathers and mothers, in cabin, in hovel, cottage and mansion, have told and retold the story of his life to their children and their children's children. And that remarkable story has stirred the ambition latent in millions of people. The schools seem powerless to give the advantage that comes from contact with wild forests, raging streams, and unsophisticated humanity. As an inspirer of youth, Lincoln is supreme.

So much has been said and written about Abraham Lincoln that anything very new on the subject is practically out of the question. Nevertheless, there is one phase of his life that has been distorted by many and left unmentioned by others. I refer to his religious views. Lincoln's religion, like his environment and form and character, was of the rugged kind.

Born in a cabin, reared amid the true-hearted though uncouth pioneers of Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois, he came face to face with outdoor Nature. As a boatman struggling with the streams, as a rail-splitter mastering the forests, as sportsman wrestling, jumping, and slinging stones, as a student walking miles to secure books, reading by the light of pine knots, and ciphering on boards, he was compelled by circumstances to think for himself. Having read at an early age both Gibbon and Paine, it is little wonder that he rebelled against the theology of his day, which was so evidently unreal and so manifestly out of harmony with life as he knew it.

Lincoln's early days as a lawyer, travelling the circuit, clashing wits with opposing attorneys, dealing with evidence and searching for facts, being compelled by political circumstances to go to the bottom of pressing questions and stating simply and clearly the fundamentals so that his pioneer constituency could not fail to understand—all clinched his early training and made him the champion of clarity, sincerity and direct action.

Such a man could not fall in with artificial theological and ecclesiastical systems. Efforts have been made by many churchmen to claim Lincoln for their several faiths. But the evidence is overwhelming that Lincoln belonged to no church. His wife, after his death, said, "He never joined any church. He was a religious man always, I think, but he was not a technical Christian." He was an admirer of Theodore Parker and of the writings of William Ellery Channing, though it is doubtful if he read very much of Channing. He was not a great reader, but a great thinker. Herndon, who for fifteen years was Lincoln's partner, said, "He read less and thought more than any man of his age." He believed that mixing with living men was better than reading dead men's thoughts; and in this he was eminently right.

Mr. Lincoln engaged in very little philosophical speculation. He was contemplative rather than speculative. He thought that his mind, like the minds of others, had its limitations, and that more could be accomplished in the practical than in the speculative field. He was a realist rather than an idealist. He accepted the theory of evolution, believed in universal law, and was somewhat of a fatalist—all in a very general kind of way. He said, "There are no accidents in my philosophy. Every effect must have its cause. The past is the cause of the present, and the present will be the cause of the future. All these are links in the endless chain stretching from the finite to the infinite." He preferred to say "the freedom of the mind" rather than the "freedom of the will." He insisted that man always acts from a motive, and that self-interest was at the bottom of all motives.

It is said that in his early days, after reading Thomas Paine, he wrote a manuscript in which he argued against current doctrines of religion; that he carried the manuscript to the village store where it was much discussed, and where his employer, Samuel Hill, believing in Lincoln's political future and thinking that such a writing would militate against his political career, snatched the manuscript from his hands and threw it into the stove. Soon after this Lincoln moved to Springfield where his liberal doctrines attracted much attention. He denied the doctrine of the atonement and eternal punishment, and asserted that prayer could not change the order of things.

In 1846 Lincoln ran for Congress against the famous evangelist, Peter Cartwright. During this campaign Lincoln was frequently accused of being an infidel. Thereafter, being occupied more with political matters and also, perhaps, appreciating more the political wisdom of his New Salem employer who burned the manuscript, Lincoln became more

reticent on matters of a religious nature, except to his young friends, among whom was his law partner Herndon.

Jesse W. Fell who wrote the first biography of Lincoln which was sent to the East to introduce the famous rail-splitter of Illinois, writing in 1870, said:

"On the innate depravity of man, the character and head of the church, the atonement, the infallibility of the written revelation, the performance of miracles, the nature and design of present and future rewards and punishments (as they are popularly called) and many other subjects he held opinions utterly at variance with what are usually taught in the church. I should say that his expressed views on these and kindred topics were such as, in the estimation of most believers, would place him outside the Christian pale. Yet, to my mind, such was not the true position, since his principles and practices and the spirit of his whole life were of the very kind we universally agree to call Christian; and I think this conclusion is in no wise affected by the circumstance that he never attached himself to any religious society whatever. His religious views were eminently practical, and are summed up, as I think, in these two propositions: the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man." Again, Professor Fell said, "No religious views with him seemed to find any favor except of the practical and rationalist order; and if from my recollection on this subject, I was called upon to designate an author whose views most nearly represented Mr. Lincoln's on this subject, I would say that author was Theodore Parker."

I think that Lincoln's reticence on religious matters in his later days may be thought of as patriotic sacrifice. As he grew older, he saw that there were questions bigger than theological differences, and that there were religious values held in common that were bigger than the creeds that separated the warring faiths. And he wisely refrained from

thrusting his views into the face of those who differed with him on theological questions. He knew that he was between narrow churchmen who could see no value in his free thought and radicals who could see no value in his growing spirituality. Thus he stood as an independent in religion. His self-control was manifest in withholding his views when their expression would be inconsistent with the fitness of things, as well as his courage in his expression of his views when he could do so with charity for all.

We are able to find scattering remarks from Lincoln's lips indicating his general position on religious matters; but we cannot find any comprehensive statement of this theological position. Once he said:

"If any church will subscribe over its altar as its sole qualification for membership the Saviour's condensed statement 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself,' that church will I join with all my heart and all my soul."

But it is in the daily life of Lincoln that we are able to find his religion, and there discover that the fundamental of his religion was sincerity. He made no pretence at being what he was not. He knew his limitations and kept well within them. Knowing what he could and should do, that he did to the best of his ability. He believed in honesty, and those who knew him best trusted him most. He believed in truth—truth that could be understood by the multitude—and he told the truth without fear of result. He believed in simplicity and he lived the simple life. A religion such as Lincoln lived—of sincerity, of honesty, of truthfulness, of simplicity—is beyond belief in creed, beyond symbolic expression, beyond ecclesiastical interpretation, beyond theological analysis, and beyond philosophical explanation. It is the "religion of man."

OUT OF THE CRUCIBLE

Excerpts at Random

(From published and unpublished sources, touching upon man's reaction to the suffering and sacrifice of war.)

ARE MORE PEOPLE PRAYING

From the New York Times

It would be surprising in these days laden with grief and danger if men did not pray more than ordinarily. In different times prayer takes different forms. If there is less of the formal saying of grace at meals, it does not mean of necessity that there is less giving of thanks. One pious man, well remembered, because when he prayed he sounded as though he were actually talking face to face with God, once said: "Prayer is an attitude, an atmosphere, a state of mind and heart."

"There are times," said Victor Hugo, "when the soul is on its knees whatever may be the attitude of the body."

We do not know in how many homes today the family actually gets down on its knees to speak to God in daily worship. In other days a chapter of the Bible was usually read before prayer, in which the head of the house led. Sometimes everybody in the circle offered some petition.

There are doubters who hold, to their own misfortune, that prayer does not change anything; but anyone who rises from a hearthstone communion of this kind knows that the participants are not quite the same afterward. A kind of peace has settled down on the room for a moment. The setting for such circles is usually rural, partaking of the majesty of the unfettered outdoors; the spirit always is. Simplicity has for the time replaced artificiality. . . .

It will be recalled that Lincoln, on that rainy afternoon before he started from Springfield to Washington, said to his

neighbors: "Without the assistance of that Divine Being who attends me, I cannot succeed; with that assistance, I cannot fail." There is a moving simplicity in the words that followed: "Trusting in Him Who can go with me and remain with you and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well." He then bade his neighbors farewell. . . .

So it was with all the great emergencies he met with in the White House. "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nobody else to go to. My own wisdom and that of all about me, seemed insufficient for that day."

We can assume that there is some praying going on in Washington today. Some of those prayers are unspoken. Some of them do not wait for the going-to-bed time for saying. They are said at desks, perhaps. But there is no reason to believe that God does not hear prayers said from behind desks.

* * * * *

HELP ME NOT TO HATE

(From "Faith is the Answer" by Smiley Blanton and Norman Vincent Peale. Abingdon Cokesbury, Publishers.)

When my old friend, Captain George Barendse, arrived in the United States from Rotterdam, he attempted repeatedly to communicate with his wife and boy in Holland. He had read of the systematic bombing of Rotterdam, in which it was reported that a great many people were killed and a third of the city reduced to a shambles. All his efforts to reach his family were in vain, probably due to restrictions imposed by the invaders.

His ship destroyed, his wife and child perhaps injured or even dead, his city in ruins, his country overrun, the Captain came to my church. Later he took lunch at my house, during which a great spiritual experience took place. He told of his

experiences in Europe. We talked of his ship, which we all loved, and his family. The Captain, a man of profound faith, controlled but obviously suffering intense agony of spirit, and talking almost to himself as though alone, prayed a noble and courageous prayer.

"God help me not to hate. . . . Give your guidance in thought, in speech and action to those who rule over the countries in war and . . . may your will be done and . . . your kingdom come." The words came one by one, slowly, as if hewn out of his soul. "God watch over my wife and boy. Before my wife was mine she belonged to you, Lord; before my little boy came to me he was yours, Father. They are in your hands. I trust you. May your will be done."

Again he searched his soul. "I pray for Hitler. He has great power over men's lives. You can change his heart, God. Help me not to hate Hitler . . . help me to mean that . . . O God."

* * * * *

HELP KEEP THE FAITH

A Letter from a U. S. Naval Flier

(Reprinted in the "National News-Letter" Toronto, Canada, and in "Life.")

The fates have been kind to me. In war, where any semblance of pleasure is, to say the least, bad taste, I find many things that please me as I know they would please you. When you hear others saying harsh things about American youth, you will know how wrong they all are. So many times that now they have become commonplace, I've seen incidents that make me know that we were not soft nor bitter, perhaps stupid at first, but never weak.

Many of my friends are now dead. To a man, each died with a nonchalance that each would have denied was courage but simply called a lack of fear and forgot the triumph. If anything great or good has been born of this war, it should

not be valued in the colonies we may win, nor in the pages that historians will attempt to write, but rather in the youth of our country who were never trained for war, and who almost never believed in war, but who have, from some hidden source, brought forth a gallantry which is homespun, it is so real.

I say these things because I know you liked and understood boys, and because I wanted you to know that they have not let you down—that out here, between the spaceless sea and sky, American youth has found itself, and given of itself, so that a home spark may catch, burst into flame, and burn high. If our country takes these sacrifices with indifference, it will be the cruelest ingratitude the world has ever known. . . .

There is much I cannot say which should be said before it is too late. It is my fear that national inertia will cancel the gains won at such a price. You will, I know, do all in your power to help others to keep the faith. . . . Remembering the countless happy hours I spent with all of you has been a constant source of contentment. . . . My luck can't last much longer. But the flame goes on and only that is important.

* * * * *

MME CHIANG KAI-SHEK SPEAKS

(From her address before the House of Representatives, U.S.A., February 18th, 1943.)

We of this generation who are privileged to help make a better world for ourselves and for posterity should remember that, while we must not be visionary, we must have vision so that peace should not be punitive in spirit and should not be provincial or nationalistic or even continental in concept, but universal in scope and humanitarian in action, for modern science has so annihilated distance that what affects one people must of necessity affect all other peoples.

The term "hands and feet" is often used in China to signify the relationship between brothers. Since international interdependence is now so universally recognized, can we not also say that all nations should become members of one corporate body? . . . We in China, like you, want a better world, not for ourselves alone, but for all mankind, and we must have it. It is not enough, however, to proclaim our ideals or even to be convinced that we have them. In order to preserve, uphold and maintain them, there are times when we should throw all we cherish into our effort to fulfill these ideals even at the risk of failure. . . . From five and a half years of experience we in China are convinced that it is the better part of wisdom not to accept a failure ignominiously, but to risk it gloriously.

We shall have faith that, at the writing of peace, America and our other gallant allies will not be obtunded by the mirage of contingent reasons of expediency.

Man's mettle is tested both in adversity and in success. Twice is this true of the soul of a nation.

Motse said: "The will of Heaven abominates the large state which attacks small states . . . the strong who plunder the weak, the clever who deceive the stupid, the honored who disdain the humble. On the other hand, the will of Heaven desires people having energy to work for each other; those knowing the Way to teach each other, and those possessing wealth to share with each other. And it desires the superior diligently attending to government and the subordinates diligently attending their work. . . . Now Heaven loves the whole world universally. Everything is prepared for the good of men . . . substantial may be said of the benefits that are enjoyed by man, yet there is no service in return."

—*Lin Yutang's Wisdom of China and India*

BUDDHIST BEATITUDES

By Miriam Salanave

Blessed are the pure in mind;
for they walk the Noble Way.
Blessed are they who suffer;
for they shall seek the Way that ends pain.

Blessed are they who have no Desires;
for they alone are the truly free.
Blessed is he whose every act
explains the Doctrine;
for worldlings seeing his life
shall seek the Master.

Blessed are they who forgive and forget wrongs;
for they understand the Eternal Law.

Blessed are they who with forethought rightly live;
for they have forebought a fortunate rebirth.
Blessed are they who muse often
by the Heart's Hearth;
for they shall be illumined by the Inner Light.

Blessed are the gentle, the patient and the loving;
for their lives are sweet
as incense-filled temples.

Blessed is he whose mind is quiet
as a windless lake;
for he shall see into the very depths
(of things.)

Blessed is he who identifies himself with all life;
for he has cut off the stem and root of egoism.

Blessed is he whose optimism is born
of Knowledge;
for he knows how vaporous are airy hopes.

Blessed are they who mistake not a Mirage
for the Real;
for they have truly awakened
to a state of Actuality.

REPORT

THE VEDANTA CENTRE, BOSTON, MASS.

"No opposition, no success." These forceful words which fell from the lips of Swami Vivekananda are being remembered constantly this winter by the members and workers of the Vedanta Centre. The severe cold weather with its frequent blizzards, ice-covered sidewalks, shortage of gasoline and dimmed-out streets have been real tests for those who turn to the Centre for spiritual sustenance. Nevertheless, a steady group appears at the three regular weekly Services and returns home richly repaid for their staunch and loyal support and steadfastness. Within the Centre's walls there is always warmth of spirit and fellowship among aspiring souls and above all there is the unmistakable sense of Divine Presence—so well defined in Swami Paramananda's words, "Where I am there is peace."

Although the Yule-tide is long-past, its import of love and good-will toward all men as emphasized at the special Christmas Eve Service remains fresh in the memory of many who gathered about the altar of the Mother and Child. This year, according to the City regulations, garlands of red vigils were not permitted to glimmer through the Chapel windows and to speak to the passerby their wordless message of cheer, but behind the curtained doors and windows lights shone brightly,

mute reminders to the faithful of God that lamps must be kept brightly burning on the altar of the heart.

New Year's Eve was a solemn occasion. The Service consisted partly of united spoken and silent prayers for the stricken world. Swami Paramananda's poem "Onward, ever forward on the march of life, my soul, march on" provided the theme for Gayatri Devi's address. Her inspired words brought untold courage, hope and helpfulness to the gathering who commented over and over, "This is the most fitting way to begin a New Year."

Swami Vivekananda was honored upon his birthday anniversary, January the 29th. The season's biggest snowfall occurred on the day before hampering the transportation. However, more than fifty persons attended the Hindu banquet followed by music and talk. At the conclusion of the evening, Gayatri Devi read to the assembled group one of great Swami's letters expressing his appreciation of American women. This helped one and all to feel a special and blessed kinship with his mighty spirit.

Sunday, January 31st, was also dedicated to his memory. Both the morning and evening Services were charged with the anecdotes of Swami Vivekananda's exalted life and luminous teachings. They fired every heart with fresh desire to know him better through his writings and to strive more earnestly to follow his precepts.

The Centre's beloved Founder, Swami Paramananda, received his share of honor and tribute at his birthday festival. On February 19th, seventy of his friends, old and new, assembled around long candle-lighted, flower-adorned tables to partake of the delectable spiced and curried food. Accompanied by a brilliant young pianist, Carl Novak, Mr. Einar Hansen played his violin and his masterful contributions once again bore evidence to his unchanging devotion to his friend,

Swami Paramananda. Several devotees of the Swami, unable to attend the celebration, sent written messages which were read aloud before Mrs. Wallace Tibbetts and Mr. William Ennis and Mrs. Isabelle Hickey expressed their profound appreciation of the one whose holy life and example is indelibly impressed upon their memory. The evening was one of unusual warmth, lovingness and happiness.

On Sunday, February 28th, the hour of evening Service was changed from eight o'clock to five. During the remainder of the winter this new schedule will continue. The regular Tuesday class on Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms is creating increasing interest.

On February 23rd, Gayatri Devi spoke before the teachers and students of Chapel Hill School, Waltham, Massachusetts, on "Spiritual Facts Behind India's History." One of the teachers, Mrs. Eloise Simpson, wrote: "My class in world history is now taking up the History of India. . . . I shall not attempt to specify what you are to say for truly, I feel that anything you may give will be what we need to hear. You carry in yourself the soul of India and its Life so I shall be grateful for your coming." Srimati was given a warm welcome and her talk was deeply appreciated.

Again she was the guest of the Rotary Club of Needham where she delivered an address on "India and the World Today," on Tuesday, March the 23rd.

Sunday, March 14th, marked the Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna. It was a beautiful day, clear with warm sunshine and alive with the hope of Spring. Many came to pay homage to India's unparalleled harmonizer of religions and to hear of his phenomenal life and powerful teachings. Both services emphasized his limitless catholicity which could follow divergent paths leading Godward; his ready recognition of Truth from whatsoever source It flowed; his reverent

attitude before all places of worship; his mad love for the Divine; his complete renunciation of the world for the attainment of God and his tender compassion for blind and ignorant humanity. To the Centre's new friends who attended the Master's Birthday Festival for the first time, the day held deep significance and blessedness. They spoke of it as one they wished to remember always.

ANANDA ASHRAMA, CALIFORNIA

Christmastide again! Christmastide with its irrepressible spirit overriding such obstacles as war, uncertainty and suffering, even as a flower pushes up its head and unfolds its petals despite the stony ground that would hold it back.

At the Ananda Ashrama this year, Christmas preparations were shadowed by the presence of death, for on December 15th, the senior Sister, Devamata, laid aside her physical body, after a brief attack of pneumonia. Naturally, both from a human and from a practical point of view, this sad happening, with all that it involved, made any extensive holiday activities impossible. Furthermore, the constant awareness of the deadly conflict beyond and around all the Seven Seas, muted the Christmas song in most hearts. Yet there were cards and gifts and loving wishes, and on the afternoon of December 24th, the usual Christmas Eve Service in the Temple of the Universal Spirit.

The next week, December 31st, the yearly Watch Service was held at the Temple at 11:15 P. M. Preceding this, the community and guests assembled at the Ashrama Guest House and partook of a dinner which Sister Seva had prepared with loving hands. In the time intervening between the close of the dinner and the hour for the Midnight Service, every one drew around the piano and sang in chorus old familiar melodies. Afterwards several commented on the warm spirit of friendliness and unity which prevailed.

The Service which followed was fraught with special solemnity, as if the life and death of the world were hanging in the balance and even an individual prayer might tip the scales.

Sunday, January 31st, marked the birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, whose inspired life and teachings provided themes for the morning and afternoon Services. As always, the magic of his name and the known magnitude of his vision, drew the faithful up the hill, while his potent spirit seemed to fill the whole Ashrama. To think or speak of him is ever like a great purifying wind, and so it was in this instance. Between the morning and afternoon Services, a Hindu dinner was served at the Guest House.

Following swiftly on this celebration came the observance of the Natal Day of Swami Paramananda, ever beloved Founder of the Vedanta Centre of Boston and the Ananda Ashrama, California. The date, Sunday, February 14th, fell on one of California's "perfect" days; but it was not the weather so much as deep, heartfelt devotion which attracted the many friends of the Swami to the Temple forever associated in their minds with his serene and beautiful presence, and his universal message of love and peace. For the morning Service, Sister Daya chose as her subject, "Love Will Conquer," a theme very close to his heart. She sought to show that Love, genuine Love, must always conquer in the end, whereas hatred destroys even the one who sends it forth, and is a denial of every ideal and most surely of that God Who is Love. Again, a Hindu dinner was served at the Guest House, which many stayed to enjoy. At the afternoon Service, the blessed quality of the Swami's life was touched upon by Sister Daya in her Address on the "Beauty of Holiness."

Sri Ramakrishna's Birthday was observed Sunday, March

7th. The Temple of the Universal Spirit, a monument to the Saint's all-inclusive faith, was vibrant with his magnetic Presence. Sister Daya spoke with her usual poetic vision and fire on "The Significance of His Message" at the 11 o'clock service and at 3:15 P. M. on "The Seraphic Master."

On the whole, this has been an ideal California winter with an abundance of summerlike days. During the month of January one rain storm made up for the many weeks of drought. In three days, twenty-one inches of rain fell, thirteen inches in twenty-four hours, flooding the Temple grounds and the Library and leaving great piles of silt in the Temple Patio as a reminder of world-wide devastation which one might easily forget in the midst of this heavenly spot. Since the above was written, Ashrama has been deluged with nineteen additional inches of rainfall.

CINCINNATI VEDANTA GROUP

A small group of Vedanta-enthusiasts, who through the past years welcomed Swami Paramananda in their midst, still keeps the home fires burning. On Friday, February, 19th, they, too, observed the birthday anniversary of the Swami. The meeting was held at the office of Dr. Peter Boike. In a letter Mrs. Brown describes the occasion:

"Dr. Boike read an article of the Swami from the Message of the East—also the poem 'Thee I Love in All.' He and Mr. Starick told many interesting incidents of the Swami's visits here and at the last we sang the song 'The Selfless Heart' which I put to music that I composed several years ago, the Guru Song and the 'Blessed Hour' . . ."

COHASSET ANANDA ASHRAMA

Swiftly approaching Spring brings to mind the little woodland Ashrama of Cohasset which has dreamed peacefully throughout the winter uninterrupted by human intrusion. The time is near at hand for the Peace Retreat to awaken

and plans are already in progress for the coming season. Because an insufficient gasoline supply renders transportation difficult, weekly public services may have to be curtailed to a certain extent. But it is earnestly hoped that those who wish to spend their vacation there will avail themselves of the opportunity. Due to the limited capacity of the guest quarters, arrangements must be made in ample time. Throughout June, July and August, the programme of activities will include sunrise prayer services, meditations at twilight, daily study classes on Hindu Scriptures, periods of silence, personal interviews and private instruction. For physical recreation and wholesome fun, out-of-door games, ocean bathing and gardening will be made available. For all further information, letters are to be addressed to Lola A. Haynes, Sec'y Vedanta Centre, 420 Beacon St., Boston.

NOTES ON BOOKS

The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, recently published by the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York City, is without question one of the outstanding books of our time. In generations to come religious seekers, truth-lovers and scholars in the field of mysticism and philosophy, will ever remain grateful to Swami Nikhilananda, the translator, for this addition to the world's exalted literature. Dr. John Haynes Holmes bestows upon the volume its rightful honor by classifying it with the Scriptures of humanity.

Here is an extraordinary document presenting a spiritual genius who represents the sum and substance of India's age-old exploration, research and discovery in the realm of Spirit. During the last fifty years, the name and influence of Sri Ramakrishna has spread rapidly far beyond the borders of his Motherland where he is ranked with Krishna, Buddha

and Christ. The justification for such recognition lies in the depth and universality of the seer's utterances; in the authenticity of his mystical realizations and his unmistakable religious experiences sustained by his flawless character and uncompromising renunciation. Through the thousand and twenty-seven pages of the book, Sri Ramakrishna's simple though at times incomprehensible personality is seen in multiple expression.

All the teachings that fell from the lips of this unlettered but God-intoxicated sage; all the songs he sang in ecstatic devotion; all the moods of his superconscious state—*Samadhi*—all the parables lucid and vivid with his incomparable originality, are recorded in accurate detail. Swami Nikhilananda has taken infinite pains to preserve the utter simplicity of the village patois in which Sri Ramakrishna spoke. Those familiar with the Bengali Kathamrita by "M" will acknowledge that none of the atmosphere, charm or delicacy of the original text has been lost in the translation.

Readers, totally unfamiliar with Hindu religious philosophy, should pay particular attention to the introduction which is mainly a biography, concise, explanatory and authoritative—an evidence of Swami Nikhilananda's sound scholarship. The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna is indeed a noteworthy achievement, the fruit of utmost devotion and noble labor. It is a fitting tribute to the Master by one of his most ardent and learned followers.

We note with profound interest and satisfaction that in his recently published and sumptuous Anthology, "The Wisdom of China and India," (Published by Random House, New York), Mr. Lin Yutang has used Swami Vivekananda's translation of the Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali and Swami Paramananda's translation of the Bhagavd-Gita. Apparently

the simple directness, the vitality and the freedom from pedantry which characterize both these versions seemed to him to be in keeping with his desire and purpose—to share with millions of his fellow men a living wisdom, ready at their need, as well as to "communicate a joyful experience" of wisdom and beauty. In his introduction to the Blessed Lord's Song (Bhagavad-Gita), he writes:

"The great power of the Gita lies in the fact that it teaches a 'loving faith' or devotion (*bhakti*) to a personal God, Krishna. The final message of Krishna is: 'Giving up all Dharmas, come unto me alone for refuge. I shall free thee from all sins; grieve not.' (XVIII, 66)

"It is extremely important that such a testimony of the Hindu religious spirit should not be translated by a scholar of Sanskrit, but by a Hindu follower who is at home with its language and at one with the spirit of its teachings, and who knows what the different verses mean, directly and simply, to the Indian people.

"*The Bhagavad-Gita*" has engaged the loving labors of many translators, and many excellent translations exist. . . . I have, however, chosen the translation by Swami Paramananda (The Vedanta Centre) because I believe, more than the others, it shows that mastery of the languages and that profound understanding of the thought content, so that the result is, as it should be, an easy, effective and mature version, without either the cumbersomeness of the scholarly or the surreptitious paraphrasing of the over-interpretative. As the editor of the book remarks, 'The letter must be illumined by the spirit; and none can read the translation without feeling convinced that the head, heart and life have coöperated in the making of it.' That is no mean compliment. I have kept the footnotes of Swami Paramananda."

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Message of the East

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POWER AND POISE

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Message of the East

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

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

VOL. XXXII 1943 No. 2

THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES

By Swami Paramananda

Ye are like my limbs:
My love for each and every one of you
Is like unto breathing, perpetual and natural.
If ye are hurt, I am hurt;
If ye be sad, my heart is sad;
When ye rejoice, my soul delights;
When ye are well, I flourish.
When ye are united, I am strong;
In your grief, I grieve;
In your joy, I am joyous.
Come ye then all in harmony!
Be one in love,
One in hope
And one in cheer;
One in trial,
And one in work,
And lend me your share
For the fulfillment of my task.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

One cannot realize God without sincerity and simplicity. God is far, far away from the crooked heart.

—*Sri Ramakrishna*

The art of meditation may be exercised at all hours and in all places; and men of genius, in their walks, at table, and amidst assemblies, turning the eye of the mind inwards, can form an artificial solitude; retired amidst a crowd, calm amidst distraction, and wise amidst folly.

—*Isaac Disraeli*

Patience and gentleness are power. —*Leigh Hunt*

Never think that God's delays are God's denials. Hold on! Hold fast! Hold out! Patience is genius.

—*Count de Buffon*

The man who fears nothing is as powerful as he who is feared by everybody. —*Schiller*

Power rests in tranquillity. —*Cecil*

Vulgar people can't be still. —*Oliver Wendell Holmes*

Everything really fine is in itself a quiet thing: it seems asleep until it is awakened and challenged. —*Goethe*

Enter into the life which is eternal, pass through the gate of indifference into the palace of mastery, through the door of love out into the great open of deliverance.

—*Edward Carpenter*

A pure, simple and steady spirit is not distracted by a multitude of affairs; because he does them all for the glory of God, and at rest within himself, strives to be free from self-seeking.

—*Imitation of Christ*

POWER AND POISE

By Swami Paramananda

"Blessed is that man who is thoughtful yet free from care; in full possession of his senses."

"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."

"The man immersed in worldliness cannot attain Divine Wisdom. Does the muddy water ever reflect the sun or the surrounding objects?"

"Strive to see God in all things without exception. Do everything for Him, uniting yourself to Him by a mere upward glance."

These are all reflections of great mystics, but it is not really necessary to know the source of them. It does not make any real difference wherefrom thoughts like these come; they stand on their own truth and I do not speak from the spiritual point of view alone. Do we not see how in order to make our lives useful and their influence far-reaching, how to keep ourselves intact, so to speak, or even to remain alive, we need to maintain such an attitude of poise and tranquillity. A business man feels the need of it; the man of genius feels the need of it. Any one who is trying to do anything whatsoever feels that he must have this inner peace because it is fundamental to all virtues and therefore cannot be tagged merely with a religious label. Can you imagine anyone who has achieved real greatness being possessed by a turbulent spirit or by a body and mind which are undisciplined? Even though you may be attracted to a man like this by his words, very soon you will discover the emptiness behind them.

One who possesses the basic quality of inward control emanates an atmosphere of strength and serenity. In his presence we feel a sense of relaxation and repose. On the other hand, we often come in contact with people who cause

us to feel restless. They seem to sap our vitality. Wherever they enter they create a disturbing influence. They convey it even when they apparently are sitting quietly in a chair. If you are an observer you will note that there is a certain type of human being who cannot remain still for one single instant. It is not that such people are busy doing something fruitful for themselves or their fellow beings. They simply emanate unrest, and this unrest is not confined to the person himself, it infills others. Thus we see how great is our individual responsibility and how potent can be our helpfulness to others, just by what we carry in our mind and heart.

Let us, however, for the moment, put aside the idea of helpfulness to humanity. We talk constantly of it, yet trying to help others is a very large order. So let us first see what we need to do to help ourselves. You may say, "That is a very selfish attitude. Why should we seek anything for ourselves?" Because unless we ourselves are in tune we cannot help others to be so, and no matter how much we may pretend, how much we may really desire to be of service, we must have the strength, we must have the wisdom or we may do more harm than good. Now wisdom and strength go together. Our support and sustenance come out of wisdom and wisdom never can be reflected in a disturbed, turbulent and scattered mind. Such a mind may sometimes catch a flash of some beautiful idea or ideal, but it does not abide. People who are constantly under emotional strain first swing one way and then another. One moment they are full of elation, swept by it, carried off their feet, the next moment they react in an opposite direction and are plunged in gloom. These opposites destroy our tranquillity, these opposites rob us of our poise and, in consequence, of our wisdom, peace and happiness.

It is not the fault of the phenomenal world that this is so.

There are those who go through many varying experiences yet maintain absolutely their even tenor in the midst of all circumstances, while others, in contrast, just upon hearing a word which may not be wholly to their liking, fly off in a rage or in sorrow, thereby disturbing themselves and everybody else. This type of reaction is very detrimental to one's physical health, and the question of health is a vital factor in our life of today. Everyone is studying it in one way or another. We need a healthy body, but more than that, we need a healthy mind, for without a healthy mind we cannot have a healthy body. Since we know that undue disturbance breaks us sooner or later, why should we not, as intelligent human beings, avoid or prevent it?

We cannot stretch a piece of wire beyond a certain limit; if we do, it snaps. The same way with the body. It is equipped with a very subtle wiring system—the nervous system. If we put too much unnecessary strain upon it, sooner or later it will break. But those who are wise, those who have a sense of just proportion and moderation—people with temperate habits—can make these wires stretch a long way without breaking them. Herein lies the secret. You can stretch something safely if you do it gradually; but if you are abrupt, if you are impatient and thoughtless, then the very thing you want to maintain and preserve and work with, you destroy. That is what is happening to us today.

Do not for a moment imagine that I am telling you that all you have to do to preserve yourself is to sit with a passive attitude of mind, and do nothing. By doing nothing, one does not maintain his health. By doing nothing, one does not live forever. One deteriorates. We need work—action, for action can be constructive as well as destructive. Every act reacts, bringing us either blessing, happiness, peace and poise—or the reverse.

Nothing has greater influence on our body and on our mind than do our thoughts. Certain thoughts automatically make us tense; certain emotions make us rigid, causing muscular contraction. That is why it is essential to know how to relax. You may think that relaxation means just lying on a nice soft bed or on a sofa, or perhaps retiring from the noise and the crowd and finding a quiet corner. That does not necessarily mean relaxation. You can verify this in yourself. If your mind is in turmoil, it will make very little difference where you are. Even in the most calm surroundings you can feel disturbed and agitated. Watch a person who is angry and see how completely his anger transforms him—even his body. Examine the physical condition of one who is under the emotion of fear and you will find that he is trembling, in spite of his reasoning faculties and all his will to the contrary.

What does this prove to us? That poise is not a question merely of shifting ourselves from one location to another. It is not a question of seeking more comfort so that we may enjoy greater ease and save body and soul together, so to speak. Rather it is changing our point of view, directing our mind through such channels that no matter where we are placed or how we are placed, or how active we may be, there will be no unpleasant reactions. You may doubt whether this would be practical for everyone. A business man, for instance, in a downtown district, or a man who has to work in a machine shop, would it not be very difficult for him to maintain this point of balance? Of course it would be difficult, but we make it more difficult by our negative viewpoint and our tense attitude. Hundreds of thousands of people holding materialistic notions will undoubtedly create a nervous, uncertain atmosphere which will have its effect on the individual, but the individual can adjust his mind and thought, and by so doing, may surmount all these obstacles.

I am telling you this from my own experience. My life does not allow me to sit apart from men and just be tranquil. It has been very active in spite of what I want or may not want. Railroad journeys, lecture engagements, coming in contact with new people—all such things have their disturbing elements which we can either magnify or the reverse, according to our power of adaptability. Therefore we must learn to adjust ourselves under all conditions. Often a very busy person who is inwardly fortified will disregard a small annoyance, while another, who has nothing to do, will brood over a fancied slight and magnify it till it has poisoned his whole system and filled the atmosphere with unhappiness and discontent.

Poise is one thing that every one desires, but no one can have it without putting into practice certain fundamental principles. It is not anything that someone can give us or that we can buy at a bookstore. We may buy one book or many books, we may gather together all the sayings of the world upon the subject, but they will give us only information or at best stimulate our mental forces and strengthen our desire for the serene state of mind. There is a tremendous amount of saving grace in simple practice. Not until we ourselves put these truths into action, shall we know their effect on our lives.

A poised mind can observe more, assimilate more and retain more. It saves our bodily strength; it gives a sense of balance and of just proportion and it quickens our spiritual faculties—and practice makes this possible. You ask, "Where shall we practice?" Anywhere—you have endless opportunities. As you come in contact with your fellow-beings, when you go to your office, when you meet someone on the street, everywhere you find occasion to put these great principles to the test, and as you do this you will become a finer human being.

Does it matter if someone speaks harshly to us? Not in the least. But it does matter if we take the event seriously. If we allow ourselves to lose our balance and begin to act foolishly, it matters very much indeed. Every time this happens it give us a setback, whether we are engaged in a purely material work, are going through intellectual study, or have taken up a spiritual vocation. A man may be the high priest of the best temple in the world, but if he loses his mental footing, he loses ground. A spiritual person cannot afford to be angry or impatient, and for a business man if he is hasty it may be a calamity.

As a matter of fact, there is no such gulf as we create between the material world and the spiritual. What we do every day, every moment, if these things are properly done, will contribute either consciously or unconsciously, to the building up of our spiritual life. This is one of the points upon which India has laid her accent through the ages.

Religion is not confined to temples, churches and books. It cannot be labeled, or enclosed in any name or form. It lies in the living, in harmony and rhythm and true understanding. Quietly and simply the humblest person can manifest the highest power, for the power of the individual flows from his own soul, although the average man is forever seeking it without. He desires happiness and thinks that he can buy it from the outside; he wants peace and, in order to obtain it, he goes from one place to another, when all the time happiness and peace are to be found only within. This is not merely a poetic saying; it is a fact. When we realize this fact and unfold its meaning in our consciousness, we find it reflected everywhere. One who carries peace and tranquillity within his heart creates a serene atmosphere wherever he may go, while the ramparts of his life, as Seneca says, become impregnable. No hostile army can invade or find access. Let

me remind you again that when we attain this pure state we do not become dreamy and idle. Rather we shall be as active as we are now, only instead of working for small, finite and selfish ends, we shall work for things that have a larger significance and even an infinite scope.

Let me tell you this: no selfish person is peaceful. That would be impossible. All the riches of the world cannot give that sense of peace, but this does not mean necessarily that you have to get rid of your wealth in order to find peace. It means that you must adjust your mind in such a way that these outer things do not fall upon it with heaviness, thus creating disturbance and unrest.

Often we hear it said that one should be *in* this world but not *of* it. Do not always try to go with the crowd. "Everybody is doing it, why should not I?" This is no ideal to follow; it is not the way of the thinking mind. To hold back when the crowd is creating the impetus to go forward means cultivating the inward power and we cannot do this without causing the influence of our life to expand. Though we may never speak a word, though we may not ever assume the position of a teacher, if we live a life of dignity, if we hold thoughts of nobility and maintain a tranquil attitude, we shall become a potent factor in the lives of our fellowmen.

Whenever we seek anything finite, we run after human favor. Let us instead turn to the Divine grace. "If you would rise to heaven's loftiest height, then seek not the favor of man . . ." We must learn to listen for the voice, the dictate of God, the Supreme, for until we are able to do this it will be impossible for us to attain these higher ideals. We may be engaged in business, in doing all kinds of things that we feel are necessary for our well-being, but that does not mean we have to forfeit our right to follow the guidance of that Infinite One.

"First seek ye the Kingdom of God, all other things shall be added unto you." This statement stands true. It never grows old, it will never grow old or be any less true. Whenever a man tries to make a compromise with this truth, he blunders. No matter how brilliant, how intellectual he may be, he will not be able successfully to reverse the order of this saying. Unless we are willing to put ourselves heart and soul into our search for the Kingdom, we cannot have the high fulfillment of life—peace, happiness and all the fruits which come as the result of exalted living. This does not mean that we must abandon the life that we know at present. On the contrary, we enrich it. When we have become tranquil and resolved in our spiritual venture, not only do we have the insight immediately to fulfill our own duties, but we become like a rock of strength to others. Do you think that people are influenced so much by what we say? It is only the foolish man, the man who is very anxious to be heard, who thinks that all he has to do is to make a great noise in order that people may hear him. Those who have wiped out all trace of egotism within their hearts are not anxious. They know that if they let the Voice of the Infinite speak through them, they are bound to be heard.

This does not mean that they are always understood. But is it so bad to be misunderstood? As Emerson says, Christ was misunderstood. At the beginning all great men, even the men of scientific genius, are misunderstood. The vulgar mind cannot understand a lofty motive. Ease, comfort and recognition, however, should not be our standard. If we are always seeking these things we forego our right to the higher ideals. One who clings to material things changes constantly as they change. The man who adjusts his life, depending on today, is going to be disappointed tomorrow. More than that, he will be unhappy and bewildered. Anyone who bases

his hopes, his expectations, everything on a material foundation will find sooner or later that it is undependable. If we really desire stability, if we long for something to hold to which will not fail us, we should take the Divine Ideal as the foundation of our life, the starting-point of all our actions, because it is immovable and unshakable.

Our faith must also be unshakable. Do you suppose we become religious merely by subscribing to a church? The mere outer form does not make a man faithful either to the Ideal or to himself. Rather it is for him to discover these great truths in his own soul and express them in his daily living. Whoever does this, all sense of drudgery will leave him and his life will become full of joy. It all depends on the point of view, on the understanding. You may enter a forest cave and still be tormented by a turbulent mind and a restless body. Again you may be in the midst of a crowd in a big city and yet have a sense of security and aloofness. This may seem a simple statement, but it contains a truth that we should not fail to recognize and apply. The man of affairs must learn it if he wants to avoid a breakdown, for if he takes this world, as it appears, too seriously, the weight of it will crush him. The opposite is also true. When the same man approaches his tasks with spiritual vision, then the world cannot touch him; he passes through it unharmed.

No matter what we are doing, we must learn to do it in the light of wisdom. We must find the point of balance in our thinking and in our acting for it means tranquillity of body and mind and out of it will grow our spirituality. We need this not only for our rest and healing but as a means of uniting us with that which is eternal and abiding.

Every man must believe in something. We may not all call it by the same name, we may not all approach it by the same path, but that makes no difference. The Infinite can

never be partitioned off. The Infinite knows no boundary lines. It is free to all, but only he who has a tranquil heart has access to It. Therefore learn to adjust yourself to the world around you. Begin at home. Begin with your immediate family. Learn to complain less and less. When there are occasions which vex and provoke you, see if you cannot transcend them. If you sincerely strive to do this, you will find what a change will be brought about.

There is such a thing as Divine protection here in this world, but we must discover it, and this we cannot do so long as we depend almost wholly on the material. Once that protection is ours, however, we may enter the enemies' camp and come out intact. Let us find a little moment when, forgetting ourselves, we can go within and be alone with our Ideal. We can all do this. There is not a mortal so deficient in virtue that he is unable to lift up his head and take his stand in his inner being. We need this deeper connection not only to insure a better, more efficient and happier life, but to fulfill our cosmic destiny.

We are all parts of the whole, but if we, the parts, feel ourselves disconnected, then we go round and round in an atmosphere of turbulence and darkness. Only as we come once more in touch with our Source, only as we begin to realize our oneness with the Infinite, do we find our peace and experience absolute rest and fulfillment.

If thou wouldst hear the Nameless, and will dive
Into the temple cave of thine own self,
There, brooding by the central altar, thou
May'st haply learn the Nameless hath a voice
By which thou wilt abide, if thou be wise.

—*Alfred Lord Tennyson*

LIMITATIONS OF REASON

By Sivanath Sastri

(From his book "Personal Reminiscences of Sri Ramakrishna")

On one occasion I was present in his (Sri Ramakrishna's) room with a few others, who during the saint's temporary absence from the room, began to discuss the reasonableness or otherwise of certain Divine attributes. I was getting tired of the discussion when the saint returned. Whilst entering the room, he had caught some words of that discussion and had also observed the heated nature of it. He at once put a stop to the discussion by saying, "Stop, stop! What is the good of discussing the reasonableness or otherwise of Divine attributes? These things are got by other ways, by prayerfully waiting and thinking. For instance, you say God is good. Can you convince me of His goodness by reasoning? Take, for instance, that mournful incident, the encroachment of the sea on the land that lately took place at Dakhin Sabazpore, the great inundation during a storm. We hear thousands of men, women and children were carried away and drowned by that flood. How can you prove to me that a good God, a beneficient Deity, ordered all that? You will perhaps answer by pointing out the attendant good that the flood did; how it carried away filth, how it fertilized the soil, and so on. But my question is this,—Could not a good God do all that without carrying off hundreds of thousands of innocent men, women and children?"

At this point, one of the audience interrupted him by saying,—"Are we then to believe that God was cruel?"

Sri Ramakrishna: You fool, who tells you to do that? Join your hands in reverential humility and say, "O God, we are too weak and incompetent to know Thy nature and Thy doings. Do Thou enlighten our understanding."

Then he illustrated the truth by the following parable: "Take the case of two men travelling by a certain road, who take temporary shelter in a mango grove. It is the season for mangoes. One of the men sits with paper and pencil in hand and begins a calculation. He counts the number of mango trees in the garden, the number of branches on each tree and the average number of mangoes on each branch. Then he tries to imagine hom many cart-loads of mangoes that garden will supply, and then again, taking each cart-load to be worth so many rupees when taken to market, how much money that garden will fetch.

"When one man was employed like this, in counting up the probable income from the garden, the other was engaged in plucking ripe mangoes and eating them. Which of them do you consider to be the wiser of the two?"

"The second one was certainly the wiser," said the visitor, "for it is certainly wiser to eat the fruits than to count up on paper the probable income from the garden."

Then the saint smiled, and remarked: "It is likewise wiser to pray to God and to cultivate communion with Him, than to argue about the reasonableness or otherwise of His attributes. Pray, and open your hearts to Him and the light will come to you."

Never utter these words: "I do not know this, therefore it is false." One must study to know, know to understand, understand to judge. —*Narada*

So man who comes out of darkness, goes into it; only the individual body rightly travels on that road. He goes toward the open, the great free steppes—a spirit mounted upon stallion body, a tireless rider who swings from steed to steed. —*Donald Peattie*

WISDOM AND DEVOTIONAL LIFE

By Sister Devamata

Two aspects of the spiritual life are stressed in the Bhagavad-Gita with equal insistence. One is devotion, the other is wisdom. They are represented not as rival paths to attainment but as complements, completing each other. Devotion, with its fervor of spirit, carries forward to the goal; wisdom lights the way. The Lord declares in the Gita: "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."

Those who seek to follow the spiritual path without this effulgent light stray into by-paths and miss the goal. The tempering influence of wisdom in the devotional life is essential. Without it there is danger of the life of devotion growing emotional and unsteady. By its nature, devotion tends to extremes. It places great importance on outward observances, it multiplies rituals and ceremonies, it multiplies symbols and sacred images. There is need of the restraining influence of wisdom to keep the devotee to the middle path. Ritual and symbol are not detrimental in themselves, but when they dominate they draw the thought continuously outward and thus impoverish the inner spiritual life. The Gita bears this out. It says: "Wisdom sacrifice is far superior to sacrifice with material objects. The whole realm of action ends in wisdom. Learn this by reverence, by inquiry, and by humble service."

Devotion is dualistic and personal; wisdom is monistic and impersonal. The devotee, as he advances, passes from one to the other. Devotion is by its nature dual. There must be worship and worshipper. They are distinct and separate, but

as the worshipper grows in fervor the relation between the two becomes closer and closer until it merges into complete union. The outlook of the devotee becomes monistic. There are, however, earnest devotees who do not covet this oneness. They long to retain their dual state of consciousness, that they may continue the joy of worship. Of these it is said in the Gita: "The great souled ones, possessing the divine nature and knowing Me as Immutable and the Source of beings, worship Me with single-minded devotion. Ever singing My glory, striving with steadfast vows, bowing down to Me in devotion, they perpetually worship Me."

The devotional life is the natural path to attainment. Devotion is cosmic. It runs through the entire universe and lies latent in every heart that beats. The faithful dog following close on the master's heels, the horse neighing with delight at the approach of the rider, have a primitive devotional life as real as one of higher form. In every jungle village there is worship with rhythmic chant and beat of drum. Worship of something is native to the human heart.

No human heart is without its shrine, veiled perhaps and unsuspected but there, none the less, waiting to be discovered. Only when man becomes aware of its presence and bows before it in worship will he taste fullness of joy and peace.

Nothing sweetens the daily life more than the practice of devotion. An interval spent in quiet communion with the Ideal at dawn and at the evening hour fills the entire day with fragrance. Also nothing kindles greater ardor in the heart than the worship and selfless service of a lofty Ideal. It awakens a sense of Divine companionship and brings God closer than any other method of approach. The Gita tells us: "That Supreme One in whom all beings abide and by whom all this is pervaded can be attained by wholehearted and exclusive

devotion to Him." But the devotion must be steadfast and focused. There can be no scattering of interest or effort. Neither can there be any rival thought or feeling in the consciousness. The offering of devotion must be unmingled and made with complete surrender. The promise is a rich one. The Lord declares, "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."

The Bhagavad-Gita sets no limits to the paths leading to attainment. According to its teaching, the whole universe is an open road to God. There are, it is true, certain organized methods given for the realization of Truth, but they are constantly modified to meet the peculiar tendencies of the aspirant. It may be said that every truth-seeker creates his own path according to his needs. The organized method, however, remains as the foundation of his practice. This catholicity of method is apparent throughout the Gita. It is illustrated by such passages as this one, taken from the chapter on Devotion:

"Those who contemplate the Imperishable, Undefinable, Omnipresent, Unthinkable, Unchangeable, Immovable, and Eternal,

"Having subdued all the senses, even-minded everywhere, and engaged in doing good to all beings, verily they attain unto Me.

"Greater is their difficulty whose minds are set on the Unmanifested, for the goal of the Unmanifested is very arduous for the embodied to attain.

"But those who, surrendering all actions to Me and regarding Me as the Supreme Goal, worship Me with single-hearted devotion,

"With them whose hearts are thus fixed on Me, Oh son of Pritha, I become ere long the Saviour from the world of birth and death.

"Fix thy mind on Me alone and rest thine understanding in Me; thus thou shalt doubtlessly live in Me hereafter.

"Oh Dhananjaya, if thou art unable to fix thy mind steadfastly on Me, then by faithful practice of devotion do thou seek to reach Me.

"If thou art also unable to practice devotion, then be thou intent on working for Me. Even by performing actions for My sake, thou shalt obtain perfection."

And elsewhere from the Gita: "Oh Pandava, he who works for Me, has Me for his highest Goal, is devoted to Me, is free from attachment and bears enmity toward no creature, he enters into Me.

"Fill thy heart with Me, be thou devoted to Me, worship Me and bow down to Me. Thus thou shalt attain unto Me. Truly I promise thee, for thou art dear to Me."

BUILDERS

By Frances Marion Ralston

Above the tumult of high Babel's tower,
Serene, untouched by any earthly foe,
Truth's challenge may be heard with voice of power,
"Cease building, lest ye lose yourselves in woe!"
Yet on they climb, these men of Babel's plan,
Creating vaster ways to reach the sky,
With cruel thought they crush the soul in man,
Nor in their godless greed can hear his cry.

But there is one who stands apart and weeps,
He knows the end of every hate-built wall,
And ever faithfully His vigil keeps
Until the day when Babel's builders fall.
Then He will bind men's wounds and gently say,
"Come little children—build again,—Love's way."

THE INFINITE IN THE FINITE

By Swami Rama Tirtha

(Lecture delivered in the Great Golden Hall, San Francisco, January 10, 1903, and published as it was given, without revision.)

The Infinite in the finite is the proposition for to-night's discussion. . .

We will begin with the minutest thing that you can conceive of in this world, . . . say, a poppy seed . . . Hold it before you on the palm. What is the seed? Is this the seed that you see before you, or that you smell, or that you weigh, or that you can touch? Is that the seed, that tiny something? Or is the seed something else? Let us examine it.

Sow this seed in the earth, underground. In a very short time, the seed germinates into a beautiful plant, a sprouting plant, and out of that first original seed we get thousands of seeds again in due time. Sow these thousands of other seeds, and we obtain millions of seeds of the same sort. Sow these millions of seeds again, and we get quadrillions of seeds of the same sort. What does this phenomenon imply? The original seed, the first seed with which we began, where is that seed now?

That perished in the ground; . . . but out of that original seed, we have got to-day quadrillions and quintillions of seeds of the same sort. What an infinite potentiality, what an infinite power, . . . was hidden or latent in the primitive, original seed with which we began!

Now the question is again asked. What do you mean when you say here is a seed. . . ? Do you mean that the word "seed" simply means the form, the size, the weight, the smell of the seed? . . . No, no. We could make an artificial seed which had the same weight, . . . which had the same color, . . . which had the same smell, . . . which had even the same taste

as the genuine seed. But this artificial seed could not be really called a seed. . . ; this would be simply a doll, a plaything for children. . . . Thus we see that the word "seed" has got an apparent meaning and also a real meaning. The apparent meaning of the word "seed" is the form, the size, the weight, the properties which we can perceive with our senses, but the real meaning . . . is the infinite power, the infinite capability, the infinite potentiality which is latent in the seed form. There we see the Infinite in the finite. . . .

Now does this infinite capacity die with the death of the form or figure? . . . The seed form or the apparent seed dies in the earth, but does the real seed, that is to say, the Infinite within, does that also die? No, no, not at all. How can Infinity die? That never dies. To-day we take up the seed which is, say, the thousandth descendant of the primitive seed. . . . Sow this seed again . . . in the earth and you will see that this seed again has got the same infinite power of development as the primitive seed had. . . . We see then that the Infinity within, the infinite capability or power is unchangeable, immutable. . . .

To sum up: The real seed is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. It is infinite, it does not die when the seed form or the body of the seed form dies, it is indestructible, it is unchangeable; there can be no increase or decrease in it. . . .

Microscopic insects you might call them; small monads, the primitive development of protoplasm, sometimes called protozoa—do you know how they develop? They develop by bisection as it is called by naturalists. This bisection takes place naturally and we can bring it about. Take up one of these microscopic monads, small tiny insects. With a fine . . . lance, bisect or divide it into two equal halves. What will become of it? . . . If we bisect a man, . . . he will die. . . . But bisect the monad and it does not die, it becomes two. Wonder

of wonders! . . . Take these two up and cut them; . . . and instead of their dying you will have four living monads of the same force and energy as the original one had. . . . Cut each of these four into equal halves and instead of killing the four, you will multiply them into eight. So on, you can multiply to any extent you wish. . . .

I use the apparent meaning of the word monad. The apparent meaning is simply the body, the form, the size, the weight, the color, the figure. The apparent monad is that, but the real monad is the power within, or the energy, the life within, that is the real monad. Kill the apparent monad, destroy the form, and the real monad or the soul, the spirit you might call it, does not die; . . . it remains the same. Go on cutting bodies, destroying bodies. The death of the body destroys not the real spirit, it destroys but the form. . . .

Now the question comes,— . . . "when the bodies of the monad go on increasing, multiplying, does that infinite power within also go on multiplying, does that also increase? Or does it decrease?" No, it neither increases nor decreases. The real Infinity within the outward apparent finite form of the monad does not change, it multiplies not, it decreases not; it remains the same.

The Vedantic explanation of this phenomenon will be given by an illustration:

There was a small child that was never shown a looking glass. You know in East India, in Hindustan, small children are not shown looking glasses. This small baby once happened to crawl into the room of his father, and there was a looking glass lying on the floor, with one end of it lying against the wall and the other end resting upon the ground. This little baby crawled up to the looking glass, and lo! there he saw a baby, . . . a dear little baby. You know children are always attracted by children . . . so this child saw in the

looking glass a child of its own size. He went up to him and when he was moving up to the child in the mirror the latter moved up to him also. He was delighted. He found that the child in the mirror was on friendly terms, liked him just as much as he liked the child in the mirror. Their noses met. He put his nose against the mirror and the child in the mirror also drew his nose up; . . . their noses touched each other. Their lips touched. He put his hands on the mirror and the child in the mirror also put his hands to him, as if he were going to shake hands with him, but when the hands of this boy were on those in the mirror, it fell flat on the ground and broke into two pieces. Now the child saw that instead of one child there were two children in the mirror. His mother, in the other room, heard this noise and came running. . . . The child, instead of being frightened at the words of the mother, which were "What have you done?" "What have you done?" "What are you doing here?" took these words not in the sense of threat or frown, but in a good sense. He said: "Oh, I have created two, I have made two." . . . The mother smiled and took the child up in her arms, took him to her own room.

Take up these two pieces of looking glass, break them, spare them not, you will get more looking glasses; break these pieces into four pieces and you will get four children. Now the small child by breaking these four pieces of glass into eight pieces could create eight children. Any number of children might be created that way. But we ask: Does that real Divinity, does that real child increase or decrease by the breakage of the mirrors? It neither increases nor decreases. The increase and decrease take place only with looking glasses. There is no increase in the child that you see in the looking glass, that remains the same. How can the Infinite be increased? If the Infinity increases, it is not Infinity. How can Infinity decrease? If it decreases, it is not Infinity.

Similarly, the Vedantic explanation of the phenomenon of bisection of a monad is that when you take up one small microscopic insect and bisect it, the body which is just like the mirror, . . . —that little body—is divided into two, but the power, the real Infinity within, the real monad, . . . or the true God within, it is not bisected by the bisection of the bodies of the monad. When the bodies of the monad are multiplied, . . . the true Divinity inside does not multiply; that remains the same. That is like the real child, and the bodies of the monad are like the pieces of looking glass. When the bodies of the monad are divided and sub-divided and divided again, the infinite power which is unchangeable, goes on reflecting itself, . . . manifesting itself equally in all the thousandfold or millionfold bodies. That remains the same. That is only one. . . . What a joy! Bisect this body and I die not. The real self, . . . the true I, dies not! Burn this body alive; do with it any thing you like, no harm is done to me. Realize, realize that you are the Infinity within. Know that. The very moment that a person knows himself to be that, the very moment that a man realizes his true nature, he is free, above all danger, above all difficulty, above all suffering, above all tribulation and pain. . . .

Oh, what wonder of wonders that it is one infinite power that shows itself in all bodies, in all the apparent personalities, in all the apparent figures. Oh, it is the I, the I, the Infinite One that is manifesting Itself in the bodies of the greatest orators, in the bodies of the greatest men, in the bodies of the most wretched creatures! Oh, what joy! I am the Infinite One and not this body. Realize that and you are free. . . .

Here are, suppose, thousands of mirrors in the world. One mirror is black, another is white, another is red, another is yellow, another is green; one of the mirrors is convex, another is concave, another mirror is prismatic, another mirror

has a lens, suppose. There are all sorts of mirrors. There is one person standing in the mirror. He looks all around. . . . In the red glass he finds himself red; at another place he finds himself yellow, at another place he finds himself black, in the concave mirror he finds himself disfigured in a most ludicrous manner, in the convex mirror he finds himself again distorted in a most ridiculous way. He finds himself in all these multiplied shapes and forms, but in all these apparently different manifestations there is one indivisible, unchangeable, eternal, constant reality. Know that and free yourself. Know that and shake off all sorrow. All this distortion and disfigurement has nothing to do with the real Infinity, Divinity, which manifests and reveals itself in all these different mirrors or glasses. The difference lies in your bodies. The bodies, the minds, are like the different glasses; one body may be like a lens, another prismatic, another a white glass, another a red glass, another concave, another convex. The bodies are different, but you are not the bodies only, the apparent unreal self. Through ignorance you call yourself the body; the body you are not. You are the infinite power; the Divinity, the constant, immutable, unchangeable One. That you are: know that and you find yourself inhabiting the whole world, inhabiting the whole universe.

In India we have mirror houses. In mirror houses we have all the walls and the roof bedecked with mirrors and looking glasses of all kinds. . . .

Once there came into a mirror house of this kind a dog. The dog found armies of dogs on his right coming up to him, and you know that dogs are very jealous; dogs do not wish some rival dog to be present beside them. . . . When this dog saw thousands of dogs approaching him from the right, he turned to the left hand side and again on that wall were fixed thousands of mirrors, and there he found an army of dogs

coming up to him about to devour him, tear him to pieces. He turned to the third wall and there he found again dogs of the same sort. He turned to the fourth wall and there the same thing. He turned his head upward to heaven and there from heaven he saw thousands of dogs coming down upon him to devour him and tear him to pieces. He was frightened. He jumped up, all the dogs jumped on all sides; he was barking and he found all the dogs barking and opening their mouths at him. The sound re-echoed from the four walls, and he was afraid. He jumped and ran this way and that way. The poor fellow died exhausted on the spot.

Exactly the same way, Vedanta tells you this world is like a mirror-house, and all these bodies are like different mirrors, and your true Atman or real Self is reflected on all sides, just as the dog saw his figure reflected from the four walls. Just so does the . . . One Infinite Divinity, the Infinite Power, reflect Itself in the different mirrors. . . . Ignorant people come like dogs in this world and say: "That man will eat me up, that man will tear me to pieces, destroy me!" Oh, how much of jealousy and fear in this world! To what are this jealousy and fear due? To . . . doglike ignorance. . . . Please turn the tables. Come into this world . . . not as d-o-g but as G-o-d, and you will be the master of the mirror house, you will be the owner of the whole universe; it will give you pleasure when you see your rivals and your brothers and your enemies advance; it will give you joy when you find any glory anywhere. You will make a heaven of this world.

We come now to man. You have seen the Infinite in the finite in the case of the seed. That was an illustration taken from the vegetable kingdom. The Infinite in the finite was shown to you in the monad; that was an instance taken from the animal kingdom. You have seen the Infinite in the finite in the case of the glass. This was an instance taken from the mineral kingdom. Now we come to man.

Just as the original seed died and gave rise to thousands of seeds, but in reality the real seed did not multiply, . . . and just as the original monad died and gave rise to thousands of monads, while the real monad remained the same, and just as the glasses broke, . . . but the real child did not break; just in the same way when a man dies, there come up his sons. . . . When the parents die, in their place come up dozens and scores; these again die in their turn and leave behind a four-fold progeny. They die and leave behind a larger number. . . .

Here again Vedanta tells you that this apparent multiplication, this apparent increase, implies no increase in the true, real man that you are. The real man does not increase. The real man in you is the Infinite All. Man is the infinite Individual, you might call it. Let all the people die and any one pair remain. Out of this pair we can have millions of population in due time. The infinite capability, the infinite power, the infinite potentiality which was concealed or latent in the primitive pair is found in each pair to-day undiminished, unimpaired. This Infinity you are. This infinite capability, infinite power, you are, and this infinite power is the same in all these bodies. These bodies may multiply like glass, but the Man, the real Infinity is only one. You may make much of these bodies, you may think of them whatever you please, but these you are not. You are the infinite power, which is only One, One indivisible, the same . . . yesterday, to-day, and for ever. It might be made more clear by a popular illustration.

Who are you, sir? "I am Mr. So and So." Yes. Are you not a man? "Oh, man I am, of course." Who are *you?* "I am Mrs. So and So." Are you not a woman? "Woman I am, of course." Go to anybody . . . and he will never tell you that he is a man. He will always say, "I am Mr. So and So." . . . Oh, but man also you are. Then he may admit that he is a man.

Now we ask, have you ever seen Man, the unadulterated, unspecified, unparticularized Man? Have you ever seen that? . . . That species, Man in itself, you cannot lay your hands on, a man divested of his Smithness, Jonesness, or divested of his Mr.-ness or Mrs.-ness. Man *per se,* divested of these properties we cannot see anywhere, and yet this Man is present in all these bodies. Bring before you Mr. So and So. Take away the man part of him, . . . the concrete man, and what remains? Nothing . . . But the real man is still there. The real man Rama* takes in the sense of the underlying power, or the Infinity within you. . . . Weigh and examine it thoroughly and you will see that there is indeed something, the Infinity within, which cannot be seen, cannot be tasted and yet . . . is the fountain-head of all that you see, . . . is the cause of all sight, . . . is the cause of all sound, . . . is the reality in all your taste. . . . It is there and yet it is indescribable. Thus we see that the Infinite within the finite is incapable of being seen, incapable of being heard, incapable of being thought, of being imagined, and yet all that you see is through it, all that you hear is through it, all that you smell is through it. It is indescribable and yet the fountain-head, the essence of all that is described.

In conclusion, Rama simply asks you to do one favor to yourself. Above all, be men! All these bodies are like dewdrops and the real Man is like the ray of the sun which passes through and threads all those beads of dew. All these bodies are like the beads on a rosary and the real Man is like the string that passes through them all. If you once sit still for a second and feel, feel that you are the universal man, you are the infinite power, you will see that all this you are. Being Man I am everything. . . . Just rise above this Mr.-ness and Mrs.-ness, rise above that; and you become one with the All.

*Swami Rama Titha

"I am the Unseen Spirit which informs
All subtle essence! I am flame in fire,
I shine in sun and moon, planets and stars!
I blow with the winds, roll with the waves!
I am the man and woman, youth and maid!
The babe new-born, the withered ancient, propped
Upon his staff! I am whatever is—
The black bee and the tiger and the fish,
The green birds with red eyes, the trees, the grass,
The cloud that hath the lightning in its womb,
The seasons and the seas! In Me they are,
In Me begin and end."

Upanishad, Sir Edward Arnold, translator.

Not with doubting, but with assured consciousness do I love Thee, O Lord. Thou didst strike my heart with Thy word and I loved Thee.

But what do I love when I love Thee? Not grace of bodies, nor the beauty of the seasons, nor the brightness of the light, so gladsome to these eyes; nor inexhaustible melodies of sweet song, nor the fragrant smell of flowers, of ointments and spices, not manna and honey, not limbs acceptable to embracements of the flesh. None of these love I when I love my God: and yet I love a kind of light and of melody and of fragrance, a kind of food, and a manner of embracement, when I love my God; the embracement, food, fragrance, melody, and light of my inner man, where there shineth unto my soul what space containeth not, and there soundeth what time snatcheth not, and there smelleth what breath disperseth, and there tasteth what eating cloyeth not, and there clingeth what satiety divorceth not. This is it which I love when I love my God.—*St. Augustine*

GREAT WHITE WINGS

By Glory Raye

"*He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust.*"—(91st Psalm)

O, GREAT WHITE WINGS! spreading o'er the sky,
Sheltering many lonely hearts, protecting those who die,
High above the world's distress, far beyond the sea
Stretches thy infinite embrace, for all who reach to Thee.

O, GREAT WHITE WINGS! so silent, so serene,
Thy light the lofty sun reflects, night comes, stars shine and gleam.
O, spreading wings, of love and hope, I lift mine arms to thee.
Stoop, Thou, and lift me, GREAT WHITE WINGS,
To view eternity.

I don't remember when the idea of GREAT WHITE WINGS first came to me. I must have been very young. Being an imaginative child, I was constantly wondering what God looked like. No one, not even my beautiful mother, could describe to my satisfaction what God really was like in appearance. 'Tis true, I had fancies of my own, but they were fickle. Being more or less attached to human beings, they were bound to be fickle.

In my early recollections I remember a very handsome elderly gentleman with a beautifully cut pointed beard. He was the Lord Provost of the particular part of Scotland I was born in. He it was who presented me with my first prize at school, smiling very sweetly as he handed the book to me. I thought reverently, he must look a little like God. One thing I was certain of in my mind, God was beautiful, I could not think of Him as being ever angry, unkind or sad, and of

course He belonged to my particular part of the world, which proves that the sense of possession develops very early.

I remember being quite disillusioned about this one day, when mother received a letter from a dear friend in New Zealand who concluded by saying, "Our dear God," (the God which I particularly thought belonged to Scotland) blessed her each day in her new home. This was my first understanding that God was not geographical, but universal. My imagination had to soar somewhat at this realization.

I think, perhaps, that this was the moment when GREAT WHITE WINGS was born. I knew angels had wings, but God never struck me as being an angel. The angels were His servants, so He must be much greater. It was very comforting to wake up in the dark and feel that God was like a gigantic white dove, with wings stretched clear over the world, protecting all who were frightened, sick, sad and poor. One could creep under them, much as I had seen baby chicks do, and be quite safe from the outside world. This was a secret I had to keep to myself; for people had strange ideas about God.

I think the first time I really felt the protection of those wings was one day in hot midsummer. I, with a party of my little friends, decided to go on a picnic. Mother, as mothers generally have to do, stopped everything she was doing to pack our little lunch. I knew just where the most beautiful marsh marigolds grew, and that was my reason for the picnic. I remember mother saying, "Now, dearie, don't go too far away from home, I feel sure we are going to have a thunderstorm."

I being the leader, however, had a definite objective, the marsh marigolds, and it eased my conscience somewhat to know that I hadn't promised mother anything. We reached our destination and, just as she had predicted, it started to

rain, followed by thunder and lightning. A storm always frightened me, and the children were in a panic. We had passed the last farm house and were quite some way from home. I herded all the children towards a huge, sheltering tree.

One little girl refused, however, to come with us; she said her mother had told her never to get under a tree in a storm, as lightning might strike it. She was my greatest difficulty, for I no sooner got her under the tree than she'd dart out again with one or two children following her. I was far from being happy myself, for she was upsetting them all with fear. Then suddenly the idea of GREAT WHITE WINGS came, and my own fears seemed to vanish.

My new sense of protection and calmness seemed to affect the children, and by and by we were all sitting under the tree, quiet and subdued,—I and my imagination secure and safe, with all my little chicks under the GREAT WHITE WINGS.

Shortly afterwards the sun came out, luminous and warm. We ate our lunch under the tree where the earth was dry, then, with our hands and arms full of flowers, tired but happy, we returned home. Mother, of course, was very anxious, and surprised that we were not wet and frightened. I told her I had not been a bit frightened, but I did not mention about the WINGS.

Unconsciously I had discovered a law. I had faith in God, in the God my imagination had created, with GREAT WHITE WINGS that protected the universe. My faith had calmed the children, I had assured them nothing could hurt them under that tree; the GREAT WHITE WINGS did the rest.

There have been many times in my life when my vision has been so blurred that even though my inmost heart knew the GREAT WHITE WINGS of my childhood were still there, I have defiantly stood outside in the storms of my own emo-

tions, rather than creep under their protective cover. This is what is happening today all around us. People with a yearning in their hearts for peace and solace, for serenity in their souls, stand out in the storms of their own and others' emotions, getting hurt and bruised, and wet with their own tears, whilst all around them is the great divine Father-Mother God, ready to protect them with GREAT WHITE WINGS. Under them you may still know there is a terrible war going on in the world. You can hear its noise, and view from your protective place its infamous destruction. But somehow, from where you are, it cannot reach you. Far down below you can see people standing in line to get meat from the market, but you know God has provided many other foods we can use. He will not let His children starve; only our own fears can do that.

We have so much to be grateful for in this great country, so very much! We still have our homes, we have enough food, we still have our churches, and the right to worship how and when we please. It is true, outside the storm rages, there are sick hearts, and brave boys dying for a cause; but even then, if we want to, we can creep under the sheltering Wings of God, and find peace, even in the midst of turmoil and tears.

The Great Divine Ruler of the universe never forsakes us. Image Him as you will. A God who created this wonderful universe must have a million aspects. I think many of our noble bird-men feel this, when they are high in the air; I think, too, that is why so many of them have turned to prayer. The boys in this war are not ashamed to pray. High amidst the clouds on their own fleet wings they come closer to God, and in this communion with higher things, they discover that this is a spiritual war in which man must discover his own true winged Self, and thus find God.

I like to think of God having wings, GREAT WHITE WINGS, that lift us up far beyond the earth, far beyond this limited little life that many people think is all there is—high, where one has a feeling of space, of no limitation in man's power or progress. To be able from the heights to view pain and horror as something of man's creation, not God's, to be able to feel a little—even a little is so much—of that peace that "passeth all understanding," soaring high, secure, protected, neath the shadow of those GREAT WHITE WINGS!

RELIGION AND GOD

Meditations of Kagawa

(From "Kagawa" published by Harper and Bros., New York)

Religion is the greatest of all arts. What generally goes by the name of art is fragmentary and appeals only to the senses. Religion alone is an art which takes in the whole of living and is an art of life itself.

When we live by a religion we are able for the first time to sit before God's mirror. The soul functions as a medium of expression, clothing the material forms, and they in turn reveal the structure of the soul.

Religion is the most delightful of the arts. To me it is the highest of arts. There is no need of spectators. I tread its stage alone. Even when I weep shrouded in darkness, God does not fail to see me. On this stage God and I are the actors who enact all the scenes. Even though I be the most stupid of actors, God does not show contempt. The life of every moment is a phenomenon of God's heart. Every task is the combustion of the flame of God. He greets us in the kitchen. He gazes intently upon us at the well-curb. In the bustle and hustle of the factory, or when hanging on the strap in the crowded car, we breathe God. When we lift the iron sledge and are hammering out the steel we are in God's bosom.

This is the mood of the true soul—to be drunk not with liquor but with God. To feast to one's heart's content, not on food but on God. In dreaming and in waking hours, in sorrow and in laughter, to walk in a world flooded with light, this is a phenomenon experienced only by those who truly know the soul's art.

The aspiration for holiness—this is the outcome of the moral life and the very heart of religious living. When one is charmed by the Holy One and as a captive of the Holy of Holies, offers himself up as a Mass on God's altar, morals become a festival and religion becomes a sweet-scented perfume rising Godward.

Holiness is the heavenward open window of the soul. Holiness is the well which God has dug deep into a man's spirit. Eternally God looks into the soul through this open window. And sometime the day will dawn when the soul will courageously wing its way upward through this window opening toward heaven.

There is but one straight path to holiness. There must be no winding hither and thither. This path is known only to the sanctified whose faces are set toward the supreme domain. Those who are led astray by low lustings perish at the very sight of the brightness of holiness's dazzling light. . . .

Death to me is the pathway to God. I cannot believe otherwise. Even now it is God who gives me life. If life is God's gift, is not death, which is one of the variations of life, also the work of His hand?

If I praise God for life, can I refrain from praising Him for death? Let me in response to that solemn summoning voice, quietly commit my soul to God. Death cannot be a victor over me. Through death I am a victor Godward. Nay, God is ever victorious over death. He tramples it under His feet.

CROSSROADS OF LIFE

By Sister Daya

We go through life, in many ways, rather casually. There are an infinite number of things that confront us at every turn and challenge, to a minor extent, our faith, our conviction, our way of life, the choice we have made, our goal; but, for the most part, we brush these things aside rather easily, or else side-pass them. We feel that they are very small—little incidents—too little to affect to any real extent our life-pattern. So we evade the responsibility of a decision and naively believe we have rid ourselves of this or that troublesome situation, and thus it goes on year after year, perhaps life after life.

But destiny backs up on us. These things are never really put aside. They have a cumulative effect and sooner or later all these evaded responsibilities, these moments when we have refused to face what we are or where we are going, pile up like a snowball rolling down hill till, suddenly, they block our way with some terrible choice which it is no longer possible to avoid, nor may we turn to someone else to make our decision for us, as has often been our wont. We stand alone, utterly and absolutely alone, and we must choose, go in one direction or another, through the force of our own vision and character. We have in truth come to the crossroads of life.

Sometimes this is an individual crisis, but it can be national; it can even be worldwide, involving an entire humanity, as it does today, when each man must make known where he stands,—a sort of judgment day for every conscious being. In the path of discipleship this "moment of choice" is recognized as one of the great stages on the way of attainment, a test which the aspirant must meet and overcome before he is fit to advance.

No one can be faced with such a choice without sensing the mystery stretching behind it—the mystery of the entire past, reaching back to the very roots of time and being. Every selfless instinct, every true act, every occasion in the years gone by when we have risen above our dead-level self—all will lend us their strength at this crucial moment, and be our guide, our armour, our shield. Likewise if in the past we did not stand firm, refused to choose, or else chose wrong or leaned supinely on another, then weakness will inhibit our progress.

William James has something interesting to say concerning this:

"We are spinning our own fates, good or evil, never to be undone. Every smallest stroke of virtue or vice leaves its never-so-little scar. The drunken Rip Van Winkle in Jefferson's play, excuses himself for every fresh dereliction by saying, 'I won't count this time!' Well, he may not count it; but it is being counted none the less. Down among his nerve cells and fibres the molecules are counting it, registering it and storing it up to be used against him when the next temptation comes. Nothing we ever do is in strict literalness wiped out. Of course this has its good side as well as its bad one. As we become permanent drunkards by so many separate drinks, so we become saints in the moral, and authorities and experts in the practical and scientific spheres, by so many separate acts and hours of work."

This brings us face to face with the tremendous significance of little things. We are ever looking for the big event. Even those who enter what we are pleased to call the spiritual life, who feel an urge to achieve realization, look for some big trial, something that is great and overpowering. They overlook the small things of everyday life. In fact we are most of us so immersed in what the Hindus term *Maya*, illu-

sion or relative truth, that we still can think in the terms of big and little, great and small. The star Betelgeuse seems to our mind more wonderful, more innately radiant, more expressive of Deity than a little grain of dust that we brush off our arm, yet there is no inherent difference. The trouble is, we seek to measure infinitude and think of it in terms of size, whereas the Infinite is neither great nor small: it is limitless. It has neither beginning nor end. Awareness of infinitude can exist in the mind of the most insignificant appearing human being, in the mind of a dwarf as well as in the mind of a giant. It conceivably could exist in the mind of an ant.

Swami Vivekananda was once asked this question:

"How is it possible for God who is infinite to be limited in the form of a man (as an Avatara)?" And the great Swami replied:

"It is true that God is infinite, but not in the sense in which you comprehend it. You have confounded your ideas of infinity with the materialistic idea of vastness. When you say that God cannot take the form of a man, you understand that a very, very large substance or form (as if material in nature) cannot be compressed into a very, very small compass. God's infinitude refers to the unlimitedness of a purely spiritual entity, and as such, does not suffer in the least by expressing itself in a human form."

When it comes to importance what could be more significant than a seed? There is a poem by Muriel Stuart that is beautifully expressive of this. It is called "The Seed Shop."

"Here in a quiet and dusty room they lie,
Faded as crumbling stone or shifting sand,
Forlorn as ashes, shriveled, scentless, dry—
Meadows and gardens running through my hand.
Dead that shall quicken at the touch of spring,
Sleepers to stir beneath June's morning kiss,

Though bees pass over unremembering,
And no bird seeks here bowers that were his.

In this brown husk a dale of hawthorn dreams;
A cedar in this narrow cell is thrust
That will drink deeply of a century's streams;
These lilies shall make summer on my dust.

Here in their safe and simple house of death,
Sealed in their shells, a million roses leap;
Here I can blow a garden with my breath,
And in my hand a forest lies asleep."

This brings us to the seed in the mind, the seed that we plant each day by the word we speak, the thought we think, the thing we believe—the seed that if nurtured will ripen into full-blown consciousness for good or ill.

Time slips by. We say, "Today is past and I have accomplished nothing." Nothing? When we are constantly building—building destiny, building the future—the morrows and tomorrows and tomorrows for ourselves? Morrows of bright and great vision, of selfless service and transcendence of the material world; or else dark tomorrows, leading to an ever narrowing sphere where the soul of man seems to sicken and die, and which in the end must destroy itself.

Oliver Wendell Holmes, in his "Chambered Nautilus" gives a vivid picture of this never-ceasing evolvement of the future out of the past, the building of the new upon the basis of the old, yet going beyond it, till all building is cast aside forever.

We are builders every one of us, whether it be on the physical, mental or spiritual plane. From birth to death we build. But although physical matter is the densest substance with which we have to deal, we find it far easier to remodel a material dwelling than one which our thoughts have constructed

out of mind-stuff. These mental homes which we raise minute by minute may well be the product of a high and specialized intelligence, but their walls are non the less limiting.

Concentration is one of the most potent of mental powers, yet when we direct our energies exclusively to one phase of finite existence, we become unaware of other facets of reality, other realms of being. It is for this reason that those who excel along any one line may often be blind and deaf to neighboring aspects of thinking and understanding, as is sometimes the case with, say, scientists in their relation to the mystic consciousness. If, unlike the nautilus, we lack the wisdom to move on rhythmically and gracefully when the hour strikes, we shall find ourselves either "shut from heaven" with a dome not vast enough to satisfy permanently the immortal mortal that we are, or be forced by life itself into a twisted and distorted habitation, the product of our continued lethargy and blind attachment.

The aim and purpose of the nautilus was, though unknown to himself, final liberation. It was this instinctive, unswerving direction of his activities toward the ultimate goal —the leaving of his "outgrown shell by life's unresting sea" —that made possible the beauty of his pilgrimage. There was no ego to impede the great, smooth, sweep of the law of his being. True, he was only a mollusk, and out of that very ego which we condemn and the struggle which it involves, comes man's final victory. Yet egolessness is the very nature of that victory, as the Christ reveals when he lays all strife, all self-will aside and gives Himself over wholly to the Will of the Father. Looked at from this angle, the lesser life can be a symbol of the greater.

The Supreme Teachers of all the ages have told us to seek first the Kingdom of God and all things else would be added unto us. When we bind our purpose to That which is the

Life of all, the Spirit of all, the Soul of all,—to That "through fear of which" the sun shines, the stars gleam, music charms the heart and beautiful colors enchant the eyes, when, in short, we turn the whole force of our being toward that One through Whom everything exists, then we have free access to all the mansions in the Father's house, and finally to the homeless state which the Christ glorified and which, according to poetic legend, the little nautilus, in his life cycle, achieved.

In his achievement, let us note, though there is endless effort there seems to be no sense of strain. And this too is symbolic of the spirit way. Strain bends things awry, forces them out of true. It is native to ego and all that is harsh and brittle. Selfishness means strain, as do cowardice and weakness and lack of truth. These bring on the crisis. Spirit moves gently. So does the springtide, and both are irresistible.

The nautilus never ceased his work—it was like breathing; he never felt the burden—it was like the air.

"Year after year beheld the silent toil
That spread his lustrous coil;
Still, as the spiral grew,
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,
Stole with soft steps its shining archway through,
Built up its idle door,
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the old no more."

"Stole with soft step its shining archway through—" So should we—if we have rightly met each passing moment—steal softly through the archways of our days and years.

In that invaluable Theosophical booklet, "Light on the Path," by Mabel Collins, we are given this command:

"Grow as the flower grows, unconsciously, but eagerly anxious to open its soul to the air. So must you press forward to open your soul to the eternal. But it must be the eternal

that draws forth your strength and beauty, not desire of growth. For in the one case, you develop in the luxuriance of purity, in the other, you harden by the forcible passion for personal stature."

The true artist, when he sees the flight of a bird, thrills to its incomparable grace of motion, and longs to preserve it in some way, to immortalize the turn of a wing or the quiver of a feather. He is not calculating about his future reputation as a painter; he forgets everything else, including himself, and is intent only in perpetuating that swift, elusive loveliness.

Here again we do not find strain but we do find struggle—the struggle of the vast to express, not of the small to evade. It implies a sort of passion of the soul. There has to be heroism, something flaming that causes one to wipe out the self as if it did not exist, to smother the word of self-pity that rises to the lips, in order that wisdom, beauty, rapture may issue forth. In this way life becomes incandescent, blissful, yet full of peace. It is the heritage of man, this illumination, of every man who is able to transcend the deadly whirlpool of ego, and give himself in the little as in the big. When we can feel this, glow with it, then our whole being will expand and within us Truth will press down till it will seem as if our heart must break—not from sorrow, but from something we cannot make articulate—an infinite beauty which is everywhere in the universe waiting for us to awake.

In the meantime our lives may seem humdrum, and of little worth. Yet if we could meet the daily problem, not with indifference, wretched calculation or evasion, but with dedication, we should see for ourselves that heaven can be in a grain of sand as well as in a far-away planet. We would become aware of that Spirit which imbues all things with its own lightness and would in this way discover that we always have had wings.

Take man's contest with his lesser self, it need not be a sordid or a heavy battle. In one sense, it need not be a battle at all. The moment we struggle against a thing, we recognize it, we give it substance and reality. Therefore it is for us rather to keep our gaze fixed upon the exalted and the lovely, the pure and the Divine. Then though there may be suffering, we shall be able to say with Thomas a Kempis, "I bear the cross; the cross bears me." This is one of the mysteries of the Kingdom. No life can be complete without pain, and when it is nobly borne, for the sake of the Ideal, it becomes a great initiation. Thus it was that Christ said: "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven"—the Kingdom of Heaven *which is within.*

"He who sees the Self (the Divine Self) in all beings, and all beings in the Self—how can there be delusion or grief for him who sees this oneness everywhere?"

What does this mean? That we have within us the bliss, the completeness of that Whole. Here and here alone lies man's fulfilment. When the realization of this mighty Truth ignites our being, then the little worrying cares of every day will no longer have power over us, for we shall redeem their finiteness with our infinitude. We shall meet them breast on, but they will be unable to pierce our consciousness or drag down our mind. And should unworthy thoughts intrude, we shall be able to disassociate ourselves from them. We shall ignore them and turn our mind away from them, compelling it to dwell on the subject of our choice—in itself a great act of Yoga. These thoughts are no more a part of our being than the dress we wear is part of our body. We shall replace them with the Divine. Just one touch of Divine blessing is

potent enough to obliterate every shadow of darkness, every low instinct that would invade the soul. When the King of Beauty enters us, then all that is ignoble dies.

But never does this living Presence come accidentally. His way is prepared by every word, every act, every thought and feeling through the long, long years. Swami Paramananda told us over and over again, "You cannot afford to be careless in your spiritual life." This means that we cannot afford to let the moments go by, weighted only with trivialities and postponements. We must fill them with music and brave decisions and heavenly things. Ever and always we must listen for the undertone of beauty beneath the discordant, and feel for unity behind the divergent. Then life will carry us, not confront us, and all fear will cease to be.

The Lord Buddha once gave a command which if fulfilled could bring consummation. A learned Brahman approached the Blessed One and said: "How shall I find the path to life everlasting? I know all the Vedas by heart and have not found the truth."

The Buddha replied: "Learning is a good thing, but it availeth not. True wisdom can be acquired by practice only. Practise the truth that thy brother is the same as thou. Walk in the noble path of righteousness and thou wilt understand that while there is death in self, there is immortality in truth."

No time or place or circumstance is inopportune for this type of practice, and it leads one safely and surely beyond the crossroads of life to the flaming vision of Reality. Therefore let us begin, let us begin at this moment, so that the instinct for Truth may become firmly rooted in our hearts.

"Before a thing has given indications of its presence," says Lao-tzu, "it is easy to take measures against it. . . . The tree which fills the arms grew from the tiniest sprout; the tower of nine stories rose from a small heap of earth; the journey of a thousand *li* commenced with a single step."

THE SKELETON

By Rabindranath Tagore

A beast's bony frame lies bleaching on the grass.
Its dry white bones—Time's hard laughter—cry to me:
Thy end, proud man, is one with the end of the cattle that graze no more,
For when thy life's wine is spilt to its last drop the cup is flung away in a final unconcern.
I cry in answer:
Mine is not merely the life that pays its bed and board with its bankrupt bones, and is made destitute.
Never can my mortal days contain to the full
All that I have thought and felt, gained and given, listened to and uttered.
Often has my mind crossed Time's border,—
Is it to stop at last forever at the boundary of crumbling bones?
Flesh and blood can never be the measure of the truth that is myself.
The days and moments cannot wear it out with their passing kicks.
The wayside bandit, Dust, does not rob it of all its possessions.
Know that I have drunk the honey of the formless from the lotus of endless forms.
Through the cave of sufferings I have found the secret path of delight,
And have seen tracks of light across the voiceless desert of the dark.
Death, I refuse to accept from thee
That I am nothing but a gigantic jest of God,
That I am annihilation built with all the wealth of the Infinite.

OUT OF THE CRUCIBLE

(From published and unpublished sources, touching upon man's reaction to the suffering and sacrifice of war.)

FROM THE FIELD

The following is a letter written by Capt. W. C. Porter to his parents on March 6th, 1942, before Corregidor's surrender. Captain Porter is now a prisoner of the Japanese.

Dearest folks:

It seems ages since I've heard from you and I've worried countless nights because I know that you are anxious about me and I don't want you to worry. . . .

I am now a Captain and have a battalion of infantry. I received the silver star citation and another, but it is still in the mill.

The war is as a rule the most boring thing you can imagine; but it can get really hot at times. The first battle frightens you no matter how many engagements you see; but after you warm up, in a few minutes all fear leaves you and at times it is just exciting. The hardest thing here to put up with is doubt, and waiting for help—we live on rumor after rumor.

I never knew in my life how much I loved you all and what you meant to me. Maybe I never really appreciated what wonderful parents you really are. This war has made me appreciate one thing if nothing else—the little things in life—a decent smoke—a good bed—a Sunday ride—all those things that are impossible now.

The more you see of death the more contempt you have for it. Anything as wonderful as the human body that can think and love, work, figure and reason, and yet can be reduced to corruption in twenty-four hours, must have within it some property such as a soul. A little bit of metal driving through the flesh stops those functions in a flash. The greater

property must constantly be trying to escape from its base case of flesh. The flesh is weak—it is nothing—it is the most unlasting of substances. I hold death in contempt, yet respect it only because of my most ardent desire to see you again and home once more.

Never worry about me; you must not and I will have less on my mind, and before long I will meet you where we can have long days together.

* * * *

THOUGHTS ON EASTER AND THE WAR

From the Home Front

Of course I got up for a Sunrise Service, all by myself, while the rest of the household slept—and drove away. This year, as last, I went to a hilltop park which is sublime in early morning. To the west are the distant purple Rockies and the marble pavilion on top of the hill with tall columns, seems to reach to the sky. All around are the acres of broad, rolling green, fringed by trees, and to the east, pines. It was through this veiling of pine branches that the first sun rays came and it enabled us to look directly into the sun's heart—an experience in itself. The slight diffusion caused the rays of light to twinkle and dance in shimmering gossamer threads, pouring out like a rainbow tunnel from the heart of light itself. It is futile to try to describe it, but an experience to live with one forever. It seemed to symbolize so well the opened arms of the Christ Being in resurrection. All about were the chorusing of birds and above, the clear, deep morning sky. One could not help realizing that eternity is forever and wars and passing things, as all man-made things, are just shadows passing across the path of light. . . .

It occurred to me—hearing the prayers for peace—that perhaps it would be wiser to pray for understanding in the hearts of mankind—the lady across the way, the grumbling

merchant, the disgruntled over-worked employee, the hatred-sharpened sadness of some parent who had lost a son in the war. How can there be peace when people aren't ready for it? It puzzles me frankly, and alarms me endlessly, to see how unready people are for peace within their own lives. They want Japan and Germany to make peace, but they reserve the right to go on with their little private wars, their pet hatreds —their personal greeds and selfishness. How do they expect a world to be at peace while they keep those things alive? The newspapers here are devoting their purpose to building up terrific hatred. It sickens me to see how people *en masse* respond to it. They have public demonstrations, they can be whipped to a frenzy by so little. All this hatred that is being instilled in their lives will live on with them and find outlet long after any armistice is signed. The earth heals its wounds and blooms again in another spring, but hatred and fear are not so easily healed. The pity of it! . . . All one can do is to do his best to hold to his own path and his sanity and possibly his sense of humor, and resolve not to let the disease of hatred and fear get into his life.

* * * *

FROM "FLIGHT TO ARRAS"

(In the following excerpts from "Flight to Arras", the author, Antoine de Saint Exupery, records the thoughts which came to him while on an assignment so dangerous that the officers who sent him forth never thought to see him return.)

"If I am alive," I said to myself, "I shall do my thinking tonight." Night, the beloved. Night when words fade and things come alive. . . . Day belongs to family quarrels, but with the night he who has quarreled finds love again. For love is greater than any wind of words. . . . Love is not thinking but being. . . .

To live is to be slowly born. It would be a bit too easy if we could go about borrowing ready-made souls. It is true that sudden illumination may now and then light up a destiny and impel a man in a new direction. But illumination is vision suddenly granted the spirit at the end of a long and gradual preparation. . . .

There is a cheap literature that speaks to us of the need of escape. It is true that when we travel we are in search of distance. But distance is not to be found. It melts away and escape has never led us anywhere. The moment a man finds that he must play the races, or go to the Arctic, or make war in order to feel himself alive, that man has begun to spin the strands that bind him to other men and to the world. But what wretched strands! A civilization that is really strong fills man to the brim though he never stir. What are we worth when motionless is the question.

There is a density of being in a Dominican at prayer. He is never so much alive as when prostrate and motionless before his God. In Pasteur, holding his breath over the microscope, there is density of being. Pasteur is never more alive than in the moment of scrutiny. At that moment, he is moving forward. He is hurrying. He is advancing in seven-league boots, exploring distance despite his immobility. Cezanne, mute and motionless before his sketch, is an inestimable presence. He is never more alive than when silent, when feeling and pondering. At that moment his canvas became for him something wider than the sea. . . .

Each by himself is responsible for all. I understand now the mystery of the religion whence was born the civilization I claim as my own. "To bear the sins of man." Each man bears the sin of all men. . . .

Victory is the fruit of love. Only love can say what face shall emerge from the clay. Only love can guide a man to-

wards that face. Intelligence is valid only as it serves love. The sculptor is great with the burden of his creation. It matters not that he knows not how he will draw it forth from the clay. From one thumb stroke to the next, from error to error, contradiction to contradiction, he will move through the clay. From one thumb stroke to the next, from error to judgment is not creative. If the sculptor is but skill and mind, his hands will be without genius. . . .

Concerning the part played by intelligence, we were long in error. We neglected the substance of man. We believed that the virtuosity of base natures could aid in the triumph of noble causes; that shrewd selfishness could exalt spirits to sacrifice; that withered hearts could by a wind of phases found brotherhood or love. We neglected Being. The seed of a cedar will become cedar. The seed of a bramble can only become a bramble. I shall no longer content myself with judging men according to the phrases by which they justify their acts. I shall no longer accept as gold the bond they put up in the form of words, nor be deceived concerning the direction in which their acts tend. Here is a man striding toward his home. . . . I can only ask myself this: "What sort of a man is he?" And when I know that then shall I know by what lodestone he is impelled and where he is bound. For in the end man always gravitates in the direction commanded by the lodestone within him. . . .

Thus there is in me a creature against whom I struggle in order that I may rise superior to myself. Except for that flight to Arras I should never have been able to distinguish between that creature and the man I seek to be. A metaphor comes into my mind . . . what it is worth, I do not know, but here it is: the individual is a mere path. What matters is Man, who takes that path. . . .

That gun fire over Arras, I said to myself, had cracked my

stubborn shell and I was released . . . and then Man had appeared. Very simply had he taken the place of the individual within me. . . . I know the meaning of humility. It is not self-disparagement. It is the motive power of action. . . . And this, the true significance of my civilization, is what I had little by little forgotten. I had thought that it stood for a sum of men as stone stands for a sum of stones. I had mistaken the sum of stones for the cathedral, wherefore, little by little, my heritage, my civilization, had vanished. It is Man who must be restored to his place among men. It is Man that is the essence of our culture. Man, the keystone in the arch of the community. Man, the seed whence springs our victory. . . .

My civilization sought to found human relations upon the belief in Man above and beyond the individual, in order that the attitude of each person towards himself and towards others should not be one of blind conformity to the habits of the ant-hill, but the free expression of love. . . .

For centuries my civilization contemplated God in the person of Man. Man was created in the image of God. God was revered in Man. Men were brothers in God. It was this reflection of God that conferred an inalienable dignity upon every man. . . . It was the contemplation of God that created men who were equal. I understand why an equality that was founded upon God involved neither contradiction nor disorder. . . . As the inheritor of God, my civilization made men equal in Man.

Go then out boldly into the darkness and into the loneliness, as you shall find the loneliness is the uttermost of delusions, and the darkness is a light which none may lose again. —*Annie Besant*

HINTS ON MEDITATION

By Srimati Gayatri Devi

(Notes from the Tuesday Evening Class)

We are all influenced by our environment and associations; the atmosphere we live in, and the people with whom we mingle. Conversations in which we share; things we hear and read—all leave their mark upon us. The mind is ever gathering impressions through contact with the outside world. These impressions affect the healthfulness of our mind. For this reason the wise men advise us to avoid evil company, keeping a safe distance from people and places soaked with worldliness. They warn us against small talk; they ask us not to fill our minds with non-essentials for these supply the impurities which must be wiped out before one's mind can take the dye of pure wisdom.

Sri Ramakrishna, unparalleled among all teachers, said that mind is like a white sheet. If you hang it in a room where soot is gathering, eventually the whiteness of the cloth will be destroyed. In the same manner, an aspirant desirous of acquiring a state of purity cannot afford to be careless or casual. At the outset of his spiritual life he must with extreme caution guard himself against those elements interfering with his development. He can never be too careful or too particular. He is like the young plant (to use Sri Ramakrishna's illustration again) needing a hedge for its protection. When the same plant becomes a mighty tree, it can withstand not only the attacks of cows and goats but can endure the onslaughts of stormy weather.

Purification of mind should be the first step toward meditation. How can one meditate upon the Most High if his mind is clogged and covered with thousands of impure impressions? Can a dusty sheet of glass admit the sunlight? The glass must be cleaned and polished to permit the light

to shine through. So must the mind be emptied of trivialities and freed from dross before the Light of Trust can penetrate through it.

Constant practice is necessary to attain and to retain purity, indispensable for the realisation of wisdom. The mind has to be washed clean again and again. For physical cleanliness and health, we bathe every day; for our spiritual well-being we need to cleanse our mind in like manner. But it cannot be washed with earthly water, it needs finer substance and that substance is thought. We acquire a pure mind by thinking on high, wholesome, and holy things. For the cultivation of uninterrupted, unbroken thoughts, the aspirant needs silence and seclusion. When his thought flows like a stream, unhindered, undisturbed, it becomes meditation.

The Upanishads, India's Forest-books of Wisdom, tell us that the mind, when washed clean of all impurities by deep meditation, tastes indescribable happiness. Before our spiritual practises become a source of enjoyment and lead us to higher bliss, we must work faithfully and diligently. Often we take a strong broom and sweep out the accumulated dust of a room; likewise we must use our will power, and restraint against thoughts, feelings and desires that stealthily lodge in the dwelling of our mind. Desire is the chief generator of impurity. Out of it come distortion, ignorance, mistrust, doubt and fears which often darken the clear spaces of our consciousness. Control of desire, subjugation of thought and emotion, right direction of our tendencies serve to prepare a mind eager to ascend to that high place where it can in utter stillness and freedom enjoy Reality.

Meditation should be one of our daily spiritual habits. Once we have acquired a taste for it, our day will not seem complete unless it begins and ends with acts of prayer, devo-

tion and meditation. We will pause of our own accord in the midst of activities and steal moments that we may spend them in quiet reflection on our Maker. Each opportunity to withdraw from the noise and turmoil of outer life will be precious. It will be the source of our strength and refreshment. Meditation can be a safety measure against our overactive existence under the pressure of grinding routine. It guards one from nervous tension of speed which can easily disturb the poise and balance of body and mind. Action we must have but it should not be allowed to crowd out spiritual exercises without which our life is one-sided and out of focus.

If most of us cannot afford long hours of quiet inaction, we can at least find *some limited* time for the cultivation of our inner life. One of the first lessons we need to teach our mind is inwardness. It is altogether too outward, too interested in and observant of the external. The seclusion and noiselessness of our outer surroundings will be of no avail unless the mind is trained to forsake its restlessness and feverish journeys into the world without. Swami Paramananda used to sing a Bengali song frequently—"O mind, stay thou in thy dwelling! Go no more into another's house; whatever thou seekest, thou shalt find here, sitting in thy own home."

Thus we should call our mind away from the enchanting "without" and by firm persuasion help it to find the key to the unexplored "within." Meditation is that key—the unsteady mind may again and again miss the hole into which this key turns but perseverance and patient efforts will bring sure result and eventually we shall discover and possess That by "finding which no other gain seems greater, and being established wherein one is not overcome even by great sorrow."

ASHRAMA JOY

By Swami Paramananda

(Composed on the spur of the moment in honor of the Ananda Ashrama's second birthday anniversary, in 1923. To be sung to the chorus of "Keep the Home Fires Burning.")

When morning light is shining
And all hearts are singing,
Nature is ringing with
Joy, joy, joy!

Tree branches all are dancing,
Sweet flowers all are smiling,
All the birds are rhyming with
Joy, joy, joy!

High hill-tops are adoring
With uplifted glancing
The glory of the rising sun.
Do not stay thou sleeping,
Wake with new life rising,
Fill your hearts full of
Joy, joy, joy!

Do you not see, O my brothers and sisters. It is not chaos or death—it is form, union, plan, it is eternal life—it is Happiness. —*Walt Whitman*

How can I withdraw from the world? With whom should I associate if not with suffering mankind? The prevailing disorder is what requires my efforts. —*Confucius*

The eternal stars shine out when the night is dark enough.
—*From the Spanish*

GROWTH THROUGH WONDER

By Dean Philemon F. Sturges

"Ye are not of this world, even as I am not of this world."

A little child looks up at the stars and begins to wonder what they are. And in wondering, the child exercises a capacity which goes beyond the stars. The stars do not wonder what they are—but men do, and they pursue their wonder with an insight and an imagination in their observatories, until man, an insignificant speck in the universe, takes in and transcends that universe through his wondering.

The child is something more than his whole world. He is also something more than the actual and the realized. He is curiously haunted by dreams, dreams of the unfulfilled and unpossessed. He is filled with longings and desires that go beyond food and drink and things. He grows as he is driven by vision of a beauty that never was on land or sea. All literature, all music, all forms of art are nothing but man's attempt to utter things beyond expression—"the high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard. . . ." This lies at the very core of our being, filling us with a strange discontent, with a restlessness, with an inextinguishable sense of something more than this world. "Ye are not of this world."

Writes Allan Shatford: "We all have a strange sense of expectancy. The purity of a flower, the harmony of sounds, the grandeur of a character awaken a sense within us that denies all limitations." He uses this illustration: "If this life is all, man is overfreighted with faculties and endowments. It is like setting a steamer with triple engines and double screws to sail across a lake a half a mile in width. Only if that lake opens into the broad and expansive sea and the great ship moves through the channel out upon the

boundless deep does her equipment become sensible and necessary. And if man moves out of this world, out of this limited existence into an eternal life, then I can understand his endowment of love and thought and imagination and hope."

We know that the things of this world die. It is the law of this world. Matter is organized for a very brief cycle into some organic form, has its term of life, decays and is dissolved into other forms of matter. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."

But the wonder of the mystery wrought into life is the fact that rising from the return of dust to the dust are the things that do not die.. . .

"Join thyself to the eternal," wrote St. Augustine, "and thou shalt be eternal." Wonder, dream, hope, believe, trust your life to a love too large for earth, and thou shalt rise. . . .

SILENCE

By J. A. W.

The grand conception of the poetic Hagerman was embodied in these immortal lines:

"Greatness lies enshrined in silence
Littleness to sound is stirred;
And the grandest things in Nature
Never have been seen or heard."

Behold the exemplification of this majestic thought in the vast, silent plains, the mighty mountains, the azure blue of the sky, the comparatively nearby blazing sun, and the distant twinkling stars. All are silent.

As in the most stupendous of material things throughout all space, so it is in the mental and spiritual worlds. Most difficult problems are solved and most superb achievements

of the mind are attained in silence. Only in silence is the soul released quickly to fly to the realms of the otherwise impenetrable Infinite, and commune with the kindred source from which it came. In silence alone can universal power energize itself, multiply its momentum and become an irresistable force in all the activities of life.

This natural law of regeneration within oneself, from unseen, universal cosmic energy applies to all human conduct. Those who are about to put forth colossal efforts or summon courage to undertake apparently impossible tasks, always meditate alone beforehand, and in silence replenish their powers to conquer. Even to talk about it would be to weaken themselves and reduce their abiding confidence in themselves.

Long ago it was said: "Silence is golden." It is more than that. It is the forerunner and inspiration of all superlative powers of mind, body and soul.

MOTHER STUART'S PRAYER

(Mother Stuart, born ruler and educator, was a member of the Sacred Heart Convent at Roehampton, England. She died October 21st, 1914.)

Keep us, O God, from pettiness; let us be large in thought, in word, in deed. Let us be done with fault-finding and put off self-seeking.

May we put off all pretense and meet each other face to face without self-pity and without prejudice.

May we never be hasty in judgment and always generous.

Let us take time for all things.

Make us grow calm, serene, gentle.

Teach us to put into practice our better impulses and straightforwardness.

Grant we may realize it is the little things of life that create differences—that in the big things of life we are one, and O God, let us forget not to be kind.

A LETTER

From Swami Vivekananda

(Written to his great disciple, Margaret Noble, afterwards known as Sister Nivedita.)

63 St. George's Road, London,
7th June, 1896

Dear Miss Noble:

My ideal indeed can be put into a few words and that is: to preach unto mankind their divinity, and how to make it manifest in every movement of life.

This world is in chains of superstition. I pity the oppressed, whether man or woman, and I pity more the oppressors.

One idea that I see clear as daylight is that misery is caused by *ignorance* and nothing else. Who will give the world light? Sacrifice in the past has been the Law; it will be, alas, for ages to come. The earth's bravest and best will have to sacrifice themselves for the good of many, for the welfare of all. Buddhas by the hundred are necessary with eternal love and pity.

Religions of the world have become lifeless mockeries. What the world wants is character. The world is in need of those whose life is one burning love, selfless. That love will make every word tell, like thunderbolt.

It is no superstition with you, I am sure; you have the making in you of a world-mover, and others will also come. Bold words and bolder deeds are what we want. Awake, awake, great ones! The world is burning with misery. Can you sleep? Let us call and call till the sleeping gods awake, till the god within answers to the call. What more is in life? What greater work? The details come to me as I go. I never make plans. Plans grow and work them-

selves. I only say, awake, awake!

May all blessings attend you for ever!

VIVEKANANDA

REPORT

VEDANTA CENTRE, BOSTON

The traditional banquet that usually accompanies Sri Ramakrishna's birthday festival was held this year several days after the Public Celebration. On the evening of Friday, March 26th, many gathered at the Centre's spacious dwelling to partake of a Hindu feast and to enjoy some moving pictures of Swami Paramananda, taken at Ananda Ashrama, California. To see the Swami on the screen—smiling and moving about—was indeed a happy experience for everyone.

A portion of the film showed the Swami's trip to India in the year of 1928, also the Belur Monastery by the Ganges on the day of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday anniversary, and one of the Master's original disciples, Swami Shivanandaji, the Second President of the Order, as well as many interesting and beautiful scenes.

Easter was welcomed with abundant gladness and enthusiasm. Srimati Gayatri Devi spoke in the morning on "The Immortal Within" before eager attentive listeners, many of whom had joined the regular group on this special day of worship. In the afternoon at five her subject was "Unless Ye be Born Again."

Good Friday was observed with the usual period of silence from twelve to three, ending in a Service and prayer.

Lord Buddha's Birthday Celebration was outstanding in its spirit of joyousness and beauty. He, who was born on

a full moon night of Spring under a flowering tree, received homage on May 19th when the moon was full and high in the sky. The festival continued throughout the following day amidst preparation for a big banquet, attended by a large number of people in the evening. After the dinner, every one was asked to enter the Chapel quietly where a surprise awaited them. The entire altar and the surrounding platform had been transformed into a bower of fragrant lilacs. On one side stood an exquisite statue of Lord Buddha on a golden lotus, with one hand unlifted in blessing. Gayatri Devi conducted a Service, touching upon the extraordinary life and teaching of this Master Spirit. She emphasised repeatedly his compassion toward all living things —the vital core of Buddha's doctrine, so necessary for all hearts in these days of sorrow and suffering.

ANANDA-ASHRAMA, CALIFORNIA

Swami Paramananda always claimed that Easter was peculiarly Ananda Ashrama's day. Possibly because its uplifted hills, softly mantled with chaparral, and its wide open spaces, seemed so admirably adapted to a Sunrise Service, upon which the weather god usually smiles in California. Occasionally the smile is slightly veiled in fog or clouds; occasionally, at that early hour, there is a "nipping and an eager air;" but more often, the sun comes spilling over the hills in warm and golden showers.

Who that was there on that day can ever forget the last Easter Sunday that the Swami was amongst us? The fog in the valley, so dense as almost to stop traffic, did not reach to the Temple patio where the Swami stood, seemingly an almost transparent figure, as the sunlight made lambent his hair and face and the white silk chuddar wrapped about him. That living presence still seems to abide and shed its radiance all over the lovely Ashrama grounds and

into many hearts. Its loving magic was potently felt this Easter day, making everyone almost forget that the day was overcast—just one cloudy day as the filler of an otherwise perfect weather sandwich. A prevalent sense of gladness and peace made these outer things appear unimportant.

Sister Daya, standing on the stone platform beside an open fire which burned and crackled cheerfully, spoke on the "Christ of the Dawning" and conveyed a vibrant message of new hope, new life and courage. The attendance was surprisingly large and the breakfast which followed at the Community House was a happy affair.

At 11 A.M., to a well-filled Temple, the Sister spoke again, taking as her theme "The Creedless Christ," and laid her stress on the Eternal Spirit, beyond name or form or dogma. At the afternoon Service also many were present as the Sister rounded out the day on a deeply devotional note. At all these Services, the beautiful voices of Mrs. Rowell, Mrs. Warriner, Mr. Beliaeff and Mr. Humphreville blended perfectly with the peace and blessedness which permeated the atmosphere within the Temple and without. Between the two Services a special luncheon was served at the Community House.

Preceding Easter, as always, Good Friday was observed on the afternoon of that day at three o'clock, Sister Daya conducting the Service in the Temple.

Springtide, gathering momentum, has come to the Ashrama with its profusion of green grass, flowers, birdwings and songs and heavenly fragrance. It has seemed so lovely, indeed, that gazing up at the blue arching sky it has been hard to remember the devastation in other parts of the world. This has been brought close, nevertheless, by those from the unhappy lands, who often come to the Ashrama to drink in its serenity, security and beauty. There has

been a steady stream of house guests during the past months, among whom some valued new friends have been found.

The members of the Ashrama rejoiced to note the exceedingly warm response to the Lord Buddha Birthday Celebration which was observed in the Temple on Sunday, May 16th. At both morning and afternoon Services, many were present as Sister Daya touched upon the life and message of this mighty Teacher who surely "gave to Asia a light that still is beautiful." Special music added its tribute, while the small golden figures of the Lord Buddha, as prince and as Teacher, glowed beneath an offering of flowers and garlands.

Sunday, May 23rd was a big day for the Ashrama, as it marked the twentieth anniversary of its founding by Swami Paramananda, whose dreams, even his being, are blended with its hills and trees, its flowers and its buildings—with its very dust. The Services on this most special day took on a unique character. Sister Daya, both morning and afternoon, after reviewing the development of the Ashrama, and the Swami's vision for it—a vision of a shrine to the Vast and Unbounded where every devout soul of whatever race or creed could find a welcome—called on friends present, and there were a host of them, to extend individual greetings. This fact can be told, but what cannot be conveyed was the profound feeling which moved the speakers as they spoke of the beloved and gracious founder and their imperishable debt to him. Time would not permit tributes from more than a few, but these few included friends old and new—Miss Sherwood, Mr. Nelson of Boston days, Mrs. Rathbone, Mr. Hess, Mrs. Haggarty, Mrs. Casse, Miss Glory Raye, Mr. Beliaeff, Dr. Finch, and Mrs. Nulsen.

The Ashrama singers were present in force, and at the close joined with the congregation in singing Swami's own

Ashrama Birthday Song, written by him on the spur of the moment for its second anniversary. This little poem, printed on a small leaflet was given to each person present as a souvenir of the day. Dr. Richardson, old friend and accomplished organist, concluded the Service with an organ solo. Following this, refreshments were served under one of the oak trees in the patio.

ANANDA ASHRAMA—COHASSET

The peace retreat extended a warm welcome to its friends and members on May 29th when it opened for the season's activities. A Service was held under the pines amidst singing of birds that intoned harmoniously with Mr. Hansen's violin. A second period of worship and prayer was observed at the sunset hour. On the following Saturday again a smaller group was able to assemble there. Although the scarcity of gasoline is temporarily making frequent automobile trips from Boston to Cohasset difficult many are traveling by train and are walking considerable distance in order to benefit by the Services on Saturday as well as during the week.

WORDS OF APPRECIATION

(Last year, as was noted in the MESSAGE, Swami Nikhilananda of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center of New York, paid the Ashrama a fleeting visit. Later a letter came from him with the following item, which profoundly touched the hearts of the members both of the Ananda-Ashrama and the Boston Vedanta Centre. It bears eloquent testimony to the love which Swami Paramananda inspired in all hearts everywhere:)

"I shall always remember my visit to the Ashrama. It was a joy and inspiration to see you and the consecrated devotees carrying on the work inspired by the invisible presence of Swami Paramananda. May you all be drawn closer to our Master and thus fulfill the purpose of human birth.

"I was much touched by an incident in the Santa Fe train on my way back to New York. In the dining car the head steward came to me and asked if I was a friend of Swami Paramananda. As I acknowledged the relationship with pride, he brought the waiters to me to pay their respects and all said tearfully that in the death of the Swami they lost a real inspiration and source of joy. They treated me as their guest and did not allow me to pay for the meal. I was deeply moved."

(The following was sent to Gayatri Devi with the request that it be printed.)

Would like so much to add my tribute and that of my family to those paid the Ashrama yesterday, May 23d, on its twentieth birthday. So much beauty and holiness was planted here by Swami Paramananda and we are so privileged to be counted among the congregation and to partake of the joy and peace within its gates.

Too much cannot be said, however, of beloved Sister Daya, who follows so ably in the footsteps of the Swami. Her life, lived in this busy household is full of beauty, patience and love unending. The vision she carries and imparts to others, her poise, tact, enthusiam, companionship and service rendered untiringly to all of us is a precious beacon to all who come to the Ashrama. She inspired us with faith, hope and love and I sing her praises now, for she deserves all the encouragement and support and appreciation that we can give her, for she lives for the ideal alone.

And to the other sisters and brothers, I also give my thanks for keeping the light of the Ashrama ever burning. It warms all of us who come to this blessed place with its peace and healing.

Sincerely and with love always,

FAITH WARRINER

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Message of the East

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THE MYSTIC WAY

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Message of the East

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

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

Vol. XXXV No. 1

FROM THE "PARADISO"

By Dante Alighieri

Hence I to her: "In these your wondrous faces
there shines I know not what that is divine . . .
But, tell me, ye who here so happy are,
are ye desirous of a higher place,
that ye may see more friends, or make you more?"

First with those other shades she smiled a little,
and then replied to me so joyously,
that she appeared to burn with love's first fire:

"Brother, love's virtue sets our will at rest,
and makes us wish for only what we have,
and doth not make us thirsty for aught else.
If higher we desired to be, our wishes
would be discordant with the Will of Him,
who here discerneth us, which, thou wilt see
can in these circles not occur, if love
be necessary to existence here,
and if love's nature thou consider well.
Nay, more essential to this blesséd life
it is, that we should be within the Will
Divine, whereby our wills become one will;
and so, even as we are, from grade to grade,
throughout this realm, to all the realm is pleasing,
as to its King, who in His Will in-wills us;
and HIS WILL IS OUR PEACE; and that
the ocean is, whereunto moveth all
that it creates, and all that Nature makes."

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UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

One love it is that pervades the whole world, few there are who know it fully:
They are blind who hope to see it by the light of reason which is the cause of separation—
The House of Reason is very far away!

—*Kabir*

As a man cannot satisfy his hunger by simple knowledge or sight of food, so a man cannot be satisfied by the knowledge or even the perception of God until love comes: therefore love is the highest.

—*Narada Bhakti Sutras*

What is better than gold?
Jasper.
What is better than Jasper?
Virtue.
What is better than Virtue?
God.
What is better than Deity?
Nothing.

—*Ancient Saying*

If your daily life seems poor, do not blame it; blame yourself, tell yourself that you are not poet enough to call forth its riches; for to the creator there is no poverty and no poor indifferent place.

—*Rainer Maria Rilke* (*Letters to a Young Poet*)

There is nothing sweeter than love, nothing stronger, nothing higher, nothing broader, nothing more jocund, nothing fuller, nothing better in heaven nor in earth; for love is born of God nor it may not rest but in God above all creatures.

—*Imitation of Christ*

THE MYSTIC WAY

By Swami Paramananda

The mystic way is a strange way.
It is hidden and yet not hidden;
It is open and not open;
It is dark and yet not dark.
It is winding and straight, broad and narrow,
rough and smooth.
Strange way is this mystic way—

In mystic utterance there are certain opposites which are hard to understand. For this reason a thing spoken from one plane of experience may not seem to apply to another, yet nevertheless it is true. Often we do not see certain facts in life, and if someone tries to force our vision it is apt to bring revulsion and antagonism. Later those self-same facts may become so real to us that we stand up to defend them and are even ready to fight for them. We need not consider this from the spiritual point of view alone. Lesser facts, material happenings, even an invention which is a little ahead of the times call forth misunderstanding and skepticism. Thus it is when we first hear of some exalted spiritual experience and are told of a higher order of vision, we doubt and we give voice to our doubt, because we feel we cannot play the hypocrite. But doubting does not help us if we merely continue to doubt without making any effort to see in the same light as do those who have had the experience.

There are many different types of people. There are some who never want to hear about a thing that is unfamiliar to them; they are so satisfied, so absolutely certain of their own point of view. There are others again who are not satisfied to remain forever bound to some small mental concept; and finally there are those whose minds are always attuned to

great Truth. In illustration of this, Sri Ramakrishna gives a parable concerning three different kinds of fish. The first kind, he says, when the fisherman has spread his net, "are much too clever to be caught. These may be counted on one's fingers, and to these may be likened the ever-free Souls. But most of the fishes are caught in the net. Of these some try their best to make their escape. These are the seekers after liberation. But of these a couple or two only are able to leap out of the net into the water. . . . But most of the fish are not able to get out of the net; and what is more, they do not care to get out. They would rather rush into the mud at the bottom of the tank, head foremost, entangled in the net as they are, and there lie still, thinking all the while, 'We are all quite safe and secure, and we need not fear any longer.' The poor things know not that the fisherman will in a short while draw the net to land, full of the fishes. To these last may be compared the Worldly."

It is not a crime to have an element of doubt, when we do not see clearly, but when we settle down in that state of mind and turn away from every new idea and experience without even looking at it, that can be a very great calamity for the soul. Faith is a beautiful ornament of life, but it is an ornament that we can buy only at the price of life and devotion and earnestness. We cannot ask someone to give us this faith. It is something we must possess inwardly. We must earn it. For instance, I see you sitting here before me. There is no question in my mind that you are here. Other people may try to disprove your existence, but that cannot shake my faith in you or your faith in me as we sit across from each other. In the same way there are certain spiritual principles with which we come face to face, and because we come face to face with them they are ours. We may have read about them in the Bible, we may have been told about them by the min-

ister, but not until they become our own experience do we really possess them. Now this living experience is the foundation of religion, of philosophy, of life itself. You stand like a rock, unshaken, unmoved even by the greatest sorrow and calamity, when true vision is born in your soul. You know and can doubt no more.

The greatest disease of the mind is doubt, and doubt and despair and all the kindred elements continue to afflict us because we do not apply the right remedy. We possess that remedy within our own being. For this reason, sages and mystics make no compromise with the unreal. They have no motive apart from the best, the highest, the most unselfish; no desire for honor or fame or any kind of gain for themselves, for they see all things in a clear light. The vision of the mystic is the vision which is free from error, and when we are free from error not only do we safeguard our own life and interest, we are able to help and protect others. It is like a man who is acquainted with a country. He is so absolutely at home there that he can guide countless others through what is to them unknown regions. So in the spiritual kingdom, those who have found their light and their access can radiate that light and become like a beacon for their fellowmen.

In view of all this, you may think, "There is no need for me to make any effort. All I need do is to wait until someone comes to direct me." But even a great teacher may be of no avail. Unless you yourself are ready, you cannot respond. Often people miss their opportunities in this way. Even in material life, those who are dull, slow, slothful, are always behind and too late. They are forever missing their train and their tram. Similarly when we are spiritually unawakened we miss the ferry-boat that would carry us across to the "other shore." Then we have to wait, and no one likes to wait alone.

We may complain of our life and our destiny, we may put the blame on this obstacle or that, yet nothing really can hinder us, nothing can stand in our way, once we become aware of the light burning steadily within us. When we discover that light our whole life is made bright and glowing, and every nook and corner of our path becomes illumined. But alas! how very few are willing to search for the light; how very few desire to have it kindled! At first it may seem to us very insignificant, very small, but it will suffice. Even a small spark can ignite a great fire. That is something for us to think about. We have now a light by which we see; we have a life by which we act and think and enjoy sensation. We can touch and experience all kinds of things by means of this light and life. If it is not sufficing it means that we have not learned to draw from it. If our sight is not giving us satisfaction, it means we have not learned to use it properly. If our hearing falls short of true sound, it means we must adjust it to that higher vibration, and this adjustment must take place within. It is not a question of cutting ourselves off from anything, but of fitting our instruments to their proper use.

As we are now, these powers of ours seem so often to misguide us. Instead of bringing happiness, they many times bring us unhappiness. Yet when they are unified, they will bring peace, rest, greater vision and greater poise. This is one of the lessons we learn from the seers. We must, however, learn to understand the true meaning of their words and teachings. Some there are who take their sayings literally. That is, when a mystic says, "I see with my soul's eye, but unless this flesh is subdued and annihilated, I cannot have perfect vision," a man taking this from the surface may torment himself in order to quicken that divine sight. But that is not the way it comes. Self-subjugation, conquest of mat-

ter, does not mean destruction. On the contrary, the true seer ceases to throw away and abuse his faculties, he brings them to a plane where they may be united. Thus instead of proving a bondage, they become an aid and help him to reach his goal. There is nothing more helpful to this end than the element of prayer and devotion.

Here we may feel puzzled. We may say, "To whom shall I pray and what shall I ask in my prayer?" These are questions we must not expect anyone else to answer. As we enter into our inner life another world opens before us, a world formerly unknown and undiscovered, but now made visible to us for our use. Do you for a moment suppose that the great minds of this world, the most intelligent, the most advanced in their thinking faculties, in their faculty of discrimination, do you really think that these men would give up their absorption in the visible and the material, unless they had found something much more definite and more real? Of course they would not! The trouble is, we allow ourselves to be carried away entirely and completely by the outer aspects of life, and thus we never give ourselves a chance to see deeper into the real nature of things. As a very famous passage in the *Bhagavad-Gita* tells us: "That which is night to all beings, therein the spiritually wise ones are wide awake, and there where all beings are awake, that is night to the knowers of Self."

Once I met a man who told me something very interesting in regard to the faculty of hearing. He said that people can make their hearing more sensitive, in fact so delicate and keen that they can understand the language of the birds or of the animals, or the meaning of any subtle sound. It seems that what a man hears depends somewhat on the dominant interest in his life. With the average human being who is constantly handling money, any metallic sound is at once

noticeable. He gave two illustrations: He was walking along a noisy city street one day when suddenly he became aware of the chirp of a cricket. When he spoke of it, the people around him said that it couldn't be, that they heard nothing. He followed the sound to a little crack in the sidewalk, and there was the cricket singing his song. Walking a little farther, he dropped a dime and at once ten people were after it. The noise of the metal caught their attention right away. According to the same principle, there are people who have cultivated their sense of hearing and their sense of sight in relation to spiritual things. No matter how subtle these things may be or how noisy the world, they clearly perceive them because they have concentrated their life upon them. The powers which we normally use are a great asset, but unless we know their proper use we cannot evolve our best and highest faculties. Herein lies our need of discrimination and intelligence.

We all have our physical instrumentality, we all have our mind and emotions. The thing is, how are we to direct these powers? As we dive deep within our own being, this sense of direction grows until finally we come upon a Source, or rather a Resource, which we cannot exhaust. Then we are no longer timid, we are no longer doubtful, because we have found something which sustains us every hour, in all our moments, critical, difficult and dangerous. This state of surety cannot be attained, however, merely through intellectual calculation: it needs something more profound. That is why you find that devotees, seers, truth-lovers are not satisfied with intellectual discussion and analysis; they want to go deep down. They want the real, and only the real, and in that search the devotional life plays a tremendous part. One single moment of perfect silence and spiritual exaltation can unfold to us a great deal more than hours and hours spent in

a library reading *about* things. Let us always remember this. The latter teaches us the why and the wherefore and how we may attain, the former gives us the direct experience, and to attain direct experience is our goal.

In our highest moment all our faculties are united and we forget our self-importance, our troubles, our petty and selfish feelings and everything that connects us with the material plane. How refreshing this is to the mind, to the soul, to the spirit! How restoring even to the body! Such spiritual absorption serves a double purpose. It nourishes the inner being and also it revives the outer. For that reason alone we should try to cultivate it.

The trouble is, when we reach out for deeper vision, we may not, in the beginning, feel great exaltation. At first the things I am telling you may seem very unreal. Take devotion, for instance. You may ask, "How can we have devotion to God, to something so vague and indefinite?" Make it definite. Find the closest, nearest point of approach and make your contact there. God is not limited by any peculiar concept. He is not limited by creed or cult, or by any form of ritual or symbol. He is all-abiding, infinite, in everything, everywhere. All space is permeated by Him. This is true, yet nevertheless we must find our definite point of contact with Him.

Herein we find the origin of sacred shrines, sanctuaries, churches and temples. Unfortunately, however, people have lost the significance of these places of worship and God-realization. They see in them now largely an excuse for ostentation, centres of form and ritual. But their real purpose is to give us a living sense of divine Presence, to help us create a shrine within the heart, and to make that shrine, that inner Self, all alive and aglow with the candles of wisdom burning there; and as in the shrine without, so our shrine within must be fragrant with the flowers of love, good

thoughts and pure, exalted feelings. This is the real essence of spiritual living, and when we have found it even in small measure, it does make our life fragrant and glowing. It is a great asset, a great power, enabling us to go through all difficulties and dangers with a real smile which no outer condition can wipe away.

Thus we can see that the devotional life is meant not only for those who retire from worldly duties; we all owe it to our soul. If we have it not, we have no sure foundation. This world has sorrows; your fellow-beings, your friends, your relatives often suffer from numerous afflictions. You want to help them, you want to remove their burdens, but how are you going to do it? It cannot be done merely by sympathy or by the word of sentiment, but only as we develop a real inward spiritual consciousness, and this consciousness we know when we fasten our heart to the great Cosmic Heart. Then we are not afflicted by the changing conditions of the world. Then we can feel, then we can do, because we draw from an inexhaustible source of supply.

As I have said, these finer things we do not understand so much through speculation and intellectual research as through feeling, through moments of silence, moments of spiritual stillness when there is no turbulence, no commotion of any kind. At such times we are aware of a certain nearness—a vivid sense of the reality of the soul, of the spirit, of God. These moments are very precious. Even one single experience of this kind outweighs all we have gained through material achievements, and the approach is quite simple. It is merely the reverse of the complications, the dissipated and distracted thoughts and habits which have caused us to become so involved in perishable things. "If your eye be single your whole body will be full of light." This means simplifying—pointing our aspiration and energy towards one goal.

It is a profound idea. The various scriptures may choose to express it differently, but they all agree that the heart must be single to be strong, the gaze must be single to be true, and it is not possible to accomplish this singleness when we are distracted and divided in our life and consciousness. Therefore the devotional life means that at least at certain times we give ourselves to higher things and gather ourselves together, instead of drifting in a scattered condition.

What we find in spiritual unfoldment we are not always able to express in words, in fact we are not inclined to do so. Actually it can only be expressed through our life and the effect of our life upon others. The tone our life takes is the only manifestation of our spiritual attainment. Our thoughts, our dealings with people, these are the means by which we express the spiritual fervor of our being, and we cannot deal adequately with human beings until we have ripened our spiritual consciousness. That must come first. For it is that which conveys inspiration and feelings of nobility into every department of living, physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual.

Even our physical duties we cannot do well and effectively until we are sustained by spiritual forces. The more we realize this, the greater becomes our ardor. You know, when we feel that something is essential in our life, when it becomes a reality, we are willing to devote our time to it. A man who is keen to acquire a fortune is willing to make any sacrifice to gain his end. The same way it is when we long to gain access to spiritual riches. Our whole being becomes concentrated and focused and this creates a power by means of which we gain greater vision. But before this occurs, when mystic souls come and speak to us of the great truths of the Spirit, we are not able to comprehend, and because we cannot comprehend them we are inclined to doubt. We have no relationship with them; their words and utterances do not

coincide with our own experience. When we have an equal amount of inner unfoldment, however, then that ceases to be true.

The wise man knows that there is a great power flowing through him, within him and without him, and he tries to surrender himself to that power so that he may work in harmony with it. When we learn to do this we find that we do not lose anything. Many people think that if they surrender themselves they may be deprived of what is their own. But it is indeed a blessed thing to be deprived of our self-will because that will has become part of a greater Will. Then we know peace, then we know rest and are possessed of a strength that is not destructive. Our little self-will often causes us to harm others without meaning to do so: we are impatient; we grow angry; we do things often that we are ashamed of, but when this will has become part of the cosmic Will, then nothing like that can occur. It is not anything that we can accomplish by chance, and even if we were able to accomplish it that way, we could not retain it. It must be cultivated by intense feeling and sincere devotion to our Ideal.

We are all children of Divinity. Let us hold this picture before our minds eye and refuse to believe that our heritage is merely material. Our real heritage is in the Spirit. The more we can become convinced of this, the greater will be our spiritual upliftment.

All is holy where devotion kneels.

—*Oliver Wendell Holmes*

Humility, like darkness, reveals the heavenly lights.

—*Thoreau*

Should you ask me, What is the first thing in religion? I should reply, The first, second and third thing therein—nay, all—is humility. —St. *Augustine*

GOD AND RELIGIONS

From the "Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna

(Translated by Swami Nikhilananda and published by the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 17 East 94th Street, New York.)

SRI RAMAKRISHNA *(to Vijay, a member of the Brahmo Samaj, a modern sect, whose temple they are visiting)*: I was told that you had put up a signboard here that people belonging to other faiths are not allowed to come in. . . . I say that we are all calling on the same God. Jealousy and malice need not be. Some say that God is formless, and some that God has form. I say, let one man meditate on God with form if he believes in form, and let another meditate on the formless Deity if he does not believe in form. What I mean is that dogmatism is not good. It is not good to feel that my religion alone is true and other religions are false. The correct attitude is this: My religion is right, but I do not know whether other religions are right or wrong, true or false. I say this because one cannot know the true nature of God unless one realizes Him. Kabir used to say: "God with form is my Mother, the Formless is my Father. Which shall I blame? Which shall I praise? The two pans of the scale are equally heavy."

Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians [and all the differing sects] all seek the same object. A mother prepares dishes to suit the stomachs of her children. Suppose a mother has five children and a fish is bought for the family. She doesn't cook pilau or kalia for all of them. All have not the same power of digestion; so she prepares a simple stew for some. But she loves all her children equally. . . .

Do you know what the truth is? God has made different religions to suit different aspirants, times and countries. All doctrines are only so many paths; but a path is by no means God Himself. Indeed one can reach God if one follows any

of the paths with whole-hearted devotion. Suppose there are errors in the religion that one has accepted; if one is sincere and earnest, then God Himself will correct those errors. Suppose a man has set out with a sincere desire to visit Jagannath at Puri and by mistake has gone north instead of south; then certainly someone meeting him on the way will tell him: "My good fellow, don't go that way. Go to the south." And the man will reach Jagannath sooner or later.

If there are errors in other religions, that is none of our business. God, to whom the world belongs, takes care of that. Our duty is somehow to visit Jagannath. *(To the Brahmos)*. The view you hold is good indeed. You describe God as formless. That is fine. One may eat a cake with icing, either straight or sidewise. It will taste sweet either way.

But dogmatism is not good. You have no doubt heard the story of the chameleon. A man entered a wood and saw a chameleon on a tree. He reported to his friends, "I have seen a red lizard." He was firmly convinced that it was nothing but red. Another person, after visiting the tree, said, "I have seen a green lizard." He was firmly convinced that it was nothing but green. But the man who lived under the tree said: "What both of you have seen is true. But the fact is that the creature is sometimes red, sometimes green, sometimes yellow, and sometimes has no color at all."

God has been described in the Vedas as both with attributes and without. You describe Him as without form only. That is one-sided. But never mind. If you know one of His aspects truly, you will be able to know His other aspects too. God Himself will tell you all about them. . . . *(To Vijay, smiling)* I understand that they have been finding fault with you for mixing with those who believe in God with form. Is that true? He who is a devotee of God must have an understand-

ing that cannot be shaken under any conditions. He must be like the anvil in a blacksmith's shop. It is constantly being struck by the hammer; still it is unshaken. Bad people may abuse you very much and speak ill of you; but you must bear with them all if you sincerely seek God. Isn't it possible to think of God in the midst of the wicked. Just think of the Rishis of ancient times. They used to meditate on God in the forest, surrounded on all sides by tigers, bears and other ferocious animals. Wicked men have the nature of tigers and bears. . . .

One can realize God in the world, too, if only one is sincere. "I" and "mine"—that is ignorance. But "O God! Thou and Thine"—that is knowledge.

Live in the world like a maid servant in a rich man's house. She performs all the household duties, brings up her master's child, and speaks of him as "my Hari." But in her heart she knows quite well that neither the house nor the child belongs to her. She performs all her duties, but just the same her mind dwells on her native place. Likewise, do your worldly duties but fix your mind on God. And know that house, family and son do not belong to you; they are God's. You are only His servant.

I ask people to renounce mentally. I do not ask them to give up the world. If one lives in the world unattached and seeks God with sincerity, then one is able to attain Him.

When love beckons to you, follow him,
Though his ways are hard and steep.
And when his wings enfold you, yield to him,
Though the sword hidden among his pinions may wound you.
And when he speaks to you, believe in him,
Though his voice may shatter your dreams as the north wind
lays waste the garden. —*Kahlil Gilbran*

THE PROBLEM OF JUSTICE

By Esther Orlander

In the light of the Book of Job.

There is in man an instinct that expresses itself in a demand for justice from life. How frequently that demand is either ignored or denied by some seemingly indifferent circumstantial will, one needs not look far afield to observe. We do not quarrel with the sun because he shines on the just and the unjust alike, but the average human being, feeling himself helplessly caught in the web of circumstance, finds it somewhat more difficult to view with the same equanimity the impartiality with which "the darts and arrows of outrageous fortune" appear to be scattered over this world. Does it not seem to happen all too often that the meek and the gentle perish, unrewarded for their labor in life, while the ruthless flourish? There is something about this state of things which seems strangely askew; something which offends man's moral intelligence—that intelligence upon which he longs to believe the universe is founded. And to every man, however ill or well he may be able to express it, this situation asserts itself, sooner or later, as a philosophical problem of major importance.

As we reflect on this problem, many of us instinctively call to mind the story of Job, that great prototype of human suffering and endurance. Of the *Book of Job* Carlyle says:

"It is all as great as the summer midnight, as the world with its seas and stars! There is nothing written, I think, in the Bible or out of it, of equal merit. I call that, apart from all theories about it, one of the grandest things ever written with pen. One feels, indeed, as if it were not Hebrew; such a noble universality, different from noble patriotism or sectarianism, reigns in it. A noble Book; all men's Book.

It is our first, oldest statement of the never-ending Problem—man's destiny—and God's ways with him here in this earth."

Eulogistic praise, this; but, from the standpoint of its poetic imagery if from no other, it is not difficult to see eye-to-eye with Carlyle in this instance. Who, for example, can fail to thrill to the grandeur of those sublime apostrophes in which the Lord, speaking out of the whirlwind, utters his searching queries to Job?

"Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?
. . . Who fixed its measurements, for you should know? . . .
Or who laid its cornerstone
When all the morning stars sang together,
And all the heavenly beings shouted for joy? . . .
Have you ever in your life commanded the morning?
Or assigned its place to the dawn, . . .

Have you ever gone to the sources of the sea,
Or walked in the hollows of the deep? . . .
Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades,
Or loosen the girdle of Orion?
Can you send forth the Mazzoroth in its season
And lead forth the Bear with its satellites? . . ."

As for the "problem" with which this great book deals, it is indeed, as Carlyle says, "universal" and "never-ending." It concerns us just as much today as it concerned Job many millenniums ago. It is a problem which, in his own due time, each son of man must face and, having faced, may not rest until he has found its solution. The problem presents itself against varying backgrounds from age to age and from place to place among the habitations of men; but, whatever the environing factors may have been which precipitated its statement, the problem has everywhere and at all times been the same. Why does man have to suffer? And why, more

especially, must he suffer when, according to his own best moral judgments, he is innocent of conscious wrong-doing? What is the meaning of it all? Moreover, can a God who permits the patent injustices we behold on every hand—the ruthless waxing rich and prosperous, enjoying all the prizes of life, while the law-abiding and the virtuous must so often, under the lash of misery and want, remain content with the very dregs of existence—can such a God be just? Or is this notion we have of divine justice just a naive belief which, like so many other exploded myths, is ready to be cast on the junk-heap of our outgrown superstitions?

Inasmuch as the biblical *Book of Job* is, as Carlyle says, "our first, oldest statement" of the eternal problem of justice, it seems fitting to consider these various questions against the background of this early literary expression of the eternal conflict between man and his God. This drama, which in its amplified and lyrical form was probably composed about 400 B. C., is woven around a hero of very ancient tradition who, in the Hebrew version of the legend, was called Job. In his life of patient endurance in the face of untold trials of suffering, he exemplified all the virtues of the ideal hero of orthodox Hebrew faith. What were the implications of that faith? The answer to this question involves, of course, the entire concept which these people had of God and his relations with his creature, man. This may be quite succinctly suggested to our modern minds by the phrase, "bargain counter ethics." God was omnipotent, God was omniscient, and above all, God was just. And what could be more just than that man should receive from Him exactly what he paid for, no more, no less? What scale for measuring man's desert could be more just than this divine scale, whose standard of balance was "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth?" Man might, to be sure, be required to wait for his reward.

The Lord might well see fit to test his faith. If his virtue was truly without question and his faith unswerving, however, his reward would as truly, in God's good time, be forthcoming. Just as inevitably, also, would punishment catch up with the evil doer. Since this was so, reasoned the Hebrew mind, must not the implications of the obverse of this logic be equally apparent? Must not the outward evidence of God's favor imply virtue; must not suffering be a sure conviction of sin? These conclusions were incontrovertible to an orthodox Hebrew. They are explicitly stated in the drama of Job.

In the ancient epic story of Job, as it is compressed into the first two chapters of the book, we have a picture of a man who, according to the orthodox views of the time, is perfect. His piety is without flaw. It is interesting to note, incidentally, that this piety which is so highly extolled is of the strictly conventional type. It expresses itself in the perfect performance of all the outer forms of religious worship, such as prayers and sacrifice and strict observance of holy days. Nothing is said of any social service beyond the boundaries of family ties. Being perfect in his deeds, Job's reward is perfect. He is rich and prosperous. He is happy in his family relationships. Life is a beautiful experience to Job.

But alas, he has not been tested. He has not been subjected to misfortune; he has not passed through the crucible of faith! And so we read, in the legend, the famous dialogue between God and Satan. God has perfect confidence in Job's piety. But Satan who, from "going to and fro in the world," has become a cynic about man, counters God's assertions about Job's virtue with the query, "does Job fear God for nought?" His implication is that Job's piety may very well be based on self-interest. He definitely intimates his conviction that were God's favor removed Job's piety would likewise vanish and he would "curse God to his face." God accepts the challenge.

His confidence in Job undisturbed, He gives Satan permission to test him. This Satan proceeds to do. And we read of the "calamities" of Job.

His peaceful, happy existence changes suddenly to one of deprivation, sorrow and agonized suffering. Job, however—and this is the moral of the story—does not falter in his faith. Stripped of everything, he still says, "the Lord gave and the Lord taketh away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Even when his suffering becomes so intense that his wife, losing her faith completely, bids him "curse God and die," he resolutely resists and does not "sin with his lips." For this unimpeachable loyalty, Job received his reward. And what is the nature of this reward? What else could it be than that (as we are informed in the epilogue) he should again enjoy his old prosperity, restored to him many times increased?

This story was intended, undoubtedly, to boost the morale of a people sorely tried in exile. The implication was that if they, like Job, could but endure their trials in the spirit of a divine test of faith, their former prosperity and happiness would likewise be restored to them. Whatever the practical value of such ethical propaganda may have been, as a solution to the eternal problem of suffering it had certain obvious flaws. These flaws must have been apparent, even in that day, to many. The need for a more fundamental, unequivocal explanation must even then have been plainly perceptible. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the course of time there should arise a poet—or possibly poets—who, moved by a deeper and richer unfoldment of spiritual understanding, should proceed to recreate the Job legend in the light of a more mature philosophy. Thus do we account for the discrepancy in tone and spirit between the first two chapters and the rest of the *Book of Job*. In the third chapter begins the great lyrical drama, of which these two initial chapters are but the source material.

In this great drama the poet pictures Job, not as that spineless pattern of perfect submissiveness which orthodox tradition had held up as the ideal for behavior in the face of calamity, but as an altogether human man who, out of the depth of his physical anguish, cries out in bitter rebellion against an unjust Maker and curses the day he was born.

"I, then, will not restrain my mouth; [he cries]
I will speak in the anguish of my spirit;
I will complain in the bitterness of my being . . .
Let me alone! For my days are but a breath.
What is man that thou shouldst magnify him,
And test him every moment? . . .

Have I sinned? What do I unto thee, O thou keeper of man?
Why dost thou make me a target for thyself,
So that I am become a burden to thee?
Why dost thou not forgive my transgression,
And make my guilt to pass away?
For soon I shall lie down in the dust;
And thou shalt search for me, and I shall not be."

What human heart can fail to respond to the pathos in that cry? What human mind has not, in some degree, in some moment of bitter extremity, echoed its arraignment of that darkly omnipotent Power before whose relentless pursuit it has felt itself cornered and trapped? Many the chasm, dark with man's fears and doubts, which must be traversed by the human soul in its journey from the cringing superstitions of ignorance to the fearless faith of true knowledge!

It is, in truth, this journey of the soul of man which is depicted in the physical, mental and spiritual travail of Job. The drama develops through three cycles of dialogue between Job and his three friends; his three so-called "comforters." These friends, in accordance with a pattern of dramatic economy, symbolize the various ways of upholding the teach-

ing that the outward, material signs of God's favor spell virtue, while suffering and misfortune spell sin. Their "comfort" to Job consists in an effort by each one from his own particular slant, to convince Job that his trials are the logical punishment for "secret fault." If he will but admit his sin and repent, God, in His unbounded mercy, will, they assure him, forgive and reinstate him in His favor.

But Job remains uncomforted and unconvinced. Stung to the quick by the lack of that natural human sympathy which their arid dogmatism seems to have dried up in their hearts, he turns upon them savagely. Unable, moreover, to deny the acquitting voice of his own conscience, which bears witness to his inner integrity and absolves him from blame, he turns also upon their God; the God who, indeed, had so recently been the God of his own orthodox faith.

Back and forth goes the argument, round and round, between Job and his friends. Many a beautiful platitude, many a deceptive half-truth is spoken. With consummate art this poet-master of the drama of thought holds up each idea before the reacting minds of the various members of the group, in the way that one might hold up a diamond so that each of its facets may receive the ever-shifting variations in color from every angle of the impinging light. But, though overwhelming the onslaught, Job's honest mind and innocent heart do not falter. He does not assert that he is sinless, but he pours out, in human fashion, all the wild bitterness of his soul. With lashing words he expresses his indignation against the monstrous injustice of a Creator who, having made man mortally frail, punishes him for that frailty with a cruelty that makes a travesty of even human justice.

"O that there were an umpire between us, (he cries)
That he might lay his hand upon both of us,
That he might turn aside his rod from upon me;

That I might speak and not be afraid of him."

Thus, with a complete shift of emphasis, does Job re-state the problem. Is it Justice or Injustice that rules the universe? Suddenly it seems to be God himself, not Job, who is on trial. And for the moment, Job is the complaining witness, the jury and the judge. Subjected to the test of that justice by which men are expected to rule their lives, God is convicted as a despotic, capricious and intolerable tyrant. Job's words are blasphemous; the "friends" are appalled. But they are utterly unaware of the strange metamorphosis that has been taking place in Job's mind. He has battled his way, by dint of his clear, logical, human reasoning, through the morass of conflicting concepts and conflicting emotions, to this final impasse. On the one hand there is the God of his lifelong faith and devotion, the God who is too firmly implanted in his life to be cast out without a struggle to the death; on the other hand is this omnipotent Monster of whim and injustice before whom his friends would have him bow down. Clearly one or the other must go. This *is* the struggle to the death! The moment of extreme crisis is at hand. In this moment, as if it were entirely beyond his will or power to control, Job makes a complete turnabout. Despite all the damning evidence, in the moment of decision he is utterly unable to say "Nay" to the conviction of his heart that his life has been founded, not on a lie, but on Truth itself. Out of the depth of his profound sense of inner integrity which must, somehow, be part and parcel of the integrity of the universe, he cries out in a burst of supreme faith:

"Would that my words were written!
Would that they were inscribed in a scroll!
That with an iron pen and lead
They were hewn in rock forever!
But as for me, I know that my Vindicator lives;"

Henceforth he addresses himself to that God. It is as if he were appealing to God against God; to God's better nature! With profound pathos he yearns:

"O that I knew where I might find him,
That I might come to his dwelling . . ."

From now on, Job and his friends are moving in opposite directions. As their conviction of his wickedness grows, his consciousness of his own innocence and integrity deepens. With greater and greater assurance he appeals from the God of Appearances to the God of Love and Justice, who is so deeply enshrined in his heart. Once more, in meticulous detail, he reviews those principles of unselfishness and altruism which have guided him throughout his life. (It is interesting to note, in this connection, how much higher a conception of the nature of "piety" is presented in the drama than appeared in the Job legend.) Having, with utmost simplicity and honesty, reassured himself of his own positive goodness, Job rests his case, at last, with his Vindicator.

The moment of Job's illumination is at hand. At long last he has dared to turn his back on the world of appearances, on truth as it appears to be, and to look resolutely within his own heart to the testimony of his own inner conviction of truth as it really is. Suddenly, in this moment of absolute faith, God, in infinite splendor, appears to Job. Out of the majesty of the storm, He speaks:

"Who is this that obscures counsel
By words without knowledge. . ."

And then follow those glorious apostrophes (some of which have been quoted) in which God clarifies certain great truths to Job. To the bewildered mind of this human creature who, until now, has dwelt solely in the man-centered universe of humanity, He reveals a God-centered cosmos which is staggering to the imagination. Over against Job's little finite

world, He sets forth an infinite realm of "Cause," in which He has His being. For the first time, Job realizes the narrowness of his own vision. He senses, for the first time, the infinite breadth of the basis for faith in divine justice, even when judged from the purely human viewpoint.

Job listens, and as he listens he undergoes a new birth in understanding. His spirit is chastened; but at the same time it is comforted and lifted. Has not the omnipotent God condescended to speak to him directly? Now he knows, and knows that he knows! No longer by hearsay does he know, but directly! Like a clear light, the knowledge dawns in his soul that the human and divine are two distinct orders of experience, and that to interpret the divine in terms of the human must inevitably lead to that very impasse in which he has been floundering. In ever deepening humility, Job listens to the words of the Lord, and gradually the realization of their meaning floods his soul. When at last he speaks, it is only to say:

> "I had heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear;
> But now my eye has seen Thee."

This intimate, personal realization of God has swept away all his anguish and all his doubt; at last he is at peace. Has he had a direct answer to his question, "Why does God allow the innocent to suffer?" No. Nevertheless he is silenced. Nor is his silence the silence of supine submission advocated by his friends. It is, instead, the silence that comes from an absolute assurance that all is well; it is the silence of willing surrender of his will to the will of God; it is speechless awe before the inwardly realized rightness of that divine Will. In this inner realization lies the answer to all his questions, the solution to all his problems, including the problem of justice. He has acquired an entirely new perspective, and with this new perspective has come, not the ephemeral thing which

heretofore he has called happiness, but a bliss that "passeth understanding."

IN THE LIGHT OF VEDANTA.

Job's experience is mankind's eternal experience. Job's struggle is our struggle. Likewise the solution to Job's problem of justice is the solution to our own. This solution is, as we have seen, not so much a solution as a resolution—veritably an evaporation of the problem itself. If we turn now from the sublime hints given in this great drama of the soul's progress to the writings produced by the spiritual geniuses of India, we shall find there statements so explicit that they may well serve as the further light we need to illumine those meanings still left obscure in the twilight of our partial comprehension, even after catching the reflected light of Job's flash of insight.

In these great scriptures we are reminded that man has the distinction of living in two worlds at once. One is the world of the ultimately Real, the undiversified world of Spirit; the other is the objective world about him which he knows with his outer senses; the world of diversified multiplicity. It is not that, like one straddling a fence, man has part of his being in the spiritual world and the rest in the physical world. He lives in both, completely and entirely, at once; for they are, literally, one and the same world, differently comprehended. Better, the physical world is the Real World imperfectly comprehended. It is the merely relatively true image of the Real which our imperfect and limited senses afford us. In the *Bhagavad-Gita* we read:

"There are two kinds of beings in the world: the perishable and the imperishable; all beings are perishable, but the Purusha (Self) is imperishable.

"But there is another, the Highest Being, called the Supreme Self, who is the Immutable Lord, pervading the three worlds and supporting them."

And in the *Gita* and in the *Upanishads* is repeated again and again: "Thou art That." To gain this realization of the oneness of the self of our human consciousness with the Supreme Self is to gain everlasting life. As we read in one of the *Upanishads*:

"Knowing That which is soundless, touchless, formless, undecaying; also tasteless, odorless, and eternal; beginningless, endless, and immutable; beyond the Unmanifested: (knowing That) man escapes from the mouth of death."

Man, living in the world of his senses, sees only separateness and multiplicity. In the passages quoted and in countless others the Teachers of Wisdom would convey to us that our senses deceive us. The only ultimate Reality is the Supreme, All-pervading Self. This Self clothes Himself in a dual nature composed of matter and spirit. Together, these two make up Nature. They form the eternally revolving wheel of life, but beyond the wheel of life is the Indestructible, the Unchanging, the Immutable. And "Thou art That!" To "know" this as intimately as we know our own existence is to escape from the "wheel of life" into the world of the Real. Such knowledge Jesus had when he said: "I and my Father are one."

Life is indeed unintelligible when it is considered by itself, instead of as a part of a great cycle which every living creature accomplishes from beginning to end. Every creature completes the creative rhythm from the original unity of the Unmanifested, through the diversity of manifested existence, and back to the unity of spirit. Such an evolution cannot, obviously, be completed in one short lifetime. The assertion of Job's friends that God is a just God is now seen for the half-truth that it was. Veritably, God is just, but not as an anthropomorphic, heavenly Law-giver is just, meting out rewards and punishments within that brief span of life whose limits are birth and death. Rather, life is seen as a progression

of repeated incarnations. Each separate existence is seen to be the harvest of the past and the seed of the future. God is thus seen as logically and inevitably operating through the laws of Nature, which are an eternal expression of His Being. What an incalculably broader basis for judging earthly values and for interpreting divine justice does not this vision of soul evolution afford us.

But while the doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation make many of the apparent injustices of life intelligible, can we say that they completely and entirely solve the problem of justice? I think not. Let us re-examine the question and try to discover why its solution is so illusive. Does not the fault lie in the question itself? Is not the demand for justice for the individual rooted in the sense of that separateness which we have discovered to be an illusion. Man living so vividly in this world of his senses wears, so to speak, "blinders" to that other all-encompassing Real World. Learning to "see" the latter involves the removal of these "blinders." This is what is meant by entering the "kingdom of God." The Bible admonishes us to "seek first the kingdom of God," adding the promise that if we do so "all other things shall be added" unto us. Is "justice," perhaps one of these "other things?" If so, in what way is it added?

To enter the "kingdom of God," to realize the ultimate oneness of all existence is, as we have noted, the final goal of the soul's evolution. This unity, let us repeat, is not the mere coöperative union of separate parts, as we know unity in our separative existence. It is the fundamental Reality. In the world of the Real we are merged in the All and the All is merged in us. Comprehending this, the idea of separateness is recognized as a distortion of fact. In the light of this understanding, is it not clear that our problem of justice is equally a distortion, utterly incompatible with things as they are in their truth.

Not only do we share the life of all creatures; we are that life. How absurd then, how meaningless, to demand what we call justice for the separate parts of a whole which is experienced in all its parts! It is as if my bruised little finger were to complain about the unfairness of being made to suffer more than my thumb!

As the realization of the oneness of our true being with all that is, gradually infiltrates our consciousness, our horizon broadens, we breathe a higher, freer, more generous air. Such problems as have annoyed us in our narrow-visioned, separative life, drop entirely away. We see them for what they are, pseudo problems, without basis in ultimate reality, born of limited, relative understandings, and therefore permeated with falsity and illusion. They can not be answered in any final fashion, for they have no final meaning.

Because of these same false hypotheses, many of our human judgments are at last seen to be without validity. We have judged our experiences as good or bad, according as they have brought us earthly happiness or unhappiness. We understand at last that their true merit lies solely in the measure of true understanding which they help us to achieve. From Job's viewpoint and that of his friends, his suffering was utterly bad. Inasmuch as it brought him to union with God, however, it was undeniably good.

Thus by an ever deepening experience of Truth does man move forward from his ego-centered world of separateness to the God-centered world of Oneness in Spirit. In his gradually unfolding vision of this Oneness, man, little by little, gains detachment from his own particular fate and circumstances. He comes finally to comprehend what the mystic means when he says, "I am he who is struck and I am the hand that strikes." He learns to look "everywhere with the eyes of equality, seeing the Self in all beings and all beings in the

Self." Becoming "established in unity," he learns to "look upon pleasure and pain everywhere with the same regard as when it is applied to himself."

How futile, now, to talk either of justice or injustice. He whose Self has caught the vision of its true being relegates such concepts to the world of concepts, the world of the merely relatively true. With undisturbed equanimity he accepts joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, alike. When he shall have learned to do this perfectly, then he shall at last have transcended them both, and he shall have arrived at his immortal goal. This is no simple task.

> ". . . the path is as sharp as a razor, impassable and difficult to to travel, so the wise declare."

Nor can

> "This Self . . . be attained by study of the scriptures, nor by intellectual perception, nor by frequent hearing (of it) . . ."

How then, can it be achieved? I choose to answer this question with a text that epitomizes, I think, all the wisdom of both the Eastern and the Western teaching.

> "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and . . . thy neighbor as thy self."

The only truly important thing in life is love. Love, being the one unifying principle in this world of multiplicity and separateness, is an eternal verity. In love for our fellow men, the problem of justice is completely transcended, for in love the unity of all life is realized here on earth. It is not what man egoistically calls justice, but that which he experiences as selfless, altruistic love, which is the foretaste of his ultimate, immortal destiny.

With radiant thoughts of love, of compassion, of sympathy and of poise, his mind pervades each of the world's four quarters—above, below, across, everywhere.

—*Wisdom of Buddha*

MY BELOVED, THE COSMIC CHRIST

By Jessie L. Brundage

My Beloved,
Thou art Christ—my God—
The Holy Spirit—All—
My very Higher Spirit—which is I,
the Perfect!
I breathe, and from Thy lips take breath;
I think; Thy thoughts take shape in mine—
are ME.
I sleep and rest in Thee;
I wake and Thou art there!

Sometimes a lover of the "long ago"
suddenly becomes THEE.
Sometimes—walking—intensely Chinese—
And all about me Chinese, too—
in atmosphere—in feeling—
Fragile porcelains, quaint embroidered tapestries—
Thou—Thou there—Chinese too!

Or—
Hindu! Latin! Spanish!
Sometimes I wake still speaking Spanish words
With Spanish scenes around me—
Speaking Spanish words I understand while waking,
But later, consciously, cannot recall,
Knowing no Spanish—the outer me.

And Thou art there, flowing through all—
Shining through the Hindu—Latin—Spanish—
The Chinese. Thou art Ho-Cen-Ko, Chinese God,

And my Sri Krishna, the Beloved One,
For Whom I pant—then, realizing "I have Thee,"
Knowing attainment of Thy Being,
Like a fed, satisfied nestling—cease to seek—
Know the peace of being Thine—all One with Thee.

Thou art my Father-Mother God—
Vishnu, Shiva, Brahm—my Buddha, too,
And Zoroaster—my Allah, the "But One" God
Of Whom Mohammed was but prophet!

Thou art Jesus Christ, the MAN,
And Christ, the LIGHT—my LIGHT
That shines both night and day!

Thou art Goodness—Love—Peace—
Beauty—Humanity—Divinity!
Thou art the "He" in every other Soul—
the "She."
Thou art HE Who made me for Himself—
the Bridegroom.
Yes, Thou art others, too,—my sisters all—
my brothers.
I see them all in Thee and Thee in them.
I see Thee in my children! in the animals!
These bespeak Thy presence and Thy Love.

Thou art Nirvana!
My Peace! My Calm!
Not neutrality—not indifference—
Not obsorption in self—but Selflessness—
And yet All—Self—God-Self!—

All happiness—the "Bird of Life"
That nestles in the heart,
Making humanity divine!

Thou art Alpha—my beginning of Life;
Thou art Omega—my ending—
Ending of all my search—
Of my desire to BE—of yearnings,
Once only half understood—
Longings—all ending in Thee!
Yet—never ending! Going on—on with Thee—
In splendor—never ending—
The never-ending Circle—
O Thou Invincible One,
How well Thou hast conquered—ME!

FROM A DISCIPLE'S NOTE-BOOK

(Continued from the Winter Issue)

Today as the disciple focuses her gaze upon the past, she is amazed anew by the way in which the Swami with a few brief words sounded the key-note for her whole future inward life. She had come to him a rebel from a religious and philosophic organization which sought to define the infinite in terms of the finite and which followed grammar-school methods, more or less, in its attempt to impart the Wisdom of God, as though spiritual reality could be conveyed by means of little copy-books! The disciple had turned away from all this, feeling its inadequacy, yet, after a short period at the Boston Centre, she was not content to "grow as the flower grows" under the rays of a beneficent sun, she wanted some little rule laid down for her. So she went to the Swami and asked, "What method do you want me to follow in meditation?" The Swami answered, "Lay yourself at the feet of

Divine Mother." No room for egotism here; no room for mere intellectual effort; rather the whole world of surrender opened before her, and a path—the final goal of which could be no less than immersion in the ocean of God.

The same thought the Swami expressed later in one of his poems:

> "Thou art my life's consummation,
> My abode of unbroken rest;
> I lay at Thy transcendent feet,
> My weary heart for its peace."

"And really lay your heart there," the Swami would say as he read the poem aloud: "Really do it."

The disciple knows, as she knew then, of the great schools of Yoga where mental discrimination is taught through stern practice and austere control. She knows that Swami Paramananda gave differing instructions according to the needs and the temperaments of his disciples, but, for her, that little sentence spoken so long ago has drawn her mind, her heart, her whole being deeper and deeper into a one-pointed effort which has induced meditation and which must ultimately destroy not only the little roots and fibers of self and self-interest but the very tap-root of ego-consciousness.

It must be remembered that the Swami's path was *Bhakti Marga,* the path of devotion, and that the training on that path is a training of the heart in the way of selfless love instead of the colder discipline of the mind and intellect. Not that the mental aspect was lacking. Quite the reverse. But the other was emphasized. Each path includes all paths. No path stands by itself alone.

Quickness of mind, mental alertness, pleased him greatly. He disliked ineptness in those who were under his training. One day a student sought to evade the blame for a particularly thoughtless action by declaring that it was all due to the

fact that she had renounced. "But no one asked you to renounce your brains!" replied the Swami with a smile that drew all the sting out of his comment.

Another day, someone describing a third person who was absent, remarked that she had good breeding. "And what kind of breeding would you say that I have?" mischievously asked the Swami. The student hesitated a moment and then replied, "Oh, Swami, you have God-breeding!" The Swami laughed. "That's good!" he said;" I like that. I want you all to be mentally wide awake."

He knew well the souls with whom he was entrusted and fed them the food that they could assimilate. He built under their feet a foundation from which they could take their flight into any sky. Through his own pure being he lured them on to a new level of life and consciousness from which they could at least glimpse the promised land. Writing once, in a letter, he said:

"Some of you have grown deep and profound. Not that you have performed great formal spiritual practices, but your nobility of purpose, your dedication, your selfless devotion, have brought you up, and nothing can stop the process of this upbuilding."

If one could lay a finger on any single quality and say, "This was basic for all of the Swami's teaching," that quality could well be *integrity*. The Swami had no use for the spurious, the imitation, the fictitious. Without utter honesty of purpose and spirit, he held, there could be no spiritual growth. He himself was a clear mirror in which his students saw reflected their own truth or lack of it. For instance, self-depreciation never passed, in his eyes, for humility. He showed it up for what it was, the reverse side of the coin of egotism, and for egotism he had no mercy. The ego acts as one's own enemy, he would quote, just like an external foe,

and is as potent in the pride of a priest or an intellectualist as in the self-abasement of a pseudo saint. In fact much that passed for saintliness, in his presence assumed its true colors.

The Swami loved his spiritual "children" with a love that nothing could alter, but they never fooled him by their small pretences or unworthy ambitions. His eyes, brown and steady, challenged the veracity of the soul. He knew, and his "children" knew that he knew. He saw beyond the little outer creature to the real Entity within, and his vision of that ultimate Self never faltered. For this reason alone he could never encourage self-consciousness and subtle spiritual vanities, the betrayers of that true Being. Thus when the disciple would come to him to recount some symptom which she thought might indicate inner advancement, he would show not the slightest sign of being impressed, but would quietly draw her mind into another channel. At those hours, however, when she would go down, genuinely submerged by the sense of her own unworthiness, he would say, as he said often to the others, "Why don't you have a little faith in me? Do you think I can be so mistaken in you all?" and she would rise again sustained and comforted. He never pandered to petty moods and the tears of wounded ego drew forth from him no commiseration. That type of weeping failed to win the sympathy it was angling for, but only succeeded in driving it away. The disciple's gratitude is beyond measure that with all his gentleness, the Swami never yielded to the importunities and demands of the lesser self. Before his own dedication, self-pity and self-importance stood nakedly revealed. When such small sentiments tended to magnify, in the disciple's mind, the extent of her sacrifice or service, another sentence—once drawn from the Swami by a word of complaint—would echo and re-echo in her heart:

"One little life," the Swami had said, "is a very little thing to give to God."

If one should gather from all this that his teacher was even for an instant, cold toward suffering, no matter what the occasion, it would only reveal how little one has understood. Throughout all the years he strove without rest to bring joy and peace and gladness to every heart, and at those times when the opposite elements appeared, he would put the blame on himself and say that apparently he had failed in his great task. Always he sought to redeem and restore, but he did it in his own way. In the Note-book it is written:

"Swami said: 'You cannot help people by bringing them conditions similar to their own. You cannot help people in sorrow by just going and weeping with them. You must bring them something fresh.' "

It was this perennial freshness that he strove to instil into the lives about him. His nature was attuned to bliss and it seemed sometimes that he would smother in a gloomy or unloving atmosphere. It was so utterly alien to his spirit. If there was a shadow on any face he was aware of it and never rested till he had somehow charmed it away by the brightness that he carried within.

On one occasion when the subject of weeping was under discussion, he told us that Sri Ramakrishna had said that there were three types of tears: the tears of self-love, the tears of unselfish love and the tears of divine ecstasy. The first type rolled down from the inner corner of the eye; the second type spilled over from the centre of the lower lid, while the third type, induced by the bliss of higher vision, streamed out from the outer corner. Another entry in the Note-book runs as follows:

"Swami said today, as he says so often, 'Love overcomes everything! That is my motto.' I had wept over something which he felt he had caused and he said: 'You don't know what pain it gives me, what deep pain, to feel that I have

even unconsciously made anyone suffer, even a little bit.' "

Sri Ramakrishna, the great Master, would not permit a disciple to sit around in a dejected attitude. He would tell him to go off by himself till he recovered from his dark mood, that to inflict it on others was only selfishness. Swami would remind his household of this when he saw anyone with head bowed on hands or in some other posture of depression. "A child of Divine Mother," he would say, "should be ever cheerful," and looking at his radiant face, those who listened understood.

One cannot think of life at the Vedanta Centre without remembering the senior Sister, Sister Devamata, of whom the Swami said, "No one knows the theory of Bhakti better than she." She was a disciplinarian. Though possessed of a tiny body, her will was adamant and was set on creating a perfect spiritual community. Unfailingly conscientious, she spared neither herself nor others in the carrying out of this resolve, and gave unceasingly out of her rich mental store and her experience. For this the whole household has ever owed her a debt of gratitude, difficult to repay. Devotion, she explained, was self-forgetfulness in all things in the service of the Lord. This lesson she drove home again and again, sometimes with reprimand, sometimes with some story. As an example, one day the disciple was entrusted with the task of dusting the books in the lending library. They were valuable books, of peculiar interest to an aspirant, and the disciple took time to read a page here and a page there, neglecting the dusting in the meantime. The senior Sister appeared in the doorway and, standing quietly, took in the situation. "Are you serving yourself or the Lord?" she asked. "The true devotee has no other interest than the work which has been given to her to do. This does not seem to be true in your case."

Another time she recounted an incident in the life of the

great Incarnation, Sri Krishna. A woman devotee, seeking to use the Lord for her own advantage, suddenly found herself standing alone. Sri Krishna had vanished. So when we serve God selfishly, we lose Him. The Divine One can never be used by devotees to fulfil selfish desires.

Lessons like these lingered in the disciple's mind and helped her to grasp a little of the deep implications of the devotional life—so far removed from the life of pretty pretense or sentimentality. The trouble was that the senior Sister's teaching came from a mental source rather than from realization and perhaps it was for this reason that she so often failed to take account of the human element which constantly upsets the best laid plans of mice and men. The Swami always took this human element into account. He gave, like the springtide, from his own being and bounty. He gave through laughter and he gave through play; he gave through deeply profound speech and through silent meditation. If anything could have produced perfection in the imperfect hearts of his disciples, it would have been his faith in them which never wavered. He made those close to him understand that true spiritual teaching is delicate and pervading, the fragrance, as it were, of the illumined consciousness. Yet balance, common-sense and all the homelier virtues he interwove with the subtler and more ethereal concepts. In all who came close to him he demanded normalcy. "Don't let us have any queer ones," he would say, and as for fanaticism, he looked upon it as a malady whose symptoms were blindness, intolerance and cruelty. Service, he held, was a blessed path. To forget oneself and even the question of one's spiritual progress in service of a holy ideal was a safe and sane way. Holy men, he said, lived in the same world and had the same problems as did ordinary people, only they approached them with a different consciousness. Even such a mundane affair as driving his

car was in no way disconnected from his spiritual activities. How many a time the disciple recalls, when she would repeat to her master some word of praise or extravagant appreciation, he would close his eyes for a moment as if in prayer, and she knew with no shadow of doubt that he was offering it all to the Divine Mother. Once the disciple when reading his "Way of Peace and Blessedness" came across the following paragraph:

"Honor, praise, recognition can be great drawbacks to the soul. They awaken the subtle ego and prevent our spiritual progress. God alone can protect us from such dangers. All glory must go to Him. Offer all the honor, respect and love that you receive from people at His divine feet, then you will never create any bondage for yourself. This is the secret." It was indeed the secret of his own peace and blessedness.

Often in the evenings, during the Queensberry Street days, the Swami would read aloud to the members of his community. He thoroughly enjoyed drama and shared with them the wonderful spiritual plays of G. C. Ghose, known as the "Shakespeare of Bengal." He entered fully into the parts, and imbued the sacred characters especially with a livingness which made those who listened feel as if they were in their holy presence.

One night it was Ghosh's *Life of Buddha* that he shared with his household, reading from his own translation the sacrifice scene wherein the Lord Buddha pleads with King Bimbasara to spare the lives of a flock of goats, being led by order of the king to the sacrifice—even offering his own life in their stead. Said the Swami, (as recorded in the Notebook):

" 'It was the majestic presence of the Lord Buddha which affected the king. Argument, logic, love, sacrifice—all these, but never a word of reproach. He was ready to give his life.

An ideal really means very little till we are willing to die for it. In India it is not preaching that counts but living the life. Words are of little avail.' Swami then referred to the meditation scene and said we should read it over alone to get its full import. Then he quoted from it: 'No name have I! Nor birthplace! No caste, creed or color!' 'This,' he said, 'is what renunciation means. So long as one is bound by narrow special claims, one cannot enter fully into the more universal love. The West understands practically nothing of spiritual renunciation. They look on it merely as selfishness. People think they can go back into the worldly life and hold themselves free, but the world enters into them in spite of themselves.'

"This came as an answer to a question as to how long special attachments lasted. Swami said: 'Illumination must come before full universality and tolerance can be felt. This talk of loving all the world alike is just sentimentality. First must come the renunciation.'

"Then he spoke of two apparently contradictory statements in the *Bhagavad Gita* (a) One can attain by ceasing from action. (b) One can attain by action. If actions bind then why not cease from them altogether? 'It is like getting a thorn in one's hand,' the Swami explained, quoting from Sri Ramakrishna, 'and having to extract it with another thorn, after which one can throw them both away. So if one gets involved in Karmic struggles and difficulties, one must go right on acting but from an entirely different motive. When one is bound down and tormented by an old set of impressions, one must create a new set of impressions to wipe out the old. Some may think it strange that after being bound by attachment to one thing one should attach oneself to another. But that is the way of salvation, is it not?'

"Miss Ph—— remarked that creating this new set of im-

pressions had sometimes to be done mechanically.

" 'Yes,' said Swamiji, 'that is true. Even the greatest do not feel at all times the ardor and glow in their prayers and meditations that they do at certain times, but it is of vital importance that they do not waver but keep right on. To meditate only when one is in the mood does not really accomplish a great deal. Sri Ramakrishna laid great stress on *steadfastness.*'

"Swami spoke here of the scene in the Buddha play concerning the robber's conversion by the Buddha and said it was taken from an actual incident in the Lord Buddha's life. Mrs. W—— mentioned a similar scene in the life of Lord Gouranga. Said the Swami: 'Love can do everything.' He repeated this. Someone said, 'But sometimes it is hard to love.' Swami replied: 'No, it is not hard to love; love is always in the heart. But it is hard to remove the impurities, such as the sense of ego, which obstruct its flow.' Then he quoted from the *Upanishads*: 'Hard to tread is the path—sharp as is the edge of a razor. It is a terribly difficult path, terribly difficult, so the wise declare.' "

On another day there is this entry in the Note-book:

"Swami said today to Sister Seva and to me: 'I say this to you from the depths of my heart—Endure, endure and again endure. Never forget this. Endurance, let that be your watchword! Later on he added: '*Dependability* is the essential quality in a disciple. If he has dependability he need worry about nothing else.' "

(*To be continued*)

The whole length and breadth of the wide world is pervaded by the radiant thoughts of a mind all-embracing, vast and boundless, in which dwells no hate nor ill-will.

—*Wisdom of Buddha*

POWER THROUGH THE SPIRIT

By Gayatri Devi

(An address recently delivered at the Vedanta Centre, Boston)

In the following words of Calvin Coolidge is a note of spiritual understanding which summons clear thinking on our part. He says: "We do not need more material development: we need more spiritual development. We do not need more intellectual power; we need more moral power. We do not need more knowledge; we need more character. We do not need more government; we need more culture. We do not need more law; we need more religion. We do not need more of the things that are seen; we need more of the things that are unseen."

We are inclined to agree with the President of the United States of the recent past. For as intelligent, thinking, human beings, some of us have frequently looked on the achievements of our present age feeling glowing pride in men's ingenuity and advancement in the field of science, technology, education, law and administration. Again we have been heartsick at the turn of events revealing wrong trends in what we term "civilization," leading to self-destruction.

Every age produces its own thinkers, philosophers and men of high idealism, who view civilization not primarily by its purpose of utility, as serving man's small and fleeting ends, but by its higher, more abiding and intrinsic values. The questions in the minds of such men and women are simple and clearly defined. They are: Can our civilization claim distinction from the standpoint of spiritual development? Has it been too materialistic in its tendencies? What avails scientific evolution or mechanical supremacy if by their products human beings divide themselves, sow the seed of interminable greed and hate, and destroy one another? Have the advan-

tages of our present times, brought about through multiple inventions enhancing the comfort and convenience of daily life, helped to make our inner life freer, more progressive and more concerned with what Calvin Coolidge calls "the things that are unseen," or, shall we say, the things pertaining to the Spirit? Why has not civilized man by his intellectual and mechanistic powers succeeded in abolishing colossal disasters known as wars that frequent the globe?

Shall we then admit that perhaps our intellectual, scientific or mechanical developments are not the criterion of civilization, powerful though they may be. Something must be vitally wrong at civilization's core as long as it overlooks moral values. For only by their application can humanity live happily, in peaceful relationship with one another on the same earth, sharing its manifold bounties and blessings.

At any rate, none of us can forget that we live in an age of tremendous power. This power is man's own, gained through his distinguished endeavor. The inventiveness of his mind and the skill of his hands have created endless devices, all granting him ever greater power over the forces of nature. Today man is master in the air, ruler of the sea, controller of light, re-creator of the earth's resources. In our time we are scaling heights that were considered beyond human reach fifty years ago. An airplane takes us across thousands of miles within the limit of a few hours. Sitting in our own comfortable corner a voice reaches us through the radio —a voice released somewhere in Russia, China or India, ten or twelve thousand miles away. Blood plasma and penicillin, radar and atomic energy—all are so many powers in the hands of man. He is ever traversing the places which nature has heretofore kept hidden, his sphere of knowledge is rapidly expanding, reaching for the limitless. What does all this represent? Power and more power. It is in his keeping and

it is for his use. Whether he will apply it constructively and thus bring help and healing to the world or whether he will set it in motion to cause destruction resulting in human misery, is a matter of paramount importance awaiting his wise decision. If his moral sense exceeds his love of personal gain or collective greed or his pride in what is known as prestige due to material acquisitions, he would not fail to ultilize all his powers for the good and for the upbuilding of humanity. Otherwise he will again and again destroy or be destroyed by the instruments of his own creation.

Let us for a brief moment survey the world as a whole. Today we cannot but think of it in this manner, for the powers of transportation and communication have broken down all barriers and the farthest stranger has become the nearest neighbor. We are no longer oblivious of people and places divided from us by distances, nor altogether indifferent to their aspirations and needs. But let us be careful as we survey mankind that we do it objectively, without emotional or mental bias, without passion or prejudice—taking the position of a witness or an impersonal observer.

Whom do we consider the most powerful people or nation, which is no other than a group of people held within a geographical boundary and banded together by racial and traditional rights? The answer is: Those who occupy the largest territories or hold control over them, or those who possess the largest supply of the earth's inexhaustible riches and can use them to better advantage by building industry, trade and commerce through their initiative and enterprising ability. Who are the outstandingly powerful nations of today's world? Specifically, the most wealthy, the most militaristic, and the most potential leader in industrial equipment. Wealth, then, has become the symbol of power, as well as machines that, producing masses of goods, increase man's

insatiable hunger for possessions or feed his vanity; and again the array of steel-made implements that are shiningly displayed everywhere nowadays. Which of these are true indicators of a civilization or culture having in it predominantly the element of the spiritual? Please do not misunderstand me. I am not underestimating the miraculous present-day productions—the creditable creations of man's remarkable brain. Objects are neither good nor bad in themselves. Their use, right or wrong, determines their merit or demerit. Sri Ramakrishna, India's inspired sage, used to say, "By the light of a lamp, a man can read a holy book or perform forgery. But the light remains the same." Our ships, airplanes and radios can be carriers of good will, tolerance, understanding and peace to the world, or fearful weapons scattering want, death and misfortune on the path of human beings. Why not allow our sea-going vessels to carry health and restoration to the hungry or afflicted in the form of food, medicines and garments; and the airplanes to transport ambassadors from one nation to another as messengers of friendly relationship? Why not use the radios to spread knowledge of countries and people, and thus eliminate gradually ignorance, prejudice and intolerance, which keep apart those who could become richer in mind and spirit by understanding one another as well as through exchange of culture?

Whence man's spiritual power? It is not separate from his earthly achievement, glory or grandeur. It generates from his own being by an upward turn of the motives which control his actions. If his motives are high, unselfish, broad, and concerned with an Ideal and with the well-being of his fellowmen, he transforms all that is material in his keeping into the spiritual. On the other hand, when he is satisfied with and enamored of the material and the perishable, and does not seek further, he brings about his own spiritual ruin. Let us

remind ourselves of the words of Christ, "What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his soul? And what can he give in exchange for his soul?" As individuals and nations we are guilty of losing our soul through excessive concern with matters that make us pompous and powerful externally and empty spiritually. Thus we have the power without the spirit, a civilization without a heart, a culture without enlightenment, which will leave behind it only shambles and rubbish heaps of rusted iron—the characteristic remnant of any materialistic age.

I like to picture Christ and beings such as he with their instinctive simplicity and disregard for material grandeur, in our time, in contrast with our monumental demonstration of might. How harmless, unostentatious and defenseless they seem! Yet who can deny the power that substantiates their personalities? They were not afraid of weapons but would not touch one even for self-protection and preservation. Their voices were clear and strong in denunciation of evil, having none in themselves, yet they were ever ready to stoop down to touch it in order to transform it into good! The power by which they won the hearts of men was the same as that which defied the hypocritical authorities—the power of their inner conviction combined with compassion and forgiveness of evil-doers. It was the power of their spirit gathered from conscious knowledge of their own origin and background. This was their greatest asset, the supreme power that carried them triumphantly across pain, tribulation, treachery, denial, distrust and physical destruction imposed on them by their fellowmen. In their endurance and gentleness, in their faith and fearlessness, in their submission to the Spirit which they realized as greater than themselves, were the potent elements integrating their personalities, recognized in their day and in all the ages to follow as very powerful ones.

We often sing their praises, yet fail to learn the secret of their power unless behind our life, conduct and action there is definite effort to abide by the example and precepts of the Great Ones. Some argue, "Who wants spiritual glory if we are made to suffer physically in order to attain it?" Others say, "Some boast of spiritual heritage or triumph of principle while dying of poverty, want and starvation." The counter-argument is: What is the use of material aggrandizement if by misusing it we also create suffering, struggle and want for mankind? One point of view is as rational as the other. The fact is, according to our sense of values, we take the side of the argument which justifies our own beliefs. There are people who think it is better to have less materially and more spiritually. Such individuals preserve their ideals at the cost of personal loss and sacrifice, yet they remain intact spiritually in spite of outer reverses. This is the type of power that Christ represented. He was not afraid to take a stand against the forces of materialism and oppression, thus upholding a standard that was to endure forever.

There must be people throughout the world who dare to live by such criteria. You and I can be one of them, if we choose to place above all other values our love of and loyalty to high principles and strive to translate them into concrete actions daily and habitually. Not much is gained by dwelling on evils that strangle the very life of humanity. We should instead think of ways and means by which they can be counteracted. This plainly implies living in a constructive manner, trying to put heavier weight on the scale of good, causing it to out-balance its opposite.

Once someone asked Swami Vivekananda how the world could escape from being demolished under the weight of evil. He answered in his piercingly penetrating wisdom: "Remember, my friend, the evil done by men is ever being counter-

acted by good done by other men. This is what keeps the balance."

We may out of free will utilize the good the Source of which lies in ourselves. I do not mean the lesser good, the concealment or camouflage of pride, covetousness and self-love; doing acts of benevolence or charity which feed the ego; but a use of the greater good that does not seek compromise between intention and its active demonstration, neither does it desire reward except the self-compensating joy of doing right for its own sake. Only thus can we become instruments of Absolute Good, limitless and all-powerful, and come to know the infinite capacity of our own being. To our amazement we discover all power is ours from within flowing perennially for the accomplishment of our high purpose. This power takes no account of physical frailties or circumstantial limitations. Having within itself the strength to conquer and transcend, it leads us to the heights of exalted tranquillity.

Have you not seen men and women living by this power, yet not fully aware of it? They are of the common walk of life—not geniuses or supermen—but ordinary people holding up their heads with heroic courage, enduring patiently natural odds such as physical handicap, loss, sorrow, or daily struggles of existence. Some of them may not even claim to profess any special faith or philosophy, yet are they strong, brave, smiling and victorious. The secret of their victory is in the spirit they embody. It is never determined by the material assets or their lack but rather by the stand a person takes and by which he overcomes all obstacles and oppositions. You and I might have done this over and over without thinking much about it and grown stronger for the experience. We have been successful because the spirit was stronger than flesh.

Conscious awareness of the power which makes man other

than the body, senses, mind, egotism, or a combination of these, is his biggest and most powerful asset. To recognize that impelling Existence behind change, beyond life and death, concealed in our own being, and to ally oneself with It, is to rise out of darkness, confusion, uncertainty, fear, doubt and ascend to a high sphere of shining wisdom. In order to abide there, the act of alliance must be constant, regular and firmly established. In time, it will efface the sense of "I," and all its accessories such as self-importance and self-limitation, replacing them with true humility, the indispensable condition for the influx and outpouring of the Spirit.

How wonderful is the conviction and assurance of our heritage of Spirit! The Spirit that we truly are—by which and through which and in which all the phases of our life are expressed, manifested and enlightened! If we possessed this knowledge consciously, all power would be ours! We will be able to perform wonders. First for ourselves. None of us are interested in working so-called miracles with their mark of supernaturalism, for we recognize that the greatest of all miracles is the transformation of man. The most egotistic, selfish and earthly-minded among us becomes pure and free and cleansed of self—a worthy channel for the Almighty and a doer of His will.

There is one point we need to remember: that power is dangerous, whether it be material or spiritual, in the hands of the ignorant, the ambitious, the self-seeking, the uncontrolled in desire. Only one who is free of small motives can use it rightly, for the good, happiness, preservation and peace of all.

The personal problem confronting us and the baffling world situation is at times discouraging. It can be neatly summed up in a parable found in Hindu Literature. It concerns the One Creator and His many instruments, created by His own

hands to assist Him in His work. The Great God empowered Agni, Vayu and Indra—the Fire-god, the Wind-god and the King of Heaven—by His own might, then entered the straw and hid Himself in this most insignificant object. No sooner were the elements given full independence and freedom of action than they went forth to show their might. They tried to destroy the straw by releasing their overpowering might. To their dismay and humiliation they discovered that they were unable to destroy it, because it was imbued with the Spirit of Brahman, the Imperishable Giver of life and power.

The lesson in the story is that of humility we need to learn as individuals and as nations. Having achieved hitherto impossible and unthinkable ends on the road of progress, man in his power, so certain of his attainment, is apt to forget that his power is not his own but an endowment from Him Whose intelligent guidance sustains, supports and directs the universe. This is what the wise ones know, therefore they share in the might and glory of the One, yet remain ever humble. Even a fraction of such realization will make us safe, secure, content and charged with a power which is devoid of the least inclination to injure or destroy, in thought, word or deed. Possessed with it we can live in understanding and friendliness as one human family, helping one another, and hindering or disturbing none.

The task of imparting to civilization the elements which will survive the test of time and change, rests with each one of us. Only insofar as our idealism will permit, are we capable of God-awareness and at-one-ment with our fellowmen. These states of being must be cultivated with earnest and utmost diligence, for only then can peace, the crying need of the hour, be found, established and preserved in our personal life, bearing fruit in all our dealings with mankind.

THE MIRACLE OF PURUN BHAGAT

By Rudyard Kipling

(Concluded)

Nearly all hermits and holy men who live apart from the big cities have the reputation of being able to work miracles with the wild things, but all the miracle lies in keeping still, in never making a hasty movement, and, for a long time, at least, in never looking directly at a visitor. The villagers saw the outline of the *barasingh* stalking like a shadow through the dark forest behind the shrine; saw the *minaul,* the Himalayan pheasant, blazing in her best colors before Kali's statue; and the *langurs* on their haunches, inside, playing with the walnut shells. Some of the children, too, had heard Sona singing to himself, bear-fashion, behind the fallen rocks, and the Bhagat's reputation as miracle-worker stood firm.

Yet nothing was further from his mind than miracles. He believed that all things were one big Miracle, and when a man knows that much, he knows something to go upon. He knew for a certainty that there was nothing great and nothing little in this world; and day and night he strove to think out his way into the heart of things, back to the place whence his soul had come.

So thinking, his untrimmed hair fell down about his shoulders, the stone slab at the side of the antelope skin was dented into a little hole by the foot of the brass-handled crutch, and the place between the three-trunks, where the begging-bowl rested day after day, sunk and wore into a hollow almost as smooth as the brown shell itself; and each beast knew his exact place at the fire. The fields changed their colors with the seasons; the threshing-floors filled and emptied, and filled again and again; and again and again, when winter came, the *langurs* frisked among the branches feathered with light snow,

till the mother-monkeys brought their sad-eyed little babies up from the warmer valleys with the spring. There were few changes in the village. The priest was older, and many of the little children who used to come with the begging-dish sent their own children now; and when you asked of the villagers how long their holy man had lived in Kali's Shrine at the head of the pass, they answered, "Always."

Then came such summer rains as had not been known in the Hills for many seasons. Through three good months the valley was wrapped in cloud and soaking mist—steady, unrelenting downfall, breaking off into thunder-shower after thunder-shower. Kali's Shrine stood above the clouds, for the most part, and there was a whole month in which the Bhagat never saw the village. It was packed away under a white floor of cloud that swayed and shifted and rolled on itself and bulged upward, but never broke from its piers—the streaming flanks of the valley.

All that time he heard nothing but the sound of a million little waters, overhead from the trees, and underfoot along the ground, soaking through the pine-needles, dripping from the tongues of draggled fern, and spouting in newly torn muddy channels down the slopes. Then the sun came out, and drew forth the good incense of the deodars and the rhododendrons, and that far-off, clean smell which the Hill people call "the smell of the snows." The hot sunshine lasted for a week, and then the rains gathered together for their last downpour, and the water fell in sheets that flayed off the skin of the ground and leaped back in mud. Purun Bhagat heaped his fire high that night, for he was sure his brothers would need warmth; but never a beast came to the shrine, though he called and called till he dropped asleep, wondering what had happened in the woods.

It was in the black heart of the night, the rain drumming

like a thousand drums, that he was roused by a plucking at his blanket, and, stretching out, felt the little hand of a *langur*. "It is better here than in the trees," he said sleepily, loosening a fold of the blanket; "take it and be warm." The monkey caught his hand and pulled hard. "Is it food, then?" said Purun Bhagat. "Wait awhile, and I will prepare some." As he kneeled to throw fuel on the fire the *langur* ran to the door of the shrine, crooned, and ran back again, plucking at the man's knee.

"What is it? What is thy trouble, Brother?" said Purun Bhagat, for the *langur's* eyes were full of things that he could not tell. "Unless one of thy caste be in a trap—and none set traps here—I will not go into that weather. Look, Brother, even the *barasingh* comes for shelter!"

The deer's antlers clashed as he strode into the shrine, clashed against the grinning statue of Kali. He lowered them in Purun Bhagat's direction and stamped uneasily, hissing through his half-shut nostrils.

"Hai! Hai! Hai!" said the Bhagat, snapping his fingers. "Is *this* payment for a night's lodging?" But the deer pushed him toward the door, and as he did so Purun Bhagat heard the sound of something opening with a sigh, and saw two slabs of the floor draw away from each other, while the sticky earth below smacked its lips.

"Now I see," said Purun Bhagat. "No blame to my brothers that they did not sit by the fire tonight. The mountain is falling. And yet—why should I go?" His eye fell on the empty begging-bowl, and his face changed. "They have given me good food daily since—since I came, and, if I am not swift, tomorrow there will not be one mouth in the valley. Indeed, I must go and warn them below. Back there, Brother! Let me get to the fire."

The *barasingh* backed unwillingly as Purun Bhagat drove

a pine torch deep into the flame, twirling it till it was well lit. "Ah! ye came to warn me," he said rising. "Better than that we shall do; better than that. Out, now, and lend me thy neck, Brother, for I have but two feet."

He clutched the bristing withers of the *barasingh* with his right hand, held the torch away with his left, and stepped out of the shrine into the desperate night. There was no breath of wind, but the rain nearly drowned the flare as the great deer hurried down the slope, sliding on his haunches. As soon as they were clear of the forest more of the Bhagat's brothers joined them. He heard, though he could not see, the *langurs* pressing about him, and behind him the *uhh! uhh!* of Sona. The rain matted his long white hair into ropes; the water splashed beneath his bare feet, and his yellow robe clung to his frail old body, but he stepped down steadily, leaning against the *barasingh*. He was no longer a holy man, but Sir Purun Dass K.C.I.E. Prime Minister of no small State, a man accustomed to command, going out to save life.

Down the steep, plashy path they poured all together, the Bhagat and his brothers, down and down till the deer's feet clicked and stumbled on the wall of a threshing-floor, and he snorted because he smelt Man. Now they were at the head of the one crooked village street, and the Bhagat beat with his crutch on the barred windows of the blacksmith's house as his torch blazed up in the shelter of the eaves. "Up and out!" cried Purun Bhagat; and he did not know his own voice, for it was years since he had spoken aloud to a man. "The hill falls! The hill is falling! Up and out, oh, you within!"

"It is our Bhagat," said the blacksmith's wife. "He stands among his beasts. Gather the little ones and give the call."

It ran from house to house, while the beasts, cramped in the narrow way, surged and huddled round the Bhagat, and Sona puffed impatiently.

The people hurried into the street—they were no more than seventy souls all told—and in the glare of the torches they saw their Bhagat holding back the terrified *barasingh,* while the monkeys plucked piteously at his skirts, and Sona sat on his haunches and roared.

"Across the valley and up the next hill!" shouted Purun Bhagat. "Leave none behind! We follow!"

Then the people ran as only Hill folk can run, for they knew that in a landslip you must climb for the highest ground across the valley. They fled, splashing through the little river at the bottom, and panted up the terraced fields on the far side, while the Bhagat and his brethren followed. Up and up the opposite mountain they climbed, calling to each other by name—the roll-call of the village—and at their heels toiled the big *barasingh,* weighted by the failing strength of Purun Bhagat. At last the deer stopped in the shadow of a deep pine-wood, five hundred feet up the hillside. His instinct, that had warned him of the coming slide, told him he would be safe here.

Purun Bhagat dropped fainting by his side, for the chill of the rain and that fierce climb were killing him; but first he called to the scattered torches ahead, "Stay, and count your numbers;" then, whispering to the deer as he saw the lights gather in a cluster: "Stay with me, Brother. Stay—till—I—go!"

There was a sigh in the air that grew to a mutter that grew to a roar, and a roar that passed all sense of hearing, and the hillside on which the villagers stood was hit in the darkness, and rocked to the blow. Then a note as steady, deep, and true as the deep C of the organ drowned everything for perhaps five minutes, while the very roots of the pines quivered to it. It died away, and the sound of the rain falling on miles of hard ground and grass changed to the muffled drum of water on soft earth. That told its own tale.

Never a villager—not even the priest—was bold enough to speak to the Bhagat who had saved their lives. They crouched under the pines and waited till the day. When it came they looked across the valley and saw what had been forest, and terraced field, and track-threaded grazing ground, was one raw, red, fan-shaped smear, with a few trees flung head-down on the scarp. That red ran high up the hill of their refuge, damming back the little river, which had begun to spread into a brick-colored lake. Of the village, of the road to the shrine, of the shrine itself, and the forest behind, there was no trace. For one mile in width and two thousand feet in sheer depth the mountain-side had come away bodily, planed clean from head to heel.

And the villagers, one by one, crept through the wood to pray before their Bhagat. They saw the *barasingh* standing over him, who fled when they came near, and they heard the *langurs* wailing in the branches, and Sona moaning up the hill; but their Bhagat was dead, sitting cross-legged, his back against a tree, his crutch under his armpit, and his face turned to the northeast.

The priest said: "Behold a miracle after a miracle, for in this very attitude must all Sunnyasis be buried! Therefore where he now is we will build the temple to our holy man."

They built the temple before a year was ended—a little stone-and-earth shrine—and they called the hill the Bhagat's Hill, and they worship there with lights and flowers and offerings to this day. But they do not know that the saint of their worship is the late Sir Purun Dass, K.C.I.E., D.C.L., Ph.D., etc., once Prime Minister of the progressive and enlightened State of Mohiniwala, and honorary or corresponding member of more learned and scientific societies than will ever do any good in this world or the next.

A SONG OF KABIR

Oh, light was the world that he weighed in his hands!
Oh, heavy the tale of his fiefs and his lands!
He has gone from the *guddee* and put on the shroud,
And departed in guise of *bairagi* avowed.

Now the white road to Delhi is mat for his feet,
The *sal* and the *kikar* must guard him from heat;
His home is the camp, and the waste, and the crowd—
He is seeking the Way as *bairagi* avowed!

He has looked upon Man, and his eyeballs are clear
(There was One; there is One, and but One, saith Kabir);
The Red Mist of Doing has thinned to a cloud—
He has taken the Path as *bairagi* avowed!

To learn and discern of his brother the clod,
Of his brother the brute, and his brother the God.
He has gone from the council and put on the shroud
("Can ye hear?" saith Kabir), a *bairagi* avowed!

There is a class of devotees, the *nityasiddhas,* the ever-perfect. From their very birth they seek God. They do not enjoy anything of the world. The Vedas speak of the Homa bird. It lives very high in the sky. There the mother bird lays her egg. She lives so high that the egg falls for many days. While falling it is hatched. The chick continues to fall. That also goes on for many days. In the mean time the chick develops eyes. Coming near the earth it becomes conscious of the world. It realizes it will meet certain death if it hits the ground. Then it gives a shrill cry and shoots up toward its mother. —*Sri Ramakrishna*

AS AN EAGLE

By Lt. (jg) Julius J. Nodel, ChC, USNR

While on a visit to the Naval Hospital at Portsmouth, Va., I talked with several Marines who had arrived from the hell of Iwo Jima. Though I was there to bolster their morale, I heard from one of them a sermon more effective than anything I could have said.

"You know, Chaplain," said one Marine to me, as he caressed the healing stump of an amputated arm, "unless a fellow went in there with a clear conscience, he was lost."

"What do you mean 'a clear conscience'?" I asked.

"Well, a guy must know that he deserves to have God up there watching over him. Just as we were moving in, I thought of something I had heard when I was a kid. There's some kind of a bird living around the Alps which has an interesting way of teaching its young to fly. When the mother feels that the fledgling is old enough to fly, she pushes it out of its nest among the rocky crags. Just pushes it out! The little thing . . . . begins to flap its wings, and then begins to fall. Just before baby hits the ground, the mother swoops under it, catches it on her back, and carries it safely back to the nest. That's the way I felt.

"There I was, pushed right out of the landing boat onto the beach. Then the mortars began dropping all around. Just when I got so scared that I was ready to fall down and let anything happen to me, I suddenly felt that God wasn't going to let me down. At that moment, I felt as if He had swooped down, sorta lifted me right up and protected me from sure death. After that I knew I'd be all right."

After a pause he continued, "Yes Sir, you gotta know what you're fighting for, who you're fighting for, and that God is up there watching you."

REPORT

As was reported in the last issue of the*Message of the East,* Srimati Gayatri Devi and Sister Daya exchanged their respective fields of service, Srimati arriving at Ananda Ashrama, California, on December 1st, while on the following day Sister Daya took the train for Boston. Her plan was to remain there during the former's sojourn in the west. But circumstances, quite unforseen, made it imperative for each to return to her original post.

ANANDA ASHRAMA, CALIFORNIA

The Christmas Eve Service was the most outstanding event during Gayatri Devi's six weeks' visit to California. Throughout the day many hands worked swiftly, gathering Ashrama greens and flowers, decorating the Temple, installing portable altars for Mother and Child, and trimming the Christmas tree until the entire Temple was transformed into a thing of breathtaking beauty. The single candle lit in the niches, each of which represents one of the world's great religions, joined its gentle glow with that of many candles on the Madonna altar and blended softly with the radiance emanating from the inner sactuary, exquisitely lovely with a wealth of colorful flowers, fruits and white lights. Standing against this background Gayatri Devi gave her message of Christmas—"Love, Peace and Good-will." Tears shone in the eyes of many listeners, deeply moved by the wordless assurance of the living Presence which stirred their hearts with gladness and gratitude.

Immediately after the Service all were invited to witness a beautiful tableau of the Nativity presented by Ashrama Sunday School children under the supervision of Sister Amala. The Sister was warmly congratulated by all for costumes which she had specially designed, for her splendid training of

the children, and for the realistic setting created in one section of the Library.

This year the traditional midnight Service on New Year's Eve was held at eight o'clock. Many responding to an inner need drove up the hill in order to begin the New Year in prayerful devotion. After an impressive Service, the Community and friends gathered in the big room of the guest house where they enjoyed the warmth and hospitality of Sister Seva. For a whole hour music filled happy hearts—music of Christmas carols, folk songs and popular selections were sung by all to the accompaniment of the piano. Refreshments were then served, followed by more music and informal fellowship, until the clock struck farewell to the old year. By that time the group was smaller. Following a short period of quietude, the New Year was entered upon by the singing of Swami Paramananda's "How Sweet is the Sound of Silence."

Owing to the difficulty of securing reservations, Sister Daya was unable to return to California until eleven days after Gayatri Devi's departure from the Ashrama. In the interim Sunday Services were conducted with grace and feeling by Sister Vimala, who through her long years of service has endeared herself to the California public.

After Sister Daya's return to Ananda Ashrama on January 24th, the birthdays of Swami Vivekananda and Swami Paramananda were first observed privately with a vigil in the Temple, and other devotional Services for the Ashrama Community. On Sunday, February 10th, a public joint-birthday celebration was observed. It was notable for the vibrant spirit manifested in both Services and throughout the day. A large congregation filled the Temple, and at the Hindu luncheon which followed Sister Seva had to work a near-miracle in order to take care of the large number of unexpected guests.

Sri Ramakrishna's birthday anniversary was observed on Sunday, March 3rd. At the special morning Service Sister Daya spoke of the Great Master as the "Prophet of Oneness." In the afternoon she shared many of his wonderful parables. Lovely music by Ashrama singers added to the sacred atmosphere. Many partook of the Hindu luncheon, served at the Ashrama guest house. The private observance was on Tuesday the 5th. It was marked by an all-day vigil, culminating in a meditation in the Temple in the evening.

VEDANTA CENTRE, BOSTON

A warm welcome was accorded Sister Daya on her arrival at the Boston Vedanta Centre on Friday, December 6th. The following day a reception was held in her honor in combination with the second Christmas Bazaar Tea and the Sister was happily greeted by friends old and new.

Christmas in Boston marks the culmination of a season that is peculiarly given to joyous preparation. Perhaps nowhere else in the country are as many carols sung or more candles lighted. The Vedanta Centre likewise busied itself in making ready for the holy occasion. Guests in the Centre, including two very small children, brought warmth and rejoicing. Activities increased until on Christmas Eve the traditional Service, full of the mystic spirit of the infant Christ, was held at six P.M. The Chapel, hall and adjoining rooms were fragrant with greens from the little Ashrama at Cohasset, while lovely flowers and shining vigil lights graced the main altar and the wall shrines. It was a "White Christmas" and a specially joyous one since it was the first to be celebrated after the war had ended.

The next special observance was the Watch Service, conducted by Sister Daya just before midnight on December 31st. Special music marked these occasions, carol singing by members, and solo numbers by Mrs. Eunice Langenbach, whose

clear, true, youthful voice, with its reserve and delicate shading, blended with the sacred atmosphere of the Services.

One by one, birthday anniversaries of India's three great personalities were observed. On February 10th, both Sunday Services vibrated with the spirit of Swami Vivekananda, whose life and teachings formed the themes of Gayatri Devi's talks. A Hindu dinner followed on February 15th, jointly commemorating the birthdays of the aforesaid Swami and his disciple Swami Paramananda. The evening was bitterly cold, accompanied by a fifty-five-mile-an-hour gale, but a group of eighty persons graced the occasion and enjoyed an hour's program of Swami Paramananda's poems, some of which were read by Gayatri Devi and others sung by Mrs. Eunice Langenbach. Among the songs, "Flame of Love" and "A Secret," set to music by Latham True, were most unusual. "Ye Who Love and Serve," for which Lillian Engstrand, one of the Ashrama Community, wrote the music, also deserves mention.

Sri Ramakrishna's birthday was celebrated in three ways. March 3rd marked a day of prayer and devotion for the Centre's resident Community; on the 8th a Hindu dinner attended by a large and happy group filled the house with a festive spirit; and on the following Sunday the Services opened a door through which all could have a glimpse into the life and realisations of modern India's God-Man. His incomparable parables were related on the evening of the dinner after a short musical program shared by Mr. Einar Hansen, violinist of the Boston Symphony, and a young Hawaiian pianist, Conchu Hughes.

AN APPEAL

India is again faced with the danger of an impending famine. In the year of 1944 two million persons died of

hunger in one province alone, namely Bengal. This time the threat is widespread, due to the failure of crops in every part of the vast country. Starvation is likely to take a larger toll of lives.

Shall we join hands with those who are already making heroic efforts to avert the catastrophy and offer our share of help?

India needs food, garments, medicine, and funds with which to purchase them. Any contribution you make will be sent to the Ramakrishna Mission which is noted for its relief work and voluntary services throughout the year and especially in times of crisis.

Please mail your donation to INDIA FAMINE RELIEF, Vedanta Centre, 420 Beacon St., Boston 15, Mass.

We are sending small supplies of food, mostly rice, to Charushila Devi, Ananda Ashrama, Dacca. She prevented several families from starving during the last famine.

BOOK REVIEW

The *Message of the East* gratefully acknowledges the receipt of "Vedanta for the Western World", published by the Marcel Rodd Company of Hollywood, California. The book contains an Introduction by Christopher Isherwood who is its editor. A number of essays dealing with Vedanta philosophy, written by such well-known authors as Gerald Heard, Aldous Huxley, John van Druten, Swami Yatiswarananda, Swami Prabhavananda and others fill the present volume's four hundred and fifty pages.

There is no doubt that the book is a valuable contribution to the literature on Vedanta. Earnest students of religion and philosophy will find it interesting and stimulating. We hope it will be widely read.

WORKS BY SWAMI PARAMANANDA

MY CREED (Poems)
Portrait of the author. Flexible binding, $2.00. Cloth $1.50. Paper 50 cts. (new).

RHYTHM OF LIFE (Third Volume of Poems)
Flexible binding, $2.00. Cloth $1.50.

THE VIGIL (Second Volume of Poems)
Portrait of the author. Flexible binding, $2.00. Cloth binding, 1.50.

SOUL'S SECRET DOOR (Second Edition) Poems
Flexible binding, gold lettering, $2.00. Cloth, ink lettering, $1.50.

BOOK OF DAILY THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS
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Message of the East

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

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

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AFTER CIVILIZATION

By Edward Carpenter

(From "Towards Democracy")

Slowly out of the ruins of the past—like a young fernfrond uncurling out of its own brown litter—

Out of the litter of a decaying society, out of the confused mass of broken down creeds, customs, ideals,

Out of distrust and unbelief and dishonesty, and fear, meanest of all, (the stronger in the panic trampling the weaker underfoot);

Out of miserable rows of brick tenements with their . . . glances of suspicion, and doors locked against each other,

Out of the polite residences of congested idleness; out of the aimless life of wealth;

Out of the dirty workshops of evil work, evilly done;

Out of the wares which are no wares poured out upon the markets, and in the shop windows,

The fraudulent food, clothing, drink, literature;

Out of the cant of commerce—buying cheap and selling dear—the crocodile sympathy of nation with nation, . . .

The despair and unbelief possessing all society—rich and poor, educated and ignorant, the money-lender, the wage-slave, the artist and the washerwoman alike;

All feeling the terrible pressure and tension of the modern problem:

Out of the litter and muck of a decaying world,

Lo! even so!

I saw a new life arise.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

He whose passions are quieted and mind perfectly tranquil, who has become one with Brahman, being freed from all impurities, to such a Yogi comes supreme bliss.

—*Bhagavad-Gita*

Sri Ramakrishna: I have come to the final realization that God is the Whole and I am a part of Him, that God is the Master and I am His servant. Furthermore, I think every now and then that He is I and I am He.

Bhavanath: I feel disturbed if I have a misunderstanding with someone. I feel that in that case I am not able to love all.

Sri Ramakrishna: Try at the outset to talk to him and establish a friendly relationship with him. If you fail in spite of your efforts, then don't give it another thought. Take refuge in God. Meditate on Him. There is no use in giving up God and feeling depressed in thinking about others.

—*Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*

When a man lives with God, his voice shall be as sweet as the murmur of the brook and the rustle of the corn.

—*Emerson*

A true religious instinct never deprived man of one single joy; mournful faces and a sombre aspect are the conventional affectations of the weak-minded.

—*Hosea Ballou*

Yea, in that day shalt thou sing unto the Lord a new song, a song of rejoicing in His beautiful countenance, the FACE of thine own true Self.

—*Book of Tokens*

To enjoy true happiness we must travel into a very far country, and even out of ourselves; for the pearl we seek is not to be found in the Indian but in the Empyrean Ocean.

—*Sir Thomas Browne*

SECRET OF HAPPINESS and THE REDEEMING POWER

By Swami Paramananda

(Two Lectures delivered by the Swami at The New Thought Temple and at Unity Center, Cincinnati, Ohio, in October 1924.

SECRET OF HAPPINESS

My friends, we need no introduction save a spiritual understanding, for as souls we are already connected. It is only through our misguided zeal that we hold ourselves aloof from one another and thus bring about our individual miseries as well as all the miseries which afflict the masses of the people, the community, the nation.

Tonight I am to speak to you on the *Secret of Happiness,* but first let me give you an ancient Vedic hymn, dedicated to the "Lord of the Field."

"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 ploughshare turn up the sod merrily;
Let the men follow the oxen merrily!
May the god who gives rain, moisten the earth with sweet rain!
Giver of blessedness, bestow on us happiness!"

Here we have brought before us a picture of a group of men who are able to bring into their every act a sense of joyousness, whether ploughing the field or engaged in any other occupation.

You may wonder how this can be possible when man is so tremendously aware of the miseries of existence. He feels the burden of all the cares that are placed upon him. How then can he know this unbroken happiness?

We have to earn our happiness. We cannot buy it; we cannot sell it. It is something we unfold from within, al-

though the average human being is always searching for it without. The man of experience, however, can tell you that true happiness is never to be found in the external. A man may possess a great deal of money, yet not be happy. He may have many, many opportunities in this world, yet never know the blessing of a happy heart.

India for thousands of years has held the concept of God as the All-blissful One. In fact her name for God is a three-fold name, *Sat-Chit-Anandam,* Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. As soon as man partakes of that Infinite Life, his little human life becomes animated with a greater power, while his sad and often desolate heart, weighted down by countless anxieties, becomes inspired and filled with an exuberance of ecstasy.

Wherever there is the presence of Spirit there can be no unhappiness. Once we find access to that Infinite Being, unhappiness is banished from our heart. In order, however, to partake of that unending bliss, we need certain attributes. No selfish person can be happy. People who do not think of themselves, who do not want anything for themselves, know the greatest joy. Why is this? Christ indicates this truth when He proclaims: "He who loses his life for My sake shall find it."

Now, although we desire happiness, we do things which destroy it. A moth is drawn by the glamour of the fire and, although his desire was to find happiness, he burns himself in the flame. If we lack discrimination, if we are selfish and egotistic, then we do those things that destroy even the possibility of our enjoying the blessed fruits of existence. Spiritual life is connected with the life of cheerfulness. There are people in India, holy people, who devote themselves to maintaining cheerfulness under all circumstances. That which produces morbidity in our soul, that which makes us look sad

and fills others with sadness is not the Spirit of God. Spirit of God is like sunshine,—wherever it penetrates it destroys all darkness, all doubt. One who has found his home, his inspiration in God, carries this atmosphere wherever he goes, and brings new light to every man whose life he touches.

You may say, "Some people are born with that attribute of cheerfulness whereas others are born melancholy." If we are part of that infinite, unbounded Spirit, if we have all descended from that One who emanates happiness, peace and bliss, then we must all have the same inherent possibilities. It is said that the knower of God becomes like unto Him. If a man is miserable and unhappy, it is because he thinks too much of his failures, his imperfections, and all the things pertaining to his little life. Let him forget himself. We cannot overcome unhappiness by dwelling on unhappiness. We overcome unhappiness through joyousness; we overcome weakness through strength; we overcome darkness through light. Wherever the Spirit of God enters, there is a ray of bliss. Why should a man not keep close to it? Children of God should be joyous. It is their heritage. Let me give you a story from the life of Lord Buddha.

One day when the Buddha was wandering as a homeless mendicant (as one who goes wherever the Lord leads him and whose mind and heart are dedicated to the Supreme), he drew near to a house. A servant who was cutting grass in the meadows nearby saw this holy figure approaching, and realizing that he was seeking alms, ran over to the mistress of the house and asked for the food that was due him as his daily portion. It was given, and the servant, without thinking of himself or his own hunger, immediately went to the Buddha and offered it all to him. The Buddha accepted it and blessed him.

The daughter of the household, witnessing this act, said to

the servant, "That is well done. Thou hast earned merit."

"Indeed," the man replied, "I feel full of happiness because of it."

The master of the house, overhearing this, said, "Won't you share your merit with me?"

The servant returned to the Buddha and asked, "Holy Sir, may I share my merit with my master?" In reply, the Buddha told him a parable:

"Once there was a village with hundreds of houses but with only one light. All the villagers, however, came and lighted their lamps and torches from it, so that the one light gave birth to many lights without losing any of its luster, and the village was made the brighter. Give thy merit, then, to another," said the Buddha to the servant; "thou wilt lose nothing thereby."

The servant went to his master and cried, "I gladly share my merit with you."

In return, his master offered him a sum of money, but he replied, "Not so, my Lord! If I accept thy money it would be like selling my share. Bliss cannot be sold."

Here indeed are some very wonderful thoughts. Selfless giving means happiness. Happiness is something we have to earn. Man cannot bargain and barter with the things which belong to the higher realms of revelation.

Have an ideal, and hold to it. Whatever you do, do with a spiritual touch. All our routines and systems give us nothing unless we are inspired by That which is Life, which is Joy, which is Eternity. You possess this spirit. There is no one who does not carry it within him. As soon as it unfolds in us, it fills us with supreme joy and inspiration. That is our "merit." This blissful, exuberant spirit we need at every turn of our life. Home is more beautiful because of it. If every person could go about with a cheerful heart, what an atmosphere it would create!

It is the height of selfishness when we indulge in despondency. Never do we overcome failure by thoughts of failure. I have never seen a selfish person who is happy. But there are people who are happy no matter what comes. Happiness is an inner condition, my friends. Those who know the secret of life and living look forward to each day. There are human beings who are just like sparks of sunshine. Wherever they are, the whole place becomes animated with the spirit of life, joy, action. One who gives his fullest measure, nothing can hinder him. People who are noble, who have lofty aspirations, they forget themselves altogether.

Secret of life, secret of beauty, secret of happiness consist in one secret, and the man who is able to give himself wholly without thought of self, he has found it, he knows it. The artist who loves his art, who gives himself through his art, he becomes a master. Whatever may be your vocation, give yourself through it wholly. At the present time you may not be in a very high position in the world, but remember, it is not the position that ennobles us, we ennoble it. People who know the secret of happiness are never complaining. They engage in their work because they love everything that is placed before them. Love of art, love of life, love of human beings, love of achievement! It is by means of this love that they attain their happiness. Forget your self; you will not be annihilated.

You may say, "I might succeed in doing this if I had some real spiritual contact."

There is surely someone you love more than you do your self—perhaps a friend or a little child. Whoever it may be, make the love you feel symbolic of your devotion for the Highest. Serve the Ideal through him. This will draw out your sense of sanctity, no matter how hidden it may be. Through devotion, through service, you will realize joy.

We are not called upon to walk like beggars, but to dis-

cover that we possess within us an inexhaustible supply of life, wisdom and eternal blessedness. In that realization we cannot fail to find the fullness of happiness. Every one of us cherishes some ideal, and for us, how beautiful, how lofty, how perfect that ideal is! Let us fill our thought and our life with it. Whatever we think upon, we become; whatever we love, we absorb through our love; therefore if we can love the beautiful and the sublime, our whole life will grow like unto it. In this way we shall come to realize that, verily, wherever God is, there is bliss.

THE REDEEMING POWER

"Cleanse your heart of malice and cherish no hatred, not even against your enemies; but embrace all living beings with kindness and compassion. 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."

Lord Buddha said this, and we find it identical with the teachings of Christ, although it was given many centuries before His advent, showing that Truth is ever the same. It must ever be the same.

"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 you may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven. For if you love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect."

"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."

These sayings seem distant indeed from our present life. It is not a question of who gave utterance to them first; the question is whether or not these ideas are practical, helpful, constructive, or only visionary. If they are visionary, then, of course, we ought to reject them, but we cannot know what they are till we have tried to put them into practice. And here

is our stumbling block! For a man does not become spiritual merely by professing one religion or another. One man may profess Christianity and another, Mohammedanism—or any other ism; but this by itself means little. It is one thing to adopt a religion and quite another to manifest its living spirit in our life—to embody its ideal. Pure and selfless love is one of the greatest ideals that has ever come down to man through the ages. In fact, all other ideals are included in it. Everything else may fail us utterly, but this divine thing never fails us; it cannot fail us. It is the only healing, restoring factor in our life; yet how few there are who understand it, turn to it or have faith in its invincible power. Instead when an enemy seeks to wreak vengeance on us, we think we can overcome him by greater vengeance. No man, however, whether king, emperor or private individual, can ever say that he has attained genuine success by force of hatred. The man who starts something destructive always finds that it reacts in time upon his own self. Hatred is something absolutely alien to man's true nature, therefore we must with all our power of devotion shield ourselves against it.

Whenever, in training children, we think it necessary to teach them that in order to love their own people they must hate others, we are unconsciously sowing seeds in their minds which ultimately may develop into criminal tendencies. Just before the World War, which brought such disaster, did we not take great pride in our civilization, especially in all its wonderful inventions? Did we not turn a deaf ear to the voice of Christ? And what happened? Those very things of which we were so proud became instruments for destruction and ruin.

We cannot strike someone without striking ourselves; for it is the same living Spirit which gives life to all. How can anyone suppose that we can please God by unkind feelings? We

please Him by giving reality to our religion through our own action, thought, and everyday living.

Christ proved through His life that love conquers. The great, compassionate Buddha likewise proved it and preached it. He also had enemies who tried to destroy him. According to the legends the priests schemed against him and even hired evil men to kill him. But because he had no hatred in his heart, when they attacked him, the swords fell from their hands. A man who lives by the sword perishes by the sword. That is the law, and the reverse also is true.

We all know the great power of love. One's whole being unfolds when one is surrounded by a loving atmosphere. True love always upbuilds. Why then are we not able to practise it? The simple reason is, because we know it only intellectually. The one way we can convince anyone through love is by radiating it. If you are a lover you will inspire love. If you have gentleness you will inspire gentleness. These attributes are not the result of softness or weakness; they can be acquired only through force of character. In India, even ferocious animals are subdued by the magic of love. We have read of such things, and they have seemed to us almost like miracles. I personally know of a Swami, a spiritual Teacher, who lived unprotected in the mountains. Sometimes tigers came and sat by him without hurting him. The secret lay in his consciousness. One person by the thoughts he carries will awaken hatred in the hearts of those about him, while another will dissolve that hatred and transform it into love and loveliness.

Let me give you a simple illustration: The same air that carries fragrance also conveys to us noxious odors and foul, deadly gases. Thus the human heart (and of course the human mind) is capable of transmitting constructive feelings of love or of carrying that which is poisonous to the soul which generates it, as well as to others.

You cannot pretend, with any success, that you are loving people so long as you carry venom in your heart. Unless you can follow the light of love, unless you can radiate it through your own actions, you do not know what love means. It is not in books that we learn this great truth. When the heart unfolds, then we see by direct vision that love overcomes hatred. When one has this great fortification of gentleness and is infilled with the spirit of love, anger melts before him.

You may have the idea that Oriental people are naturally gentle because they are so given to God-love and meditation. They are, however, children of the same Spirit as are you. Every heart is endowed by God with a full capacity for loving, but the trouble is we deaden ourselves to our own possibilities and allow ourselves to be carried away by the glamour of what we call material achievement. One of the things that we forget is that man can be happy without material possessions. "What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul!" The great Teachers and Saviours of the world without exception have told us: "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind!" But we say, "let us love ourselves first and our own bodily pleasures;" or if we do not say it by words, we convey it by our actions.

No man can fill his mind with selfishness and reap the blessing that is born out of love. If you find someone who is constantly attracting to his life goodness and blessedness, it means that he is carrying within him their counterpart. Mere contact with this type of person gives us exuberance of feeling. Yet there are other people who convey to us the feeling that life is not worth living.

The truth is, we always carry something within us, in our mind and consciousness, and that something we constantly convey to those about us for good or ill, whether we know it

or not. How wonderful, if we could always give forth the healing perfume of love! When everything else fails, love succeeds. It comes and touches us and we are restored. Never lose your faith in this power, no matter how hopeless life may seem. It is through love that the great universe has been created, and all the beautiful things we see are born out of the inspiration of love.

A man who gives his all in the service of humanity feels as a result only a tremendous exaltation and joy in that great giving. When this spirit will work through us all and emanate from us all, the world will be a better place for men to inhabit. There are some who have already found the world full of joy. These people wake up each morning with a great expansion of heart: they yearn to do something beautiful and good. Another type of human being when he opens his eyes, thinks only that it is the beginning of another day of sadness. These thoughts go out from him because he has given them entrance into his inner being.

Let us sow in our hearts the seeds of love. They will produce love and that love will envelop us and fortify us. May we always remember that when we drift away from love, we drift away from the very thing that can sustain and guide us.

In India, the spirit of love is portrayed as a great Mother. There is nothing sweeter than mother-love. Mother never fails us; mother always loves and forgives. May that pure love be the directing power in our life. It will redeem us, it will exalt us, it will purify us, and when our heart is made pure, it will become still and clarified. Still heart alone is able to reflect the true picture of the universe. He who carries such a heart in his breast, for him the world becomes beautified. In this way one's life becomes a benediction to others.

We do not have to be preachers in order to express this great consciousness. All of us can love and serve everywhere,

at every turn and at every moment. If we would help humanity, we first must learn to live helpfully with those immediately around us. The love that we feel and manifest toward them will expand until it embraces the community, the nation and finally—the whole of humanity. Only then, when we have made this realization our own, will our heart be filled with gladness and our life and living prove of lasting benefit to ourselves and to our fellow men.

Love is a great thing, a great good in every wise; it alone maketh light every heavy thing and beareth evenly every uneven thing: for it beareth burden without burden and every bitter thing it maketh sweet and savory. . . .

There is nothing sweeter than love, nothing stronger, nothing higher, nothing broader, nothing more jocund, nothing fuller, nothing better in heaven nor in earth; for love is born of God nor it may not rest but in God above all creatures.

The lover flieth, runneth and is glad; he is free and is not holden. . . .

Love feeleth no burden, it accounteth no labor, it desireth more than it may attain, it complaineth never of impossibility, for it deemeth itself mighty to all things, and all things be lawful to it. It is valiant therefore to all things, it fulfilleth many things and bringeth them to effect where he that loveth not faileth and lieth still.

Love waketh; and sleeping, it sleepeth not; love wearied is not weary, and love constrained is not constrained; it afeard is not troubled; but as a quick flame and a burning brand, he bursteth upward and passeth safe.

—Thomas a Kempis

There is a god within us; when he stirs our bosom warms.

—Ovid

TWO SONNETS

By Amy Requa Russell

I.

You have come back. How do we know that you
Are here again? By faith you are restored,
To please us now as you were used to do—
With every simple grace, by us adored.
Only the spirit could make clear our gain—
That death is lost to immortality.
Transmuted now to peace is every pain
As of much grief we suddenly are free.
And like a dormant tree who long has stood,
Drained of all life, upreaching to the sky,
When once it knows the spring and feels the wood
At once refilled by sweet infinity—
We, too, are filled, and by your gentle touch:
Reality to us who loved you much.

II.

Dark days may come again; yet there remains
Remembrance of this day, and our release;
This is the stature that the soul attains
At its majority, and this is peace.
To have remembered you—as still you are—
Has healed us; and no longer we take heed
To hide our wound, since every trace of scar
Is faded out, the suture closed indeed.
And as they who Easter morning ere the day
Begins, see earth enshrouded, dimly paled,
Until the sun uprears whose beams display
The very spring in every twig unveiled,
We were awaiting light, re-kindled now,
And we behold the blossom and the bough.

INDIA'S ROLE IN THE PRESENT WORLD CRISIS

By Sir S. Radhakrishnan

(A radio address delivered by Sir Radhakrishnan from New York City, on March 29th, 1946.)

I am happy to be able to broadcast today to the American people a message on India's role in the present world crisis. Modern civilization, with its scientific temper and secular humanism, is uprooting the world over the customs of long centuries and creating a ferment of restlessness. The world has found itself as one body, but physical unity and economic interdependence are not by themselves sufficient to create a sense of universal human community. In spite of the external unity, the world mind is anarchical and unruly. More than ever before we are divided and afflicted by formidable evils of fear, of suspicion, and of misunderstanding. To remove these evils, which are the originating causes of wars, to give a soul to the growing world unity, is the task assigned to our generation. In this great work of creating a new pattern of living, a new social mind, some of the fundamental insights of Indian culture may perhaps be found useful.

After the two wars which this generation has passed through, we are impressed by the utter inadequacy of a secular view of life and the urgent need for a renewal of faith, a renaissance of spiritual values. The war which has just ended with the wiping out of two cities by the atom bomb has disclosed the strength as well as the weakness of our civilization. It has given evidence of our intellectual penetration and marvelous endurance. It has also revealed our greedy and grasping nature, our fundamental insufficiency, our essential lack of self-control. What we suffer from is not intellectual error or even moral ignorance, but it is spiritual blindness. No

amount of science and art, commerce and industry, obedience and discipline, can maintain whole an edifice whose foundations are unsound. The Kingdom of Man belongs not to the most intellectual or even the most disciplined, but to the most virtuous, the spiritually wise. The leaders of thought and science who enfranchise the mind, the poets and artists who persuade the heart, the moral heroes who serve humanity, have all their place, but the first place belongs to the seers, the convinced and inspired souls, the creative men of affirmation, who tell us that man is not simply body and mind, that our personal insufficiencies and social maladjustments are directly traceable to the neglect of the spiritual and the divine, and absorption in the pursuits of the physical and the animal, the instinctive and the intellectual.

From the beginning of her history, India has looked upon religion not so much as a revelation to be attained by faith but as an effort to unveil the deepest layers of our being and get into enduring contact with them. Religion is spiritual life, which is different from a vague religiosity or conventional piety. Religion is not a solemn routine or a superstitious faith. It is not submission to authority or subscription to a formula. Properly understood, religion is a summons to spiritual adventure, to individual regeneration, to a change of consciousness from the ordinary ignorant state, when we are cut off from our true Self, to a greater consciousness in which we find our true being. It is to rise from *vijnana* to *ananda,* from the order of thought to the order of charity, to use Pascal's words. To uncover the inner springs of regeneration we must turn inward, deepen our awareness, grow into completeness, develop a more meaningful attitude toward life, an attitude which will free us from bondage to the external forms and hardening of the spirit. Religion, if authentic, means an illumined mind, a changed heart, and a transformed will.

Such an intensification of religious consciousness will naturally be accompanied by an intensification of social consciousness. The great Indian thinker Sankara tells us that we have first a consciousness of the Divine in oneself and next the consciousness of the Divine in all. *Adau brahmasmiti anubhava udite, paschat sarvam khalv idam brahma.* We first grasp the Kingdom that is within us all, and then it becomes manifest in our relations with the world. *Sarvabhutatmake tata jagannathe jaganmaye paramatmani govinde mitramitrakatha kutah.* "When we realize the one Lord in whom we all dwell, how can there be any talk of friend or foe?" Oneness with our fellow men becomes then the leading principle of our life, not merely a policy for economic cooperation and political unification. It becomes a principle of deeper brotherhood, an inner realization that only in the life of our fellow men is our own life complete. Such a feeling, which is not only an idea but the truth of our being, is the only secure base for human unity.

Science has put at our disposal potencies of universal force, but the human individuals who use them are little communal egos with nothing universal in the light of their knowledge or the life of their affections. The nationals of a country are prepared for the worship of their nations, for the immolation of the innocent by the affliction of subtle propaganda, blinding their vision and splitting their ears. Attempts to unite the peoples of the world, the Christians of the world, the workers of the world, the capitalists of the world, have failed because of the armed and irrational exaltation of the nation state. In pursuits of the mind and spirit there was hitherto an element of international collaboration. But today even the scientific workers are conscripted into the service of the state. Science and scholarship, whose essential purpose is to foster universal values, are being betrayed by their votaries, who are com-

pelled to conform to the policy of the state and give to a group what is meant for mankind. We are bruised and bewildered, our deepest emotions are stirred, by the incredible forms of savagery in which even intelligent and sensitive men are required to acquiesce. If we believe in humanity, we must throw off our national disguises and develop a new social discipline.

The war has contributed to a coming together of the peoples and the mingling of races and cultures. No nation can keep itself in isolation. All will have to depend on all. The Eastern and Western worlds, which used to live more or less separately, have been brought into close contact. Civilization is ceasing to be European or Asiatic and is becoming of the world. Whenever East and West met in the past, a cultural renaissance was the result. The development of a world wisdom worthy of our time and place is in process today. The search for world peace—there can be no other peace—is not a mere moral aspiration, but an urgent political necessity. The time is so short. The need is so desperate. If we are to live as members of a world community, a unity, if not identity, of spiritual outlook and aspiration is essential and we must do our best to develop it.

In the different religions themselves there are movements for the reunion of the sects within them. This attempt at reunion requires to be extended to the great living faiths of mankind. In the sphere of religion, also, there is room for diversity and no need for discord. If the sects of a particular religion can get together, giving up their claims for the exclusive possession of the truth of that religion, it is not too much to hope that the religions themselves may modify their claims to the exclusive possession of spiritual truth. Belief in such exclusive claims and monopolies of religious truth has been a frequent source of strife and a formidable obstacle to cooperation in the world of spirit. The creeds are guides to the religious goal,

bidding us to pass from words to the vision, which is the work of each individual soul. When they claim for themselves eternal and complete truth, they must in the name of love and reason seek to convert others who, according to them, are in error. Fierce fanaticism, which fought and killed, tortured and imprisoned, burnt and persecuted in every way imaginable for the sake of dogmas and rites which did duty for spirituality has marred the fair name of religion. If we reflect on the matter deeply, we will perceive the unity of spiritual aspiration and endeavor underlying the varied upward paths indicated in the different faiths. The diversity in the historical formulations of the fundamental spiritual truths tends to diminish as we rise in the scale of spiritual perfection. All paths of ascent lead to the hilltop. It is immaterial what approach we take. "As the birds fly in the air, as the fish swim in the sea, leaving no trace behind, even so is the pathway traversed by the seeker of spirit." *Sakuninam ivakase jale varicaran iva yathapadam na drsyeta tatha jnanavidam gatih.* This convergent tendency and the remarkable degree of agreement in the witness of those who reach the hilltop are the strongest proof of the truth of religion. To neglect this unity of spirit, to underline the diversity of religions, is philosophically unsound, morally unjust, and socially dangerous. Religion for the Indian mind is life in God, love of man, and charity for all.

If religion becomes unique and universal, a flame which cleanses mankind and so cleanses the world, then will the cry of St. Joan in Bernard Shaw's epilogue to that play be fulfilled: "O God, that madest this beautiful earth, when will it be ready to receive Thy saints?" Then will come a time when the world will be inhabited by a race of men with no flaw of flesh, no error of mind, freed from the yoke not only of disease and privation but of lying words and of love turned into hate

LIFE AND SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

From the Kaushitaki-Upanishad

Pratardana, forsooth, the son of Divodasa (King of Kasi), came . . . to the beloved abode of Indra. Indra said to him: "Pratardana, let me give you a boon to choose." And Pratardana answered: "Do you yourself choose that boon for me which you deem most beneficial for a man." Indra said to him: "No one who chooses, chooses for another! choose thyself." Then Pratardana replied: "Then that boon to choose is no boon for me."

Then, however, Indra did not swerve from the truth, for Indra is truth. Indra said to him: "Know me only; that is what I deem most beneficial for man, that he should know me." . . .

Indra said: "I am *prana,* meditate on me as the conscious self (*pragnatman*), as life, as immortality. Life is *prana, prana* is life. Immortality is *prana, prana* is immortality. As long as *prana* dwells in this body, so long surely there is life. By *prana* he obtains immortality in the other world, by knowledge, true conception. He who meditates on me as life and immortality, gains his full life in this world, and obtains in the Svarga [heaven] world immortality and indestructibility."

(Pratardana said): "Some maintain here that the *pranas** become one, for (otherwise) no one could at the same time make known a name by speech, see a form with the eye, hear a sound with the ear, think a thought with the mind. After having become one, the *pranas* perceive all these together one by one. While speech speaks, all *pranas* speak after it. While the eye sees, all *pranas* see after it. While the ear hears, all *pranas* hear after it. While the mind thinks, all *pranas* think after it. While the *prana* breathes, all *pranas* breathe after it."

* Pranas, in the plural, is supposed to stand for the five senses as modifications of breath.

"Thus it is indeed," said Indra, "but nevertheless there is a pre-eminence among the *pranas*.

"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, for we see infants. Man lives deprived of his arms, deprived of his legs, for we see it thus. But *prana* alone is the conscious self (*pragnatman*), and having laid hold of this body, it makes it rise up. . . . What is *prana*, that is *pragna* (self-consciousness); what is *pragna*, that is *prana*, for together they (*pragna* and *prana*) live in this body, and together they go out of it. . . .

"Of this, this is the proof, this is the understanding. When a man is thus sick, going to die, falling into weakness and faintness, they say: 'His thought has departed, he hears not, he sees not, he speaks not, he thinks not.' Then he becomes one with that *prana* alone. Then speech goes to him (who is absorbed in *prana*) with all names, the eye with all forms, the ear with all sounds, the mind with all thoughts. And when he departs from this body, he departs together with all these.

Speech gives up to him (who is absorbed in *prana*) all names, so that by speech he obtains all names. The nose gives up to him all odors, so that by scent he obtains all odors. The eye gives up to him all forms, so that by the eye he obtains all forms. The ear gives up to him all sounds, so that by the ear he obtains all sounds. The mind gives up to him all thoughts, so that by the mind he obtains all thoughts. This is the complete absorption in *prana*, and what is *prana is pragna*, what is *pragna* is *prana*. For together do these two live in the body, and together do they depart.

"Now we shall explain how all things become one in that *pragna* (self-consciousness).

"Speech is one portion taken out of *pragna* (self-conscious

knowledge), the word is its object, placed outside. The nose is one portion taken out of it, the odor is its object, placed outside. The eye is one portion taken out of it, the form is its object, placed outside. The ear is one portion taken out of it, the sound is its object, placed outside. The tongue is one portion taken out of it, the taste of food is its object, placed outside. The two hands are one portion taken out of it, their action is their object, placed outside. The body is one portion taken out of it, its pleasure and pain are its object, placed outside. The organ is one portion taken out of it, happiness, joy and offspring are its object, placed outside. The two feet are one portion taken out of it, movements are their object, placed outside. Mind is one portion taken out of it, thoughts and desires are its object, placed outside.

"Having by *pragna* taken possession of speech, he obtains by speech all words. Having by *pragna* taken possession of the nose, he obtains all odors. Having by *pragna* taken possession of the eye, he obtains all forms. Having by *pragna* taken possession of the ear, he obtains all sounds. Having by *pragna* taken possession of the tongue, he obtains all tastes of food. Having by *pragna* taken possession of the two hands, he obtains all actions. Having by *pragna* taken possession of the body, he obtains pleasure and pain. Having by *pragna* taken possession of the organ, he obtains happiness, joy and offspring. Having by *pragna* taken possession of the two feet, he obtains all movements. Having by *pragna* taken possession of mind, he obtains all thoughts.

"For without *pragna* (self-consciousness) speech does not make known (to the self) any word. 'My mind was absent,' he says, 'I did not perceive that word.' Without *pragna* the nose does not make known any odor. 'My mind was absent,' he says, 'I did not perceive that odor.' Without *pragna* the eye does not make known any form. 'My mind was absent,'

he says, 'I did not perceive that form.' Without *pragna* the ear does not make known any sound. 'My mind was absent,' he says, 'I did not perceive that sound.' Without *pragna* the tongue does not make known any taste. 'My mind was absent,' he says, 'I did not perceive that taste.' Without *pragna* the two hands do not make known any act. 'Our mind was absent,' they say, 'We did not perceive any act.' Without *pragna* the body does not make known pleasure or pain. 'My mind was absent,' he says, 'I did not perceive that pleasure or pain.' Without *pragna* the organ does not make known happiness, joy, or offspring. 'My mind was absent,' he says, 'I did not perceive that happiness, joy, or offspring.' Without *pragna* the two feet do not make known any movement. 'Our mind was absent,' they say, 'We did not perceive that movement.' Without *pragna* no thought succeeds, nothing can be known that is to be known.

"Let no man try to find out what speech is, let him know the Speaker. Let no man try to find out what odor is, let him know Him who smells. Let no man try to find out what form is, let him know the Seer. Let no man try to find out what sound is, let him know the Hearer. Let no man try to find out the tastes of food, let him know the Knower of tastes. Let no man try to find out what action is, let him know the Agent. Let no man try to find out what pleasure and pain are, let him know the Knower of pleasure and pain. Let no man try to find out what happiness, joy, and offspring are, let him know the Knower of happiness, joy, and offspring. Let no man try to find out what movement is, let him know the Mover. Let no man try to find out what mind is, let him know the Thinker.

"These ten objects (what is spoken, smelled, seen, etc.) have reference to *pragna* (self-consciousness), the ten subjects (speech, the senses, mind) have reference to objects. If

there were no objects there would be no subjects; and if there were no subjects, there would be no objects. For on either side alone, nothing could be achieved. But That (the Self of *pragna,* consciousness, and *prana,* life) is not many (but one).

"For as in a car the circumference of a wheel is placed on the spokes, and the spokes on the nave, thus are these objects (circumference) placed on the subjects (spokes), and the subjects on the *prana.* And that *prana* (breath, the living and breathing power) indeed is the Self of *pragna* (the self-conscious self), blessed, imperishable, immortal. . . . And He is the guardian of the world, He is the King of the world, He is the Lord of the universe,—and He is my (Indra's) Self, thus let it be known, yea, thus let it be known!"

THE NEW UNFOLDING*

By Annie Besant

What is the great mark of spiritual types of humanity—what the quality that shines out above all others wherever they appear upon earth? It is that quality that today we name Brotherhood, the recognition of that unity of life that makes for all-embracing compassion and boundless self-sacrifice. Those are the types that we see in these Great Ones of our race, they who have unfolded the spiritual nature, who show out the glory of the Spirit. It is very marked that in every one of those mighty Teachers of the past this is the quality which above all others shines out as their distinguishing mark among the men of the generation in which they are born.

The love of the helpless and the weak,
The effort ever to raise those who are downtrodden and oppressed,
The effort to share, to uplift, to make happy—in a word, to save. . . .

*From "The Changing World."

THE SUBTLE EGO

By Sister Daya

(Including extracts from "Dark Night of the Soul" by St. John of the Cross.)

Throughout the whole drama of man's spiritual striving, in fact, throughout the whole drama of his existence, one villain is outstanding. Men have called him by many names, such as Satan, Set, Ahriman, Mara, to mention only a few; but in and out of religious circles and by the public at large, he is generally recognized as *Ego*. His tricks are many and various and his disguises manifold. Sometimes he wears the lowly garb of charity, or the purple of a king; on the political rostrum he rants with eloquence against the people's wrongs, or openly schemes for his own advantage in the Black Market. He will take bread from the mouths of the famished, and equally he will feed the hungry, provided men know of it and feed *his* insatiable hunger for praise. The would-be saint, treading the narrow way of prayer and austerity, may find him sitting on the golden throne and wearing the crown which he himself had, perhaps unconsciously envisioned as his own eternal reward. For truly it has been said that there is no pride greater than that of a saint in his own sainthood. Thus it can be understood why the ancient Indo-Aryan seers proclaimed: "The path of the Spirit is sharp as is the edge of a razor and difficult to travel, so the wise declare."

The average human being is apt to be more aware of ego in his neighbor than in himself, because egotism, in others, constantly jolts our own feeling of selfhood. True teachers have said that when anything goes wrong in the life of the wise man, he looks within himself for the cause.

The tragedy is that while man recognizes and condemns egotism, he gives the "go ahead" signal to ego, for the simple reason that he thinks he *is* ego and nothing else beside. Like the fish in the sea, who is too surrounded by water to be aware

of it, man is too immersed in his small self to see it as it really is, as only the dregs of the real Being, the One Being, of which he is a part. Or, to use another illustration, like Queen Titania, utterly bewitched, he stoops to worship a donkey-headed Bottom to the degradation of his own royal nature. But also, as in the *Midsummer-Night's Dream,* the spell in time must be broken and the illusion seen for what it is.

It is this growing awareness of the real nature of things that marks the beginning of man's inner life. He has fluctuated long between life's great opposite and at last is beginning to realize that self-depreciation and vanity are inseparable twins and that so long as he identifies himself with the insulated ego, there can be and will be no rest for his weary and tortured being, flung like a shuttle-cock, backward and forward, by pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat.

"Lead me from the unreal to the Real!" he now prays, and struggles to awaken from the dream which holds him prisoner —the dream of self that forever separates him from final union with Absolute Being, which he has sought at every turn— albeit unconsciously—through various lesser unions.

The mind, painfully yielding to the higher call, now begins to concern itself with those things which feed and nourish this new-born yearning. Even the mental concept soothes and uplifts, and though the life is still involved with self-interest and moves gropingly, like a sleep-walker, a fresh pattern is beginning to form, in which the little self is no longer the main theme in the design.

The aspirant turns to reading, as if the mental acceptance of great truth was in itself enough to liberate him. If he is perceptive, it will soon be borne in upon him that though the scriptures are many, Truth is One. Especially will the teaching concerning the small self prove identical, for Ego is *per-*

sona non grata in all sacred circles. It is true that the Christian mystics make Satan their scapegoat, but even they cannot refrain from mentioning the true culprit from time to time. As witness, Michael Molinos, the Spanish priest, who writes:

"Thou shalt never be hurt by men or devil, but by thyself, thy own proper pride, and the violence of thy passions. Take heed of thyself, for thou of thyself art the greatest devil of all to thyself."

Does this not reflect very accurately the words of the Bhagavad-Gita, written hundreds of years before:

"Let a man raise himself by his Self. Let him never lower himself; for he alone is the friend of himself, and he alone is the enemy of himself.

"He who has conquered himself by the Self, he is the friend of himself; but he whose self is unconquered, his self acts as his own enemy like an external foe."

Our enemy is always within. Should anyone question this, let him, when he is offended—hurt, sensitive, "righteously" indignant—follow his pain through to its seat, as a surgeon with searching fingers seeks out the cause of some physical ailment. "Does it hurt here?" he asks. "No." "Or here?" "No." And then as the fingers dig deeper, a cry: "There—there it hurts!" and the diagnosis is made. So shall we find that our mental probe will lead ultimately and only to the source of all our misery, justified or the reverse—ego.

"He that loseth his life for My sake shall find it," said the Christ. Mortal man has not the power to lose his life, his self, for the sake of nothingness; he cannot drop it into a vacuum, so to speak; but he can lose it for the sake of the Ideal, for the sake of God, of Truth, of the Beloved. Lord Buddha, who has been accused of teaching a doctrine of annihilation, told his disciples to hold to the Truth as to a lamp. "Self is death," he taught, "and Truth is life. The cleaving to self is a perpetual dying, while moving in the Truth is partaking of Nirvana, which is life everlasting."

Our novice, reading immortal words such as these, is filled with a fine fervor. Browsing among the Sufi mystics he finds the same teaching. Akhlaq-I-Jalali, for instance, encourages him with these lines:

> "Thou that wouldst find the Lost One, lose thyself,
> For naught but self divides thyself from Him.
> Ask ye how I o'erpassed the dreary void?
> One little step beyond myself was all."

"One little step beyond myself . . ." muses our seeker. "How simple! The whole struggle of man's soul for God wrapped up in a tiny sentence!"

Not so simple as it seems, brother, this transcendence of self. You have challenged a subtle, a pervasive foe, not easily overcome and never to be discounted. If you fight him, you but affirm his existence; if you ignore him, he may slip under your guard and seek to go before you into the courts of heaven. Writes Rabindranath Tagore:

> "I came out alone on my way to my tryst. But who is this that follows me in the silent dark?
>
> I move aside to avoid his presence but I escape him not.
>
> He makes the dust rise from the earth with his swagger; he adds his loud voice to every word that I utter.
>
> He is my own little self, my Lord, he knows no shame; but I am ashamed to come to Thy door in his company."

Be wary, therefore, be on guard! But at the same time saturate your mind with saving thoughts—thoughts of the vast and the illimitable. "O man," runs a verse in one of the great Upanishads, "Thy happiness lies in the infinite and the unbounded—never in the finite! never in the finite!" and the same may be said of man's liberation and peace and safety. "Live neither in the present nor in the future, but in the eternal," runs a line in *Light on the Path,* a modern mystic treatise. "This giant weed [of self] cannot flower there: this blot

upon existence is wiped out by the very atmosphere of eternal thought."

All well and good! But this is a rare atmosphere for the ordinary—though aspiring—mortal to sustain. Accustomed as he is to the little self, he may, during his spiritual quest, easily fall a prey to its machinations, in the "No Man's Land" which lies immediately before him. For we are told, "Vices of the ordinary man pass through a subtle transformation and reappear with changed aspect in the heart of the disciple."

Is there then no talisman to guard him, no one thing he can hold within his heart against the day of his testing? Yes, there is one element, so essential that without it there can be no spiritual life. That element is sincerity, honesty, genuineness of spirit—an integrity fundamental and unshakable. Possessing this quality of truth, the disciple becomes invulnerable to attack; lacking it, he is not safe even for a moment. Spiritual masters, knowing this, do not hesitate to tear the veil of vanity and self-deception, hypocrisy and subtle ambition from the souls of their followers. They know that one who dares to face things as they are, even to his own seeming undoing; who can see ego as ego and Truth as Truth, no matter how sharply the vision strikes home, is firmly established on the path of God. Sentimentalism must be cast aside and all pseudo manifestations of the spirit, even the comfortable feeling that one deserves praise for being a good instrument of Deity, even though, of course, God is the real Doer.

The great Spanish contemplative, St. John of the Cross, with sweeping insight, reviews some of these pitfalls, especially for those who have taken up the religious life as a vocation; and because his comments are as apt today as they were in the year 1600, we give them in part for the benefit of those who may be misled by their own secret desires or by the glamour of appearances:

"When beginners become aware of their own fervor and diligence in their spiritual works and devotional exercises," he writes, "this prosperity of theirs gives rise to secret pride . . . and the issue is that they conceive a certain satisfaction in the contemplation of their works and of themselves. From the same source, too, proceeds that empty eagerness which they display to some extent, and occasionally very much, in speaking before others of the spiritual life, and sometimes as teachers rather than learners. They condemn others in their heart when they see they are not devout in their way. . . .

"Some of them go so far as to desire none should be thought good but themselves, and so, at all times, both in word and deed, fall into condemnation and detraction of others. . . . They avoid as they would death, those who destroy their delusion with the view of leading them into a safe way, and sometimes they even hate them. . . . They are occasionally desirous that others should perceive their spirituality and devotion, and for that end they give outward tokens by movements, sighs and divers ceremonies; sometimes, too, they fall into certain trances in public rather than in private . . . and are pleased when others are witnesses of them."

"Surely Christ Jesus referred to similar tendencies when He said: 'Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them: else ye have no reward with your Father which is in heaven. . . And when ye pray ye shall not be as the hypocrites: for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have received their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and Thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense thee.' "

But to continue with St. John of the Cross:

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

"Many a beginner also falls at times into great spiritual avarice. Scarcely anyone is contented with that measure of the spirit which God gives. . . . Besides, they load themselves with images, rosaries and crucifixes, various and costly. . . . Some may be seen with . . . relics and medals, like children with coral.

"I condemn here that attachment and clinging of the heart to the form, number and variety of these things, because in direct opposition to poverty of spirit, which looks only to the substance of devotion. . . .

"Some, too, form spiritual friendships with others, the source of which is luxury and not spirituality . . . when this affection is purely spiritual, the love of God grows with it, and the more we think of it the more we think of God, and the greater our longing for Him. . . .

"Many beginners, because of their inordinate appetite for spiritual sweetness, generally fall into many imperfections in the matter of anger; for when spiritual things minister to them no more sweetness and delight, they naturally become peevish, and in that bitterness of spirit prove a burden to themselves in all they do. Trifles make them angry and they are at times intolerable to all about them. This happens generally after great sweetness in prayer; and so when that sensible sweetness is past, their natural temper is soured and rendered morose. . . . There are other spiritual persons, too, among these, who fall into another kind of spiritual anger. They are angry with other people for their faults with a sort of unquiet zeal, and watch them. They are occasionally moved to blame them, and even do so in anger, constituting themselves guardians of virtue. . . .

"Many beginners, delighting in the sweetness and joy of their spiritual occupations, strive after spiritual sweetness rather than after purity and discretion, which is that which God regards and accepts in the whole course of the spiritual way. For this reason . . . that spirit of gluttony which has taken possession of them, forces them to overstep the limits of moderation, within which virtue is acquired and consists. For allured by the delights they then experience, some of them kill themselves by penances and others weaken themselves by fasting. They take upon themselves more than they can bear, without rule or advice. . . .

"Inasmuch, then, as all extremes are vicious, and as in this course of conduct men follow their own will, the consequences are that they grow in vice and not in virtue . . . for they do not walk in the way of

obedience. . . . The evil has so grown upon them, that they lose all desire to do their spiritual duties the instant obedience enjoins them; because all their satisfaction consists in doing that which pleases them, and perhaps it would be better for them to leave it undone. . . . These persons, when they communicate, strive with all their might for sensible sweetness, instead of worshipping in humility and praising God within themselves. So much are they given to this that they think when they derive no sensible sweetness, they have done nothing, so meanly do they think of God. . . .

"They conduct themselves in the same way when they are praying; for they imagine that the whole business of prayer consists in sensible devotion, and this they strive to obtain with all their might, wearing out their brains and perplexing all the faculties of their souls. When they miss that sensible devotion, they are cast down, thinking they have done nothing. This effort after sweetness destroys true devotion and spirituality which consist in perseverance in prayer with patience and humility, mistrusting self, solely to please God. . . .

"Beginners are not free from many imperfections in the matter of the two other vices, envy and spiritual sloth. Many of them are often vexed because of other men's goodness. They are sensibly afflicted when others outstrip them on the spiritual road, and will not endure to hear them praised. . . .

"As to spiritual sloth, beginners are wont to find their most spiritual occupations irksome, and avoid them as repugnant to their taste, for being so given to sweetness in spiritual things, they loathe them when they find none. . . . Thus, under the influence of sloth, they neglect the way of perfection—which is the denial of their will and pleasure for God—for the gratification of their own will, which they serve rather than the will of God. Many of these would have it that God should will that which they will, and are afflicted when they must will that which He wills, reluctantly submitting their own to the divine will. . . . They measure Him by themselves, and not themselves by Him, in direct contradiction to His teaching in the Gospel."

Here very clearly St. John of the Cross shows the subtle ego in action, and why this self must be transcended in order to make place for the God-power. For "where self is Truth cannot be."

Right here the rationalist may arise to challenge the very

theme of this article. "What talk is this?" he may well ask. "How could any individual creature exist for a moment without a self?" The answer is, "None could." So long as man moves as a separate entity he must be conscious of his own personal being; but with some this consciousness is dense and contracted, revolving around a very small point; with others, it is tenuous, all-inclusive, confined in no narrow orbit, but circling out beyond—and beyond; in truth, an ethereal connection binding the innate Divine most lightly to name and form.

Sri Ramakrishna, who in a thousand different ways, through direct teaching, story and parable, showed up egotism as the one great barrier to God-vision, also stated:

"It is impossible to get rid of ego. Therefore it should be made to feel that it is the devotee of God—His servant."

Said one:

"Am I to understand that you advise us to forsake the 'rebel I', but say that there is no harm in keeping the 'servant I'?"

"Oh, yes! the 'servant I'! In this conviction, that I am His servant, or I am His worshipper, there is no harm. It brings us to God."

He drew a very interesting distinction, thereby revealing to man the way out of his dilemma:

"The consciousness of self is of two kinds: one ripe, the other unripe. 'Nothing is mine, whatever I see, feel or hear—nay, even this body itself, is not mine. I am always eternal, free and all-knowing!' Such consciousness as this originates in the ripe ego, while the unripe ego makes man feel himself forever related to the transitory things of the world. By acquiring the conviction that all is done by the will of God, one becomes only a tool in His hand. Then one is free, even in this life."

Think not I am existent of myself,
Or walk this blood-stained pathway of myself;
This being is not I, it is of Him.
Pray what, and where, and whence is this "myself"?

—*Omar Khayyam* (*literal translation*)

A TRIBUTE TO INDIA

By Ruth St. Denis

O beloved India!
Thy ageless Spirit resting on Himalayan heights,
Ever draws to thy radiant feet
The kingdoms of the world;
For the nations have fed on thy timeless wisdom
And the ages are in thy debt!
Now, in thy hour of need,
We of the West
Who have gazed upon thy radiant face
And been illumined by thy light,
Take the dust of thy feet
In unswerving love.
Though with our eyes we see, today, thy tattered garments,
And with our ears we hear the voices of thy bewildered mind;
With our souls we still trust thy mighty Spirit!
Thou knowest that neither planes nor guns alone,
Nor man's passionate will to break his bonds
Can ever avail.
His freedom lies in knowledge of the Self,
Existing now above the Dream.
Mother India!
Thy children of the West give thee hail!
With courage to endure the night;
For in the midst of darkness
We remember thy Vedic Light.

This India is the land of Religion Eternal. The country has fallen, no doubt, but will as surely rise again, and that upheaval will astound the world.

—*Swami Vivekananda*

THIS IS OUR TOMORROW

By Fanchon Brown Mowers

We have journeyed together to this place where time could end for us and we stand on the abyss, shielding our eyes from the dazzling brilliance of the new age which confronts us. Our eyes read only recently an excited report that echoed around the scientific world: a star had exploded with unimaginable force and this sight was visible to the naked eye.

Men interested in astronomical miracles collected in groups or singly climbed hilltops to gaze at the eastern sky in order that they might obtain data before the explosions diminished. This data will be compared with that of other learned men all over the world and some day the laymen will learn the results of these findings.

The majority of men did not even raise their eyes from the commonplace events of everyday life to look at the sky. Who but a few excited astronomers could be interested in a star that exploded one thousand years ago and was 6000 trillion miles removed from the earth? One thousand years ago and the light was only now reaching us. Were there some who felt faint stirrings of hope that perhaps man might gain insight into himself and find his own illumination?

Christianity had come into being over two thousand years before and the ways of history were paved with the bodies of the fallen, and the atmosphere in the outer void might still resound to the gentle, wise voices of those who gave their lives to benefit mankind.

The world today is still plunged into a morass of darkness, only feebly lighted by the wishful thinking of the present nominal heads of world governments, who are still thinking that force of arms will accomplish their aims. Yet the restlessness of the people, all thinking people, in this unhappy

time, reaches out more and more for guidance. There is in many a turning to philosophical things, not as a panacea for aching hearts seeking to alleviate their suffering in self-administered religious capsules, but because of a desire for genuine learning on how to discover the utmost within the self and translate it to daily living. For those who are truly attuned to the delicate nuances of the spirit know that the potentiality of all things lies within the self, all ultimate wisdom and creative powers.

The artist paints perhaps what he sees about him, yet if he is truly great, the impetus to paint comes from within and he becomes the interpreter of that impetus from inner self to canvas. We see it in those of the painters who are truly mystics, and in that beautiful abstract quality that bears a peculiar depth, as though the observer might walk into the scene and find himself in a magnificent blinding light like the light of self-illumination.

In this, our world of today, we live, particularly in America, in a society where materiality has reached a peak. Unless a thing is functional for the ease and comfort and luxury of man we have no use for it. We are smothering in the feather pillows of comfort where we have placed ourselves. The emphasis is upon the material and it is becoming increasingly difficult to locate the spiritual. Not even a ghastly catastrophe, such as this war has been, has had much effect upon us. Already the talk is of armed peace which is only an abstraction, the antithesis of true peace. We can only arm ourselves within.

We must pull ourselves out from under the burden of possessions, either physical or mental, which make it so easy for us to clutter up our lives with useless things. It is like entangling ourselves in the hair of Medusa and finding the life being choked out of us. It is so hard for the individual, inured to

this type of life that is advocated in America, to understand why one would want anything else; the very thought is frightening to him. How many times haven't all of us had friends say, "How can you stand to be alone? I wouldn't know what to do with myself if I had to be alone—I'd go crazy." That is a possibility for such people, but the mechanical age has blessed them with radios which can keep them company all day long and keep thought far away, and the ennui which would ensue. The constant search for new ways to escape boredom is the keynote of the vast majority, and in so doing the power of discrimination is sacrificed. How saddening it is for those of us who love this country and who are striving for our own illumination to see this country so sick. We are only consoled by those great souls who have existed among us, and we reach out to them.

When we keep a day of silence, such as many of us do when we go to the Ananda Ashrama on those days set aside for this, usually the days when the world below our hilltop is expending the most noise, how great and magnifying an experience it becomes. It takes some time for our own noisiness to leave our systems; when it does, how the inner world begins to open up for us. Our senses are keyed so we hear sounds of Nature we have never noticed before. We hear the hum of life in everything. We feel the sheer vital power that is latent in all of us, as it transmits itself from the great earth to our being. Everything is vibrant, quivering. The creatures of the earth, that are ordinarily too small to catch our hurried glances, become our brothers. Time is caught and held, and all merges into that One that is timeless—formless—divine. We feel the love for all mankind and know that innate goodness that lies in all men, too often covered or lost to sight by what they have chosen from life. How simple everything becomes, and how complex we now understand we have made it for ourselves.

We know the power of *ahimsa* (hurt nothing), we know we must face our worldly responsibilities and not flee from them, for I am reminded that the great Ramakrishna said: "A man who flees from worldly responsibilities is too weak to be exposed to the heavier responsibilities of God's service." The power of silence, if only for a short time, can make us realize how superfluous much speech is, when there is so much to hear within.

We cannot communicate through the medium of language to others what we experience within, though the natural thing is to want to run and do so. Experience in self-realization defies the tongue of man. It is too deep to be put into the shallower word form; however we can and do communicate to others by our own being. We all know how many of us have been impressed by the calm serenity of those we may have known who embody the essence of the Divine.

Ramakrishna, like all true Indian thinkers, believed in nothing he had not first realized,—"When once he has known the truth they do not remain only ideas, they quicken into life and fertilized by his credo they flourish and come to fruition in an orchard of realization, no longer abstract and isolated but clearly defined and having a practical bearing on everyday life for the satisfaction of the hunger of men. Faith should not mean a blind acceptance, as it has degenerated into among the downtrodden races, but rather a living and seeing intuition."

We have all come upon days when Kali, the dark Mother, seems to take possession of our very beings, when Saturn seems to surround us and with those mysterious rings crush us relentlessly. The question arises: what can we do? What can we say? For words enmesh us only more. We fall back into abject hopelessness and wonder if there is any way out. All the philosophy we have studied and learned, all the pearls

of wisdom we have thought we absorbed, avail us nothing. The goal towards controlling our selfish, our meager desires seems further removed than ever. Each word we speak unkindly of ourselves or others serves only as a trap, and we fall down, down into it. All of our confused groping to find our way back is mere mockery. We hold a two-edged blade in our hands and cut ourselves to ribbons with it. Then is the time to recall what we have known in our more lucid moments: that we are not really beasts with mean ambitions, but we have the angel within us and merely falsify it with outer confusions.

It is easy to fall into despair when we look about and see the dreadful things that do exist, but despair is the morphine of the heart, the sedative that puts into a torpid state the mind and all the reasoning powers.

We watch with envious eyes the innocent play of children and recall to mind the statement of those who have told us that only children and childlike spirits have that detachment of spirit. How often that great detachment wounds us when the child rushes off to new interests and in a moment has forgotten us, though our need and longing for him may still be there. Detachment of the spirit is now understood by some of us to be the most enlightened state and possibly the most difficult for Westerners to obtain; however when we truly understand and have attained it, then we can no longer be hurt. We may wring our hands and plead to know how to attain it, how to remove ourselves from living on the petty plane of ego—how to thrust from us like plagued garments the *maya* of hatred, envy, distrust, jealousy and all the detrimental factors that consume us like the fires of Dante's hell. We cry out, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" We have forsaken ourselves. We must find purity of thought, in a world that pours into us impurities, and burn the impurities to ashes

with the fires of realization. We must seek again the child-like nature, we who have drifted from its serene state. We must be reborn in our love for our fellow-men, we must believe in the brotherhood of all men.

It is strange that we who talk so much about the fact that all men are created equal, are here in this country so intolerant of those very ideals. It takes men from other countries, and more particularly from the East, to teach us the meaning of universality. To those of us who were fortunate enough to come in contact with a truly great man, Swami Paramananda, we saw the embodiment of all that angel purity that man possesses. We saw quiet strength, that comes from inner peace, never flamboyant, permeate all those receptive enough to receive it. Even though he is no longer with us physically, the truths he taught and, more important, lived are felt in the places he founded for us.

We have been encouraged that those great ideals that Christ advocated—and all the other mystics who lived as long ago as that exploding star—still live brought face to face with our modern world. We know that the light is still coming to us through men like these. We know that these things are not merely words spoken ages ago by men no longer here. We saw living proof and we know that they are not dead, they are perhaps more alive than ever—we have only to stretch out our hands to receive them. Can any of us fail to accept the challenge?

To know this is to find the most thrilling experience in the universe and take us one step more along the way toward the final surrender, the final liberation of the ego. Then there ceases to be any ego and we are finally free; not just men chained by the word "freedom," but men liberated by the act of freedom and surrender, complete—infinite—divine. This is our tomorrow, but it is also our today.

A TRIBUTE

Author Unknown

(Reprinted in memory of Swami Paramananda, who passed out of this life, June 21st, 1940.)

He made an art of living day by day:
He wove a tapestry of graciousness.
Using what threads he found—the bright, the gray—
He patterned them to lasting loveliness.
Loving the flight of gulls across the sky—
So like the shining freedom of his mind—
He still had time to heed the faintest cry
Of some unfortunate. Oh, he was kind!
Children and poets and a crippled bird
Impartially he comforted and healed.
Beneath the proudest spirit's haughty word,
He understood the loneliness concealed.
His heart was wide to love but closed to hate.
He never even guessed that he was great.
Now he belongs to the ages!

We are born and we die, and whether we are prince or peasant, the thing that we are—and all that we can take with us—is our character and our deeds. That may sound like Indian philosophy, but I have nothing whatever to say against Indian philosophy. Men like Vivekananda have straightened out Western philosophers on a good many difficult points.

—*Edward Holton James*

But, lo, compassionate, out of glory leaning,
You have called forth the music and the meaning
From doubt, retreat, confusion and despair.

—*Gerald Gould*

BEFORE I'M EIGHTY*

* From "The Reader's Digest", December 1940.

By Walter B. Pitkin

I've passed sixty, and there's much I long to experience while I'm still spry and foolish. So I'm planning my next twenty years to be brimful of things I've always wanted to see and hear and taste and smell and know. Here are the high spots on my agenda up to eighty:

I want to sit in an igloo of unbreakable glass on some West Indies peak, and watch the world go mad with the gray, wet fury of a hurricane; and stand on the wild cliffs of Aran, off Ireland's western coast, while a winter gale out of Greenland hammers the shuddering rock with waves that leap, as they crash and die, three hundred feet into the air; and then, fathoms below wind and storm, spend a week in a comfortable sea-bottom house, viewing the strange creatures of the deep.

I want to see a hundred sunsets more in the lonely heart of the Everglades, where all in the same magic hour the sun slinks away in many-colored fires, and thunderclouds spatter lightning across half of heaven, and timid stars wink down from the untroubled blue.

My ears can ask for little more than they have already heard. All the world's great music has been mine; I've listened to the chants of Bantu and Samoans; I've heard an Alpine avalanche grumble its snowy way down two thousand feet of mountain-side. My spine has chilled at the unearthly rustle of the aurora borealis as it drags its sky-wide silken skirts across the jagged stars. I've heard a forest fire drown out human speech—and wish no encore. But before I'm eighty I want to hear: a first class volcano in eruption; the drum concert of five hundred baboons.

Let me whiff, many times between the end and now, the

lilacs of a New England spring, a still night of blossoms in a Florida orange grove. Let me breathe over and over again, the lifting cleanliness of salt ocean air. For my palate, give me a few thousand more desert melons, picked as they fall from the stems and eaten before sunrise so that they are filled with the coolness of the night.

And for the thirst and hunger of my mind, give me to know the moon as a wise astronomer will see her through tomorrow's 200-inch telescope. Give me time to learn the secret of ant and bee; with the help of special amplifiers let me be a cosmic eavesdropper on their conversations.

But all these things would I gladly give up if only I might gain, before I'm eighty, a new insight into human nature and witness a thousand experiments with the chemicals that control character, and help find the substances that can clear befuddled minds and bring caution to the reckless, life's sparkle to the listless, zeal to the shirker, honesty to crooked souls. For me, life can hold no higher adventure than to see man learn to control his own nature as he now controls the atoms.

Domination of human nature can only mean the domination of every man by himself. Has he achieved this? Or, perfection being beyond his reach, does his domination of himself bear any proportion to his vastly increased control over physical nature? There is hardly reason to think so. Only too often it seems as if man, abusing the freedom obtained through his control over physical nature, refuses to dominate himself and is ready to abdicate all the values which the spirit has gained him. The rights and claims of human nature are everywhere called upon to question the authority of absolute ethical laws. The condition, control over nature, is only halfway fulfilled.

—*Jan Huizinga*

FROM A DISCIPLE'S NOTE-BOOK

(Continued from the Spring Issue)

The opening years of the disciple's novitiate (those covered by the Note-book) were basic in a way that she did not then understand. In the first place, the Swami was present with his household for longer periods at a stretch than in later years when the needs of the newly-founded Ananda Ashrama in California necessitated constant travel between the east and the west. Also the community, in those early days, was far smaller, permitting more frequent contact with the teacher and more personal training by him than was possible later on. Thus for all concerned it was a most precious period, but also a difficult one; for naturally it was a time of adjustment to a new viewpoint and a new way of living.

Inevitably this involved discipline. There was the discipline of living with other personalities hitherto unknown to one—temperament striking against temperament; there was training by this sister or that, older and more experienced—not always easy to assimilate; there was the legitimate discipline which one gave to oneself, and the illegitimate discipline inflicted on one by one's ego; and, finally, most devastating of all, the discipline caused by a fleeting look of displeasure or disappointment on the Swami's face, or a word of correction from him, with the feeling which it roused in the heart that somehow one had failed him. It is a characteristic of the holy, however, that always with the reprimand goes the healing, and this was true of the Swami right to the end. The secret, perhaps, is revealed by a line of poetry from Rabindranath Tagore's *Crescent Moon:* "Only those who love may chastise." Always the Swami sought to pour balm on any wound, self-caused or otherwise. But also when correction was needful, he did not falter in the stroke.

The disciple remembers one lesson she received. At the time it cut deeply and she even felt that it was not altogether deserved; but it has proved invaluable to her throughout the years, especially because of its relation to gossip, tale-bearing and all undue concern with petty, personal matters, which prove so often to be the bane of a community.

She was in the Swami's study one day, along with the Swami and the senior Sister, Devamata. They were talking together, the Sister and the Swami, but not seemingly in confidence. In the course of their speech mention was made of a certain teacher from India who had evidently lectured at one time in the United States. The disciple, who was standing by the door awaiting instructions, listened with interest. The name of the teacher was new to her, so she asked quite innocently: "Who was he, Swami?" The Swami gave her a quick glance and replied shortly: "Never be curious!" It seems a little thing in the telling, but it struck the disciple at her most sensitive point, the point of her own breeding and background. She fled to her room in tears. She wept till her eyes were swollen. The Swami sent for her. He spoke gently, told her to wash her face and pull herself together. At that moment luncheon was announced. "I can't go down to the table!" the disciple announced. (All she wanted was a nice dark hole to hide in). "Oh, yes, you must come," said the Swami, and so down she went, humiliated to have the others see that she had been crying. But each one in the household had gone through similar difficult hours and had had to learn, as did the disciple, that brooding never healed any hurt yet, and that a coddled ego (like a coddled egg) will always find itself in hot water.

During that early period it seemed to the disciple that she was either floating on the winds of exuberance or weeping her heart out in self-pity and commiseration before her own

little altar. Again and again the Swami would strive to win her back to a state of balance, and ever she would plunge once more into new depths, betrayed by her own mind, and in despair of ever finding true equilibrium. Her unhappy condition reminded her of a story the Swami used to tell to illustrate the dangers of inordinate desires.

It seems that there was once a Yogi who had the reputation of possessing great Yoga powers. One day a poor man came to him and, bowing down to his feet, said: "O venerable Sir, I am a very poor man and you are a very great Yogi. It is said that by just the repetition of certain words, you can control the unseen world so that mighty spirits will do your bidding. O Sire, teach me such a mantram. Give me a spirit to command!"

At first the Yogi refused. He said: "Foolish man, you don't know what you are asking. These spirits can be very terrible. If you do not keep them constantly occupied they will turn and destroy you." But the man would not be denied. He begged and he pleaded till finally the Yogi said: "Very well, I shall grant you your wish. Remember, however, that I have warned you." He then proceeded to instruct the man in the pronunciation and use of the magic formula.

Jubilant, the man went upon his way. Fnding a secluded spot, he intoned the mantram and at once a tremendous spirit appeared before him and in a mighty voice cried out: "Give me something to do!"

"Build me a palace!" said the man. It was done on the instant. "Create a beautiful garden around it!" That too was accomplished in the wink of an eye. "Give me fair maidens to wait upon me!" They were there before the man had finished speaking. Then he asked for food. A delicious repast was set before him. He did not have time to eat it, however, because the giant spirit was once more after him,

crying: "Give me something to do!" The man in desperation demanded this thing and that till finally he was exhausted and could positively think of nothing more to ask for. Infuriated, the spirit started to chase him, shouting: "Give me something to do at once or I'll eat you up!" The terrified man sought shelter at the feet of the Yogi. "Merciful Sir," he implored, "protect me from this fiendish spirit or I am lost!" "I warned you of this," said the Yogi. "I shall nevertheless take pity on you, for after all you are only a poor, ignorant creature and know no better." Pointing to a dog lying in the sun, he said: "Do you see that dog over there with a curly tail? Give the spirit the task of straightening that tail and you will find that he will not bother you again."

The man did not waste any time in following the Yogi's suggestion and the spirit mollified, went to work on the tail; but as fast as he straightened it out, it curled up again. Finally, completely conquered, the now dejected spirit struck a bargain with the man. He agreed to leave him alone if the man in his turn would free him from the endless job of making that tail straight.

The disciple, swinging like a pendulum between joy and despair decided that she was more difficult to straighten out than the dog's tail and the Swami's job more difficult than that of the spirit.

The truth is that spiritual life acts at first like a ferment, and the disciple's whole nature was stirred by the little leaven that was destined, perhaps in some far future life, to leaven the whole lump. Emotional stability and an increasing spiritual sensitivity—these two had to go hand in hand. It was a task not to be accomplished lightly or easily. Yet it was just this lightness and ease which characterized the Swami in all his relationships, human and divine—a grace, a rhythm, a harmony, as native to him as is flight to the wings of a bird.

Not lightness in the superficial sense, but rather in the sense of Spirit which, though Itself bodiless, has power to bear the weight of the entire universe. So the Swami bore the weight of the moods and struggles too often imposed on him by those whom he sought to lift. "Just be patient with me," the disciple would say, "I'll learn in time to be as you want me to be." There was no need to make this plea: his patience was never-ending, and he knew it must win in the end.

But it was a look on his face—a look of deep hurt—a stricken, wounded look—(following a particularly unhappy session) which finally roused the disciple from her self-absorption and proved a turning-point in her new life. For her, it was all the more poignant because the Swami so seldom revealed the pain that these gloomy conditions must have caused him. Instead he would carry on with a brightness which it seemed must dissolve all clouds, however heavy. His household had come to take this attitude for granted. Therefore the disciple felt as though she had struck down a blissful child, and she vowed then and there that, God willing, it should not happen again. This blissfulness, as has been said, was innate with the Swami, but the obligation to manifest it had been stimulated not a little by the great Swami Ramakrishnananda, into whose hands he had been entrusted for training by Swami Vivekananda. He used to tell us of an incident that had occurred when he was living with Swami Ramakrishnananda at Madras, and we could see what an indelible impression it had made upon his fresh and receptive mind. Something had troubled him and the older Swami, noticing his clouded expression, asked him the reason for it. The explanation was given but it did not satisfy. "Don't ever let me see a frown on your face again," he said: "it hides the smile of Divine Mother."

It was this "smile of the Divine Mother"—sign and symbol

of the Spirit within—which gave to the Swami's associates—in a way that no book or even scripture could do—a real sense of the bliss and beauty which must have emanated from the great Guru, Sri Ramakrishna, and from his mighty disciple, Swami Vivekananda. If one who was perhaps their youngest spiritual child could radiate such light and loveliness, then what great glory must have been theirs! The disciple felt their shining presence in and through her master, and the Infinite Mother's presence in and through them all. Thus for her and her companions holiness wore a living countenance and carried a tangible benediction.

Swami Ramakrishnananda used also to tell the Swami: "You must learn to make your heart more hard; now it is so tender that I fear when you come in contact with the world it may be crushed." The Swami never made it hard—he could not; the Supreme Power he served became his shield and armor.

We often speak of this one or that one as being childlike, but for those who formed the Swami's community, he was not just childlike, he was the child. Yet in no ordinary sense, for he was also the sage, a fountain of pure wisdom. These two aspects blended in him, often in a most surprising manner. Realizing that for these Western students of his, (one or two of whom was very young), the transition from the extravert life of the Occident, with its constant glamor and excitement, to the internal life of spiritual surrender was most difficult, the Swami sought to make of himself a bridge, leading by gradual stages to the land of peace and poise. From the world's point of view, life at the Centre no doubt seemed boring and restricted, but within all was movement and life. The Swami was like a dynamo. Where he was there could be no dullness. In later years, when he was constantly on the move, his arrival at, for instance, the Ananda Ashrama would

be the signal for renewed and intensive activity from the Temple to the barnyard. There, in the Temple, over the shrine, is an inscription which reads: "WHERE I AM THERE IS PEACE." "Where I am there is *no* peace!" the Swami laughingly misquoted one day, in reference to this galvanizing power of his.

Certainly he never brought stagnation. His household was always prepared—or at least should have been—for the unexpected. Thus when one afternoon at the Queensberry Street Centre, everyone was summoned to the library, instead of meeting in some ordinary conclave, they found their erstwhile holy teacher arrayed in a most ridiculous costume: coat turned hindside before, a pillow for a stomach, huge goggles, coat sleeves for trousers, all arranged with the help of one of the senior Sisters. Of course, there were gales of laughter, but in the midst of this mirth, something was said which drew from the Swami that wisdom-flow of which mention has been made. Literally in a moment his ludicrous disguise was completely forgotten. Over those present an instant quiet fell as they were caught up in the exalted atmosphere which his first words seemed to generate, and which surrounded him like light. Standing there listening to his simple, beautiful utterance, they were conscious only that they were standing in the presence of a master spirit whose dignity and command were greater than any circumstance and could never be overthrown.

Following this experience were other days of play-acting. One morning the Swami appeared as a French chef, with a large white apron tied around him, a chef's tall cap on his head and a palm-leaf fan in his hand, which he waved constantly, repeating: "It is very warm in the kitchen! It is very warm in the kitchen!" Again he was Hamlet, in long cloak and turn-down collar, wandering about with a melancholy

and philosophic mien; or he was Petrucchio, crowned with a big, plumed hat and carrying a whip which he snapped with autocratic fury as he swept through the house. And all this with a child's delight and spontaneity, a thousand miles removed from mere adult clowning. In retrospect it is difficult to say what aspect of his life conveyed the truest lessons, the grave or the gay. He seemed always so whole, so merged with the innermost spirit, in everything he said and did.

It would, however, be a mistake to think that the members of the household ordinarily saw much of the Swami during the day. Of course there were interviews, and always a response to genuine individual need; but, for the most part, the Swami, during the daylight hours, was either busy in his study, working on the monthly magazine, *Message of the East,* dictating letters, translating from the Sanskrit, or else he was abroad in his car, attending to the affairs of the Centre. It was in the evening that he met with his community, or at meals. After dinner there was the reading, to which reference has been made. Sometimes there were simple games for relaxation, and there were the group meditations which forever abide in remembrance, like the memory of great music.

These meditations were almost always brought to a close with holy songs—songs of India, in the Bengali—sung by the Swami, while interwoven with these were the ancient Sanskrit chants, deep, sonorous, and so vibrant that a listener could feel them through her entire body. The final song was apt to be the *Song of Samadhi,* written by great Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda). With its rising and falling cadences, its close intervals, plus its transcendent meaning, it exhaled a sacred beauty, intensified by the Swami's voice, which seemed to have power to transport one to the borderland of the Illimitable. The Swami's voice was rich and round—a golden voice with a full sustained quality, that gave a mean-

ing, beyond the words, to the poems he read, the songs he sang, the thoughts he uttered. One of his students used to speak of it as a "voice with a bloom" (like the bloom of a peach), probably just a way of saying that it was rich in over-tones and under-tones. It could be heard at great distances, because of its timbre or quality. It was peculiarly the medium of his inner being and must ever form an inherent part of all memories concerning him.

Questions and answers were generally in order at meal-times. Thus in the Note-book, under the date of October 24th, 1919, we find the following entry:

"*At luncheon:* I asked Swami what was the Karmic cause of physical beauty, also of magnetism. He said: 'There are different kinds of beauty. Beauty may be gained by intense desire for it life after life, and then there is the beauty that is the result of desirelessness. This is the best type of beauty, the result of right thought and action in the past!'

"The subject of renunciation came under discussion. Some one remarked that it had never been difficult for her to renounce *things*. The Swami replied: 'Renunciation comes easily to some people, physical renunciation. But can they renounce envy, anger and such detrimental feelings? This is the real renunciation. How do these destructive elements come? One is feeling happy, then suddenly some wrong thought enters the mind and at once all one's peace is destroyed. There must be something akin to it in us to permit its entrance. In the *Case of Becky**, Becky had been hypnotized by an evil man, and as in obsession, she had permitted entrance for that evil into her consciousness. When we indulge in morbid feelings, like sadness and depression, we make the spiritual life very difficult, for these states of mind represent the powers of darkness. How quickly a glass of milk is made impure by a little dirt, just so are our minds soiled by wrong thoughts.

* A play on split personality which the Swami had witnessed.

" 'Cheerfulness is of great value, not only to ourselves but to others. There is an inner strength which protects us from darkness, even when we are unconscious of it. Nothing dark dares approach one who has this strength.' "

The Swami shared bountifully with his students, drawing them into a fellowship, exalted yet also very happy and human. Eager to encourage them in the art of physical control, he used to go through a series of Yoga postures for their benefit, and also to keep his own limbs supple. This he did generally just before retiring. Naturally it was done seriously, but in time it assumed the nature of a little game. Some one would bring the rug and place it on the library floor. The Swami then would go to his room and return a few minutes later most professionally garbed in long black tights and athletic trunks, which had been given him for the purpose since the Western male outfit was entirely unsuitable for Yoga purposes.

Everything being in readiness, there followed the different postures. The Lotus posture, in which the Lord Buddha is often depicted, with each foot, sole uppermost, on the opposite knee, was, perhaps, the favorite, and was the starting-point for variations which included rising on the points of the knees with the legs still locked, as described, and balancing there while the intent onlookers counted, "one, two, three" and so on, sometimes up to twenty or thirty, till the Swami, his arms waving, lost his balance and fell forward. He was remarkably pliant, very slender in build, with broad shoulders and a wonderful rounded chest, which gave him a superb carriage. He retained till the final day the grace and ease of movement which were so in evidence during these earlier years.

A page or two of the Note-book refers to these exercises:

"*October 25th, evening:* Tonight after Swami had finished

his exercises he said to us: 'These physical exercises are excellent things. At first your joints may feel stiff and like sticks, but that can be overcome. The body is under your control and must do as you will. If anything is the matter with me I do not blame the body, for I know I have it in my power to make it do what I want. That is a helpful attitude to take. When I started these exercises I felt stiff, but now my limbs are like India rubber.'

"Salome (a young Spanish member) smiled.

"Swami: 'Why do you smile?'

"Salome: 'It is very hard to do as you say: it takes great will, but you talk as if it were easy.'

"Swami: 'I only say what I have experienced, spontaneously. Athletes are seldom given to anything low, like—well, say sexual vices. Their life seems to bring about in them a normal, healthy state of mind. So much physical exertion is an outlet for that physical force. It does away with abnormal states of mind. It is one of the best ways of getting rid of bad conditions. Athletics are encouraged in the Ramakrishna monasteries. They are really part of religious observances. Many of the things I do are regular postures.

" 'I was so relieved when I read in Sri Ramakrishna's teachings, and heard Swamiji say, that cheerfulness was very desirable. It had been a doctrine with me and I feared it might be a lack in me somewhere. There were times in the monastery when I might have been morbid. I was much alone. Of course I read, and I meditated a great deal. But it is not natural for me to be morbid. I am naturally buoyant. I have come to see that cheerfulness is a great gift, that it is a tremendous help in the different dark periods in life which one must meet alone. In the monastery there were men of religious life who had this morbidness. They apparently reached some heights, but none the less, it is a great barrier. Those

who have attained the supreme realizations have not had it. It has been really hard for me to understand people when they are in these states of gloom. Of course when I see that they are, I have pity for them; but I am firmly convinced that these conditions can be overcome.' "

The Swami used to tell his household students that they knew nothing of real discipline. "You should see," he would say, "what some of the teachers in India put their disciples through—the most difficult tests to try the temper of their souls." An ideal disciple, so he told us, should never rise in self-defense, even though wrongly accused. He must not justify himself once he has really taken shelter in the Lord. There was a story he used to tell in illustration of this:

A certain devotee was in the habit of saying, "Thy will be done! Thy will be done!" One day he was attacked by an evil man, but still for a time he offered no resistance, but kept on repeating, "Thy will be done!" The Lord was moved by his spirit of surrender and sent a powerful deva or angel to help him. Very quickly the deva returned. "How is this?" said the Lord; "You are back already?" "When I arrived there," explained the angel, "the man had grown tired of waiting and had taken matters into his own hands. Therefore since he seemed to have no need of me, I did not stay, but left him to carry on his fight alone."

"Sometimes," the Swami said, "we don't wait long enough for the divine help to come to us."

On October 30th, 1919, the disciple wrote in her Notebook:

"Early this evening, apropos of an accident in the ktichen, the breaking of a glass, Swami said that it was not easy for him to comprehend carelessness. He felt that there was a great deal of carelessness in the house. 'It would be hard,' he said, 'for most members to live under such a disciplinarian as was Swami Ramakrishnananda.'

"Later, on the same night, he showed us how he tied his Sannyasi cloth (the orange cloth worn by the men of renunciation in India). At his final good-night he said:

" 'Be cheerful, be courageous, be happy, be staunch. This morning I felt that every one in the house was glad. That is what is wanted. This house should be filled with those qualities. Never let any one else be your excuse for failing in them. If someone else is down, then it is your chance to help her up by your attitude. Community life is a great discipline. Even if no words are said, one can learn. We should be as fresh and fragrant as flowers, full of helpfulness and love. That is the spirit we must try to hold. If we succeed we shall be a help not only to ourselves but to everyone around us.' "

(To be continued)

Sacred and wonderful, pregnant with power, are these first hours of the day when the soul, refreshed by bodily sleep, and by its increase of vital energy from the Unseen, starts once again upon its daily journey. Go forward serenely, conscious of divine power sustaining you at all times. Then the light will shine through every cloud that crosses your pathway. No outward agitation need alarm the soul that is centered in serenity. The soul creates its own atmosphere, therefore its sky need never be gray.

—*Source unknown*

We ought to acquaint ourselves with the beautiful; we ought to contemplate it with rapture, and attempt to raise ourselves up to its height. And in order to gain strength for that, we must keep ourselves thoroughly unselfish—we must not make it our own, but rather seek to communicate it; indeed, to make a sacrifice of it to those who are dear and precious to us.

—*Goethe.*

THE MEANING OF PRAYER*

By Rabbi Stephen S. Wise

The underlying assumption of prayer is not that things may be had for the asking, but that there are levels of life which cannot be reached save through superhuman communion. Prayer reaches a high stage when it is recognized that prayer must never be directed against another, or against another people, nor even for things for self or others, but solely for the inmost life of self, or the inmost life of another.

Who will presume to speak of futility in the realm of the spirit, who will say that aspiration is unavailing because it seems to be what the world calls futile? How can prayer be futile if through prayer one pour one's self—as is possible in no other way—into the life of another, if one reach out into the life of all? Prayer might almost be defined as the mingling of the stress of the life of the individual with the seas of infinite life,—but the stream of the soul is not lost or spent, but regained and enriched through commingling with the tides of life, infinite and eternal.

Prayer will always remain disappointing if prayer be interpreted as if there were some celestial bargain-counter over which things must be given in answer to the soul's trafficking. If we cannot endure the absence of disinterestedness in human relationships, shall we not loathe it in the higher relationships of life, the relation of the human spirit to the divine Spirit, or shall we make that relationship one of give and take?

"Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him"—this is prayer, for it is love supreme, it is trust sublime. Is not his soul most truly served who, whether his petition be granted

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*From "We Believe in Prayer." Edited by Sydney Strong. Pub. by Coward McCann, New York, N. Y.

or denied, flings himself into the unknown with a song in his heart touching his fate? "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

Prayer is not the only possible form of coöperation on the part of the human with the Divine, and when prayer becomes a substitute for every other manner of aspiring cooperation with the divine purpose, then it becomes nothing more than utilitarian and base trafficking. Prayer must in truth be nothing more than the will to coöperate with the Eternal Purpose become articulate.

I pray not that I may have but that I may be; I pray not that God may give me, but that I may give myself to God. Nor shall I cease to pray when God withholds from me, for from me God may not withhold the infinite and eternal gift of Himself. Prayer is the joy, high and unutterable, of the soul's outreaching unto Him who is the soul of souls!

REPORT

VEDANTA CENTRE, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Eastertide at the Vedanta Centre was poignantly significant this year, as it came in the wake of a sad loss in the untimely passing of Ethel Littlefield. A part of the morning Service was in the nature of a memorial to this devoted friend. Since her first contact with the Centre, six years ago, she had proved her devotion, loyalty and spirit of service to the extent of becoming an example to all who knew her. The bereaved family, relatives and friends were among the large congregation, seeking comfort, hope and assurance in the message of immortality which formed the central theme of Gayatri Devi's tender address. Special music was rendered by Eunice Langenbach who in sweet and clear tones sang appropriate songs that had been favorites of the departed one.

Lord Buddha's birthday celebration on Friday, May 10th, was a joyous occasion. A Hindu dinner preceded the Service which will long be remembered for its setting of loveliness. In a bower of numberless delicate spring fruit-blossoms, stood an ethereal, golden statue of Lord Buddha, who was born under a flowering tree.

June 21st, ever sacred to Swami Paramananda's friends and followers, was observed in memory of his final liberation. A Service of prayer, song, reading and a brief address terminated a day of quiet vigil.

Invitations from Outside

The Spring of 1946 has been an extremely busy season for Srimati Gayatri Devi, who gave a course in Indian literature at Bradford Junior College weekly throughout March and April. On April 3rd, Srimati spoke at the Edith Baker School, in Brookline, before a hundred and thirty boys and girls of the seventh and eighth grade classes. The appreciation of the children for "Mother India" was revealed in "thank you" letters, which were a great source of satisfaction to the speaker. On April 9th, Gayatri Devi was a guest of the Wesley Foundation of the Harvard Methodist Church of Cambridge, where she addressed the young people's group on "Vedanta" and afterwards answered many questions. On May 12th, the First Baptist Church of Boston invited Gayatri Devi to be guest speaker of the evening for its young people's society. These engagements have proved worthwhile, as some of the young people contacted through them are often a part of the audiences of the Centre's regular Sunday Services and Tuesday Classes. On Sunday, April 14th, a group of boys and girls from the First Universalist Church, who have been discussing the world's living religions, attended the Centre's Sunday evening Service.

Distinguished Visitors

The Centre frequently extends hospitality to eminent personalities from India and abroad. One Sunday afternoon last Winter, Dr. Taraknath Das was given a reception by the Indian students' group.

In March, Sir S. Radhakrishnan, distinguished scholar and philosopher, was the guest of honor of a large assembly consisting of the city's resident Indian students, with some of their college professors and friends. A group of the Centre's devotees were also in attendance. An elaborate tea consisting of delicious Hindu delicacies was Gayatri Devi's contribution to the party. Sir Radhakrishnan spoke briefly, impressing his listeners by his profound scholarship and deep spiritual earnestness.

Mr. Prasanta Mahalanabis, famous statistician and physicist of Calcutta Presidency College, and Mrs. Mahalanabis, both close associates of India's renowned poet Tagore, took time out of their full program to spend a few pleasant hours with the Centre's resident Community.

Mr. K. C. Neogy, another son of India, a delegate to United Nations, was warmly received during his brief visit to Boston.

ANANDA-ASHRAMA, CALIFORNIA

Ananda-Ashrama was greeted by clear skies on Easter morning. It was an inviting dawn to which many friends responded. Not until later did the members of the Ashrama learn that the valleys were blanketed with a pea-soup fog, making driving difficult and dangerous. The early Service was so timed that before its close, the sun was striking across the speaker's platform, warming with its golden rays the backs and heads of the congregation. There was a very tangible spirit of joy abroad, enhanced by lovely organ music

and songs of birds and human voices. The message given by Sister Daya dealt not so much with resurrection as with life beyond birth and death. Breakfast followed the first Service and Sister Seva, the presiding genius of the Community House, once again performed a miracle by providing sustenance for a far greater number of people than had been anticipated. A large and enthusiastic group attended the eleven o'clock Service and the luncheon which followed as well as the afternoon Service which terminated the activities of the day. There have been many glowing days at Ananda-Ashrama, but all agreed that this occasion ranked with the finest.

The next Spring offering was the celebration of Lord Buddha's Birthday on Thursday, May 16th, in the Temple of the Universal Spirit. Sister Daya spoke with feeling on the life and teachings of the Blessed One, and sought to correlate them with the ultimate realizations of Vedanta. The large image of Lord Buddha—which is generally kept indoors—was placed in a bower of green at the end of the arcade leading to the side door of the Temple. A large candle burned before it, and beside it—in the arch of the arcade—hung a great brass temple gong, suggestive of some ancient temple in China where gold-toned Buddhas are set amidst age-old pines. The glorious full moon of May, hidden until then by fog and clouds, came forth as a final blessing. Its clear light outshone the fire burning redly in the patio fireplace and signaled a bright farewell to the friends as they departed.

On Sunday, May 26th, Ananda-Ashrama celebrated another anniversary, her own birthday, marking the end of her twenty-third year of existence. This time the weather was not kindly. Rain and gloomy skies prevailed all day, but the memory of the occasion will always be sunny because of the

spirit of gladness which seemed to emanate from the hills. Mrs. Altheia Turner of Beverly Hills was guest-speaker at the morning Service. Her charming, gentle personality, her sincere spirit and the quiet wisdom of her words captivated all hearts. She made a special plea that her listeners hold themselves spiritually above the present world turmoil, steadfastly refusing to become involved in it. She spoke of Swami Paramananda and Ananda-Ashrama as a unified light shining amidst the present darkness, ever irradiating peace and healing to a sad, sick world. Before the close of the Service, she extended through Sister Daya a hearty invitation to all present to attend the famous "open House," inaugurated by her husband Major Turner and herself. It is held each full moon night at their Beverly Hills residence, for the furtherance of unity among men and nations.

During the Service exceptionally fine music was rendered by Mrs. Thilo Becker (violinist) and Miss Alta Grimes (cellist) who played, in trio with the organ, the Bach-Gounod Ave Maria and Handel's Largo, and as solos, the slow movement from the Goldmark concerto for violin, and the adagio movement from Boccherini concerto for cello. As Sister Daya remarked, "In spite of fear, doubt and turmoil music still unites the world of man with the world of God." There was also vocal music offered with deep feeling by Mrs. Warriner and Mrs. Vogetzer. The Temple was filled to capacity. A large number remained to partake of luncheon served at the Community House.

At the afternoon Service, Mrs. Becker and Miss Grimes repeated their program in part, while Mr. Baliaeff, an old and true friend of the work, sang a Russian devotional song, admirably attuned to his sonorous voice. Sister Daya spoke with fervor on the subject, "Ideals and Memories," recreating by her words not only past Ashrama activities, but the inner

ideals which the Swami sought to inculcate in the hearts of his followers, and which he exemplified by his life and being.

ANANDA ASHRAMA, COHASSET

Excessive rain; untimely low temperatures; construction of a new cabin and alterations of other buildings have made the task of preparing the woodland retreat for the season's use somewhat difficult, however it was opened to its friends on Memorial Day. Fortunately the weather cooperated. An eager group of forty travelled from Boston and neighboring towns to spend a few hours of refreshment in the peaceful shelter, so aloof from the world. The Service was held at four o'clock under the pines, preceded by an informal luncheon served out of doors. The little Ashrama is greatly improved by the new additions which make possible the accommodation of a larger number of guests. The Summer program consists of daily Services, regular study of Scriptures, periodic silences and sufficient physical recreation.

The Ashrama will observe its seventeenth anniversary on Saturday, June 29th, for which preparations are in full progress.

We take this opportunity to thank our subscribers and friends for their contributions to *India Famine Relief*. Members of California Ashrama under the direction of Sister Daya have been especially active in order to raise a fund for India's starving millions. On Thursday, June 13th, a benefit program of moving pictures was presented. It met with splendid success. Further donations to the Relief will be gratefully received by Ananda Ashrama, California, and the Vedanta Centre, Boston.

BOOK REVIEWS

ATMA BODHA. *Translated by Swami Nikhilananda. Published by the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 17 East 94th Street, New York, N. Y.*

From the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center we have recently received a copy of this important work on Self-knowledge by the great master of Advaita Vedanta, Sri Sankaracharya. The Swami's translation, plus his lucid commentaries between the verses, makes it possible for the Western student of Vedanta to gain a thorough understanding of this ancient text. The introduction (by the translator), which comprises over half the volume, is in itself an excellent and comprehensive source of reference for those who seek to grasp the essentials of the Vedanta philosophy and trace its scriptural origins. In the appendix, translations of a few of Sri Sankara's songs bear witness to the fact that although Sankara was a great monist, he had the heart of a devotee.

THE MESSAGE OF THE HIMALAYAS. *By Swami Sambuddhananda. Published by the author, Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Khar, Bombay 21, India. 73 pp. price 12 As. Foreign 2 Sh.*

Here, in a very tiny volume, the author seeks to evoke the majesty, the mystery, and the divine implications connected with these mightiest of mountains, from which India has derived material sustenance and spiritual exaltation throughout the centuries. Approaching his subject both factually and symbolically, the Swami presents a vivid picture of this great Mother of Ranges, and helps to lift the mind of the reader to the pure heights attained by the envisioned seers and sages of his Motherland, who reflected in their consciousness the glory and purity of the Himalayan snows. The book is dedicated "with deep love and reverence" to Srimat Swami Akhandanandaji, third President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission.

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Cincinnati, Ohio: Mr. W. H. Starick, 2360 Rohs St.

New York City: Brentano, 586 Fifth Ave.; Baker & Taylor Co., 55 Fifth Ave.

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Message of the East

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

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

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FROM "RENASCENCE"

By Edna St. Vincent Millay

Ah! Up then from the ground sprang I . . .
O God, I cried, no dark disguise
Can e'er hereafter hide from me
Thy radiant identity!
Thou canst not move across the grass
But my quick eyes will see Thee pass,
Nor speak, however silently,
But my hushed voice will answer Thee.
I know the path that tells Thy way
Through the cool eve of every day;
God, I can push the grass apart
And lay my finger on Thy heart!

The world stands out on either side
No wider than the heart is wide;
Above the world is stretched the sky,—
No higher than the soul is high.
The heart can push the sea and land
Farther away on either hand;
The soul can split the sky in two,
And let the face of God shine through.
But East and West will pinch the heart
That cannot keep them pushed apart;
And he whose soul is flat—the sky
Will cave in on him by and by.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Self is the lord of self; who else could be the lord.

—*Buddha*

Give not over thy mind to heaviness.

—*Ecclesiastes*

Sit in a straight posture, and the first thing to do is to send a current of holy thought to all creation; mentally repeat: "Let all beings be happy; let all beings be peaceful; let all beings be blissful." So do to the East, South, North and West. The more you do that the better you will feel yourself. You will find at last that the easiest way to make yourselves healthy is to see that others are healthy, and the easiest way to make yourselves happy is to see that others are happy. After doing that, those who believe in God should pray—not for money, not for health, nor for heaven; pray for knowledge and light; every other prayer is selfish.

—*Swami Vivekananda*

My mind to be a kingdom is.

—*Chaucer*

Truth is so great a perfection, that if God would render Himself visible to men, He would choose light for His body and truth for His soul.

—*Pythagoras*

Great souls have wills; feeble ones have only wishes.

—*Chinese Proverb*

Much wisdom often goes with fewest words.

—*Sophocles*

No one can acquire for another—not one. No one can grow for another—not one.

—*Walt Whitman*

The Delphic oracle said I was the wisest of all the Greeks. It is because that I alone, of all the Greeks, know that I know nothing.

—*Socrates*

PRINCIPLES OF YOGA

By Swami Paramananda

(An Address delivered by the Swami at the Vedanta Centre, Boston, May 18th, 1922.)

There are certain fundamental principles in connection with the eightfold Yoga, or the eight limbs of Yoga, for Yoga is like a tree, it has many limbs.

The first of these principles are more or less ethical and moral and are combined with spiritual practices. For instance, non-killing, which is connected with *Yama,* the first limb. This means not hurting anyone by thought, word or deed. For these are the three ways one can hurt another.

Other principles are: non-stealing, truthfulness, and non-receiving of gifts (which means keeping oneself free from a sort of slavery). Then connected with *Niyama* or the second limb comes cleanliness, both inner and outer (because unless our inner being is clean all our outer care will avail very little); following this are contentment, discipline—sometimes called mortification—*Asana* or Posture, the third limb, and finally, *Pranayama* or Control of Breath, the fourth limb. Beyond this we shall not go for the present.

Now in regard to the first principle, non-killing, we never do anything outwardly that we have not already conceived in our mind. If we think a thought and continue to think it, we cannot help but express it in one way or another, and this is true equally of good thoughts and bad. Often a person makes an angry remark and afterwards explains that he did not mean to make it, the words just escaped. But they could not escape unless the feeling were there first inside him. If he had been perfectly contained and calm and able to calculate the result of his speech, he would not have made it. That is why we must be harmless within if we would really practise harmless-

ness without; otherwise, at a crucial moment, our hidden thoughts will betray us, and all our play of shrewdness, calculation and mental cleverness will prove of secondary importance when it comes to the vital issues of life.

Passing over the next three principles we come to cleanliness. You may say, "If we make our surroundings clean and spotless will that not just naturally secure healthy conditions for us on every plane of existence?" That is true up to a certain point. One who through impure thoughts, however, creates an atmosphere which is unclean and oppressive, will soon bring even a clean physical environment down to his low level. Pure and exalted thoughts, on the other hand, will transform even the most sordid conditions into their own likeness. The more spiritually awakened we are, the more susceptible do we grow to the subtler things of life: they become for us the real things. Merely coming into a person's presence, we are instantly made aware of tranquillity and peace, or their opposite.

Contentment, the next principle we shall consider, is a very wonderful quality. It is not, as some of you may imagine, the state of possessing what you consider sufficient for your happiness. It has nothing to do with what you have or have not. It is a quality of mind. Some people are contented with very little and some are discontented with a very great deal. Ambition, in a certain type of human being, grows and grows. It is like a consuming fever: it never stops. Only when we reach a certain point of mental evolution do we find the blessing of contentment.

Discipline, or mortification, comes next. It does not imply self-torture; rather it means that we must train ourselves in order that we may find freedom in our body and mind, and in our aspirations. Bondage is of the mind, and also freedom. Suppose God mercifully bestows upon a man something very

precious. If his mind is not rightly attuned he will not be able to retain it. Perhaps he indulges in envious, hateful or cruel thoughts, and then wonders why he has lost God's gift. Very often he blames others. He feels that they have deprived him of his blessing. But no one can take from us what is really our own. It is we who deprive ourselves by our own unworthiness. The reason for our loss does not lie outside. In fact outside conditions have very little to do with it.

Posture, the third limb of Yoga, plays a real part in our spiritual life. You may say, "One can meditate in any position. It does not matter whether one lies, stands or sits." On the contrary, the position in which we try to meditate makes a great deal of difference. If, for example, you are standing, especially if you are not standing properly, although you may strain your mind, you will not be able to lift it very high. Any abnormal position will affect your spine, which plays a very vital part in relation to your bodily health and mental efficiency. If you try to meditate in such a posture, you work against odds. You expend a lot of energy and accomplish little. These conclusions are not merely the result of metaphysical study, they are also the conclusions of medical men, of scientists. Of course such men do not consider the subject from the point of view of spiritual development, but from that of bodily welfare. When the spine is injured or defective, you will find that it impairs the health and it may affect the mind. Also it is very apt to injure the morale, robbing a man of his mental stamina, and under certain conditions it could lead to insanity. Depression is one of the most immediate results of improper bearing. In telling you this I am giving you a technical lesson. I am trying to show you why we should sit properly.

Nothing gives greater impetus to a correct posture than meditation. The erect position of the body and meditation are

closely related. Meditation is a very special act. We are inspired to fulfil all its requirements, even the bodily requirements, without question. In our ordinary moments we may be careless; we may sit carelessly and perform our duties casually; but not so in our moments of meditation. Thus it is that for one who is faithful in his meditation practice, correct bodily position gradually becomes his habit and affects his general bearing.

When I was first in this country, holding classes in New York City, a student brought her sister to one of the meetings and afterwards invited me to dine with them. The very first question the sister asked me was whether I had had military training. She said that all through the class she had noticed the way I sat and the way I stood, and it had made an impression on her. What she said also made an impression upon my mind. It showed me that even without being aware of it, we bear the stamp of our habitual consciousness. But it is not without effort that we achieve such results. People who have not had the training and who have never been taught the right way of sitting or standing, at first find it very painful. For example, in India—in fact throughout the East—a person will sit cross-legged without any effort, because for him it is the most natural way. But here in the West it seems to most people very difficult and most unnatural. This question of what is natural and what is unnatural, who is going to decide it? It is a matter of habit. We have to follow that which is productive of good, which proves to be helpful and an aid to our thinking faculty, especially an aid to our mind in its higher aspirations. Summing it up, we should say that we should seek to hold ourselves upright, in that position in which we are least conscious of our body. Here you may remark, "If I try to sit cross-legged, I am conscious of my body all over. When I try to sit straight, I feel more conscious of my body

than ever, but when I sit crooked, then I forget my body, at least for a time." This merely shows what has been your habit, but it does not show what may be the result.

The Yoga system affirms (and this is today also recognized by eminent scientists) that the spinal column plays a tremendous part in our mental and physical existence, and should be properly taken care of. One simple lesson is: Hold yourselves erect in a straight line. The animals have not a straight spine and they are still backward in evolution. They have most of the faculties that we have but their mental development is far behind ours.

It is a fact that he who is physically upright is at the same time buoyant, courageous and free of spirit. One can see this illustrated constantly in everyday life, same way, one who is inclined to be morbid, who lacks in ambition and in higher aspiration, he is generally stooped. He has formed the habit; it has become natural for him to hold himself that way. When anyone speaks to him about this, he says, "What can I do? My shoulders are naturally bent." Or else he says, "It has come by degrees: I had too many burdens, too great responsibility." But one may be able to carry all such responsibilities yet not feel crushed by them or be made crooked by them. In trying to correct habits like these one should not go to extremes. What has come by degrees must be overcome the same way. If at first you find your body is unbending, little by little you can cause it to grow pliable and flexible. Your thought will have a great deal to do with it. Body and mind are so closely connected. Thought can play havoc; it can make the body as rigid as a board. This is a fact that we can learn through contact with medical men. Therefore one of the first points in acquiring correct posture is *firmness of resolution.* Say to yourself that you are never going to give up, that you are not going to move till you accomplish your purpose. Think

what a tremendous command a man can have over his body. Convince yourself of this and you will achieve success.

These may seem like very simple lessons, but follow them up and they will lead to something very definite. It is true that we shall find people who without knowing anything about posture or Yoya or the science of breathing follow the right methods quite unconsciously. They live in rhythm, their thoughts are lofty, and if we observe them we shall see how flexible, how transparent, how pliable they are in bodily ways, in mental ways—in all ways. Yet somewhere at some time, in this life or some other, they have gained this mastery through right direction of their forces, and we can do the same thing.

Body, mind, emotions—all these elements work together. A man who is rigid physically will be rigid mentally, and the opposite also is true. A saint seated in prayer or meditation has all his forces moving in right rhythm. He is sustained by that rhythm because it is established through long effort and practice, but the average person in the beginning needs outward help. That is why I am giving you these lessons. They are for that very purpose.

Remember that when you sit for meditation you must strive to take a position that causes you to be least conscious of the weight of the body and which at the same time insures that the body is in a straight line. At first you will try to hold your body up, but very soon you will find that you have created a certain erectness which helps you physically and in turn awakens in you a mental vigor, a definite power. The Yogis go farther. They have discovered that there are certain subtle currents in the body and that when the channels through which these flow are open and clear, not blocked because of wrong thought or wrong body position, then the power which is latent within can pass freely through the whole body. The result is a tremendous uplift.

Physical exercise also, even when one does it in a simple way, is a good thing. It starts the circulation going, and it keeps one limbered up. All such practices aid tremendously.

Sometimes, I know, you feel you are too rushed. You have not the time. I take this into consideration. But if you can spare even two or three minutes, you will be greatly repaid. You see, I too have fallen into this habit of Occidental rush, so I can sympathize with you when you say you have not the time. It is better, however, to make a little time. I can tell you this because I have gone through the same experience. It is very good that we have all kinds of experiences. They are great blessings; they connect us with our fellow beings. How can we help a person from a distance? One who is drowning, we cannot save him by calling to him from the shore. We must swim out and bring him in. That is the way of life. Theories are not enough: we have to know. Many things may be difficult but also many things are simple, and the spiritual life is the simplest of all. This statement may be startling to you. "If spiritual life is so simple," you may say, "why can't we all be masters of our fate and acquire these powers?" The answer is that we create complexity within ourselves. We want to go the roundabout way and often overlook the way that is simple and direct. If we observe, we shall find that the greatest souls—the souls all men recognize as great—are most simple in their habits, in their life, in their outlook on things in general—so simple in fact that the average person will pass them by. There is a twist in the ordinary mind which leads human beings so often to seek the strange and the mysterious. Thus when simple Truth is presented, they are apt not to perceive it.

Spiritual practice always means readjustment of the body, the mind, the whole constitution. Life becomes enriched when we are able to readjust ourselves. It is not that all in a

moment we are going to become absolutely perfect; but the effort, the sincere desire, will in themselves purify us and bring about a deeper understanding. As we practise one virtue another virtue comes. They are all interrelated. That is why I say that you cannot help yourself in bodily ways without helping yourself mentally, and you cannot help yourself in mental ways without benefitting enormously in your spiritual life. One is reflected in the other. Thus even these physical practices aid us in our spiritual regeneration.

We now come to *Pranayama* or Control of Breath. This means control of the life force, the vital energy. This is a big subject and very essential, because an average person cannot live without breathing. There are Yogis, however, who have such power: they can keep on living even when the breath is shut off. But this is not the main point. The main point is that through the control of breath we can gain mastery over our emotions, over our passions, over our physical conditions. Even aches and pains can be cured through proper breathing, because breathing is the means of conveying life-force. We are always taking in this life-force, but if we do not know how to distribute it properly, if it does not circulate freely, then we do not get the full benefit from it. That is the sum and substance of the whole matter. We have been given these organs and these powers by which we can transmute the baser elements in our body and awaken our higher faculties.

Correct breathing is very purifying. It helps us to equalize all our actions and creates a sense of tranquillity and poise. One of the great commentators on Yoga compares it to a scrubber. One may scrub the outer body, but one cannot reach inside. It is essential, however, that our inward being also be kept clean, and for this nothing is so penetrating, so far-reaching as breath. We are breathing all the time. That is the reason we are living. If we are able somehow or other

to draw the breath in and out, why can we not do it correctly? Rhythm is necessary. The whole universe is built on rhythm —vibration. Music implies rhythm, a sense of time. Without the sense of time and of right rhythm one cannot be a musician. When one goes to a concert if one hears someone play out of tune, it is like a shock; it can give one a headache, and whenever the rhythm is lost it seems to hurt one; it affects one even physically. Rhythm is like a pendulum. The life of a clock depends upon it. Same way with the life of an individual. You breathe in and out. Some people breathe rhythmically. They inhale and exhale, keeping a certain time, often without knowing it. This regularity prolongs the life and makes for healthfulness and greater vigor. We can see how any strong, sudden emotion—anger, for instance—can throw one out of this ryhthm, create disturbance, and rob us of our vital force.

The Yogis are the most practical people. They recognize the value of meditation by which one may gain higher consciousness and one's union with the Supreme, but they realize that one cannot accomplish this by visionary means. There must be coöperation on all planes of being, for in this way we not only benefit ourselves spiritually: we think better, we act better, we gain greater joy through life, we eliminate exhaustion and unnecessary expenditure of energy and accomplish a great deal more. Unless we practise these principles, however, with sincere, earnest spirit, coupled with a sense of balance and moderation, unless we do this regularly and with determination, and not merely when we feel like it, we shall miss our goal, and we shall miss it because we deserve to miss it.

Humility is the root, mother, nurse, foundation and bond of all virtue.

—*Chrysostom*

WHAT JESUS MEANS TO ME*

By Mahatma Gandhi

Although a great part of my life has been devoted to the study of religion and to discussion with religious leaders of all faiths, I know that I cannot avoid seeming presumptuous in writing about the figure of Jesus Christ and trying to explain what significance and meaning He has had for me. I do so solely because I have been told more than once by certain Christian friends that, since I am not a Christian, and do not (to quote their exact words) "accept Him in my innermost heart as the only-begotten Son of God," I can never realize the full meaning of His teachings and therefore can never draw upon the greatest source of spiritual strength known to man.

Whether or not this is true in my case, it seems to me to be a mistaken point of view. I believe that it is incompatible with the message that Christ brought to the world. For He, surely, was the greatest example of one who wished to give to all, to withhold from none, whatever their creed. I believe that He Himself, if He lived among men today, would bless the lives of many who perhaps had never heard His name, if they lived in accordance with the virtues that His life so imperishably illustrated, the virtues of unselfishness and loving-kindness toward one's fellow men.

It is this, I think, that above all was important to Him, just as it is written in the great book of Christianity—not he that crieth Lord, Lord, but he that doeth His will.

What, then, has Jesus meant to me? To me He is a great world teacher. To His followers He was and is the only-begotten Son of God. Whether or not I accept this, does He affect my life the less? Is all the grandeur of His teaching thus automatically barred from me? I cannot believe so.

The adjective "begotten" has a meaning for me that I like

* Liberty, February 8th, 1941.

to think is deeper and possibly grander than its literal one. To my mind it implies spiritual birth. My interpretation, in other words, is that in Jesus' own life He stood nearest to God; He most perfectly expressed the will and spirit of God. And it is in this sense that I look upon Him as the Son of God. But I believe that there is something of this spirit, which in Jesus was expressed in the fullest measure, in all mankind. I must believe that; if I did not, I would be a cynic, and to be a cynic is to be lifeless, empty, valueless; it means that one condemns the whole race of man.

There is every apparent reason for cynicism, certainly, when one beholds the bloody carnage that Europe's aggressors have wrought, when one thinks of the misery and suffering spread over the surface of the globe, the pestilence and plague and hunger that inevitably and terribly follow in the wake of warfare. In the face of that, how can one speak seriously of the spirit of the divine in man? Because these acts of terror and bloodshed appall man's conscience; because he knows that they are evil; because in his innermost heart and mind, he deplores them. And because when he is not misled, deceived, and corrupted by false leaders and false arguments, man has in his breast an impulse of kindness and compassion, which is the spark of the divine, and which one day, I believe, will be brought forth to the full flowering that is inherent in it.

It is an example of such a flowering that is seen in the figure and life of Jesus. I refuse to believe that there were any who did not profit by His example and by His atoning for their sins, whether or not they consciously realized it. The lives of all were, to some degree, great or small, changed and benefitted by His presence, His actions, and the words of His voice.

It is impossible, I think, to weigh the merits of the world's several religions, and unnecessary and pointless even to attempt to do so. But in each one, I believe, there was an orig

inal, common impulse—the desire to help and to improve the life of all men. I interpret the miracles of Jesus not in a literal sense, which seems to me unimportant, but as the dramatic and unforgettable expression of this impulse, as the most vivid lesson possible to impart—not to pass by the sick and suffering, not to judge those who, in the world's eyes, have sinned, but to forgive them and thus help them to enter a new and better life, in the firm belief that the regenerate can outgrow the original taint.

These lessons stand for us today as they stood for the men and women of Jesus' own time.

Jesus gave mankind, in these lessons and in His life, the great goal toward which to aspire. It is because there is such a goal, and because there was such a figure as that of Jesus, that I cannot be pessimistic, but instead am hopeful and confident of the future. And it is because His life has this significance and meaning for me that I do not regard Him as belonging to Christianity alone, but rather to the whole world, to all its peoples, no matter under what name they worship.

ALL-GIVER

By Dorothy Hanson

Knowing man's need of truth eternal
  Unlimited by finite bars,
God formed vast upward-pointing majesties—
  Mountains and stars.

Yet knowing, too, his yearning for the transient,
  Dearer because it quickly ends,
God made the wistfully small and changefully lovely—
  Kittens and friends.

THE FINGER OF GOD

By Thilo Becker

(To Paderewski)

[Thilo Becker, distinguished teacher of the piano and concert artist, was born in Australia of German parentage. He was taken to Germany for his education and graduated from the Leipzig Conservatory. His musical career began with a concert tour in Europe, but was interrupted by a severe illness which he contracted and which forced him to come to California to recuperate. Although he had then no intention of remaining there, he accepted pupils and soon was recognized as an outstanding teacher and master of music.

In the midst of his success, however, rumor reached him that the members of his family in Germany were in great want. It was hard for him to credit this, for he had been sending them substantial sums from his earnings and their letters had given no hint of any trouble. Nevertheless he felt that he must go back to Germany in order to make sure. Upon arriving there he found that the report was all too true and the family, because of financial reverses, was reduced to poverty. Unhesitatingly he took all the money he had set aside for the furtherance of his musical future and gave it to his mother and brothers.

It was following this act of whole-hearted renunciation that something happened which changed the whole course of his inner life. At the time he was a convinced non-believer. However, while in London, on his way back to America, he was persuaded by a close friend to attend a communion service in St. Paul's Cathedral. Kneeling at the altar rail, he experienced a shattering illumination, and he left the Cathedral in a daze.

He returned to California and began to give expression to the deep, mystical wisdom which was native to his spirit and which the vision had released.

The aphorisms given below are but a minute portion of a great mass of spiritual writings which came through the heart and mind of Thilo Becker. They are merely thoughts and guides for the untrained, and are intended as subjects for meditation. They were written in honor of Paderewski, who was a close friend of the Beckers, and were placed in his hands as a farewell gift on his departure from Los Angeles. The great man did not wait to write his appreciation, but sent the following telegram:

"I send you without delay the expression of heartfelt gratitude for the beautiful letter and the precious manuscript. They touched me very, very deeply. Your sayings contain a wealth of thought and nobility belonging to an altitude which only a man with mighty heart could possibly reach. I am happy to have won your friendship and I feel profundly grateful for the delight in having seen you both again."

Thilo Becker, both as a teacher and as a man, exerted a most profound spiritual influence upon all who came in contact with him, and this influence extends beyond his death, which occurred in California on December 16, 1945.]

Music—
sublime authority of
God.

* * * *

Space reverberates
with the mighty sound of the
Eternal Word.

* * * *

He who listens not
hears not.
To listen means
to place your inner life
wholly
at the disposal of God.

Music is a star
that casts its light in undimmed splendor
across the track of earth's darkness
and sorrow.

* * * *

Except the Voice
of the Lord be heard,
there is no speech
nor sound.

* * * *

Music
relates man to God
when man
relates God to music.

* * * *

Music trembleth
in the hearts of the people
and the people recognize not
God.

* * * *

The secret of all power
lies in belief;
belief in God's power,
belief in your own power
united with that of God.

The soul of man
breaks into flame
when touched by the finger of God.

* * * *

The gates of music
are guarded
by the Holy Spirit.

* * * *

Music reveals
what the tongue of man
is unable to utter.

* * * *

Music is cradled
in the spiritual centers
of man's being.

* * * *

Music is the product of Grace,
and Grace is the expression
of God's unbounded Love.

* * * *

Touch the Infinite One
and feeling
will gush forth like a fountain.

Cease from thought
When you feel the mighty throb
of God's presence.
Be ready to receive.

* * * *

Struggle to attain the heights
When once the soul is aflame
heap up the fuel
let not the fire go down.

* * * *

Great awakenings
are often preceded
by struggle, by pain.
Man is born many times
spiritually.

* * * *

All men suffer
but only to few is granted
divine insight
into the mystery of pain.

* * * *

Obedience
to spiritual urge
creates
enlivenment of vision.

The Path to knowledge
leads through the garden
of meditation.

* * * *

What you constantly behold in mind
that you become.
Man is unified
with the object of his contemplation.

* * * *

The study of
Music
is the study of
soul development.

* * * *

Spirit
cannot be compassed intellectually.
Man understands Spirit
only
as he feels Spirit.

* * * *

Feeling
is the breath of Love.
Without feeling
there is no warmth of ideas,
no inner radiance.

All spiritual vibration
returns to God.
God sends it forth,
God draws it back again.
Thus the currents are kept
going and coming.

* * * *

Creative urge
is the desire to give form
to what lies hidden
in the innermost recesses
of man's being.

* * * *

The mind of man
ascends through many spheres.
In each successive sphere
Thought becomes
larger and loftier in concept,
for man is eternally being drawn
to the one great Circle in which
the Lord abides.

* * * *

Physical sensation endures
but for a moment.
Spiritual expression is as
far above the merely physical
as the stars are above the earth.

Nobility of expression
is the result of
nobility of soul activity.

* * * *

Be master of yourself
if you would deliver in authoritative fashion
the truths
hidden in God.

* * * *

The artist
must be both humble and aggressive.
Humble
in thinking of God first,
and not of self;
aggressive
in proclaiming his message
to the people.

* * * *

Tradition
withers the flower
of originality.

* * * *

Intuition
is the flash of the wings
of Spirit.

Music
depends not on men's Authority;
Music
is an authority unto itself.

* * * *

Spiritual things
are spiritually discerned.
Only Reality
can comprehend Reality.

* * * *

Spiritual ascent
is fraught
with travail of soul.

* * * *

In listening
seek to transcend
vibratory forms,
and penetrate
vibratory essence.

* * * *

Bring Tone to a focus,
To a point of contact
with heart and mind.
Insulate your being that no
contaminating particle may enter.

Production of Tone
is not a mechanical process.
Tone is born of God,
or not at all.

* * * *

True spiritual Tone
is the result of
sustained relationship with
spiritual power.

* * * *

Man creates
the body of Tone.
God is the creator
of the life of Tone.

* * * *

Surface Music
reaches but the outer ear.
Man possesses both
an outer and an inner ear.

* * * *

The outer ear is a
gatherer,
the inner ear an
interpreter
of musical sound waves.

Divest Tone
of its material covering
and array it in the garments
of spiritual Light.

* * * *

Spiritual Force
brooks no contradiction.
It conquers
all manifestations of Pulse.

* * * *

By Sound
the worlds are
upheld.

The music-maker knows unconsciously, as Plato knew consciously, that beyond the phenomenal world is a *real* world . . . in which exist the eternal archetypes of those qualities whose interplay covers and constitutes the range of our human experience. It is indeed the ultimate source of all beauty and the ultimate object of all art. This is the world of the Kantian "noumenal," of "the thing in itself," transposed to the creative plane of those artists who are also seers. For music, alone among the arts, can deal with those essences of which even ideas and concepts are projections. We enter here the innermost secret place of the dreaming mind, the place where dwell the Immortals. This is the Holy of Holies of all loveliness, and only the singing of Palestrina, or Byrd, or Bach, or Beethoven, or Wagner, or Schubert, or Brahms, or the other hierophants, can ever lead us there. —*Selected*

THE DREAM OF MY LIFE

By Swami Vivekananda

(Condensed from his lecture, "The Work Before Us.")

The problem of life is becoming deeper and broader every day as the world moves on. The watchword and the essence have been preached in the days of yore, when the Vedantic truth was first discovered,—the solidarity of all life. One atom in this universe cannot move without dragging the whole world along with it. There cannot be any progress without the whole world following in the wake, and it is becoming every day clearer that the solution of any problem can never be attained on racial, or national, or narrow grounds. Every idea has to become broad till it covers the whole of this world, every aspiration must go on increasing till it has engulfed the whole of humanity, nay, the whole of life, within its scope. This will explain why our country for the last few centuries has not been what she was in the past. We find that one of the causes which led to this degeneration was the narrowing of our view, narrowing the scope of our actions.

Two curious nations there have been—sprung of the same race, but placed in different circumstances and environments, working out the problems of life each in its own particular way. I mean the ancient Hindu and the ancient Greek. The Indian Aryan, bounded on the north by the snow-caps of the Himalayas, with fresh-water rivers like rolling oceans surrounding him in the plains, with eternal forests which, to him, seemed to be the end of the world—turned his vision inward; and given the natural instinct, the superfine brain of the Aryan, with this sublime scenery surrounding him, the natural result was—that he became introspective. The analysis of his own mind was the great theme of the Indo-Aryan. With the Greek, on the other hand, who arrived at a part of the earth

which was more beautiful than sublime, the beautiful islands of the Grecian Archipelago, Nature all around him generous yet simple—his mind naturally went outside. It wanted to analyze the external world. And as a result, we find that from India have sprung all the analytical sciences, and from Greece all the sciences of generalization. The Hindu mind went on in its own direction and produced the most marvelous results. Even at the present day, the logical capacity of the Hindus, and the tremendous power which the Indian brain still possesses is beyond compare. . . .

At the same time, when the national vigor went, perhaps one or two centuries before the Mohammedan conquest of India, this national faculty became so much exaggerated that it degraded itself, and we find some of this degradation in everything in India, in art, in music, in sciences, in everything. In art no more was there a broad conception, no more the symmetry of form and sublimity of conception, but the tremendous attempt at the ornate and florid style had arisen. The originality of the race seemed to have been lost. In music no more were there the soul-stirring ideas of the ancient Sanskrit music, no more did each note stand, as it were, on its own feet, and produce the marvelous harmony, but each note had lost its individuality. The whole of modern music is a jumble of notes, a confused mass of curves. That is a sign of degradation in music. So, if you analyze your idealistic conceptions, you will find the same attempt at ornate figures, and loss of originality. And even in religion, your special field, there came the most horrible degradations. . . . The themes of the Vedanta, the sublimest and the most glorious conceptions of God and soul ever preached on earth, were half-lost, buried in the forests, preserved by a few *Sannyasins,* while the rest of the nation discussed the momentous questions of touching each other, and dress, and food. . . .

Then for good or evil, the English conquest of India took place. Of course every conquest is bad, for conquest is an evil, foreign government is an evil, no doubt, but even through evil comes good sometimes, and the great good of the English conquest is this: England, nay the whole of Europe, has to thank Greece for its civilization. It is Greece that speaks through everything in Europe. . . . Today the ancient Greek is meeting the ancient Hindu on the soil of India.

Thus, slowly and silently, the leaven has come, the broadening out, the life-giving, and the revivalist movement that we see all around us, has been worked out by all these forces together. A broader and more generous conception of life is before us, and although at first we have been deluded a little and wanted to narrow things down, we are finding out today that these generous impulses which are at work, these broader conceptions of life, are the logical interpretation of what is in our ancient books. They are the carrying out, to the rigorously logical effect, of the primary conceptions of our own ancestors. To become broad, to go out, to amalgamate, to universalize, is the end of our aims. And all the time we have been making ourselves smaller and smaller, and dissociating ourselves, contrary to the plans laid down in our scriptures.

Several dangers are in the way, and one is that of the extreme conception that we are *the* people in the world. With all my love for India, and with all my patriotism and veneration for the ancients, I cannot but think that we have to learn many things from other nations. We must be always ready to sit at the feet of all, for, mark you, every one can teach us great lessons. . . . At the same time we must not forget that we have also to teach a great lesson to the world. We cannot do without the world outside India; it was our foolishness that we thought we could, and we have paid the penalty by about a thousand years of slavery. . . .

The first manifest effect of life is expansion. You must expand if you want to live. The moment you have ceased to expand, death is upon you, danger is ahead. . . . Those of you who think that the Hindus have been always confined within the four walls of their country through all ages, are entirely mistaken; you have not studied the whole books, you have not studied the history of the race aright if you think so. Each nation must give in order to live. When you give life you will have life; when you receive, you must pay it by giving to all others, and that we have been living for so many thousands of years is a fact that stares us in the face, and the solution that remains is that we have been always giving to the outside world, whatever the ignorant may think.

But the gift of India is the gift of religion and philosophy, and wisdom, and spirituality, and religion does not want cohorts to march before its path and clear its way. Wisdom and philosophy do not march upon bleeding human bodies, do not march with violence, but come on the wings of peace and love, and that has always been so. Therefore we had to give. I was asked by a young lady in London, "What have you Hindus done? You have never even conquered a single nation." That is true from the point of view of the Englishman, the brave, the heroic, the *Kshatriya*—conquest is the greatest glory that one man can have over another. That is true from his point of view, but from ours it is quite the opposite. If I ask myself what have been the cause of India's greatness, I answer, Because we have never conquered. That is our glory. You are hearing every day, and sometimes, I am sorry to say, from men who ought to know better, denunciations of our religion, because it is not at all a conquering religion. To my mind, that is the argument why our religion is truer than any other religion, because it never conquered, because it never shed blood, because its mouth always shed on all, words of

blessing, of peace, words of love and sympathy. It is here and here alone that the ideals of toleration were first preached; and it is here and here alone that toleration and sympathy have become practical. . . . The one characteristic of Indian thought is its silence, its calmness. At the same time, the tremendous power that is behind it, is never expressed by violence. . . .

Like the gentle dew that falls unseen and unheard, and yet brings into blossom the fairest of roses, has been the contribution of India to the thought of the world. Silent, unperceived, yet omnipotent in its effect, it has revolutionized the thought of the world, yet nobody knows when it did so. It was once remarked to me, "How difficult it is to ascertain the name of any writer in India;" to which I replied, "That is the Indian idea. . . . Those great master-minds, producing momentous results in the hearts of mankind, were content to write their books without even putting their names, and to die quietly, leaving the books to posterity. Who knows the writers of our philosophy, who knows the writers of our Puranas? They all pass under the generic name of Vyasa and Kapila, and so on. They have been true children of Sri Krishna. They have been true followers of the Gita; they practically carried out the great mandate, "To work you have the right, but not to the fruits thereof."

Thus India is working upon the world, but one condition is necessary. Thoughts, like merchandise, can only run through channels made by somebody. Roads have to be made before even thought can travel from one place to another, and whenever in the history of the world a great conquering nation has arisen, linking the different parts of the world together, then has poured through these channels the thought of India, and thus entered into the veins of every race. Before even the Buddhists were born, there are evidences accumulat-

ing every day that Indian thought penetrated the world. Before Buddhism, Vedanta had penetrated into China, into Persia, and the islands of the Eastern Archipelago.

One of these cycles has again arrived. There is the tremendous power of England which has linked the different parts of the world together. English roads no more are content, like Roman roads, to run over lands, but they have also ploughed the deep in all directions. From ocean to ocean run the roads of England. Every part of the world has been linked to every other part, and electricity plays a most marvelous part as the new messenger. Under all these circumstances we find again India reviving, and ready to give her own quota to the progress and civilization of the world. . . .

There have been great conquering races in the world. We also have been great conquerors. The story of our conquest has been described by that noble Emperor of India, Asoka, as the conquest of religion and of spirituality. Once more the world must be conquered by India. This is the dream of my life, and I wish that each one of you who hear me today will have the same dream in your mind and stop not till you have realized the dream. They will tell you every day that we had better look to our own homes first, and then go to work outside. But I will tell you in plain language that you work best when you work for others. . . . This is the great ideal before us, and every one must be ready for it—the conquest of the whole world by India, nothing less than that, and we must all get ready for it, strain every nerve for it. Let foreigners come and flood the land with their armies, never mind. Up, India, and conquer the world with your spirituality! Aye, as has been declared on this soil first, love must conquer hatred, hatred cannot conquer itself. Materialism and all its miseries can never be conquered by materialism. Armies when they attempt to conquer armies only multiply and make brutes of humanity.

Spirituality must conquer the West. Slowly they are finding out that what they want is spirituality to preserve them as nations. They are waiting for it, they are eager for it. Where is the supply to come from? Where are the men ready to go out to every country in the world with the messages of the great sages of India? Where are the men who are ready to sacrifice everything, so that this message shall reach every corner of the world? Such heroic souls are wanted to help the spread of Truth. Such heroic workers are wanted to go abroad and help to disseminate the great truths of the Vedanta. The world wants it; without it the world will be destroyed. The whole of the Western world is on a volcano which may burst tomorrow, go to pieces tomorrow. They have searched every corner of the world and have found no respite. They have drunk deep of the cup of pleasure and found it vanity. Now is the time to work so that India's spiritual ideas may penetrate deep into the West. . . . We must go out, we must conquer the world through our spirituality and philosophy. There is no other alternative: we must do it or die. The only condition of national life, of awakened and vigorous national life, is the conquest of the world by Indian thought.

At the same time, we must not forget that what I mean by the conquest of the world by spiritual thought is the sending out of the life-giving principles, not the hundreds of superstitions that we have been hugging to our breasts for centuries. These have to be weeded out even on this soil, and thrown aside, so that they may die for ever. . . . In our sight, here in India, there are several dangers. Of these, the two, Scylla and Charybdis, rank materialism and its rebound, arrant superstition, must be avoided. . . . I would rather see every one of you rank atheists than superstitious fools, for the atheist is alive, and you can make something out of him. But if superstition

enters, the brain is gone, the brain is softening, degradation has seized upon the life. Avoid these two.

Brave, bold men, these are what we want. What we want is vigor in the blood, strength in the nerves, iron muscles and nerves of steel, not softening namby-pamby ideas. Avoid all these. Avoid all mystery. There is no mystery in religion. Is there any mystery in the Vedanta, or in the Vedas, or in the Samhitas, or in the Puranas? What secret societies did the sages of yore establish to preach their religion? What sleight of hand tricks are there recorded, as used by them to bring their grand truths to humanity? Mystery-mongering and superstition are always signs of degradation and of death. Therefore beware of them; be strong, and stand on your own feet. Great things are there, most marvelous things. We may call them supernatural things so far as our ideas of Nature go, but not one of these things is a mystery. . . .

If there have been sages and Rishis in the past, be sure that there will be many now. If there have been Vyasas, and Valmikis and Sankaracharyas in ancient times, why may not each one of you become a Sankaracharya? This is another point of our religion that you must always remember, that in all other scriptures inspiration is quoted as their authority, but this inspiration is limited to a very few persons, and through them the truth came to the masses, and we have all to obey them. Truth came to Jesus of Nazareth and we must all obey Him. And the truth came to the Rishis of India . . . the seers of thought—and will come to all Rishis in the future—not to talkers, not to book-swallowers, not to scholars, not to philologists, but to seers of thought. The Self is not to be reached by too much talking, not even by the highest intellects, not even by the study of the scriptures. The scriptures themselves say so. Do you find in any other scriptures such a bold assertion as that . . . ?

You must open your heart. Religion is not going to church, or putting marks on the forehead, or dressing in a peculiar fashion. You may paint yourselves in all the colors of the rainbow, but if the heart has not been opened, if you have not realized God, it is all vain. If one has the color of the heart he does not want any external color. That is the true religious realization. We must not forget that colors and all these things are good so far as they help, so far they are all welcome, but they are apt to degenerate and instead of helping, they retard; and a man identifies religion with externalities.

Our scriptures declare again and again that even the knowledge of the external senses is not religion. That is religion which makes us realize the unchangeable One, and that is the religion for everyone. He who realizes transcendental truths, he who realizes the Atman in his own nature, he who comes face to face with God, sees God alone in everything, has become a Rishi. And there is no religious life for you until you have become a Rishi. Then alone religion begins for you, now is only the preparation. . . .

Whatever you believe, that you will be. If you believe yourselves to be bold, bold you will be. If you believe yourselves to be sages, sages you will be tomorrow. There is nothing to obstruct you. For if there is one common doctrine that runs through all our apparently fighting and contradictory sects, it is that all glory, power and purity are within the soul already. . . . All power is within you; you can do anything and everything. Believe in that, do not believe that you are weak; do not believe that you are half-crazy lunatics, as most of us do nowadays. But you can do anything and everything without even the guidance of anyone. All power is there. Stand up and express the Divinity that is within you.

Not what I have but what I do is my kindom.—*Wasson*

FROM A DISCIPLE'S NOTE-BOOK

Within the range of our normal human consciousness there are certain experiences, subtle, delicate, profound, which can only be *suggested* by word of mouth, never truly conveyed: the communion of love, the worship of beauty, the exuberance of joy, the immediate contact of hearts and hands and minds with one another and with those principles of life which give to hands and hearts and minds their only reality and meaning. These are moments of ignition, when the inward being glows with sudden flame and speech falters or else grows lyrical. They are, however, moments common to the everyday life of man and therefore are capable of being shared and understood by the stranger or the next door neighbor.

Quite other is it with those rarer times beyond Time, when the human spirit, transcending itself, merges with its own Godhead. Where would be the words to express such a union? Who would have lips to speak them? Who would have ears to hear? As for the signs and symbols of divine ecstasy, the streaming eyes, the rapture, the insensibility to outward things, men, beholding them, will interpret them according to their own state of being.

The Swami used to repeat the story of the holy man who sat beneath a tree beside the road one whole night through. His mind had soared into the ineffable; intoxicated with bliss, he was unaware of his physical body.

A thief, escaping to his hide-out, after a night of plunder, beheld him and slyly remarked: "Hello! there is one who has been out all night stealing, like me. I'm the fellow who knows how tired he is. But what a fool, to sleep there in plain sight! First thing he knows the guards will get him."

Soon a drunkard came reeling by, and catching sight of the saint exclaimed: "Ha! Ha! brother! What have you been

drinking? Pretty strong stuff to put you to sleep like that!"

Finally, just at sunrise, a devotee drew near. He gave one look at the saint's blissful countenance and then, softly approaching, bowed down and took the dust of his feet. Thus do men behold without only what they have within.

Can the extrovert West, for instance, righty appraise any thing so other-worldly, so far afield from its material preoccupations, as, say, the love of St. John for his Lord, Mary Magdalene's adoration for her Saviour, or the love for Him felt by the other Mary? The devout Christian will answer: "It was the recognition of the divinity of their Master which drew their hearts and moved them so mightily." It was indeed, and the Christian world accepts that fact, since it is properly attested by scripture, and treats it with dignity. Things assume dignity when seen through the mist of two thousand years, especially in relation to one's own religion. But what of Ananda's devotion for the Blessed One? Was it a brother's love, a friend's, a son's, which moved him to lean against the lintel of the door and weep in despair as the Buddha lay dying? And how about the followers of Sri Ramakrishna? What swept their souls that they should perceive in their Master the very Presence of the Mother of the Universe? Is the King only with us yesterday, at one point in time and space and in one being? No, that innate Divinity is not limited to any one time or place or Saviour. Even in the lesser saints and in the more obscure teachers He may be discernible to their devotees and be adored by them as the "Light of lights," the embodied glory, destined to lead their feet to Nirvana or to the Kingdom of Heaven, through the grace of their Guru. They, these little worshippers, even they, can understand in a way that men and women of the world can never do, the rapture which stirred the hearts of these mightier disciples.

In the scriptures of India it is written: "If the Truth has been taught to one of lofty mind who feels the highest devotion for God and for his Guru as for God, then It will shine forth, then It will shine forth indeed!" And that shining forth has nothing to do with age or country or dogma or ritual.

Meeting one's true teacher, no matter when and no matter where, is like beholding a sunrise: it is overwhelming, absolute, not to be denied. It comes with the authenticity of pure beauty, of truth, of love unsullied by the things of this world. There is an element of great destiny in it; for one knows it could not have been otherwise—that it was ordained somehow, somewhere, deep in the beginning of things. And with this apprehension comes a further knowledge: that one has not yet learned even the meaning of devotion, has only had the barest glimpse into the promised land. Like the horizon line, its extent and scope recede as one advances. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that the Lord was free, yet He was bound to His devotees, therefore he granted that intense devotion to very, very few. This being the case, fortunate indeed are those who have felt even the first faint stirring of such love in their hearts.

One also knows that these are the pearls which Christ warned were not to be cast before swine—before those who would mistake them for common pebbles and trample them under foot. For this reason, these profound, these rare and delicate verities are covered, as the Swami was wont to say, "with the hush of silence." He would not have the members of his community speculate about them even with one another, thus dragging them down to the level of ordinary happenings. They were either utterly sacred or they were nothing. Initiation, ordination as a Sister or a Brother, these and similar holy events had to do with the innermost inner. Like the sacred lotus opening in secret by night on the silent lake of

the soul, these blessings were ethereal, their bloom easily destroyed. They could become, like the cheap and the spurious, merely a bait to draw the seekers of sensation, a caricature of the real.

The temptation to keep silent now concerning them is very great. Especially is *guru-bhakti*—the devotion of the disciple for the teacher—most difficult to put into words. It is like stripping the heart bare. Yet it is the golden thread binding all these notes together into a complete whole. Without at least some understanding of it not one word would be read aright. Furthermore, in this sacred relationship lies the key to spiritual transcendence. Yes, the transcendence of the personal through and by means of an absolutely consecrated Personality, which having itself become a living instrument of the Divine, can lead the seeker only to God. Man must be made to understand the possibility here and now of such a hallowed connection, its significance—the promise it holds for him of a new dimension and a new world. He must understand how deep the roots strike, watered by subterranean springs, not by the trickles of sentimentality or the waters of superficial emotion. Otherwise, as so often in the past, Beauty will live in his midst and he will not recognize it. He will ignore it or crucify it, and continue to live an exile from his better part.

The Swami once said that the true influence of any spiritual movement could be determined by the extent to which it is able to transform lives. He himself was a transformer, and the process began from the moment one met him. It meant constant ferment. The disciple well remembers how her whole being was stirred. Every word that he spoke, every thought he conveyed seemed as a challenge to her life and action. Long familiar words and sentences flowed through her consciouness with new meaning. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." Purity meant selflessness, not tomorrow, but

now. "Not everyone that calls me 'Lord! Lord!' is My disciple, but only he who doeth the will of My Father." This meant sacrifice—the real thing—deed, not just theory. It might even mean sacrifice of nearness to the teacher. There were others about her with similar longings. Interests sometimes clashed. How was she going to blend her way with theirs? Back and forth these thoughts moved, weaving strange patterns in the disciple's mind as she strove to adjust herself to the inward life of the community as well as to the demands of her ideal.

Finally one day her heart found utterance and poured itself out on paper. The words were put down, just as they came, white-hot from some unknown depth of thought and feeling, and she knew that they said truly what she felt concerning this new Life and the teacher. Later, she went shyly to the Swami's study and asked permission to share with him what she had written. He nodded assent, so sitting on a stool, she read aloud her summation of discipleship and its problems, as she understood them.

"Those who follow the path of *Bhakti* with pure fervor," she began, "will, by the intensity of their devotion, draw to them sooner or later the embodied ideal. Some day, some hour, when their yearning has become sufficiently compelling, the One Teacher will come to them and by a look or a touch will make them his own in spirit and in truth forever. Then, for the first time, they will see and recognize God in human form and the very flesh of their Guru will seem luminous with holy radiance. It is through such profound recognition that God gives vision to the *bhakta*. It is the true transubstantiation, for imperceptibly the human in the Teacher will withdraw, leaving only God to the worshipper, limited neither to time nor place.

"He who can give himself up utterly in adoration to a true

teacher will reach the goal, not he who clips his own wings with fear and skepticism. Nor must it be a mental recognition that says: 'This is my Teacher: I must behold him as God!' One must be swept with adoration even before one realizes that one has actually found the Teacher. Right from the beginning one must see him with the heart. Heart-vision is not a pretty figure of speech; it is a divine fact. Pray that you may have the gift of the seeing heart before you find a teacher.

"A real Teacher is rare, as rare as a real disciple. Search for him deliberately, with mental calculation, and you will never find him, but yearn for him to God with a fine and lofty yearning and he will come to you even across the world.

"But what of the teachers who bring disillusionment and despair, who take all and give worse than poison in return? What of the danger of worshipping anything so frail as a human being, of materializing the Ideal?

"Such false teachers are the accurate response to petitions of vanity, curiosity and lesser desires. In the coin that we pay we shall receive. The supreme prayer will bring the supreme answer and the power of discernment, even the sincere and absolutely unselfish prayer will bring it, if it is sufficiently intense. There is no doubt about this at all and if we feel a doubt, the winged faith that helps to make a prayer supreme is lacking. Where in all the realms of imagination or reality is there anything less frail, more worthy of our profound homage, our utter fealty, than an unsullied, perfected human being? It is doubt of the possibility of such a one that keeps him from our door and recognition from our heart. Dare to believe! Dare to believe! Dare to believe your own vision! Pray to God that you may be given the power, not of materializing your Ideal, but of spiritualizing the material. Cover all things with the Lord and you will be one of the seers

who can by touching the feet of a stone image be lifted into the ecstasy of communion with the Mother of the Universe, who, bathing in a muddy river, can feel so cleansed by its sacred flow that the very impurities of the heart are washed away. Oh, the wise man who says: 'Fools! you worship stone, and you bathe in filth!' He it is who worships only stone and bathes in the waters of death. Blessed are the guileless fools of his scorn, who can worship God in the pile of manure as well as in the flower it feeds! Theirs will be the vision. To them will come the pure manifestation of Deity. To you also, if you share their faith.

"And when the Teacher comes, how then? Shall we be ready to live with our Ideal? Oh, yes, we shall find it easy to live for it, perhaps to die for it,—but to live with it? For the first time all that is not pure spirit in us will be thrown into continual and sharp relief by the white light of his presence. All that is not in tune with him will suffer and bleed and bleed and suffer till the agony forces us either to leave our ideal or become it. If we are petty, his bigness will be a wall upon which our little will is broken. If we are hateful, his love will show us the agony of our own imprisonment, whiech keeps us from him. In the outer world the fingers of our soul have been torn again and again through attachment, but never as they will be when they seek to cling to free Spirit and selfishly hold it as their own. The mighty non-attachment of the Teacher flings back on one the force of one's own desires, and though there is always tender consideration, the hungry, grasping fingers close on—nothing.

"When we dream of the coming of the Teacher, we picture ourselves as being content just to give ourselves utterly with no thought of return. But when he is with us, the subtle ego seeks to have its share of delight and instils the poison of self into our very adoration. So sweet, so precious is recognition

from the Teacher that we long for it and work for it with personal desire. We expect it and look for it and thereby hold it from us. Others, perhaps, receive what we crave and the sharp pang of disappointment or jealousy startles us. We find that the initial impulse of selfless devotion is degenerating into a mean struggle for favors, a comparing of benefits received. We wound each other in a rivalry to serve, forgetting that the sublime service of the Master is in being rather than in doing, in great-heartedness, and love and humility rather than in any outer act, and that only that which comes spontaneously from the hand of the Master and is neither asked nor expected, is blessed. The privileges of outer service may or may not be given to us, the inner service nothing can take from us, and its magnitude rests with ourselves alone. External nearness to the Master may be denied us, but what can withhold from the pure soul the intimate blessings that flow into it from his heart. This is to abide with him in truth—this is to know discipleship.

"It is our little self that is impotent before his high impersonality and falls back in despair. His freedom reveals its bondage. Therein lies our pain. Not in the nobility of the Teacher but in our own ignobleness,—in the ego that struggles, knowing that the redeemer is come, that the sword of St. Michael is drawn and poised above its heart. To realize that through humility, through selflessness, through the non-demanding spirit, infinite nearness to the Teacher is obtainable, yet feel one's heart contract with selfish pain because one is unnoticed or left alone—this is to suffer. Then, even should the Teacher choose to give we should be unable to receive.

"One must be big indeed to live with universal love. Shall we seek to escape it, to fly from it? We could not if we would; we would not if we could. He who has once glimpsed the Divine can never again be content with the mere human.

And all this anguish of discipleship is nothing, is less than nothing, compared with the bliss that the Teacher brings. To have touched his garment even once, to have heard his voice, to have sensed his realities, is worth a lifetime's loneliness. Somehow he has opened a door in the heart and the light has flooded through. What matter if the door closes again? One has had a moment's vision and is ready to storm heaven itself to regain it. If one is not willing to endure darkness and pain one is not worthy of the Teacher.

"There are moments, there are memories, poignant with beauty and blessedness; what matter if darkness follows for a space? Through pain we shall learn the secret of joy and through joy we shall fathom pain. Standing above them both they will no longer sway us. Why indeed should we struggle? There is no need. We forget that we have laid all at the feet of the Teacher—of God—*all*, our meanest qualities as well as our noblest. Let us leave the redemption to him utterly. To do less is to doubt that Gurudev who has promised to take our burden upon himself. What have we further to do with this fragment of life that we have called our self? Is it broken? He will mend it. Is it soiled? He will cleanse it. Is it imperfect? He will make it part of himself. By the divinity within us we recognized the Teacher; by the divinity within us we shall become him. No greater tribute can we offer him than this, no surer service render. When we learn to love through his heart, our greatest enemy will be transfigured. When we learn to see through his eyes, we shall look beyond the body to the soul, and beyond the soul to the bodiless Spirit. When we learn to think through his mind, we shall dwell with God and every man's blessing will seem as our own. What can separate us from the Teacher who meets us in the room of the heart? Having found him there, we shall find him everywhere. Dwelling there, we shall know his peace, and there at last we

shall learn to live with our ideal, as true disciples should, in constant joy."

"When the reading was finished, the disciple looked up at the Swami and found his face thoughtful and very grave. Was he thinking how easy it is to say 'Lord! Lord!' and how difficult to do 'the will of the Father'? If so, he gave no sign. Under the date of November 5th, 1919, we find a record in the Note-book of this interview:

"I told him," the disciple said, "that I wished I could begin over again, especially here at the Centre; that I felt as if I had lowered my ideal in so many ways. Swami said: 'There is no reason for beginning over again. All you need do is to shake off from your garment a little dust that has collected there.' At this, I said something in which I linked Swami with the Divine Mother as my redeemer. He replied:

" 'Swami is only a little speck' (indicating with his thumb the tip end of his little finger). 'You don't know how humble I feel when I hear an article like the one you just read. It reminds me of the story of the teacher and his milkmaid disciple. The teacher lived on an island and every morning the milkmaid, who was a great devotee, brought his milk to him by means of a boat which transported passengers at certain hours for a few pice. But often the boat was not on time and then the milkmaid would arrive late with the milk. This annoyed the teacher who scolded her and would take no excuse. Sad-hearted, she asked him what she would do. He said: "If your faith were strong enough, you could cross over the water."

" 'The next morning, when the boat did not arrive, the milkmaid, in whom faith was very strong, remembered the teacher's remark and repeating his name over and over, stepped upon the water and walked across unharmed. She did this for several mornings, until finally the teacher noticed that she never was late any more and asked her how she man-

aged to bring this about. She replied: "Why, sire, I did as you told me; I simply said 'Jai Guru! Jai Guru! Jai Guru!—Victory to the Guru! Victory to the Guru! Victory to the Guru!' and, repeating your name, walked over the water without fear." The teacher was amazed. "You were able to do this," he said, "merely through the power of my name?" She assured him that it was so, at which he exclaimed: "Then without doubt *I* can do it!' He at once started down to the shore, but as he drew near to the water he gathered his cloth up in his hands. "He who has faith is not afraid of getting wet!" the milkmaid warned him, but unheeding, he plunged into the waves, repeating in a loud voice: "Jai I! Jai I! Jai I!—Victory to me! Victory to me! Victory to me!" Of course he went down like a stone to the very bottom.' The Swami laughed with glee as he told this."

Those who are familiar with the life of Sri Ramakrishna will recall how part of his *sadhana* or spiritual practice was to identify himself with the woman's nature, so that no phase of life would be outside his comprehension. He stood above sex, however, maintaining himself at the point of perfect balance between masculine and feminine. The Swami also seemed to have this balance as his spiritual heritage.

> "Thou art our Mother! Thou art our Father!
> Thou art our Friend, Companion and Helper!
> Thou art our Learning and thou art our Wealth!
> Thou art our all-in-all,—our One Lord!"

This chant could have been our chant to him. Although there was no trace of femininity in him, there were those feminine qualities which one associates with a tender and protective mother.

On November 7th we find the following entry in the Notebook: "This evening Swami did exercises before the fire in the

hall, with only the flames for light. He came down the long stairs, wrapped in a white *chuddar* (shawl), singing some lovely Bengali song in light, clear tones. The song was in praise of the Divine Mother and he seemed to carry Her gracious and blissful atmosphere by his very presence. At the close of the evening, before saying good night, he went up to the next floor and then came down once more, carrying the new long-handled collection basket which he passed to each one of us. Entering into his play, we each put in our heart's love and devotion. Then, when he had made the rounds, he went back up the stairs with the basket over his shoulder, saying: 'You should see what a rich collection I have!' 'Where will you keep it?' a young student asked. He replied: 'In my safety.'

"Student: 'In your safety?'

"Swami: 'My great safety vault.'

"Student: 'Oh, no! not in your safety vault with bills and money!'

"Swami: 'I keep no bills and money there. I said, "in *my* safety," O you, of slow understanding!'

"Then he walked up and down the little hall above us, with the basket over his shoulder, the white *chuddar* still enfolding him, and spoke, in the sort of poetic recitative that he uses at times:

" 'I am the harvester. When the harvest is ripe I shall go out and reap it and I shall share it with you all—all the spiritual joy and blessings that shall be gained. I carry with me a heavy burden (of your gifts), but not heavy, for spirit is always light.

" 'Sleep sweetly. Go to your sleep like children, joyous and care-free children. Good night.' "

All grand thoughts come from the heart.

—*Vauvenargues*

I DID NOT KNOW

By Lillie Tucker

I didn't know, dear Lord,
That life could be so much more sweet,
If I would think of others first
And lay my selfish longings at Thy feet,
For Thee to touch with loving hands,
Forgiving me, and so
Transforming them into Divinity—
But now I know!

I'm sorry, Master dear,
It took so hard a lesson
To teach me this—
To let Thy finger point the way
That I should go—
I didn't know 'twould bring such bliss,
But now I know!

NEW EYES

By Rufus Jones

We must somehow recover our power to see essential realities vividly. It demands new eyes—what the Bible calls *vision*. We have immensely enlarged its scope, both upward and downward, by the invention of telescopes and microscopes. But there are realities of a different order which no increase of the microscope or telescope will ever reveal, which rods and cones and lenses are not made to deal with. "We look," St. Paul said, "not at things that are seen with the eyes, but at things that are not seen, for seeable things are temporal but things which eyes cannot see are eternal." It is for *that* that "new eyes" are needed.

The "eyes" I am talking about, the eyes that see the invisibles, do not belong to a few chosen persons, the spiritually *elite;* they belong, potentially at least, to all of us who have minds. Intellect is never the whole of our type of reason. When Wordsworth said that "Imagination is Reason in its most exalted mood," he was using "imagination" as the capacity in us to *see* the realities by which we live. We all do it in our measure, but it is a capacity which can be cultivated, improved, expanded, as certainly as the capacity to see perspective is cultivated by the artist.

Open the Bible almost anywhere at random and you will find a sentence beginning with the word, *Behold.* We are being asked to see with "new eyes." This call to "behold" expresses surprise, wonder, thrill, joy, admiration. It is an attitude which we express with the exclamation point. If we learn how to *behold* with new eyes we can more often supplement the interrogation point with the exclamation point of wonder and awe.

To see the eternal in the midst of time, to feel and to enjoy the infinite here in the finite, is one of the greatest blessings life has to offer. Plato used to say that life comes to its full glory when some beautiful object, or some loved person, suddenly opens for us a window that gives a glimpse into eternal reality.

We must have new eyes—the eyes of our heart enlightened. That means that we must see the essential realities vividly. We must have our imagination captured. The minute the eyes of your heart are enlightened, the minute your imagination gives you the picture of your path, your goal, it is as good as done.

Who falls for the love of God shall rise a star.

—*Ben Jonson*

LETTER TO A SON

Thirty-five years have passed since discovering in the effects of my father a document which has come to be of the nature of a treasured legacy as I grow older and can appreciate the more its import and utility. Whether the author could foresee what direction my path would take or whether he was only recording for my benefit the conclusions he had drawn from his own experiences, I can never know, but it is strange that after so long a time I should feel that I might have written it myself. Six months after writing, he passed the veils of earthly existence. The letter follows:

————————, Columbia
Aug. 20, 1910

My Son:

One of my chief regrets rests in the fact that the circumstances of my life have not permitted spending more of my time with you, sharing my travels, listening to your dreams and becoming aware of the things which interest you. Now I find myself as he who said, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have I give thee,"—if you are prepared, these lines can be of great value to you when you read them; if you are not duly prepared they probably will not interest you. I pray they may find you ready to use them.

From childhood my parents inculcated regular devotional habits in their children and we have, or rather your mother has, endeavored to guide you similarly with what I believe to have been great freedom of thought and expression. Indeed, I have noted with pleasure your involuntary interest in those volumes at home concerning the Orient and the classics. It would have afforded me great pleasure to know how deeply you had read and to have conversed with you on these inexhaustibly interesting affairs.

In the past twenty years my greatest entertainment has come from these things. They have meant more than I can tell in making lovely otherwise lonely hours in far places, remote from much human contact. There, one becomes more observant and talks little, impressions appear to be more inborn than ordinarily and I am sure, from repeated experience, that they are more trustworthy. Please do not infer, therefore, that the things whereof I write were obtained wholly from books or from my modest library at home, although they have had their part in developing my interest in those subjects.

It might be interesting for you to know just why these things have exerted so great an appeal to me. Long ago I discovered that while engaged in meditating upon certain portions of the New Testament, they became startlingly more personal and living when I could imagine myself in the character of Jesus rather than as being one of the listeners, or a reader of the words. In a very real sense and within the limits circumscribed by my own nature, it seemed as though I were one with Him.

Since that time I have continued to cultivate this habit, not for the purpose of gaining an emotional experience, for I believe it desirable to control emotion, but because of a growing perception that things within myself were becoming different; I was finding that difficult persons acted differently towards me than to others; annoying situations would not distress me to the same degree as formerly; anger, I found, was becoming more readily governed. For me this has come to import more clearly the meaning of, "I am the Way, the Light and the Truth."

Years later when I became absorbed in the study of the Gospel of Buddha, the application of this idea yielded similar effects in greater understanding of the spirit of his teaching. It may seem surprising to you, but this gospel has enlarged my

understanding of Jesus, and the New Testament enlightened for me many of those expressions which to me had been obscure. The points of identity in the Gospel of Jesus and that of Buddha are more numerous than the differences, but both are notable and useable, I think, when properly understood.

It was probably ten or twelve years ago that I was brought into contact with reliable and authoritative expositions of the Scriptures and philosophy of India, particularly Vedanta. My interest in these Hindu classics stems from the time my attention had been directed toward them by remarks found in the writings of the revered General Albert Pike and with whose works you must now be familiar. It seemed to be a piece of the same fabric described above when I learned that in my time a celebrated and highly revered saint of this faith had actually lived daily for protracted periods in the character of Jesus, Mohammed and Buddha at successive times. It is of absorbing interest to myself that this holy one, who is such a vivid expression of Vedanta, should conform in his life to all that Christians hold dear and was a living demonstration of Jesus' expression, "I and my Father are One." I could recommend for your most serious consideration a careful acquaintance with the Gospel of Ramakrishna.

Now, it is true, as someone has said, one learns to walk with the Masters; it is so profoundly interesting because it is so profoundly real and the methods for acquiring this companionship are utterly simple. I say they are simple because they now appear so to me from the place whereon I stand on my particular path. I would summarize for you what I mean, both by using references with which you should be familiar, and because I have come to find I am able to resolve all my personal questions in the light of them; they are my yardstick, my rule and guide, these three:

1. The first and great commandment and the second —

preferably as expressed in the Gospel according to Mark 12:29.

2. The beatitudes, in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:3 to 11.

3. Love (charity) in 1 Corinthians 13:1 to 7.

Do you recall asking me during my last visit at home with you, what are the Mysteries? I could not answer you suitably for your comprehension. At that time you were too mystified at my attempts to explain a proposition which is incomprehensible to the majority of men or ripened age, while not all those who have the knowledge can give expression to their knowledge and *no* man can give adequate expression except to another who has had the same experience. I do not mean to deal in paradoxes nor am I attempting to confound you, but I can assure you that those individuals who have mastered the application to themselves of the above injunctions, they, my son, are on the threshold of the Mysteries. To walk with the Masters means to walk with God.

Three great prophets, Jesus, Buddha, Ramakrishna, all of them Masters, sublime exponents of the dignity of humility, are my companions at will and between whom there is no rivalry for priority.

While the references I give are in our New Testament, you should be keenly aware that they are common in spirit among all the great voices which the human world has heard. Familiarity with identical thoughts expressed from different viewpoints in other Scriptures frequently makes much more lucid what would otherwise be obscure passages in our own.

I can recommend for your cultural improvement as well as for additional light on our Scriptures a conscientious examination of the Sacred Books of the Hindus, at the very least their Bhagavad Gita. If by this time you should desire to enquire further, the necessary avenues to do so will open before

you. There are countless Scriptures, countless philosophies, but with Vedanta, philosophy is the Scripture and conflicts with no man's freedom of thought or conscience.

The precepts contained in my yardstick sum up our duty to God and to man, they are the measure of our conceptions of a gentleman, they are the standards by which good breeding is measured. I can testify that my experiences teach me they are universal. Things which are good must be universal. Universals cannot be circumscribed or they cease to be universal.

At this time, when you are about to enter an institution of higher learning to prepare yourself for one of the professions, I speculate whether your destiny may take you to far places. Perhaps your steps may cross mine, perhaps your mind will naturally gravitate to these things in the periods when it must find relaxation from more or less intense application to professional responsibilities. If so, at these times, you will in your retrospective moments, recall something of what I am herein trying to convey to you.

In closing, I would leave with you also my heartfelt conviction that according to my understanding, thought and feeling, it is a matter of indifference whether I be considered Christian, Mohammedan, Jew, Vedantist or Taoist. I make no profession of faith in creed or dogma at this point in my life, because the things to which I subscribe are no particular private property of any group—they belong to all. The yardstick heretofore mentioned is found in all; if not in word, they are in spirit and the differences are inconsequential.

This is your legacy, that I affirm the desirability, nay, the ultimate necessity of the cultivation of these things by all. Do not put off the sincere application of them too long, my son.

Affectionately,

Your Father.

Of course, at my first reading, I was impressed with the sincerity of motive but I was not prepared, because of my youth, to receive it in the way it had been hoped for, and so all too soon it was only a hazy memory. It is strange, however, that after so long a time, I realize that I have travelled the same path, sought the same sources of written authority. I have also been blessed, for some reason quite unknown to me, in having enjoyed personal contact with a living example of "the Way." His was of the same gracious simplicity, the expression of all three rules of my legacy, he personified all my ideas of what Jesus must have been, sometimes under very trying circumstances. His message was entirely universal and pointed out the universality of all religion in man's efforts to seek God. My words cannot convey adequately all that I received directly and indirectly from Swami Paramananda, spiritual descendant of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, giants of Vedanta.

The peaceful atmosphere of the La Crescenta hills, where he offered solace to countless seekers of peace, works miracles for the sick of heart, and the living presence with which the place is saturated is subtly experienced by those attuned to things of this order. It calls softly forth, "Come, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, I will give you rest." The torch planted by that exalted soul, kept burning by a gallant few of his devoted selfless followers, continues to shed its benign influence over those who seek its comfort. The many who have enjoyed the humble hospitality of the Ashrama are living testimonials of the enduring benefit derived therefrom. From me, the torch bearers have my inmost expressions of appreciation for their courage and self-denial in perpetuating these springs of the living waters at the Temple on the Hills.

I am thankful for the legacy and grateful that I did not put off too long its application.

PREPARATION FOR CHRISTMAS

By Alice Tisdall Hobart

SILENT NIGHT IN SHANGHAI

Everywhere over our country families will be gathered in there be delusion or grief when he perceives this oneness ancient and beautiful song with its lovely opening line, "Silent Night, Holy Night." The words have been with me constantly ever since I read a letter from a friend of mine just liberated from a prison camp in Shanghai, China. She and her husband were again in their own home in that city after nearly three years of imprisonment. During that time they had been crowded together with people of all sorts and at night they could hear the rustling sighs and groans of men, women and children, half-starved and sick—the murmurings of frightened people.

My friend said little of all this. Instead she spoke of her first night in her own home. She lay awake listening to the quiet. "No other sound," she said, "reached me but the wind through the trees outside my window." It was an experience she would never forget—the beauty of silence, its peace, its grandeur.

So it must have been those hundreds of years ago on that silent, holy night when the angels sang, "Peace on earth, good will to men."

Perhaps on this Christmas eve, if we will stop all our murmurings and complaints and pause to listen to the silence of the night, we shall find in the silent night the way to peace on earth and good will to men.

He who perceives all beings as the Self, for him how can their homes and in churches this Christmastime singing the everywhere? —*Isa-Upanishad*

THE POWER OF TRUTH

From "The Questions of King Milinda"

(This ancient belief in the creative power of Truth is found not only in the "Questions of King Milinda" which is held to be contemporary with or slightly antedating the Christian era, but is referred to in the far older Jatakas or Birth Stories of the Lord Buddha. The touching legend of the baby quail, which appeared in the January 1934 issue of the "Message of the East," illustrates beautifully and poignantly the essential characteristics of this belief, which hinges upon what is called an "Act of Truth," or the ranging of Truth, realized and affirmed, against the forces of Nature. While the results recorded by the ancient chroniclers may seem archaic and altogether fantastic, the central concept does give an almost tonic sense of basic Reality and renewed faith in the invincibility of *That Which Eternally Is.* As the Bhagavad Gita puts it: "There is no existence for the unreal and the real can never be non-existent."

It will be noted that in this Buddhist commentary, as in the Birth Tales, the stress is always laid, not on the non-existence of the ill to be overcome or the power to be vanquished, but on the reality of Truth itself or some one of Its aspects.—Editor.)

[King Milinda said:] "Venerable Nagasena, your people say thus: 'King Sivi gave his eyes to the man who begged them of him, and when he had thus become blind, new eyes were given to him from heaven*.' This statement is unpalatable, it lays its speaker open to rebuke, it is faulty. For it is said in the Sutta: 'When the cause has been utterly destroyed, when there is no longer any cause, any basis left, then the divine eye cannot arise.' So if he gave his eyes away, the statement that he received new (divine) ones must be false: and if divine eyes arose to him, then the statement that he gave his eyes away must be false. This dilemma too is a double-pointed one, more knotty than a knot, more piercing than an arrow, more confusing than a jungle. It is now put to you.

*There is nothing in the text of the Jataka of the new eyes being "divine" or "from heaven." There new, ordinary eyes arose to him as the result of his virtue.

Rouse up in yourself the desire to accomplish the task that is set to you, to the refutation of the adversaries!"

"King Sivi gave his eyes away, O king. Harbor no doubt on that point. And in stead thereof divine eyes were produced for him. Neither on that point should you harbor doubt."

"But then, Nagasena, can the divine eye arise when the cause of it has been utterly destroyed, when no cause for it, no basis remains?"

"Certainly not, O king."

"What then is the reason by which in this case it arose, notwithstanding that its cause had been utterly destroyed, and no cause for it, no basis, remained. Come now. Convince me of the reason of this thing."

"What then, O king? Is there in the world such a thing as Truth, by the asseveration of which true believers can perform the Act of Truth?"

"Yes, Lord, there is. And by it true believers make the rain to fall, and fire to go out, and ward off the effects of poison, and accomplish many other things they want to do."

"Then, great king, that fits the case, that meets it on all fours. It was by the power of Truth that those divine eyes were produced for Sivi the king. By the power of the Truth the divine eye arose when no other cause was present, for the Truth itself was, in that case, the cause of its production. Suppose, O king, any Siddha* on intoning a charm, and saying: 'Let a mighty rain now fall!' were to bring about a heavy rainfall by the intoning of his charm—would there in that case be any cause for rain accumulated in the sky by which the rain could be brought about?"

"No, Sir. The charm itself would be the cause."

"Just so, great king, in the case put. There would be no ordinary cause. The Truth itself would be sufficient reason for the growth of the divine eye!"

*Knower of a powerful charm.

"Now suppose, O king, a Siddha were to intone a charm, and say: 'Now let the mighty blazing, raging mass of fire go back!' and the moment the charm were repeated it were to retreat—would there be any cause laid by which would work that result?"

"No, Sir, the charm itself would be the cause."

"Just so, great king, would there in our case be no ordinary cause. The power of Truth would be sufficient cause in itself!"

"Now suppose, O king, one of those Siddhas were to intone a charm and were then to say: 'Let this malignant poison become as a healing drug!' and the moment the charm were repeated that would be so—would there be any cause in reserve for that effect to be produced?"

"Certainly not, Sir. The charm itself could cause the warding off of that malignant poison."

"Just so, great king, without any ordinary cause the Truth itself was, in King Sivi's case, a sufficient reason for the reproduction of his eyes.

"Now there is no other cause, O king, for the attainment of the four Noble Truths. It is only by means of an Act of Truth that they are attained. In the land of China, O king, there is a king of China, who when he wants to charm the great ocean, performs at intervals of four months a solemn Act of Truth, and then on his royal chariot drawn by lions, he enters a league's distance into the great ocean. Then in front of the head of his chariot the mighty waves roll back, and when he returns they flow once more over the spot. But could the ocean be so drawn back by the ordinary bodily power of all gods and men combined?

"Sir, even the water in a small tank could not be so made to retire, how much less the waters of the great ocean!

"By this know then the force of Truth. There is no place to which it does not reach.

"When Asoka the righteous ruler, O king, as he stood one day at the city of Pataliputta in the midst of the townsfolk and the country people, of his officers and his servants, and his ministers of state, beheld the Ganges river as it rolled along filled up by freshets from the hills, full to the brim and over-flowing—that mighty stream five hundred leagues in length, and a league in breadth—he said to his officers: 'Is there any one, my good friends, who is able to make this great Ganges flow backwards and up stream?'

" 'Nay, Sire, impossible,' said they.

"Now a certain courtesan, Bindumati by name, was in the crowd there by the river side, and she heard people repeat the question that the king had asked. Then she said to herself: 'Here am I, a harlot, in this city of Pataliputta; by the sale of my body do I gain my livelihood; I follow the meanest of vocations. Let the king behold the power of an Act of Truth performed even by such as I.' and she performed an Act of Truth*. And that moment the mighty Ganges, roaring and raging, rolled back up stream, in the sight of all the people!

"Then when the king heard the din and the noise of the movement of the waves of the whirlpools of the mighty Ganges, amazed, and struck with awe and wonder, he said to his officers: 'How is this, that the great Ganges is flowing backwards?'

"And they told him what had happened. Then filled with emotion the king went himself with haste and asked the courtesan: 'Is it true what they say, that it is by your Act of Truth that this Ganges has been forced to flow backwards!'

" 'Yes, Sire,' said she.

*That is to say, in the words of the Quail Story, she "called to mind the attributes of the Buddhas who had passed away, and made a solemn asseveration of the faith" that she had in the truth they had taught.

"And the king asked: 'How have you such power in the matter? Or who is it who takes your words to heart (and carries them out)? By what authority is it that you, insignificant as you are, have been able to make this mighty river flow backwards?'

"And she replied: 'It is by the power of Truth, great king.'

"But the king said: 'How can that power be in you—you, a woman of wicked and loose life, devoid of virtue, under no restraint, sinful, who have over-stepped all limits, and are full of transgression, and live on the plunder of fools?'

" 'It is true, O king, what you say. That is just the kind of creature I am. But even in such a one as I so great is the power of the Act of Truth that I could turn the whole world of gods and men upside down by it.'

"Then the king said: 'What is this Act of Truth? Come now, let me hear about it.'

" 'Whatsoever, O king, gives me gold—be he a noble or a Brahman or a tradesman or a servant—I regard them all alike. When I see he is a noble I make no distinction in his favor. If I know him to be a slave I despise him not. Free alike from fawning and from dislike do I do service to him who has bought me. This, your Majesty, is the basis of the Act of Truth by the force of which I turned the Ganges back.'

"Thus, O king, is it that there is nothing which those who are steadfast to the Truth may not enjoy. And so King Sivi gave his eyes away to him who begged them of him, and he received eyes from heaven, and that happened by his Act of Truth. But what is said in the Sutta that when the eye of flesh is destroyed, and the cause of it, the basis of it, is removed, then can no divine eye arise, that is only said of the eye, the insight that arises out of contemplation. And thus, O king, should you take it."

"Well said, Nagasena! You have admirably solved the dilemma I put to you; you have rightly explained the point in which I tried to prove you wrong: you have thoroughly overcome the adversary. The thing is so, and I accept it thus*."

To those who cry out against romance I would say, "You yourself are romance. You are the lost prince herding obscurely among the swine. The romance of your spirit is the most marvelous of stories. Your wanderings have been greater than those of Ulysses."

—*Æ (G. Russell)*

REPORT

ANANDA-ASHRAMA, CALIFORNIA

The summer program at Ananda-Ashrama, California, was a full one, several extra activities being added to the regular observances and celebrations which belong to this season of the year.

On June 21st a vigil in the Temple was kept by the Ashrama community in remembrance of Swami Paramananda's day of final release June 21, 1940. On Sunday, the 23rd, both services were dedicated to his living memory. At the morning service Sister Daya called on certain old friends to speak—Miss Sherwood, Mrs. Field, Mr. Hess, Mr. Nelson, and Mr. Kopp—and they all gave spontaneous and touching tribute to the ever-living teacher who, while in his body, stood for them as a symbol for the spiritual ideal. The singers in the morning, and Miss Alta Grimes with her

*This idea of the power of an Act of Truth which Nagasena here relies on is most interesting and curious. The exact time at which it was introduced into Buddhism is as yet unknown. It has not been found in the Pitakas themselves, and is probably an incorporation of an older, pre-Buddhistic, belief. The person carrying it out is supposed to have some goodness, to call that virtue (and perhaps, as in the case of the quail, the goodness of the Buddhas also) to mind, and then to wish something, and that thing, however difficult, and provided there is nothing cruel in it, then comes to pass. It is analogous to the mystic power supposed to reside in names.

'cello, in the afternoon, provided the musical background.

Swami Vivekananda's day of liberation, July 4th, fell this year on a Thursday, so a special memorial service was announced for that evening in lieu of the regular class. A goodly number responded, and as usual the great Swamiji seemed to be dynamically present as Sister Daya dwelt upon his mighty spirit and deathless influence.

On June 13th a novel entertainment was given by the Ashrama for the benefit of Indian famine relief when motion pictures, obtained through the Extension Division of the University of California, were presented out of doors in the Temple patio. A good friend, Mr. Francis Grosjean, who owns a sound projector, made the showing possible, and the response was extraordinarily generous. The summer evening, the beautiful setting, the pictures (most of them travel scenes—all with sound and some in technicolor) formed a combination which created in the audience desire for another evening of the same kind.

Therefore arrangements were made for a similar performance on August 1st, this time for the benefit of the Ashrama organ fund. The pictures were charming sequences of travel and nature study, both interesting and beautiful, and again the attendance was excellent and the response enthusiastic.

On Sunday evening, July 7th, Sister Daya, at the invitation of Major and Mrs. Turner, spoke briefly at their monthly Open House in Beverly Hills. The subject for the evening was Famine Relief and the chief speaker, Mr. Eric Johnson of the famous Friends' Service Committee, directed the whole discussion toward India and her heart-breaking need. He spoke of her as the world's forgotten country, and paid deep and sincere tribute to her people.

The Ananda-Ashrama is happy to report that to date its total receipts for India famine relief amount to $1,165.00.

As it seems certain that actual food in any adequate amount is lacking in the Orient, the Ashrama is sending the money obtained to the Friends' Service Committee. This Committee, which has been commissioned by the government in India to buy food in the open market for famine relief (since the United States Government's allotment was too small to serve any practical purpose) will join hands with those who are seeking to send to India the multipurpose food developed by scientists at the California Institute of Technology, and with the Ramakrishna Mission, which will act as a distributing agent.

VEDANTA CENTRE, BOSTON, MASS.

Throughout the summer the Vedanta Centre remained open in order to carry on its regular program of Sunday Services and Tuesday Classes. The week-days were quiet and uneventful except for the visits of newcomers to the Library and Reading Room, who frequently returned to be present at the meetings. The majority of the Centre's resident Community stayed at the Ashrama in Cohasset, which was the focal point of all important activities.

ANANDA ASHRAMA, COHASSET, MASS.

The singing silence of the tree-adorned peace retreat was broken again and again by the frequent arrivals and departures of its many friends and devotees. A number of them spent their vacations either at the house on the rock or at the spacious bungalow under the pines which is now equipped with two extra attractive rooms. Services were held daily in the morning and before dusk out-of-doors whenever the weather was favorable. On the whole, the season has been unusually cool with many heavy rainstorms. A period of silence was observed in the middle of the day and brought to a close by reading from the Scriptures and other inspired literature. Often there were guests who came only for the

day to carry away a little of the beauty and peace which are the chief attractions of the place. On rainy days, a blazing log-fire warmed and cheered the spacious room of the lower house. Around it gathered the earnest group, praying, listening to Services, reading or enjoying happy fellowship. Every Saturday a number of friends, ranging from twenty to thirty, were present, sharing in the regular afternoon Service as well as the dinner prepared by Srimati Gayatri Devi.

The two highlights in the calendar of the season's events were the observances of Fourth of July in memory of Swami Vivekananda, whose final liberation makes the day sacred to all followers of Vedanta, and Labor Day on September 3rd. On both occasions a large group participated in the day's activities consisting of Services, silence, the dinner, prepared chiefly of Ashrama-grown vegetables, and complete enjoyment of the out-of-doors under perfect weather conditions. The three-hour period of silence on July 4th, held in Nature's Sanctuary, beginning with brief instructions by Gayatri Devi on how to make the silence most helpful and ending with remarks on the holy life of Swami Vivekananda, will long be remembered for the beauty of the stone altar adorned with orange day-lilies.

The Ashrama will remain open until the end of autumn. It is hoped that good weather will encourage its many devotees to visit it frequently and even periodically stay there overnight.

We regret to announce that because of the increased cost of production we have been obliged to raise the price of the *Message of the East*. With this issue the price of the subscription will be $2.50 per year, the price for a single copy will be sixty-five cents. Foreign subscriptions will be $3.00 per year.

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VEDANTA QUARTERLY

Message of the East

VOLUME XXXV 1946 NUMBER 4

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OCTOBER · NOVEMBER · DECEMBER

SOUL'S POTENTIALITY

Issued by

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Message of the East

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

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

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REBIRTH OF CHRIST

By Angelus Silesius

God's spirit falls on me as dewdrops on a rose
If I but like a rose on Him my heart unclose.
The soul wherein God dwells (what church can holier be?)
Becomes a moving tent of heavenly majesty.

Lo! in the silent night a child is born
And all is brought again that e'er was lost or lorn.
Could but thy soul, O man, become a silent night,
God would be born in thee, and set all things aright.

Ye know God but as Lord, hence Lord His name with thee;
I feel Him but as love, and love His name with me.
How far from here to Heaven? Not very far, my friend;
A single hasty step will all thy journey end.

Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born,
If He's not born in thee, thy soul is all forlorn.
Hold there! Why runnest thou? Know Heaven is in thee;
Seekest thou for God elsewhere, His face thou'lt never see.

In all eternity no tone can be so sweet
As when man's heart with God in unison doth beat.
Whate'er thou lovest, man, that too become thou must—
God if thou lovest God; dust if thou lovest dust.
Ah! would the heart but be a manger for the birth,
God would become once more a child of earth.
Immeasurable is the highest? Who but knows it?
And yet a human heart can perfectly enclose it.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

All will surely realize God. All will be liberated. It may be that some get their meal in the morning, some at noon, and some in the evening; but none will go without food. All, without any exception, will certainly know their real Self.

—*Sri Ramakrishna*

This that doth ne'er grow old, this never ageing, never dying Way—
No sorrow cometh there nor any enemies, nor is there any crowd,
None faint or fail, no fear cometh, nor aught that doth torment—
To THIS, the Way of *Amata,* have gone
Full many, and today e'en now it may be won
But only by a life that's utterly
Surrrendered in devotion. Labor not
And ye shall not attain!

—*Psalms of the Buddhist Sisters*

We have writing and teaching, science and power; we have tamed the beasts and schooled the lightning, . . . but we have still to tame ourselves. —*H. G. Wells*

No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friends' or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me because I am involved in mankind. And therefore, never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee. —*John Donne*

Life is not entirely real until it opens into the sense of the infinite. —*Sri Aurobindo*

All errors are the want of love. —*William Law*

SOUL'S POTENTIALITY

By Swami Paramananda

(An Address delivered by the Swami at the Vedanta Centre of Boston, on Sunday, April 2nd, 1922.)

"We live in succession, in division, in parts and in particles. Meantime within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence, the universal beauty." —*Emerson.*

There are two conflicting opinions in regard to the soul of man, and this inevitably leads to two different attitudes toward life. According to one, we look up, reach out and try to find something beyond the range of ourselves. According to the other, the soul (that is, the indwelling Spirit) already possesses all things. It stands above the phenomenal world, above little happenings and big happenings, and dwells at such an altitude that everything is visible and nothing great or small can escape it. The first point of view implies what Emerson calls the "eating, drinking, sleeping man" who takes the attitude of being only what he appears to be — a man of flesh, who feels aches and pains and physical limitations as most real and is painfully aware of material obstructions. The second viewpoint sees as the real man a Self within — divine, transcendent, potent, forever untouched by any outer conditions whatsoever. The human being who becomes aware of this great inward Reality is freed from fear and from attachment to the passing things of life, which by their very nature can be so easily destroyed or taken away. Formerly he thought he could not live without these things even for a day, but such ideas vanish altogether once he feels himself related to that inner Immensity,—his true Entity, boundless and endless.

In the Indo-Aryan conception these two distinctive types of thought form what are called the *dvaita* and *advaita* (the dualist and monistic) philosophies. The dualist is he who

stepping out from himself, as it were, seeks Another, a Greater, whom he calls God, Truth, or whatever name he pleases. He looks for something beyond himself, and whenever he comes across that which he feels is a manifestation of this Power, he adores, he worships. The monist does not want to recognize anything outside of himself, not because he wishes to ignore the realities of the outer universe, but having started with the theme that there is but One, he feels that that One must suffice.

This idea of oneness, and of the Self as being identical with that One, may seem like egotism. That a man should ever venture to assert his supremacy over all material things, that he should claim to be beyond birth and death and disease and all afflictions, must appear at the outset (to some minds at least) as an absurdity and sacrilegious. As we analyze, as we reflect, as we go deep down within ourselves, however, we begin to realize that this infinite "I" is not the same "I" that the average person asserts through his ignorance, and through his identification with the physical. It is entirely different and bears no trace of egotism at all. We find it proclaimed in the Vedic scriptures, in the *Upanishads* and in the *Bhagavad-Gita* when the Lord Sri Krishna, speaking of that Self, asserts: "Sword cannot pierce It, fire cannot burn It, water cannot wet It and air cannot dry It. It cannot be pierced or burned or wet or dried. It is eternal, indestructible and impenetrable." No man who carried egotism and selfishness in his heart could reach that lofty height.

Now this potentiality of the Spirit, do we possess it? Do we actually have access to this innate Reality, and if we do, why are we not aware of the fact? Why is it that we go on begging for our happiness and for those passing, changing things which we feel will bring it about? If we are

born of indestructibility, why is it that we dream about the destructible? Herein lies one of the great studies of life: the seeming and the real. One gives us the common, the beggarly attitude, the other gives us a definite, positive vision of inherent Truth. One tries to look up from beneath, the other looks from above below. You know how it is when you stand on a low level; you may gaze toward the mountain-top and think that you have seen it, yet how often you are deceived. You do not really see it at all. You see lower peaks in front, or sometimes when you do perceive the outline, many essential things are hidden from you, because you have no direct contact. For the same reason, there is confusion and conflict in relation to our own life. We do not know the truth directly from our own experience. We may quote religious texts, (we shall find many in the different scriptures of the world and they all describe the Power that resides in man), we may conceive this Power intellectually, we may theorize about It; but to know It, to feel It, to carry It in our consciousness is another matter. Herein we find the cause of all the differences in men's religious conceptions.

There are those who when they hear it said that every soul is inherently pure and sinless think it a dangerous doctrine. People, they think, should be reminded of their imperfections and made to be humble. This sounds logical but will not a man who has found directly his own inner majesty as an absolute fact, will he not overcome all evil? Evil is not overcome by evil, and weakness we never overcome by weak thoughts, but rather by uniting ourselves with That which is strong, spiritual and dynamic. Light always overcomes darkness; wisdom always overcomes ignorance. That is the universal law, and as soon as we learn to live by it, we are free.

The soul is not our organ, as man may imagine. At pres-

ent he identifies himself with the body, and feels instinctively that if the body is destroyed, he will be destroyed, that if his hands or feet, or any part of his body, is injured, he will be injured. But hands and feet and all the other members are the organs which the soul, the Being within, uses, and as soon as we realize this, as soon as we realize that our real Self is quite apart from the outer, at once our whole attitude changes. Take, for instance, a person who has become provoked because of a harsh word that has been said to him. This word has irritated him. Why? Because for him the whole of life rests upon the basis of physical existence. He thinks he is wounded owing to the fact that all the time he is identifying himself with the body, the flesh, the limited instrument. As soon, however, as that Immensity dawns in his soul, these things no longer exist for him. He smiles at the memory. This does not mean that he merely makes a tremendous effort to endure them, but he has transcended them. For him they have ceased to be. He has risen in a flight of consciousness. He is untouched; he is triumphant.

One who possesses a direct, a definite consciousness of innermost Reality is in all ways a better human being. Even in his ordinary conduct he carries himself with nobility. Though he may have a thousand occasions to be molested, he is not molested and he rises above all afflictions. It is a great gain when we can go through life not expecting everything to be made easy for us and all obstructions to be removed from our path. These ordeals and trials that come upon us prepare us for a greater life and consciousness by drawing down our latent power from within. We may pray for absolute protection, we may hope to be completely shielded, but it cannot be; the soul would miss the discipline, would miss the beneficent influence which these occasions provide.

The soul is not frightened by the confusion of life, but man is frightened. He always wants to escape from these unpleasant things. He seeks to run away from them, but he can never do so, because the remedy does not lie on the outside. It lies within his own self.

Now great trials and tribulations may turn us inward, but what a wonderful thing it is when man of his own accord turns within, not because he is defeated, not because his life is spoiled and he has nothing left to cling to, but because he seeks Truth. One who seeks it in this way, if he does not allow himself to be distracted by the things of this material existence, finds something at last which not only fills his immediate need, but gives him enduring satisfaction. We may, for instance, seek some intellectual gift or some power which we think will benefit our physical life; we may have ambition to become great in this world, or we may have a definite goal in some other direction; but if we are fortunate enough to find that One, we shall find all these things contained in it. That is the most marvelous discovery that any individual can make. The idea of the Soul, the idea of God, of Truth, of perfect happiness and blessedness may, in the beginning, be vague and visionary and indistinct, but when we find our access to that supreme Reality, we discover everything in its fulness: all is there; nothing is lacking. Solomon prayed for wisdom. He prayed for it above all earthly things, above rubies and gold and kingdoms, but when he found it, he realized that all those treasures were contained in it. The same way it is with the Soul.

One of the great *Upanishads* declares that the man who finds his access to his inner Being, one who has realized the Truth, is full of unending happiness; not selfish happiness; not happiness for a day or a year; but happiness that knows no break. We cannot conceive unending happiness in this

life, because our happiness as a rule is dependent on circumstances. When we acquire something we desire or come in contact with someone we love, we feel delight, while separation from these brings grief. But the happiness that comes from within, because we have our contact with our real Being, is not dependent on anyone or anything or any locality. It is unending, unbounded, unconditioned. When we possess it we can lift other hearts from despondency, not by quoting ideas we have conceived from books, but because we ourselves have become glowing examples of perfect bliss. This is why the sages sing the glory of the Soul.

When a man has entered within his inner life, the real life, the life that is imperishable, he does not abandon his present existence, he does not become neglectful toward it; rather he is able to enrich it. Not only does he know how to fortify himself with skilfulness and wisdom, but he is able to share with those who are immediately surrounding him. It is the power of the Spirit which sustains us and our fellow beings. Think if you could impart this idea to humanity as a whole! What might it not mean to civilization! Think if you could implant in the mind of a criminal the conviction that his Soul within is eternal and pefect! Could you measure the result? Unfortunately the criminal would probably not believe you. That is what makes him a criminal — the fact that he has gotten so far away from the great Ideal and has made the physical life all in all. War, intolerance — all our fictitious barriers and personal misery, as well as the collective misery of people as a whole — consist in this loss of the Real. We live too much on the surface; thus our life has become impoverished, and this impoverishment leads us to seek to fill our emptiness continually from without. So it is that whenever man finds that he lacks anything, he tries to grab it from someone else. In this way the world goes

on from one evil to another. Man tries to remedy this condition but he cannot find a remedy, for the simple reason that it lies in the spiritual and he is not looking there.

Each individual being contributes his share of good or evil to the destiny of the whole. He either helps to corrupt the community or uplift it. Thus if we could improve the individual, the entire humanity would share in the result. Now the power of the individual lies in the soul. The misguided zeal of one man can bring depression and gloom, as well as all kinds of unwholesome feelings, while another who has found his access to divine Reality, will be able to uplift his fellow men.

At first, when we hear of this great Ideal, of finding our happiness and perfection in the One, we feel unrelated to it. The average person finds it difficult to connect himself with the cosmic universe. But we all feel a very definite connection with our immediate surroundings, and our chief interest lies in our relationship to our household, to our friends — to those who are connected with us. We have a longing to give to them that which is good, helpful and constructive, but in order to give, we must first acquire. Let us look within ourselves. What have we to give? We all know there is great happiness in giving. Everyone enjoys giving. The giver always feels exaltation whenever he is able to impart anything, whether it be knowledge or some material asset. The material gift, however, is a very small thing compared to the real gift, the great gift which man holds within his own being, often without knowing it is there. A day will come when he will know, and when that light shines forth he will at once come into possession of an unbounded consciousness.

Swami Vivekananda once said: "Give, give, and ask nothing in return." The thought may come, "How can I give

when I have nothing?" Do not ever think that! You are the possessor of the Infinite. The Infinite is behind you, above you, below you, around you. It is your heritage; your potentiality. Draw from that! It is only our misguided, misconceived idea which gives us this notion that we are limited and that if we give we shall lose. There is no loss in the cosmic universe, and as soon as we realize that, this weeping in a corner, this complaining and hiding one's face in the dark, with the idea that one is sinful and degraded — all this will vanish. A mighty Power will descend upon us and we shall rise up, not only as individuals, but as an inherent part of humanity.

It is this universal spirit that we sense when we come into the presence of a great soul — of a soul who is great not because of physical strength, not because of money or fame or intellectual reputation, but because he knows above all that he carries the spark of Divinity within him. In this consciousness alone man finds a stable ground — stable under all circumstances. Heat and cold, pleasure and pain, success and failure, praise and blame, these we cannot avoid. Sometimes people smile on us and show us a kindly countenance, and then, through misunderstanding or apparently for no reason at all, they turn away. Are we to rise and fall with these varied conditions? Are we to lose our point of view and live just as if our life were entirely centered in these outer circumstances? Shall we not rather remember that the real power, the real possibilities of life, lie within? The soul of man is potent, is invincible. Moreover the soul of a saint and the soul of a sinner have descended from the same Source. This may shock you. You may ask: "How can these two who are so contrary — one constructive, the other destructive — how can they have the same origin?" Nevertheless it is true, and the so-called sinner, once he

knows this, once he becomes aware of the redeeming Power within him, ceases to be a sinner.

Every one has in his own keeping this power of redemption, the power to destroy all evil, all wickedness, but he must know that he has it. It is not just a question of theory, or of a poetic, visionary dream. It is something definite that we must consciously possess. If prayer will help us, then let us use prayer. If philosophy brings this realization, we should practise philosophy. Whatever helps us to attain, that we should follow. In regard to this, the Indo-Aryan conception shows forth a tremendous, tolerant attitude. All souls, it holds, in their struggle to find their heritage, must choose their own distinctive paths; every one must express in his own way, but let no man ever forget his birthright, let him not forget that he is part of Divinity, born of the Spirit, and not just what he seems to be — an isolated, material fragment.

The average person looks upon life as a material production. Even some of the philosophers hold that this body is composed merely of earth, water, fire, air, ether. But is there not something more? The body may be whole, seemingly intact, yet when the living principle withdraws, can anyone keep it intact? Where then is its power? The hands cannot move, the eyes cannot see, the ears cannot hear—none of these organs can function, because the dominating factor, the Real, has departed. Now this Real and the way to it constitute the theme of philosophy and the heart of religion. Religion does not mean merely getting hold of a doctrine, repeating a text, or observing a dogma. It is to know. It is being and becoming. Therefore in India they lay tremendous emphasis on individual experience. They hold that every person must know for himself. The Voice of Truth tells us:

"It is you who have the saving grace. It is you who have the power to look up and see with bright light the face of Reality. Also you have the power to close your eyes and see nothing but despair and despondency. Yes, through your imagination, you can even magnify your misery to such a degree that you will feel that you are doomed, that there is no escape, no salvation for you. Therefore lift up your head and connect yourself with the Infinite, the Undying!"

In our lives if there are thoughts, actions or conditions which are barring our vision, we must remove them, we must reorder our life, reorganize, readjust it in such a manner that our vision may be made clear. For only with clarified vision may we behold the glory of God and find our way to serve mankind. Only as we find the Infinite do we bring saving grace to the world.

India starts with this hypothesis. "O ye children of eternity, of immortal bliss!" — this is her conception of humanity, and is it not a very much sweeter form of address than to say, "O ye children of earth, born of sin and iniquity, and doomed to struggle on and on in the hope of finding salvation on the final Day of Judgment!"? No, rather let us think that we possess the divine heritage within ourselves. We may not be aware of it, but when that power is kindled within us, it is like a blazing fire: it consumes all impurities; it burns them to ashes.

It is this power of the Spirit which sustains man. Even our physical life becomes bigger, stronger, more effective, more potent, more helpful to humanity, if we utilize it with conviction and the consciousness that we are truly Spirit, that no matter what we may have done, we are the children of God. Suppose we have committed some blunder, should we sit down and brood and repeat to ourselves that for us there is no way out? That would be the real blunder. Let

us learn from our mistake. Let us lift our head, our heart, our whole being, knowing that all these things are influences which play upon us in order to make our understanding more firm, and our purpose more enduring.

Through this life we go, sometimes on a straight course, sometimes by a roundabout way. It all depends on our inclination, our tendencies, our habits of thinking. Some people cannot think in a direct line, they lose their mental track, as it were. There is nothing, however, that should hinder us or cause us to believe that we are permanently lost or without inner guidance. On the contrary, let us remind ourselves again and again that we have the effulgent Spirit within us. Let us remind ourselves that that Spirit is birthless, diseaseless, deathless. It is immortal!

This beautiful, poetic idealism finds supreme expression in the Vedic *Upanishads*. One verse, for example, reminds man: "O man, thy happiness and the fulfillment of thy life lies in the Infinite and Unbounded! Never in the finite, never in the finite!" The finite cannot satisfy the real soul of man. Therefore cling to the Infinite, no matter how vague and remote it may seem when first you turn your gaze toward it. You may indeed feel discouraged — as you look within — to perceive your limitations, your selfish instincts, your inability to be the thing you know. You should not be discouraged. Look up, think, reflect, meditate on the vastness of existence, on the hidden powers of the soul, and as these potentialities are quickened within you, your imperfections will vanish just as darkness vanishes before the light, or the iceberg before the sun.

To bring that Spirit closer to us, or to bring ourselves closer to It, is the great aim, the great purpose, whether we know it or not, of human life and living. For as we come into direct contact with It, all our impurities, along with

our fictitious theories, melt away, and we find perfect strength, happiness and peace of mind and heart in that great vision.

CHRISTMAS ON THE RANCH

By Charlotte Miles

With burning candles we have sown the seed
Of light into the darkness where we strayed
So far from sun and summer in our need
Of cleansing frost and freshening shade.
Fiercely and low have come the winter stars,
The tired Earth is fitful in her sleep, —
For years she bore the bitter corn of wars,
And Death is walking through her dream to reap.
With silent prayers we now have sown again
The seed of love into the darkest night,
Into the depth of winter grains of light, —
Oh may they be of true and single strain
And grow within our care to sheltering trees,
A summer-grove to bear the fruit of Peace.

A wonderful night tonight, so that the spirit goes forth a little, enters the harmony of things, drinks the magic of the world. How beauty moves the heart! And the war cannot destroy it, cannot take from us the feeling that, living or dead, we belong to such perfection. It cannot take the voice from the streams, remove the flight of small wings in the darkness, the gleam of moonlight, the whisper of night about us, nor that bright star. It cannot take from within us the soul that vibrates to loveliness, to the universal rhythm around us.

—John Galsworthy

We see God face to face every hour. *—Emerson*

THE VEIL OF IGNORANCE

By Sister Devamata

(A Class talk given by the Sister at the Vedanta Centre of Boston, February 11th, 1919.)

The veil that hides the Truth from us is not over Truth; it is over our own eyes. This we must keep very clearly before us at all times. There is nothing hidden anywhere in Nature. All the processes of Nature are being carried on openly and may be seen by anyone who has the eyes to see. God has not hidden anything from us. The only thing that veils the highest Truth, the most hidden facts of life, is our own ignorance. God is eager and glad to have us discover all His secrets. He is calling upon us, begging us to understand everything concerning Him and His universe. If we do not respond it is our own fault.

Often the question is asked: "If it is true that everything is open to us and the veil is over our own eyes, why did God ever allow the veil to cover our vision in the first place?" The reason is that freedom is the greatest gift that God has given us. He does not force us even to be good. Merely for our protection, He has put a barrier or law on either side, so that we can move only within a certain limited space. But He gives us a long leash. He lets us discover everything for ourselves as far as is possible. The same tendency we find in all modern education. There are educational systems which hold that a child should not be forced to learn at all. He must learn as he wants to learn. He must be allowed to find out the misfortune of not learning. In other words, he must cut his own way. We are given this same freedom, because we could not attain ultimate freedom if the privilege of freedom were wholly ours. We could know absolute freedom, however, if we could learn to transcend our lower nature.

The principle of freedom is already within us. We have freedom to hold the veil tight over our eyes or to tear it off if we will. But how are we to know this? How are we to lift the veil which hides the very Truth that would remove it? Nothing finite can last forever. If we set out with determination to face towards God rather than towards the world, making the desire to know Him the supreme desire of our life, then this veil will wear out, just as a dress finally wears out. We shall not have to bother to tear it away because it will fall of itself. We are, however, constantly adding to it by clinging to the false things of existence, to the very things out of which the veil is woven, and thus we add to its thickness. We believe those things to be real which are not real. There is not a single relationship that we do not permit to take precedence over our relationship with God. If there is even one human call upon us, we listen to it rather than to the call of the Divine.

How many people there are who say that they would gladly devote themselves to higher things if they did not feel it would isolate them from their fellow men. They are fearful that they will be regarded as selfish if they follow a strong aim of that kind. Yet all the time God is calling: "Please come! I am waiting for you!" But we do not hear because we are listening to the human voices. It is so with our meditation and all our inner activities. We have only to analyze our day to see how our spiritual duties are crowded into a few minutes while our secular duties consume hours. To make God our first concern does not mean, however, that we turn our life upside down. It means that we transform all other duties into God duties. Our life will adjust itself without any violence whatever, once we change our point of view.

The first thing we have to get over is this fear which pos-

sesses us, — the fear of offending, the fear of throwing ourselves out of sympathy with our environment, the fear of failing in some duty, the fear that our life will be wholly changed and disorganized. All these fears must be destroyed in us. We must say: "I have nothing to do with the outcome; I have no calculation to make at all. This I know, that if I have any sense of duty, if I have any love in my heart, if I have any consideration for others, these feelings certainly do not come from me, they come from the God in me. Yes, 'even though He slay me, still will I trust Him!' " It is lack of trust that holds us back. We must be like the child who reaches up and takes its mother's hand and says: "I don't care where you go, only let me go with you." That should be our attitude. God knows the road and everything we must do on the journey. Leave it all to Him, and you shall feel a certain quietness and confidence enter your heart like a silent blessing.

They who know the inner Principle, — the life of the life, the eye of the eye, the ear of the ear, the mind of the mind, they alone comprehend the Supreme. They are conscious that God is within, that He is not to be discovered through mere mental theory, nor are we to seek Him outside, for we shall not find Him there. Often we hear people say: "I am searching for God everywhere!" But they have not yet learned to go beyond the covering. What they see is the light of God playing on the external world, and they like this world with God's light upon it. The Reality, however, is to be perceived only within. This Eternal Being can be known in one way only, — by internal seeking. No amount of outer activity can bring vision of Him. He does not become greater by good works or smaller by evil works.

These two worlds — this outside world and the inner world where all is clear — must not be confounded. God

stands on the boundary between the two. When we find Him by turning within, then both worlds are made known to us. We understand their relation and our relation to them. This awareness of God does not increase with our activities. Our activities may purify us, but it is only by knowledge that we shall tear the veil. The inner Self is all knowledge. The measure of our day should not be what we have done, but how much more we know tonight than we did last night of that infinite Mystery. Have we had the slightest glimpse farther down into ourselves? Have we for one moment caught a flash of that eye behind the eye, of that mind within the mind? It would be a wonderful practice, as we go about our daily tasks, if, occasionally, as we observe something we would stop and think: "Who saw it? These eyes did not see it. It was another, an inner eye. Of course, there was the mind that registered, that took account of the picture in the organ of seeing, but who actually did the seeing?" Likewise if every time we heard something we would ask ourselves: "Who heard?" and every time we thought something, we would stop and say: "Who thought that?" we would learn to become gradually mindful of our inner being.

We never ask a question in all sincerity that we do not grow a little. The trouble is that we move about our daily tasks so unconsciously that we never ask anything. We feel it is foolish to bother. The wise man, however, feels just as a good student feels in school. He is not interested merely in learning lessons; he wants to understand. Pupils used to learn their lessons by heart; but now they are expected to give them in their own words and in their own way. They are expected to think about them. We should be able to interpret our life in a similar manner day after day. Of course to do this all day long would be too great a strain;

but we can do it at intervals throughout the day, whenever we have a little leisure. When we are walking along the street, or sitting in the car, or waiting, we should begin to question: "Who is it that is walking or sitting or waiting?" and soon the answers will begin to come and our understanding to open. Thus we learn that it is not by rushing hither and thither that we are able to perceive the light. All our outer activities do not take the place of the search for knowledge. A little boy may stay away from school. He may chop wood and do many useful things, but when he is twenty-one he still will not know how to read or write. So with us. We may be able to do all sorts of important outer things, but if we have not acquired knowledge of something deeper, we shall be hampered in our conduct of life, and we shall hamper all those with whom we have to deal.

The way to know is to become quiet, subdued, satisfied, patient and collected. These are given as the five essential conditions. We must learn to do everything quietly. There must be quietness within us and all about us. We have to cultivate this quietness and it is very easy to cultivate. As we move there should be no jerkiness, but a certain rhythm, and we should avoid all haste. Haste confuses the mind. We should so systematize our life that we pass quietly from one task to another. Even when we put something down we should do it quietly. Practice in quietness is a wonderful practice. It rests the mind; it soothes it. To enter a house where people move quietly and live quietly is like a benediction. There must also be practice in mental quietness. Often when we are perfectly still in body, we are noisy in our minds. The mind can be rushing hither and thither and talking very loudly; it can be almost screaming, yet outwardly we are not making a sound. That is the worst kind of noise, and never imagine that it is not perceptible ex-

ternally. It reveals itself in the way we act. It nearly always results in our overturning something or dropping and breaking something. Therefore we must quiet the inner noises. If this can be done in no other way, then we can do it by repeating the words, Peace, Quietness, or any text which will calm the mind and start other vibrations.

To be subdued means of course the same thing but in a greater degree. Quietness comes first, as we begin to practise, and then by constantly living it in our life we arrive at the subdued state. Now the only thing that makes us hurry is the belief in the reality of time. As a matter of fact, time does not exist at all. Time is nothing but the interval between two of our thoughts. That is the only way we can know time. When we are absolutely absorbed in a piece of work, an hour will pass and we shall think it was only ten minutes. Time is something we create for ourselves. For this reason, try to move a little less quickly. Try to see how slowly you can do things. Especially here in the West this is very vital. Move rhythmically. One can work in rhythm, one can do all one's work in rhythm. People in India repeat the word OM, or the Name of God — *Narayana*. They find that this puts their whole system into harmony.

We must be satisfied and contented. Naturally if our mind is restless and full of desires for things we cannot have, and we are forever tearing at the veil of ignorance in order to pull it off, we cannot possibly advance in knowledge. Be perfectly contented to go on as slowly as is necessary. Be content to work at a thing as long as you must. Be satisfied to let the thing take its own course.

Finally we must be patient and collected. That inner Principle cannot be gained by mere learning, or by much study, even of the scriptures. In other words, it is not an in-

tellectual knowledge at all. Many people think if they read a great deal they are progressing spiritually. Reading can be just as much of an indulgence as are sense pleasures. For instance, you may know an oak tree, and by and by you may know a beech tree, you may study their peculiarities and their species, but you do not really grow in knowledge of trees until you know "treeness," — the tree within the tree. Always going up, always gaining a higher point of view, that is the knowledge that is meant. It is not finding out more about this plane, it is going to another plane, and the only way we can do that is by developing our higher faculties. Knowledge means development. We must develop something within. Unless we develop our inward faculties by meditation, by practice, we shall not grow in knowledge, because we shall be neglecting those very faculties by means of which we are able to know something greater. Here in the West we go on crowding our minds with facts about the outside universe, but we are utterly blind to the universe within. In the East, the reverse is true. That is, the Oriental is more concerned with the inner. He feels that if he guards that, the outer will take care of itself. It is a fact that as we develop our higher perceptions, new ideas flood our consciousness and overflow into our outer life.

In all these things strength is needful. This knowledge of the inner Self, of God within, cannot be gained by one who is destitute of strength. We must develop our strength in every way. We must have physical strength. We must take good care of our bodies — feed them properly and not indulge them in any way. Any sort of physical indulgence weakens. Observe the athlete, how carefully he lives. His whole idea is to develop strength and endurance. So should we build up our physical instrument. We should do a certain amount of gymnastics every day in order to keep our

body well. It is good for us to make this part of the day's routine. Each day there should be some exercise for strengthening the physical body, and also we should take at least fifteen minutes every day to think about some deeper thing. We should read a paragraph in a book that is difficult for us to understand. We should read it again and again till we do understand. It is good for us to memorize, and our moral strength we should develop in exactly the same way. We should, for instance, set certain tasks for ourselves. Moral strength is strength of will. Therefore we should take some point in which we are weak and practise along that line. We can appoint a fixed task and then do it on the moment. We can create certain practices for ourselves. When some irritating circumstance tends to annoy us, we can stand right up and take it, and refuse to be annoyed. We should not run away from people who rub us the wrong way, but rather we should stay with them, because it is a great opportunity to conquer these reactions in our mind and heart.

In this way we learn little by little to welcome the hard moments in life. We come to feel that they are of the greatest value since they help us to develop our strength, and only the strong can gain the higher knowledge. Now we consider we are injured when difficulties arise, but the strong man glories in difficulties. In spiritual matters no one should expect to have nothing but sugar, candy and sweetmeats. There were times when people in order to gain strength endured self-inflicted austerities. We do not need to do that. Life does it for us nowadays. The daily coming in contact with the world is enough. What a wonderful thing to be able to meet it and not be touched by it!

There are men who have such a longing for education, for the privilege of night-school or of a teacher, that they would

not for the world miss a lesson or waste a moment of study. So should we be in our spiritual life. We should avail ourselves of every opportunity to hear of God or of higher things, or to read some book that deals with God. It does not cost anything to rise a little earlier in order to have a moment of communion with Deity. It does not cost anything to take less time over our meals and seize those moments for thought of the Divine, or to give up invitations to go out into the world for the sake of amusements, in order to be a little quiet and indrawn as a preparation for vision. To me it would seem a great privilege.

Have the feeling that you have made a permanent contract with God, that you have given yourselves up to Him and therefore cannot possibly fail Him. You have asked God to reveal Himself to you. In return, you have given yourself to Truth, and you must meet this responsibility. If you entered into any social or external engagement, you would be very careful to fulfil it. No trained nurse allows herself to sleep when she should be watching, and we should have exactly the same sense in regard to our spiritual undertakings. Nothing should be overlooked, nothing should be forgotten. Hours for practice should be kept just as carefully as we keep the most vital worldly appointment. Then there must be right meditation, not merely an hour of sitting down, or of wandering off in silence. That is, we must have a fixed subject for meditation and we must meditate upon that subject day after day till we have identified ourselves with it. A wise man striving after this higher knowledge by strong, by earnest, by right meditation, finally enters the Home of God.

That is what it means to live constantly in contact with the Source of all happiness, all knowledge, all strength and all life. Yet this possibility we are throwing away every day for the sake of a little worldly pleasure. We are literally

selling our heritage for a mess of pottage. None the less, when anyone comes and tells us this, we almost resent it. We say: "You ought not to preach such things to people!" But has not every great teacher who has come into the world given this very message? We had better wake up. We shall have to do so sooner or later; how much better to do it now! How much better to free ourselves from our slavery to such petty feelings as envy, anger, discouragement and despondency, and be able with a clarified mind to behold Truth everywhere and in all things!

Like a flash is presented to a *Jnani's* [Knower's] consciousness a clear vision of the meaning and drift in the universe. He does not merely believe but sees and knows that the Cosmos, which to the self-conscious man seems to be made up of dead matter, is verily a Living Presence. He sees that instead of men being, as it were, patches of life scattered through an infinite sea of inert substance, they are in reality specks of death in an infinite ocean of life.

He sees that life in man is eternal, as all life is eternal, that the *Atman* alone exists and nothing else; and that the one *Atman* is his own Self.

The illumined ones learn in a few seconds that which no study ever taught or can teach. Especially does he obtain such a conception of the whole as dwarfs all imagination and speculation inherent to ordinary self-conscious existence, and all attempts made to grasp the universe seem petty and ridiculous. —*Aksharajna*

Hold a short and perfect saying — Leave all and thou shalt find all; forsake coveting and thou shalt find rest. Think this over in thy mind and when thou hast fulfilled it thou shalt understand all things. —*Imitation of Christ*

THE CONCEPTION OF THE SELF IN THE UPANISHADS

By S. C. Sen

The authors of the Upanishads, whoever they were, were metaphysicians of no mean order. Their contribution to the central problem of philosophy, *viz.*, the problem of the self, is wonderfully original, and, in my opinion, much in advance of anything that modern philosophy or psychology has been able to tell us. Their method, too, was of the right kind.

It is true, they did not embody their thoughts in methodical or systematic language, but nevertheless, their treatment of the philosophical problems lacked neither method nor system. Badarayana has shown, and following him, Sankara and Ramanuja — to mention only two principal among the commentators on Badarayana's Sutras — how the thoughts of the Upanishads can be woven into a consistent and methodical system, such as can challenge comparison with any *Weltanschaung* that has ever been conceived by the mind of man.

I

As regards methods, the ancient sages have very little to learn from their modern confrères. The psychological method of introspective analysis was well-known to them. They employed it with great skill, enlarging its scope, so as to include in their analysis of consciousness, dream and sleep, as well as waking experiences. The method of phenomenological reduction was well understood and was adopted with equal success. But the most conspicuous feature of the Upanishadic method of investigation is what the ancient teachers called "*Tapas*." *Tapas* was conceived as constituting the *sine-quâ-non,* the indispensable preparatory condition, for the proper investigation of philosophical truths.

No one who had not undergone *tapas* was considered fit for philosophical enquiry, much less for philosophical instruction.

Bhrigu, son of Varuna, went to his father, so we are told in the Taittiriya-Upanishad, and asked for instruction in the doctrine of Brahman. Varuna said, "Perform *tapas,* my son; know Brahman by *tapas;* for *tapas* is the way to Brahman." The son performed *tapas,* came back with an answer about which he was not sure in his own mind, and requested his father to enlighten him. "Go and perform *tapas* again," was the peremptory reply. In this way the son was made to scale higher and higher heights until all his doubts were dissipated, and the truth flashed forth filling his mind with happiness and conviction.

Indra, the king of the gods, and Virochana, the king of the demons, went to Prajapati for instruction in the nature of the self. Both received elementary instruction from the master. Virochana, who did not care for the truth, went away, satisfied with what little he had learnt or mislearnt. But Indra was troubled with doubts and felt that his knowledge was insufficient. He, therefore, stayed with the master and underwent a course of discipline extending over a period of one hundred and five years. At the end of this long period of discipline, when his mind was completely purified by *tapas,* he received the highest illumination.

Upakoshalas, another aspirant after truth, lived in the house of his master, we are told in the Chandogya-Upanishad, for twelve years as a *Brahmacharin.* For twelve years he served his master and tended his fires. The master allowed the other pupils to depart, but Upakoshala was not allowed to go. Then the master's wife took pity on him, went up to the master and said, "This student has regularly performed his *tapas* and carefully tended your fires. Let him now receive instruction, or the fires will blame you." But the mas-

ter did not pay any heed to his wife's expostulations, and went away on a journey. On his return from the journey he found his pupil pure and fit, and gave him the instruction. There are many other anecdotes like the above in the Upanishads, inculcating the importance of mental purification, discipline, or *tapas,* as an indispensable preliminary to the investigation of a philosophical problem.

The Katha-Upanishad (Verse 2, 24) says:

"He who has not turned away from wickedness, who is not tranquil, who is not subdued, whose mind is not concentrated, he cannot obtain the self by knowledge alone." In other words, for a knowledge of the self, one must perform *tapas,* which consists in (1) abstaining from wicked modes of life, (2) the controlling of the senses and the mind and (3) concentration. In the Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad (Verse 4.4.24) we read:

"He who has subdued his outer senses (*Santa*), he who has subdued his inner senses (*Danta*), he who is free from attachment (*Uparata*), he who is patient (*Titikshu*), he who has learnt concentration (*Samahita*), he sees the self in the great Self, and sees all in the Self."

This process of mental and moral purification so as to enable the mind to concentrate on one definite object was a speciality of the method employed by the teachers of the Upanishads.

II

The central problem of the Upanishads is the problem of the Self. The Self, the Upanishads declare, is to be searched for and known; for it alone is blissful, and everything else is "*artam,*" *i.e.,* afflicted with suffering. What then is the Self, the *Atman,* the subject of all experience? The answer is arrived at by stripping the Self of all that is not Self, but is in association with it. This method of phenomenological

reduction, as it is now called by its modern adherents in Germany, which has been adopted in recent times with such remarkable success by Professor Husserl in his works, was followed by the Rishis of old in this country to investigate and discover the true nature of the Self.

The Self, they said, is the knower, the *Atman,* by whose light all things are lighted up. It is the subject of all experience and is in association with an object which it knows. Yet the two, the subject and the object, are antithetical and sharply opposed. The essence of the subject consists in knowing, *i.e.,* consciousness, and the essence of the object in being known, *i.e.,* absence of consciousness. A subject cannot be anything but a subject or knower, and an object cannot be anything but an object — it can never be a knower. Our body, our thoughts, feelings and desires are all objects of knowledge and, though closely related to the self, they are not the self. To transfer their quality to the subject would be entirely wrong. The quality of being known, *i.e.,* unconsciousness, can never be ascribed to the subject, nor can the quality of knowing, *i.e.,* consciousness, be attributed to the object, whether the object be external like the table I am writing on, or internal like the thoughts and feelings that are passing in my mind.

Hence the Self, the subject of conscious experience, must be different from the physical body and its states, as well as from the internal organs like the mind and its states, such as thoughts, feelings, and desires, all of which are objects of knowledge. The subject is above all objects which it knows or illuminates. It cannot itself be objectively known. How can the knower, asks Yajnavalkya, become the object of knowledge, for who can know the knower? "Verily, beloved one," Yajnavalkya thus instructs his wife, "the Self is imperishable and of indestructible nature. For when there

is duality (as in waking and dream experience), then one sees the other, one hears the other, one perceives the other, one knows the other. But when the Self is all in all (as in dreamless sleep or in moments of highest illumination) how should he see another, how should he know another? How should he know him by whom he knows all? . . . How, O beloved one, should the knower know the knower?"

Yet the existence of the Self or the knower cannot be denied or doubted; for to doubt it, as Sankara and Descartes have shown, would be to doubt the doubter, which is an absurdity. We can know the Self only by being the Self; we can know the knower by being the knower. In self-knowledge, knowing and being are identical. This characteristic of self-knowledge follows from the nature of the Self as knower or consciousness. The nearest analogue to the Self in this respect is light which is self-luminous and does not depend upon anything else for illumination. We truly become or know the Self (here knowing is identical with being) in dreamless sleep — so we are told by Yajnavalkya in the Brihadaranya-Upanishad, by Prajapati in the Chandogya-Upanishad, and by Ajatasatru in the Kaushitaki-Upanishad, for in dreamless sleep the Self alone exists, transcending all objective limitations. "If the Hindu philosopher," says Professor Max Müller, "is clear on any point, it is this, that the subjective soul, the witness, or knower, or the Self, can never be known as objective, but can only be itself, and thus be conscious of itself."

III

Having seen in a general way that the subject is different from the object, the soul from its organic states, let us now turn to the organs or vehicles which the soul employs for its objective knowledge and see how they condition consciousness in its various stages.

The vehicles of man are beautifully described in the Katha-Upanishad in the following manner:

"Know thyself to be the person sitting in the chariot, thy body to be that chariot, thy *buddhi* [intuitive faculty] to be the driver thereof, thy *manas* [mind] to be the reins, thy senses to be the horses and the objects of thy senses to be the roads for the horses. When the soul is in union with the body, the senses, and the *manas,* the wise call it the enjoyer, *i.e.,* the individual soul."

The Maitrayana-Upanishad adopts the same simile with a slight variation. It says: the perceptive organs are his reins, the active organs are his horses, the mind is his charioteer, the whip being his temperament. Driven by the whip, the chariot of the body goes round and round like the wheel of the potter.

The Svetasvatara-Upanishad mentions the organs of *sankalpa* (manas), *ahankara* (egoism), and *buddhi* (intuition) as belonging to the Self. But the best and the most systematic account of the vehicles of the Self is perhaps to be found in the Taittiriya-Upanishad, where five sheaths or *koshas* are briefly but systematically described, and are said to constitute the five consecutive coverings of the Self. These coverings or *koshas* are known as *Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijnanamaya* and *Anandamaya.*

TO BE CONCLUDED

Covered by the five sheaths, like the material one and the rest, which are the products of Its own power, the Self ceases to appear, like the water of a tank by its accumulation of sedge. . . . When all the five sheaths have been eliminated, the Self of man appears — pure, of the essence of everlasting and unalloyed bliss, indwelling, supreme, and self-effulgent.

—*Vivekachudamani*

MEN OF THE WEST TO MEN OF THE EAST*

By James Hilton

. . . . We give you Speed, men of the East. Whereas it took your ancestors weeks and months to make the sacred journey to Mecca, we could have you there from anywhere in a few hours. Will you not, however, teach us something of the mood in which you still make that pilgrimage — to show us why you would perhaps still prefer to make it slowly?

We offer you Science, men of the East. We have enslaved the secret life-force of the universe as daringly as you ride a horse or a camel. Will you not help us to use this force for the world's betterment instead of for its destruction? And will you not lend us something of the winsomeness of that Eastern race which invented gunpowder centuries before the West, yet saw nothing in it but a means of having fun with firecrackers?

We offer you Hygiene. Will you not help us to ensure that the longer, healthier lifetime of the body is not fouled by dreariness of mind or poverty of soul?

We offer you the thousand gifts of our machines. Will you not ask, in addition, for something that the best of Western men have fought and died for — liberty — and will you not stand with us in the safeguarding of that heritage for the whole world?

We offer you Power, men of the East — power to follow in the blind footsteps of war-makers, if you are so bitterly tempted; or power which, if there is deep wisdom guiding it, can make tomorrow a golden age for all mankind. Will you not help us to that wisdom? Will you not share with us the

*From "This Week"

Truth which men who tend their flocks and herds can sometimes glimpse more clearly than men who work in factories and laboratories? Will you not seek with us the path that a Man of your own lands trod two thousand years ago?

THE PLACE OF SPLENDOR*

By Jessica Powers

Little one, wait.
Let me assure you this is not the way
To gain the terminal of outer day.

Its single gate
Lies in your soul, and you must rise and go
By inward passage from what earth you know.

The steps lead down
Through valley after valley, far and far
Past the five countries where the pleasures are.

And past all known
Maps of the mind and every colored chart
And past the final outcry of the heart.

No soul can view
Its own geography; love does not live
In places open and informative,

Yet, being true,
It grants to each its Raphael across
The mist and night, through unknown lands of loss.

Walk till you hear
Light told in music that was never heard
And softness spoken that was not a word.
The soul grows clear

*From "The Commonweal"

When its five senses have been fused in one:
Savor and scent and sound to splendor run.

The smothered roar
Of the eternities, their vast unrest
And infinite peace are deep in your own breast.

That light-swept shore
Will shame the data of grief upon your scroll.
Child, have none told you? *God* is in your soul.

We now see that all the various forms of cosmic energy, such as matter, thought, force, intelligence, and so forth, are simply the manifestation of that cosmic intelligence, or, as we shall call it henceforth, the Supreme Lord. Everything that you see, feel or hear, the whole universe, is His creation, or to be a little more accurate, is His projection; or to be still more accurate, is the Lord Himself. It is He who is shining as the sun and the stars, He is the mother earth, He is the ocean Himself. He comes as gentle showers, He is the gentle air that we breathe in, and He it is who is working as force in the body. He is the speech that is uttered, He is the man who is talking. He is the audience that is here. He is the platform on which I stand, He is the light that enables me to see your faces. It is all He. He Himself is both the material and the efficient cause of this universe, and He it is that gets involved in the minute cell, and evolves at the other end, and becomes God again. He it is that comes down and becomes the lowest atom, and slowly unfolding His nature, rejoins Himself. This is the mystery of the universe. "Thou art the man, Thou art the woman, Thou art the strong man walking in the pride of youth, Thou art the old man tottering on crutches, Thou art everything, O Lord."

—*Swami Vivekananda*

NEARNESS TO GOD

By Gayatri Devi

(A Sunday Evening Service at the Vedanta Centre, Boston, March, 1946.)

"In this great world we carelessly pass by the room where Mother sits. Her storeroom is open when we want our food. Our bed is ready when we must sleep. Only that touch and that voice are wanting. We are moving about but never coming close to the Personal Presence, to be held by the hand and greeted 'You have come'."

None but a poet can express his thoughts in this manner, describing a picture we can see: in a room Someone is sitting, waiting for us. How true it is that always Someone is waiting! But because we do not make the effort to come close, we miss the living touch of the Personal Presence. Rabindranath Tagore, India's great philosopher-poet, is the writer of the above passage. How wise he is, how understanding of human nature! He says that when we want our food we have it, for the storeroom is ever open. When we need our bed of rest, it is awaiting us. Is it not strikingly true that most frequently we want His gifts more than we want Him? Yet there are people who feel a need for the Divine as naturally as we feel a need for our food, drink, comfort and relaxation. It is not pretended, nor imitated, nor forced by any religious tradition. It is inborn, spontaneous and uncalculated — surging from within.

Is there anyone who does not understand the true import of love? All of us do. We know what love is, at least what human love is. It is the most powerful factor in our lives. We see two people in love, witness love between mother and child or friend and friend — love in its many phases and aspects. In whichever way it is expressed it is always sublime, especially when that love inspires human beings to forget and transcend themselves and their self-interest. When

a person can lose himself for the one he loves, he knows true joy, or even ecstasy. We have, all of us, the capacity for appreciating such love. We do not have to use our imagination; all we need to understand is that that feeling, with its naturalness, urgency and spontaneity, can be directed toward an Object unearthly or a Presence unseen. By our comprehension of human love we can all gain some understanding of what a human heart can feel for the Divine. To most of us the Divine is vague and unapproachable. He is only a name, or an idea — an uncertain entity. This is particularly true in the case of those who try to grasp Him with their intellect. Many call Him "Our Father in Heaven." Do they really feel toward the Father in Heaven as one feels toward the father on earth? To our earthly father we go quite naturally and seek his love and companionship. Do we bear the same feeling toward the Heavenly Father?

The reason we give for our attitude is that the Divine is neither living nor real to us, hence our aloofness. Why do we assume He is not close, without knowing it to be so or without investigating? Sometimes our traditional religious beliefs hinder our closeness to God. We may consider it sacrilegious to regard God as the nearest and dearest of all, because we have been taught to reverence Him from a distance. Some even fear Him for His might. Fear can never produce love in a human heart, and without love God can never become a living reality. We learn this from those souls who possess that genuine feeling, the urge of love. From them we learn also that the barrier we create, in our ignorance or fear, between Him and ourselves, can be eliminated in an instant. Our relationship with God can be as true, as rewarding and as beautiful as all relationships on the human plane. Moreover, in that relationship we experience a sweetness unsurpassed by any other.

No one can partake of the joy and sweetness that lie in closeness to God without first cultivating a yearning spirit. In India, where devotional life has been highly cultivated for centuries, certain practices are put forth that they may be used to develop a genuine love of God. In the literature of the *Vaisnavas* (worshippers of Sri Krishna, who are regarded as great devotees), much has been written on the subject. We are told that one must take definite steps to gain nearness to Him. One may establish with the Lord a particular relationship — regard Him as one's Beloved, or Master or Friend or Child. One may choose the bond most suitable to one's temperament and need. It is natural for some to think of God as Father; for some to think of Him as Mother; for others, in still another aspect of the Infinite One.

Our parents feed, clothe and surround us with their loving protection. They educate us, give us opportunities, and do many things for our benefit. For their care and gifts do we express thankfulness? No, rather a great love because they are our very own. In the same manner we must think of God, not merely with gratitude for His material blessings, but with deep and genuine devotion. Sri Ramakrishna, the greatest of all devotees in our time, once heard someone thanking the Lord, one by one, for all the blessings he had received — the gift of home, of friends, of natural comforts. Sri Ramakrishna, who had gone so very far in his inner life as to regard God with the most intimate and intense love, said, when he heard the man praying, "Why should we thank God for feeding and clothing us? Did He not create us? If He did not take care of His children, who would?"

This attitude is a step forward. The relationship of children with their parents should never be formal — but rather that of claim. When the father has millions, the son does not go about like a beggar. His behavior is that of a prince

who is aware of his earthly heritage. So must we feel toward our Maker who shares His estate with us. We should cultivate a dignity and assurance worthy of our kinship with Him. These qualities should supplement our humility and gratitude. Then, when we pray, there will be no question in our mind regarding His response to our need. We will say to Him like a child, "You must do this — You must! If You do not, to whom shall I turn?" That is the way to pray — intensely, ardently, with sureness, hope and faith. And who can pray in this manner? Only he who feels that he is intimately related to God. A true devotee never questions whether it is right or not to ask for the fulfilment of his prayers. He has no calculation. He never thinks he is asking for too much or God may not answer his prayer. Calculations and doubts have no place in true prayer. They bar us from that direct entry into the mind and heart of the Divine. Let us remember always that we have the claim and we can exert it on Him, for He is ever our all-loving and all-understanding Parent who will not deny us any blessing.

Sometimes people argue, "Why should I pray when I have nothing to ask?" The objective of prayer need not necessarily be a material one. We can pray without an ulterior motive just for the sake of having the nearness of God. We may learn to seek Him for His own sake. His Presence dispels all darkness from the mind, releases us from bondage and fear, fills our heart with gladness and light. Our spirit, in the assurance of His nearness, is above conflict, uplifted, tranquil, restful, satisfied. Prayer that destroys the veil betwen the soul and God and makes them one is its own reward, it craves no other. It is the highest type of comradeship, an exchange of love and loyalty, a wordless avowal of devotion, in the most human manner, on the spiritual plane.

There is the story of a man who went to heaven with his

family. One by one he introduced each of its members to the Lord. He called the children by name, and they were greeted. At last came his wife, Mary — modest and unassuming. As he introduced her, the Lord said, "Oh yes, Mary and I have long been well acquainted." There are people in this world, like Mary of the above description, who are altogether unpretentious. Some are not even religious (in the sense in which the term is generally used), but they possess the heart, the feeling, the natural gift for prayer. Whenever they are in need they instinctively turn to the Source with all their might and by their very simplicity and directness draw Him close to themselves.

There is nothing more appealing than naturalness in spiritual life. Sometimes too much formality and artificiality entering the religious life spoil it. Set prayers, forms, rituals and ceremonies, no matter how beautiful and colorful they are, can be empty and heartless. Their real substance lies in the feeling and devotion with which the worshipper makes them meaningful and through them brings the Presence close to the human heart. To pray earnestly we do not need the aid of any cut-and-dried technique. What we need most is an earnest spirit and intense longing.

Unfortunately, we do not seek the Lord naturally or regularly. Thus the habit of communion is not established. When we are very happy, protected against life's adversities or simply carried away by good fortune, we are inclined to forget the Divine. Sometimes our need of Him does not even arise until we are forced by circumstances, when He can fulfil our desires or be used for our benefit.

In the *Bhagavad-Gita,* Sri Krishna says, "O Prince of the Bharata race, O Arjuna, 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, 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 goa[1]."

To become established in the Lord, one must form spiritual habits — habits that help keep alive a sense of His nearness. Regular hours of communion, meditation, devotional practices, constant remembrance of His living Presence in one's heart as well as in all without, can serve to bring about a complete change in us. We gradually become transformed, transfigured, a veritable embodiment of the Presence we love and serve. Sri Ramakrishna tells us, "The Word, the devotee and the Lord are one and the same." The devotee who is conscious only of his Beloved, who lives, moves and has his being in Him, is His veritable temple. Wherever he goes he carries Him in his heart and mind and makes others feel his nearness through his own being. Such a person alone is fit to act as a mediator between God and His children. Whenever we are unable to pray or lack faith in the efficacy of our own prayer, we turn to those pure-hearted God-lovers whom we can trust implicitly and through whom His light shines unobstructedly. They convince us that He is very real and near, closer even than the nearest object. The poet Tennyson wrote, "Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet; closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet."

"Walk, talk, work and laugh with your friends, but behind the scenes keep up a life of simple prayer and inward worship. Let inward prayer be your last act before you fall asleep and in time you will find, like Brother Lawrence, that those who have the gale of the Holy Spirit go forward even in sleep." These are the utterances of Thomas Kelley, the Quaker mystic. How much we can learn from them!

So often we retire, perhaps after an unsuccessful day, during which we have experienced disappointments, disturbances and all manner of struggles. Consequently, we are inclined to be restless and fitful. At such times, if only we could turn to prayer and wash away our mental uneasiness and weight in its pure substance, we would fall asleep like babes in Mother's arms and find peace. Brother Lawrence says even in sleep one is carried forward by the gale of the Holy Spirit. Such sleep in which our thoughts are directed toward the One is usually deep and dreamless. It brings perfect refreshment to the body and healing to the mind. When we awake after it, our spirit is light and steady, ready to meet the day with an eager and tranquil joyousness.

When in waking or sleeping, in work or rest, under pressure or ease, in good fortune or ill, God becomes our first and last thought and unfailing refuge, and when our entire consciousness is focused upon Him in the doing of the daily tasks in obedience to His will, as well as in the hours of meditation, we are not far from Him nor is He far from us. Then the life which surges through our body as energy we recognize as His life; the love filling our heart and freely flowing toward His children, as His love; the intelligence and wisdom guiding our mind and intellect, as His and not our own. Then through our very being His light and power manifest, proving at every instant that He is the Source and we are but streams, He is the Whole and we are only parts—that we can have no existence apart from Him.

This is the true and genuine spiritual life — a life of consummation and fulfilment. Having found it, the devotee seeks no other gain and lives in blissful union with his one and only Beloved. Sometimes he sings His praise and glory and loses himself in silent contemplation. Again, he works in order to carry out His commandments, following ardently

diverse ways in order to give expression to his love. Yet he is ever fixed in the One whose nearness is the primary desire of his one-pointed heart.

A LETTER FROM INDIA

Those who were in touch either with the Vedanta Centre of Boston or the Ananda-Ashrama, California during the years 1928, 1929 and 1930, will remember Charushila Devi —will remember her vividly and with pleasure — the tiny, gallant little figure, conducting Services, or mingling in warm friendliness with the members of both Centres, in the east and in the west. They will recall the spirit of her devotion, which soon after her return to India in 1930, took form in constructive action, when, impelled by a powerful inward urge, she established an Ashrama for women — in the city of Dacca, Bengal — in the name of Swami Paramananda, her childhood playmate and spiritual guide. This "Ananda-Ashrama" embodied both cultural and practical training for its students, many of whom became resident members — poor girls who without this blessed refuge had little to look forward to, and no equipment in the way of a vocation with which to meet life.

The Swami Vivekananda, and all the great teachers, have told us in ringing tones that first and last it is character that counts. It was character, warmed by the fire of her consecration, that gave Charushila Devi the strength and wisdom to build up her work against almost insuperable obstacles, to win support from those among whom she worked and lived. Her work has grown and stands as a symbol of hope to many young lives — a worthy offering to her Ideal. Yet it is not financially endowed and is now called upon to weather a storm greater than any yet encountered — a storm in which India herself is involved.

A letter received recently from Charushila Devi, gives a first-hand picture of her present condition, as well as of events which appear only as brief items in the American press.

Any reader who may be moved to aid this brave woman of India during this time of trial, should send her contribution either to the Vedanta Centre, 420 Beacon Street, Boston 15, Massachusetts, or to Ananda-Ashrama, Box 577, La Crescenta, California. Charushila Devi's letter runs as follows:

October 13-1946

My very, very dear B——

Blessed greetings to you with all the best wishes of my heart. Please convey the same to all my dear brothers and sisters there in my spiritual home. The Mother-spirit is always there and here also to fold us all under Her protecting wings. We all know this; but every act of oblation brings out the best in us, Her children.

It would be quicker if I could cable, but our province of Bengal is under such wild madness at present that nothing is certain. I do not know how much is or can be filtered through the press to your public. These terrible riots have been going on for the last three months and though they are named "communal," we know for certain and have continuous proofs that it is all political, and it is so barbarously wild that our livelihood has become impossible and life unbearable. All the demon qualities being let loose, this problem has made us forget for the time being about the great famine that has been spreading its claws around us. But one cannot forget that, as one's own existence reminds one of it continuously. There never has been a national crisis such as we are experiencing now. We needed it, and out of this —the hardest experience of life — the Great Power will

rise — the *Maha Shakti* (the Mother Power) Whom the nation has just worshipped and invoked.

Please accept our deep-felt thanks for your letter of the 24th September with a draft enclosed. It will be used just for the purpose it has been given. We have already begun our relief work with outsiders; there is a ration arrangement in the cities, but in the rural areas people are even dying of starvation. Rice — the principal food of the country — is selling at Rs 50 per maund (82 lbs. a maund) in some of the villages, when in the rationed area we are getting it at Rs. 15 per maund. Rs. 15 also is an abnormal sum and beyond the capacity of majority of our people. However, it is our good fortune that we are still getting our ration out of which, from our own share, we are able to feed some of our hungry brothers and sisters. You will be shocked to hear that five hundred houses have been burnt in a few adjacent villages (that is, have been set fire to). Men, women and children — three thousand in number — came to this city for shelter and protection, just before the Pujas. A strong committee was formed to look after their needs and nineteen refugee centers were started. We have been offering our quota to the poor villagers who have not left their homes but have no way of buying food. They are generally daily-wagers, as we call them. They depend day after day on their daily earning. To these people our service is at present principally giving relief. We have given away so far four maunds of rice, some clothes, salt and vegetables — all from our own share. Cloth also is rationed and you cannot buy as much as you like. We hope to keep on doing our little bit and have the privilege — the Lord willing of course.

In our Ashrama our condition too is not a satisfying one, I should admit. Our inmates are mostly poor and helpless and it is a constant relief work that has been going on in the

Ashrama. There are sixty inmates, workers and teachers twenty, and five servants. It is not only a question of money to feed, clothe or supply them with their daily needs, but it is a great problem how to get the things. The Ashrama is hard hit at this time of crisis, I must admit to you, but I know in my heart of hearts that through Lord's grace she is going to weather the storms and come out of it all victorious.

More things have come to light now than when I wrote to you a few months ago. We all are aware now how appalling is the food shortage and how very much we are dependent on the kindness of other countries. Thank God that some countries like Australia and America are willing to send foodstuff to save our people. We should be ever grateful to them for their brotherly spirit. But what I feel is, that some arrangement should be made so as to make the best of all this. We have been receiving from Dr. Boike and Gayatri packages of brown rice and green peas for famine relief for the last few weeks. We are deeply grateful for that and specially for the spirit behind it. Some of the packages have come nicely intact but some came empty, their contents altogether lost. We have to pay customs duty on them (of course we paid nothing on the empty ones) in addition to what they have paid on the other shore. Collecting all that money together, I think we shall be able to buy more food here and shall be able to serve more people, provided of course that other countries send their help. The rice and peas that were sent were wonderful in taste, and nourishment also I am sure; but it was a pity that so much money and energy had to be spent over a smaller quantity when about double the amount could be bought with that much money here. Everything depends on the arrangement and condition of the donator countries, and also the same here. I know I have only expressed my point of view, but you will know what

you should do. We shall be most grateful for whatever you would kindly send us. Everything — money or food — will be of great help to our work of service, and also to keep us alive. I do not know how to thank you for all your loving thoughts that are sustaining us vitally and all you have been doing for us.

One word more about the food business. Last time— during last famine — much food remained accumulated in the government go-downs, when thousands and thousands died of starvation. Afterwards tons and tons went to water and fire because they were unfit for human consumption. Some were sold to the hungry public at a much cheaper rate. This time there are food committees formed here in India and over there in the States.

The reason of my writing to you in detail is to make you acquainted with our position and condition here so that you may know exactly how to give your living help. I cannot bear to think that even a bit of it be wasted or lost.

Here the girls are well and keeping busy. All the Ashrama sends its warm greetings to you all. Many of them do not know you personally, but they know that they are within the same fold and you all are very near and dear to them. Many of these girls were not fortunate enough to come in contact or even see our blessed Swamiji. But being in the Ashrama and listening to his inspiring words every morning through "Daily Thoughts," they are spontaneously and unconsciously being moulded by the ideal he held before us. He being the Ashrama *guru,* they feel proud to belong to him.

Your love and prayers are vitally needed to keep our courage and stamina intact. Please let me remind you of that again and again. Ever your little

CHARU

ETERNAL CONSCIOUSNESS

By Josiah Royce

(A Note on Dr. Royce's Ingersoll Lecture of 1899: "Conception of Immortality".)

Whoever listens appreciatively to a melody, or to a sequence of chords of music, or even to a mere rhythm of drum-taps, or to the words of a speaker, has a twofold consciousness as to the way in which the facts to which he listens are *present* to him.

1. *Each* tone, or chord, or drum-tap, or spoken word, is *present,* as *this* member of its series, in so far as it *follows* some sounds and *precedes* others, so that when, or in so far as, in *this* sense, it is present, the preceding notes of the melody or taps of the rhythm are *no longer* or are past, while the succeeding notes are *not yet* or are future. In *this* sense of the term *present,* the present excludes past and future from its own temporal place in the sequence.

2. But now the appreciative listener also grasps *at once* (or as a *totum simul,* to use the phrase of St. Thomas) the whole of a brief but still considerable sequence of tones, or of taps, or of words. In this second sense he may be said to find *present* to him the whole sequence. How much he can thus grasp *at once* depends upon his interest, his temperament, and his training, but above all upon the characteristic *time-span* of human consciousness or upon the length of what Professor James has, with others, called the "specious present." This length is, for us men, an arbitrary fact, varying more or less, but within close limits. It determines one aspect of what I have called the peculiar "form" of our human consciousness. What happens in periods too long or too short for this time-span of our consciousness escapes our direct observation. There is, however, no conceptual difficulty in the way of imagining a "form of consciousness" whose

"specious present" should be limited in span to the time of vibration of a hydrogen molecule, or, on the other hand, should be extended to include in one glance, or *at once,* the events of a billion years. Such other forms of consciousness would be in no more arbitrary relations to time than our own consciousness now is. How we come to be able to grasp *at once* the events of say two or three seconds, we cannot now say. That we can do so is evidenced by every case in which we catch, as a presented fact, the interest of a whole musical or rhythmic or spoken phrase. Other forms of consciousness might have vastly different span.

But in so far as we grasp *at once* a whole series of facts, however long or however short, this series is present, in the *second* sense of the term *present,* to the consciousness that observes it as in any way a whole. Yet the temporal facts which make up the whole sequence follow each one *after* its predecessors. Let the sequence be *a, b, c.* Then, in our *first* sense of the term *present,* when *b* is present, *a* is no longer, and *c* is *not yet.* And this fact makes the temporal sequence what it is. But in the *second* sense of the term *present, a, b,* and *c,* despite this perfectly genuine but relative difference of *no longer* and *not yet,* or of *past* and *future,* are *all* present as a *totum simul* to the consciousness that grasps the entire sequence. These two senses of the term *present* are perfectly distinguishable, and they involve no contradiction.

Since, however, the length of a "specious present" is an arbitrary fact, there is no sort of contradiction in supposing a "form of consciousness" for which the events of the Archaean and of the Silurian and of later geological periods should be present *at once,* together with the facts of today's history. Such a consciousness would merely exceed, by many millions of years, our time-span; but what is for us *no*

longer would be to such a consciousness, in our *second* sense of the term *present,* a fact of its own present consciousness. . . .

If all limitations of time-span are to be conceived as arbitrary, the question whether a consciousness is possible which should have present to it *at once* (in our second sense of the term *present*) the *whole of time,* or the whole of what, from this moment outwards, we now view as antecedent or as sequent to this moment, becomes simply the question, in what sense can the totality of temporal events be regarded as any determinate whole at all? This question involves, to be sure, the further questions: In what sense is the temporal sequence of the world's events an endless sequence or an infinite series? And in what sense can this temporal series, even if infinite, be defined as a determinate or as a really complete whole? These questions lie far beyond the limits of this note. But, as a fact, . . . at the conclusion of the Gifford Lectures, on *The One, the Many, and the Infinite,* I have endeavoured to show that an infinite series can be a perfectly determinate and individual whole, *every* member of which could conceivably be known *at once* by a single consciousness. . . . I also hold that the temporal series of the world's events constitutes such a whole, infinite, and yet present *at once* to the Absolute, (in our second sense of the term *present*).

But a consciousness whose span embraces the *whole of time* is precisely what I mean by the term *Eternal Consciousness.* And what is present *at once* to such a consciousness, viz., the whole of what happens in time, taken together with all the distinctions of past and of future that hold *within* the series of temporal events, — this whole, I say, constitutes *Eternity.* It is in these senses that I here use these two terms.

The *type* of an eternal consciousness we ourselves empirically possess precisely in so far as we grasp *at once* the sequent events of any melody or rhythm or series of words. This our possession of what may be called the *eternal type* of consciousness is limited by the arbitrary span of our human form of consciousness. To conceive this limitation absolutely removed, without any confusion resulting, implies, to be sure, the conception of the determinately infinite whole; but this conception, although abstruse, is a conception quite free from contradiction. If once we form this conception, then it becomes easy to see that to suppose the whole of time present at once to an eternal consciousness is in no wise a meaningless supposition. Nor does this supposition conflict with the temporal truth that we also express when we say that, from the point of view of any one *present* event in time (if the term *present* is taken in our first sense), all future events are *not yet,* and all past events are *no longer.* The two propositions express different aspects of the world, but are mutually consistent.

It is in view of these considerations that the text speaks of the Absolute as possessing, in its conscious fulfilment, "the whole world of past and future." If one retorts "How can the future *now,* i.e., at the *present* moment, be *present* fact to the Absolute when the future is *not yet?*" Then I simply insist upon distinguishing the two foregoing meanings of the word "present". It is as if one asked, "How can the listener grasp at once as present the whole of his brief musical sequence, if the tones or chords so follow in time that *all but one* are either past or future, and are not present when that one sounds?" Whoever listens to music with appreciation answers the latter question. The answer to the former involves no new principle, if once you grant the definable reality of an infinite time.

The usual confusion of ideas as to this twofold way in which the facts of a sequence can be called *present* is responsible for the familiar problem as to the divine "fore-knowledge" and its relation to freedom. "If God has the future present to Him, then He must *now* (viz., today, or at this temporal instant) *fore*know the future." So a frequently urged argument presupposes. The only fair comment is: God, viewed in His wholeness, does not *now* foreknow anything, if by *now* you mean merely *today* or *at this moment*. For whoever *now* looks forward to the future merely as *not yet*, is a finite being, temporarily determined, and not yet come to his own fulfilment in God. Divine knowledge of what to us is future is no mere foreknowledge. It is eternal knowledge.

FROM A DISCIPLE'S NOTEBOOK

(Continued from the Fall Issue)

With the exception of the senior Sister, Devamata, and one other, none of the Swami's Queensberry Street community had ever set foot on the shores of India. Yet through the Swami's instrumentality India became for them like another native land. They knew her from within rather than from without, — India, land of the Mother, eternal in the heavens! — as she is reflected in the hearts of her children. No mere tourist, with however keen an observation, could have discovered her in this manner or sailed so happily into the harbor of her soul.

In truth, outer India with her bewildering and infinite variety often hides the inner India from the curious eye. Guide books, books of travel and adventure, in dealing with India, convey to us the picture of a very foreign land indeed whose customs are so far removed from our way of living that they seem to have for us no basis in reason, and because

of this we are apt to look upon the Indian people as if they were inhabitants of another star. But this could never be true of the small group which in those early days formed the Swami's Boston household. Originally drawn to him by an inborn interest in the East and a sympathy for the Eastern expression, they soon began to see through his eyes and comprehend through his heart the web of Indian life and living.

The *Bhagavad-Gita* tells of an "eternal Ashwattha tree, rooted above and branching below, whose leaves are the Vedas." The tree of understanding which the Swami nurtured in the hearts of his followers seemed somewhat similar to this; for rooted above in their love for India's sublime philosophy, it sent forth innumerable branches whose leaves were kinship, nourished by sympathy, while its roots stretched down below into her world of human action.

Reason alone never gave access to the soul of a man or a nation, but feeling, love, insight — these have opened many a door, and it was through this gateway of feeling that the Swami led those who had been entrusted to his guidance. The disciple, for instance, from the very start of her novitiate (as has already been told) had been shown the deep relationship between feeling and sanctity, in the outer as well as in the inner life. She had been trained in a certain practical spiritual technique based upon this, but which viewed merely from the surface might have seemed to an observer without sense or reason. In revealing the fine and subtle aspects of these practices, the Swami had said again and again: "This is the cream of India's spiritual culture. Do not think that you will find it just by going to India." It was his heritage, through Swami Ramakrishnananda, from the great Guru, Sri Ramakrishna, who with his vast spiritual perception interpreted to his devotees many customs of the country which, due to the passing of the centuries, had lost their

original meaning and grown mechanical. The Swami warned his students that they must never follow a custom perfunctorily, out of habit, but must make it the manifestation of their own inner comprehension and sensibility. "In the true spiritual life," he said, "there can be no imitation. Imitation is death!"

"Once there was a holy teacher," he told them, "who lived apart with one disciple in a simple retreat. Now this teacher had a cat and this cat formed the habit of coming to its master during the hours of his meditation, and by rubbing against him interfered with his worship. Therefore he took the little beast into the next room and tied him to the leg of the bed and did not free him till the hour of prayer was ended. The worshipful disciple, watching everything the master did, took note of this, and when his guru died and he inherited his spiritual duties and responsibilities, he always tied the cat before beginning his religious practices. Finally this disciple also died and the one who followed in his footsteps was likewise most careful to observe every detail of the worship and, above all, he never failed to tie a cat to the bedpost. In course of time, the ritual of the cat came to be an inherent part of the ceremonial, though no one knew or ever asked why."

Thus the Swami taught, drawing tales and parables from Sri Ramakrishna's treasure-store to illustrate his points. Every country has its outworn customs and every country is charitable towards its own superstitions and scornful of the superstitions of other lands. India, with thousands of years behind her, has no doubt accumulated many barnacles which in course of time will be scraped away. No one realized this more than the Swami. His counsel was never the counsel of ignorance but of a more deeply penetrating vision. For with vision many things that seem meaningless acquire meaning.

Take, for instance, India's handling of the dead. Who has not heard of the burning ghats, the funeral pyres, the bodies floating down the Ganges, and all the ways and doings of a "heathen" people! Oh yes, we are quite familiar with all this! We have our writers and our lecturers, and those who attend the lectures, complacent and superior. The Swami, however, gave his hearers a more intimate picture of death in a Hindu home, a picture etched with its lights and shadows on the eager mind of a small child. We find it recorded in the Note-book, under the date of November 19th, 1919:

"Miss Sherwood was in to supper tonight, the first time she has been here since the death of her brother-in-law. She had much to tell us of his last hours and of the illumination that came to him. Swamiji was deeply interested and absorbed. He said:

" 'You know how tolerant and universal is my viewpoint, but I would not give up for anything the memory of what children in India do for their parents when they die. When my mother died I was only a little boy, but I wanted to perform all the austerities. There is fasting, or living on coarse foods, also there is sleeping on straw or boards. The head is shaved. There is bathing in cold water and as one wears then only one cloth, one has to keep the end about one dry and stand out in the cold while the other end is drying. All this filled me with the idea of renunciation. Oh, I loved it! I wanted to do all these things, but I was so small that the older people would not let me. They would pet me and caress me and urge me to eat delicate foods. It was then that I got the first preparation for the Sannyasin life. You see, in India there is deep religious feeling in connection with all this. It is not looked upon with gloom, but as a spiritual experience. When old people die there is real rejoicing. Piles of sandalwood are placed on the funeral pyre, and the whole air is filled with the fragrant smoke.'

"The disciple asked how long the after-death austerities lasted, and Swami replied:

" 'One month. As a rule they carry people out of doors when death approaches, so that they may die under the open sky. I think that is good; it gives a sense of freedom.'

"The disciple remarked that St. Francis of Assisi had desired to be laid on the bare ground when he was dying.

"Swami: 'Oh, with holy people it does not matter. It makes no difference to them — in four walls or none; but with ordinary people it helps. Swamiji [Swami Vivekananda] died in meditation. What did it matter to him where he was. When a person is dying someone repeats in his ear the name of the Lord, *Hari Boal!* If the dying person is near the Ganges, he is carried down and touched with the holy water.'

"The disciple asked if all the ashes were preserved.

"Swami: 'Only the ashes of holy men. In large family homes they have a garden set apart as a sacred place with a little chapel, and there the bodies are burned. On the spot where each is cremated a monument of bricks is erected—very simple — or else tulsi* is planted there. Over it is built a little support from which is hung a jar with a tiny hole in the bottom through which water falls drop by drop.' "

Because of their faith and philosophy, the Indo-Aryans do not think of their dead as dead, but they have no sentimental illusions concerning the cast-off body. From the practical viewpoint they look upon it as very dead indeed and they treat it accordingly and dispose of it as swiftly as may be. The heat of a tropical country has no doubt increased their awareness of the unpleasant process whereby Lord Shiva, the Transformer, breaks up old forms before creating others which are new. But aside from this, their own deep-

*Sweet Basil—used in India for worship.

seeing wisdom has prevented them from covering corpses with flowers, as it were, or from clinging unduly to that which the soul has outworn. They do preserve the ashes of the holy, however, as the Swami has pointed out, and they do it not merely out of a sense of respect, but because they have been taught that every particle of the body of an illumined being is impregnated with that illumination. One single hair from the head of a great Incarnation, for instance, is held to carry that intense spiritual vibration. To an Occidental, a hair might have romantic or other associations, but fundamentally it would not differ a whit from any other hair, save in color and texture. But this proves or disproves nothing. A lighted room would seem dark for him who has no eyes to see. According to Hindu tradition the very flesh of the holy differs from that of other men. This is implied in one of their great *Upanishads,* the *Svetasvatara*:

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

Sri Ramakrishna, upon looking at a person, could tell his spiritual status. There were certain definite marks that a man carried on his person, imprinted there by the subtler aspects of his being. Natural creases or necklaces around the throat, fulness of the chest, quality and color of the skin, the placement and gaze of the eyes, these the Swami mentioned as among the signs and symbols of an awakened consciousness. Those who are familiar with the records of Lord Buddha may recall the signs by which the ancient hermit recognized him in his infancy as he lay in his mother's arms. Sir Edwin Arnold in his *Light of Asia* has described the occasion thus:

> "The King saluted and Queen Maya made
> To lay her babe before such holy feet;

> But when he saw the prince, the old man cried,
> 'Ah, Queen, not so!' and thereupon he touched
> Eight times the dust, laid his waste visage there,
> Saying, 'O Babe, I worship! Thou art He!
> I see the rosy light, the foot-sole marks,
> The soft curled tendril of the swastika,
> The sacred primal signs, thirty and two,
> The eighty lesser tokens. Thou art Buddh . . . !' "

Of such ancient lineage is this tradition; but Sri Ramakrishna's vision was direct and immediate, and born of his own wisdom. He was a true son of the Infinite Divine Mother and of Mother India whose children are peculiarly aware of those things which cannot be detected by the ordinary senses. A race that is so finely attuned to the subjective naturally tends to see beyond mere surface values, even in such homely matters as personal cleanliness. The disciple learned this little lesson in rather an amusing fashion. Shortly after her arrival in Boston, she went with the Swami and one or two others for a motor ride into the shopping district of the city. As she had some errands to do on her own account, they let her out in the vicinity of the Park Street Church and told her that in the course of an hour they would pick her up in front of the old cemetery which adjoined it.

It took her only a few minutes to finish what she had to do, and though she realized that her vigil at the appointed spot might be a long one, yet she felt that she had better go there and be ahead of time rather than run the risk of missing the connection. So she stood and waited and waited while the crowd moved by her in an endless procession. Gazing through the wrought iron fence which enclosed the cemetery, she could read the names on some of the ancient tombstones — names associated with the early days of Boston and America. Then suddenly she saw it — an abandoned chair on one of the cemetery walks beside the graves. It drew her as a magnate draws the steel. Sitting was surely better than

standing, and she was very weary. Also, from this vantage-point she found that she could watch the whole traffic on Tremont Street and that those coming by motor could see her. Perhaps there was in her mind as well the traditional association of death and the contemplative life. In this time-worn graveyard her mind could dwell on the evanescent nature of all created things and in this way she could transform her vigil into a meditation. *O Tempora! O Mores!* The setting was as it should be for a prospective religious. The passers-by may have glanced at her curiously, for the chair stood out like a lone tooth, but that did not worry her in the least, because she was not thinking of them at all. She did keep her weather eye on Tremont Street, however, and after a full half hour she was rewarded by the sight of the Swami's car as it swung around the corner and approached the trysting place. By the time he had drawn up to the curb she was there and quickly climbed into the seat beside him which had been reserved for her. She noticed that the Swami's face was rather sober, and he kept silent while he extricated the car from the heavier traffic. Then he spoke to her, and there was a curious tone to his voice:

"Couldn't you find any better place to wait than in a burial-ground?" he asked her.

"Why Swami!" she exclaimed, "what is wrong with a burial-ground?"

"It is a very unclean place. You sit there alongside the graves and then come and sit beside one you look upon as your spiritual teacher. In India if a person has to go into the place of the dead, he washes himself afterwards, goes through a process of purification."

"But I do not understand," said the disciple. "How is it unclean? The dead are all buried at least six feet underground."

"That is true," the Swami answered, "but when a body is put into the earth and goes back to the elements, this is a subtle effluvium that extends from it even above the ground. You may not be able to detect this with your senses; nevertheless it is there and it is unclean."

Extremely distressed, the disciple for a moment had nothing to say; then a happy thought possessed her.

"Swamiji!" she cried, "that wouldn't be true in this case. There are no new dead in that cemetery. All of them — the Otises, the Lowells, the Sewalls, the Peabodies, and the other notables buried there, have been under the ground for a hundred years and more. Surely by this time their effluvia have vanished into thin air and all that is left of them is a handful of harmless dust."

The Swami laughed. "I think you are right," he said. "But even so, next time wait for me in some other place—not in a graveyard!"

The world is evanescent, no doubt, but the disciple was never to make any morbid approach to that fact under the Swami's guidance. He did tell his community of a certain type of Yogi whose practice included going to the burning ghats and meditating in the presence of the dead, but that was another thing altogether, and had nothing to do with them. In the Note-book it is written:

"One day in answer to the question concerning the way of escape from the world and all changing things through spiritual emancipation, Swami said: 'The great, free souls do not escape; they come back to help their fellows and to give of themselves to humanity.' "

There are two qualities lacking which no disciple can receive the spiritual impetus which a genuine teacher has to give. These are loyalty and faith. When they are absent, the relationship between teacher and taught will be sterile.

Swami Vivekananda makes this vividly clear in his *Bhakti Yoga*. "The function of the teacher," he writes, "is indeed an affair of the transference of something, and not one of a mere stimulation of the existing intellectual or other faculties in the taught. Something real and appreciable as an influence comes from the teacher and goes to the taught."

It follows that if the mind and the heart of the taught are blocked by distrust of the teacher or untrueness toward him in any form, the quickening impulse cannot flow and the purpose of the relationship is defeated.

"With the teacher, therefore," the great Swami continues, "our relationship is the same as that between an ancestor and his descendant. Without faith, humility, submission, and veneration in our hearts to our religious teacher, there cannot be any growth of religion in us. . . . Religion which is the highest knowledge and the highest wisdom, cannot be bought, nor can it be acquired from books. You may thrust your head into all the corners of the world, you may explore the Himalayas, the Alps, and the Caucasus, you may sound the bottom of the sea, and pry into every nook of Thibet and the desert of Gobi, you will not find it anywhere until your heart is ready for receiving it, and your teacher has come. And when that divinely appointed teacher comes, serve him with childlike confidence and simplicity, freely open your heart to his influence, and see in him God manifested. Those who come to seek truth with such a spirit of love and veneration, to them the Lord of Truth reveals the most wonderful things regarding Truth, Goodness, and Beauty."

The Swami Paramananda, by virtue of his blissful nature, might turn all life into a joyous play; but the sacredness of his mission was never absent from his consciousness, as was apparent to all about him. His disciples, likewise, from the very beginning, were made to realize the depth and the spir-

itual implications of discipleship. That it should ever be a perfunctory or casual relationship seemed to him almost a profanation. An echo of his deep feeling in regard to all this, we find in a little pledge which, quite spontaneously, he gave the members of his household to repeat, one evening at Queensberry Street, and which they went on repeating as part of a simple nightly ritual down through the years. The date in the Note-book is given as November 21st, 1919. The entry follows:

"As we stood in the hall with Swami at bedtime, he said a little rhyme and asked us to repeat it. He said:

'True will I be
Ever unto Thee,
Forever and ever and ever!
Amen.'

He had us say it after him several times individually and finally in chorus. At the last he stood with his head bowed as he listened. He said: 'Did you say that with real feeling? Even these things that we do in play lead back to the greater issues. When you were speaking I was offering your prayer of devotion to God. I do not take such things to myself; they are only for God. I play and all that, but finally I give everything up to God. A sense of egotism is very foolish. Ideals are always big, but they can be handled by small people.

" 'Good night. Know that life can be so lived that it will be not only a beaming thing for you, but will bring great happiness to others. Even one's face can bring joy. Also it can bring gloom. Good night! Sleep right!' "

TO BE CONTINUED

A man to be greatly good must imagine intensely and comprehensively. . . . The pains and pleasures of his species must become his own. —*Shelley*

REPORT

VEDANTA CENTRE, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

A steady succession of events made the autumn at the Vedanta Centre a full and active season. The chief among the festivals were *Durga Puja* — Worship of Divine Mother —and *Deepali* — the Feast of Lights. According to Indian tradition the former, with its three day observance of perpetual worship, prayer and joyous activities, brought a flood of new enthusiasm and devotion into the life of the Centre's resident community. On Friday, October 4th, a big Hindu banquet was held, welcoming over a hundred guests. The special feature of the evening was a delightful program of Hindu vocal and instrumental music. It was rendered by Mr. Shri Palekar who played several solos on the *sitar* and sang with the accompaniment of the *tanpura,* another stringed instrument. He was assisted by Mr. Shirish Gor, the drummer. Ranu Devi's unexpected arrival from New York during the evening was a cause of real joy. She too sang several Bengali songs. Gayatri Devi in conclusion spoke extemporaneously, interpreting in detail the manner in which Divine Mother's Festival is celebrated in India.

On the night of the Illumination Festival, the Centre assumed a new aspect of beauty by the arrangement of innumerable lights. Red and white vigil lamps were placed everywhere — on the main altar and its steps, in the niches, on the mantel of the Chapel, in the reading-room, library and reception hall, and on the railing of the stairway, making a picture which will be long remembered. A very large audience shared in the evening's activities which consisted of a brief Service, followed by a varied program of Hindu music, contributed by a group of artists, Mr. Palekar, Mr. Gor, Mrs. Divya Bhatt, Miss Leela Madgavkar, Mr. Sirdar and others. Nearly one-third of the gathering consisted of

Indians, mostly students, who represented the culture, dress and tradition of different parts of India, a country as diversified as a continent. It was a colorful group, with Indian ladies in their bright and graceful *saris* and men wearing their native *shervani,* turban, *topi* and *pajamas,* mingling freely with their brothers and sisters of the West in an atmosphere of utmost friendliness. Before the serving of Hindu refreshments, Tagore's famous anthem "Victory to Thee, O Dispenser of India's Destiny!" was sung at the request of the students.

Thanksgiving was another happy occasion providing opportunity for special devotion. At 11 A.M. the faithful members and friends joined the community in a Service of song, thankful prayer offering, and an Address.

On Tuesday, December 10th, Gayatri Devi was the guest speaker of the Arlington Street Unitarian Church in Boston, before the Adult Education Division, on the subject of inter-racial relations.

On Saturday, November 30th, the local group of Quakers were the Vedanta Centre's most welcome guests of the afternoon. The secretary of their program committee had visited the Centre several weeks before in order to invite Gayatri Devi to speak for them. She expressed the wish to bring the whole group to the Centre so that they might hear and learn of India in that country's own setting and atmosphere. They were accorded a hearty reception and tea was served after Gayatri Devi had spoken to them on "Vedanta Philosophy and Its Purpose," and answered their questions.

Preparations are well along the way for the Bazaar which will open with a tea on December 7th and will continue until December 21st. It is hoped many will respond, as this yearly occasion serves as a step toward an exchange of greater fellowship and good-will, in keeping with the spirit of Christmas.

Visit to New York

On the evening of November 19th, Gayatri Devi was the guest of the Town Hall Club of New York. Since October a group under the direction of Mrs. Ruth Cranston has been meeting weekly to study world faiths and the lives and teachings of their Founders. A keen interest was shown in Gayatri Devi's topic, "The *Bhagavad-Gita* and Buddha's Message." Many questions were asked during the discussion period which followed the lecture.

On the following noon, the Unity Centre of Practical Christianity, under the leadership of Georgiana Tree West, offered Gayatri Devi a warm welcome. In introducing her as guest speaker, Mrs. West spoke with deep appreciation of Swami Paramananda and the debt of gratitude she owed him. Gayatri Devi spoke on "Spiritual Healing", which aroused enthusiasm for the Swami's book bearing the same title.

ANANDA ASHRAMA, COHASSET

Taking advantage of New England's unusually warm and sunny autumn, the Centre's community and friends enjoyed several excursions to the little Retreat. On Saturday, November 2nd, a large group met there to attend a Service which was held in the large studio room before a blazing log fire. This was the final Service of the season. The Ashrama will remain closed until the spring.

ANANDA ASHRAMA, CALIFORNIA

Late summer at the Ananda Ashrama moved with a quiet rhythm toward the Fall season with its quickening activity and colorful festivals. Durga Puja fell this year in September and was observed from the 25th to the 29th with vigil and special worship. It seemed to ignite in the hearts of the Ashrama members its own fires of faith and devotion. On the night of Thursday, September 26th, Sister Daya conduct-

ed a Service in the Temple, dedicated to the Mother of the Universe, in which she reminded her listeners of the great Mother Power forever present. Following the Service, light refreshments were served in the library to the many friends who had assembled.

Four weeks later, on October 24th, the beautiful Festival of Lights — which falls on the dark of the moon — inspired the Ashrama workers to ceaseless activity in preparation for the evening Service in the Temple. The Temple patio was garnished with rows of candles on every side, and delicate Oriental lanterns, while the Memorial Pool wore a necklace of many-colored vigils suspended, as it were, from the head of the little waterfall just above. When the hour of the Service arrived, the Temple itself was pulsing with lights. The many who came were moved by the atmosphere it radiated, as well as by the message of inward light, which was the theme of Sister Daya's Address. Unfortunately a sudden wind interfered with the out-door illumination, and Boreas blew out the candles as fast as they were lighted. The vigils, however, burned bravely throughout the evening, and all agreed it was a night of luminous beauty and significance.

In contrast to the Indian observances, Thanksgiving brought the aroma of early America. A service was held at 11 A.M. in the Temple of the Universal Spirit. Sister Daya in the course of her address, reminded her listeners that while America feasted, half a world starved. "If we forget this," she warned them, "we shall do so at our peril." The altar was a symbol of the bounty with which this country has been blessed. It reminded all present of their great obligation to share their bounty with their fellow men in other and more afflicted lands. However, in spite of this remembrance there was a happy spirit abroad which all sensed, and which they carried back with them to their homes.

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Message of the East

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

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

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VEDIC HYMN

Translated by Max Muller

Let us know Him, the highest great Lord of Lords!
The highest Deity of deities, the Lord of the world, the Adorable!
There is no cause, no effect known of Him.
His high power is revealed as manifold, acting as force and knowledge.
There is no master of His in the world,
No ruler of His, not even a sign of him.
He is the cause of all!
That God, the maker of all things,
Always dwelling in the heart of man,
Is perceived by the heart, the soul, the mind.
They who know Him become immortal.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

O Arjuna, the Lord dwells in the heart of all beings, causing all beings to revolve, as if mounted on a wheel.

O Bharata, take refuge in Him with all thy heart; through His grace thou shalt attain supreme peace and the Eternal Abode. —*Bhagavad-Gita*

Deep peace of the running wave to you
Deep peace of the flowing air to you
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you
Deep peace of the shining stars to you
Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you.
—*St. Patrick*

I delight to do Thy Will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart. —*Psalms*

The true way to be humble is not to stoop till thou art smaller than thyself, but to stand at thy real height against some higher nature that shall show thee what the real smallness of thy greatest greatness is. —*Phillips Brooks*

No longer talk about the kind of man that a good man ought to be, but be such. —*Marcus Aurelius*

What I mean by a religious person is one who conceives himself or herself to be the instrument of some purpose in the universe which is a high purpose, and is the motive power of evolution—that is, of a continual ascent in organization and power and life, and extension of life.
—*George Bernard Shaw*

There need not be in religion, or music, or art, or love, or goodness, anything that is against reason; but never while the sun shines will we get great religion, or music, or art, or love, or goodness, without going beyond reason.
—*Harry Emerson Fosdick*

SPIRITUAL MEDIUMSHIP

By Swami Paramananda

(An Address delivered at the Vedanta Centre, Boston, on Sunday, December 14, 1922.)

"*The knower of God, the knower of Brahman, becomes like unto Him.*" What a tremendous thought, that man, limited by circumstances, by knowledge—man of finite capacity—can ever hope to blend with the Infinite! Yet that is the goal, and nothing short of this final union will ever satisfy the human spirit. Wherever there is any promise of happiness, even a glimmer of it, we struggle and strive, only to find in the end that our hunger is still unappeased. The reason is that the human being, in spite of all his limitations, is hungering for that which is beyond the human.

But how do we transcend our finite nature? Certainly not by merely making a study of our physical or material nature. We shall never find the fullness of existence by developing our muscles or even our mental faculties. There is another way—the spiritual way—by which the human melts into the divine, the finite into the infinite. At first it may sound like a very dangerous path indeed and the average man, bound on all sides by materiality, will be very apt to say, "I would rather cling to what I have than risk everything in the search for something better." A very sensible point of view, you may think, but perhaps it is this very attitude which prevents our access to the Higher. I shall not say "perhaps,"—it *is*. We create our own boundary lines when we say, "I can do only this much and no more; I can only go so far and no farther. My capacity is limited and I must not even think of anything beyond." Once we realize something bigger, deeper, more extensive, all such notions will vanish and we shall begin to understand the tremendous importance of spiritual mediumship.

No doubt there are those among you who are expecting to hear something pertaining to departed spirits, but that is not the meaning of my subject, nor is it the interpretation that I am going to give you. Spiritual mediumship is not concerned with entities and messages; it does not seek to teach us how we may put ourselves under the control of others, but rather how we may tear the veil which separates us from the Source of life, and claim our divine heritage.

Here and there we gain a glimpse of infinite majesty shining through a human being. We speak of such an illumined one as a saint. But what makes a saint? How has he become a saint? Is it that a saintly character is specially equipped by God? Is it a preordained condition? Anyone who analyzes and makes a study of the matter must recognize the fact that all have a similar capacity for seeing and knowing. All, however, do not have the same courage and firmness or an equal zeal for attainment. From the standpoint of idle curiosity alone, there are few who would not like to know the hidden truths of existence. But how many have the desire to follow up their interest—or the will to keep them persistent, firm and unshakable? These qualities are essential on the way to higher vision, while lack of them keeps one from attaining it. The whole difference between individuals lies just there. It is not that one is born capable of doing this, and another incapable. We all have the same infinite capacity. What a saint has perceived, what a man of genius has expressed, we also have the power to realize. That power lies latent within us and its unfoldment should be our first concern.

All the great things of life—the masterpieces of the world—are achieved through human instrumentality; also by the same means the most diabolical forces are set in motion. Mind conceives an ideal, blunders over it, stumbles, meets

with failure and finally embodies it. First comes the thought, then its expression through the life. Surely anyone can see this quite clearly. Unfortunately we do not always make ourselves instruments for the higher powers. A man may conceive a hideous thought, a thought of vengeance or hate. He may concentrate upon it, and use in this way the God-given power of the mind to work out some plan of destruction; or perhaps he may invent something which will bring terrible suffering to his fellow men. Thus it is that our contribution to life is good or bad according to where we lay our emphasis, according to where our heart is, our desire, our aspiration. It cannot be otherwise. Our success in life, the whole of our life's expression, every bit of it, is entirely dependent on what we hold close to our heart. We take the stamp, the imprint of our thoughts. Whatever we constantly think upon, that we become. Even our physical body changes; it becomes either more subtle or more gross according to the trend of our mind. Sometimes we say of a person: "He lost something: he used to be refined, but now he has grown very dense." If you were able to make a study of that person's nature, his character, temperament, his doings and experiences, all his thoughts and associations both visible and invisible (for are not thoughts invisible associations?)—if you could really do this, you would discover the reason for the change.

You may not be able to see thoughts, but if you are an observer you very quickly see the change of expression that comes on a person's countenance because of a happy or an unhappy thought. Noble thoughts and aspirations radiate from the face, while thoughts of jealousy, hatred and anger cast a hideous shadow. Therefore one should not give way to these things. These are the marks which we leave upon our own life, and according to them we make ourselves channels for good or evil.

When we allow ourselves to fall into a morbid state, physical or mental, we become susceptible to all kinds of negative influences. Yet we have the possibility of being so constantly allied with the Supreme Power that at every moment It may work through us, through our thought and action, through our hands and feet. What a tremendous safeguard! One who thus becomes a medium for the Highest does not have to calculate with every step, "Shall I do this, or shall I do that?" Always he is given the word to speak, he is given the strength to do. On the other hand, we have it in our power to prevent this divine protection. Through our self-assertiveness, our arrogant notions, our limited feelings, we may open ourselves to evil forces.

Now I do not believe at all in any personal devil, and yet, in a way, he exists. He exists because we create him. First we create him as a little germ, and then as we keep on fostering that germ in our mind, it becomes a very big factor in our life. For example, someone provokes us. It is a very slight annoyance, we could easily shake it off, but instead of doing so, we brood over it. Gradually it sinks into our consciousness and poisons our whole system. When we try to throw it off, we find that it has become too deeply rooted: instead of our pulling it up, it pulls us down. We have the free will to choose one course or another and depending on the course that we choose, on our tenacity and steadfastness, we either open up an avenue for infinite blessings—even in our daily life—or the reverse. The endless benefits which flow from spiritual mediumship are not limited just to the hour of meditation. In fact the hour of meditation and the hour of action become so completely united for us that we feel our connection with Divinity at all times and in all places. Moreover what we do with our hands does not prey upon our mind as is now sometimes the case when our action goes

against our higher conviction. When we have the sense of being guided by a power greater than ourselves—(shall we call it the sense of instrumentality?)—in that moment of spiritual upliftment we feel that we are part of the Infinite. Therefore any thoughts, feelings or impressions which sever us from that consciousness we should seek to remove with all the strength of our being. That is our work and it is not only for those who have dedicated themselves to the spiritual life, but for everyone, because everyone wants more power and greater success and in order to have these things we must connect ourselves with That which alone can give them to us.

At first the Divine Presence may seem very unreal to you. As you try to do your duties and fulfill your obligations you will find the ego asserting itself with all its old likes and dislikes. Past habits will try to keep their hold over your mind. But if you are steadfast in your effort and resolution, if you bring your thoughts again and again back to that high point upon which you had fixed them, by degrees you will rise above all obstacles. This is the battle between the human and the Divine, or rather between the lower elements of human nature and its higher aspects. Within us is a great, noble and majestic principle which inspires us to do what is beneficial and uplifting. Opposed to it are the lower instincts, hindering and diabolical.

There is no one outside of us who can remove evil from our nature. We ourselves must remove it; we must make it impossible for it to enter our life again. One who falls under its sway has made himself open to it. There is no accident. When we see someone terribly afflicted our first reaction is to say: "What a tragedy! Surely he has not done anything to deserve all that!" It could not have come to him unless he had earned it. A criminal may give as an ex-

cuse: "In a moment of anger I did this thing!" Yet that special moment must have had a very definite background. It was the culmination of what had gone before. If the culmination does not come at one time it will come at another. The only way we can make its coming impossible is by fortifying ourselves every day and every moment, with noble and exalting thoughts—infinite thoughts—thoughts of God.

The more selfless our action is, the more powerful it will be. Those people are greatest who render their service and express their devotion when no one is watching them. Many can rise to a considerable height and accomplish big things when there is applause and public recognition. Even a mediocre man can respond to such stimulus, but the real individual is he who does good and holds to his standard even when he is unobserved in some corner. His type of character is not just on the surface; it goes deep down. His whole nature has become so imbued with the spirit of consecration that he could not do anything unworthy. We should all strive to be of this order, and we can be. We can become so completely a part of the Divine Power that it would be physically impossible for us to do wrong even unconsciously, even in sleep. Our very body can become so purified, so sensitive and clarified that, in a sense, it never sleeps. That is, it does not fall under the sway of material density. There is no one who does not possess these higher possibilities, and according to their unfoldment do we achieve a high degree in our spiritual evolution; also, so long as we bar them from our life we are forced to keep on struggling.

Often we hear it said: "Were it not for these evil influences around me I might make some progress." Let me repeat, "There is no power outside of us which can force evil upon us." You may not agree, you may insist that there

are evil forces which work against us. That may be true, but they cannot touch us unless we first make ourselves vulnerable. A man may become obsessed by an evil spirit. I do not mean necessarily a disembodied entity, but by the spirit of doubt and suspicion—by hatred, anger and jealousy. This does not happen accidentally. It happens because he has opened himself to them by his mental attitude, by sadness, brooding or unclean thoughts. He can, however, prevent this disaster. Let him open his mind toward God and he will become so clear a channel for the Supreme Power that nothing can stop it from flowing in him and through him at all times and under all circumstances. There is a river of life, but ignorant people are unaware of it and block its course. Naturally they suffer and feel impoverished, but instead of looking to themselves for the cause of their lack and misery they blame others, or their destiny. They have not learned that their life, like a tree, cannot live if it is severed from its root. When the tree feels its connection with the root, every leaf, every branch is made alive. Same way, when we become aware of our connection with the unfailing Source of our existence, everything becomes living for us; the divine vision opens clearly before us, and we realize that every particle, every inch of our being is absolutely connected with the infinite whole. But when our consciousness is empty of this realization, we are always in danger. The greatest fortification for our life is to keep close to the heart of Reality, Truth, God—call it any name you will. Name does not make any difference. What does make a difference is whether or not we possess that great sense of instrumentality.

We are all, without exception, children of one Divinity and the only sin there is, is bound up with thoughts and feelings which hinder our awareness of this relationship.

When we feel the presence of that great Infinite behind our thoughts and acts, behind our whole being, we lift up our heart and nothing is too difficult for us. Then no condition discourages us, for we find Him in all. But when we are deprived of this feeling of the infinite Presence, nothing satisfies us. We may have wealth, friends, we may have all sorts of worldly assets, yet lacking that realization we lack everything and find satisfaction nowhere.

We must become direct instruments in the hands of God that we may use His power as He directs us. Even now we are using it, but we are using it unconsciously, whimsically and ignorantly. When we have once made that higher contact, however, there is no interruption to its flow through our heart and mind. Then whenever a problem arises, instead of looking around outside for a solution, we look within, and the within never fails. You may say: "But I did look within and I found nothing." This merely means that your vision did not reach the final depth; it does not mean that it will never do so. Long established habits, long-standing materialistic notions have blindfolded us in regard to spiritual things. If we persist in our spiritual quest, however, if we keep on looking up and looking in, we shall find our vision.

With what whole-souled surrender a mystic, a seer, a true saint lays down his self-will; but not in a spirit of death or defeat. Not at all. Realizing something greater and better, something transcendent, he cries: "Take my hands and work with them! Take my feet, my mind, my heart—everything I possess! I am wholly Thine!" Peace will come upon our soul when we are able to say this and feel it. We shall no longer be the faltering, blundering, aggressive type of human being that we are now, for we shall have attained the highest goal of human existence. Then though life's

obstacles may obstruct the path before us, upheavals shake the very earth under our feet, and most trying conditions rise on all sides to distract and even to destroy us, we shall stand firm, because within us is That which gives us power to stand.

Power comes from within! All power comes from within! It is only when in our mad haste we seek without, and forgetting the Real, run after the unreal, that we meet with disappointments. But these disappointments vanish, and our weaknesses also vanish, once we have found the real source of our strength, and we find this through a true instrumentality—through spiritual mediumship—which destroys the gulf that separates the human and the Divine.

People at the present time are very eager for spirit-communications. This type of thing feeds the vanity or the curiosity of the average human being. Yet, to get in touch with some departed soul does not imply any great merit or spiritual development. Morever, how shall we know that the communicating spirit is what he appears to be? Those who told lies on this plane may still be controlled by the same tendency on the other plane, after they have passed out of the body. Even from that mysterious region they may come with fanciful stories and pretend to be what they are not. Of course if one could have direct contact with some lofty and spiritually illumined being it would bring great blessing, but too often the messages are from stray, earth-bound entities who, instead of helping us, may open us to all sorts of complications and impede our progress.

Spiritual mediumship is quite the opposite of this. It does not deal with beings but with Being. It is safe for everyone, high and low, great and small, the learned and the ignorant, and can only lead to peace and great illumination.

Walk always in the light of knowledge. That will be your safeguard. When you have that protection, no matter how you may be placed or where you may be called, you will ever have the sense of being led by a Divine Hand. So long as you do not permit evil thoughts and selfish habits to tear you away from this guidance, nothing can harm you. Darkness cannot come near the light, and if we carry that light—if we do not neglect it but keep it always burning—we shall be safe every step of our existence.

When the vision of oneness dawns on a human soul, that man is blessed and is able to bless others. Not only has he crossed over the dangerous span of life which separates the finite from the infinite, but he can help others to cross. For he knows the secret, the great secret, which we all can know. The Kingdom of Truth is within, but because we have formed the habit of looking without, we do not find it. Therefore we must form the habit of inward gazing. That is the first step and if we persist, the way will open and in the clear light we shall behold That which will make our life complete, fill our heart with happiness, and our entire being with a peace which cannot be broken by any material circumstance whatsoever.

I say to the Divine Mother: "O Mother, I am the machine and Thou art the Operator. I am the house and Thou art the Indweller. I am the chariot and Thou art the Charioteer. I do as Thou makest me do; I speak as Thou makest me speak; I move as Thou makest me move. It is not I! It is not I! It is all Thou. It is all Thou!" Hers is the glory; we are only Her instruments. If a man truly believes that God alone does everything, that He is the Operator and man the machine, then such a man is verily liberated in life. Thou workest Thine own work; men only call it theirs.

—*Sri Ramakrishna*

THE VALUE OF SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

By Srimati Gayatri Devi

Ritualistic workship, acts of devotion, prayer, meditation, repetition of a holy name, all are various means to purify the mind of the aspirant who seeks union with God. They should be observed with regularity, steadfastness and earnest faith in their efficacy. To be careless or irregular and spasmodic in their observance is to slacken in the discipline of the mind without which one cannot hope to attain the Highest.

For a beginner on the path, utmost effort and determination are necessary in order to form the habit of spiritual practice. Our daily life represents a set of physical and mental habits which we make from childhood onward. We have regular hours for taking nourishment, for work, rest and recreation. We plan for them and follow them with careful precision and regularity. Again we go through them casually as a matter of habit. We learn to eat and play and work effortlessly after the habit has been established. Similarly, the practice of prayer and other spiritual exercises becomes a part of our daily routine once we have formed the habit. We feel uncomfortable and dissatisfied without them as we are when we have foregone our habit of eating or taking a walk.

In India men and women and even children are taught spiritual practices. There, definite hours are chosen as auspicious times for communion. I remember vividly the experience of my childhood of being awakened in the early morning by the devotional singing of my parents. They never started their day without each individually spending a little time in silence and meditation apart and away from their cares and duties. Again at eventide the sound of the

conch shell or temple bell in the distance and the scent of incense being passed from room to room, even to the barnyard, reminded one that the hour of remembering God was at hand.

Anyone nurtured in a religious atmosphere among devout people who are particular about their spiritual practices cannot fail to be influenced by them. Here in the West children are sent to Sunday School for their religious training. It is to be remembered that a child would learn more quickly from its mother by watching her acts of faith and prayer than by memorization of litanies and hymns. If in the homes men and women took time out of their overactive routine to go into silence daily, or to follow their specific religious exercises with feeling and earnestness, their example would kindle the faith of their children in such practices and inspire them to do likewise.

It is true that one may become mechanical in trying to make spiritual practices habitual. But nothing is lost even by going through them in that manner. A person who is learning to play a musical instrument will have first to master the technique and form of his art. In the beginning his practice is likely to be monotonous and uninspiring. But he does not give up. In time he learns to play well, producing sweetness of tone, and in his work finds joy and uplift and imparts the same to others. In the same way, when one begins to establish himself in a habit of meditation or any other practice, he cannot escape the inevitable struggle and monotony. But one should not be discouraged by them nor lose his interest or enthusiasm for his objective. He must keep his goal clearly before his mind and try to move toward it, persevering steadily and with an undepressed attitude.

Each day, if we so choose, we can set aside a period for the specific purpose of spending it alone in union with God.

A devotee who thinks of the Spirit as One outside himself will pray to Him, asking His guidance and protection in a childlike manner, or express in song his joy in God. Another following a different path may take pains in his exercises of breathing, posture, concentration and meditation. Another will study high philosophy and practice discrimination and analysis between the Real and unreal. Still another will enter into perfect silence in order to hear, see, feel and touch without senses the Spirit dwelling in the inmost recesses of his being. Whatever the particular method of approach of the individual according to his aptitude and inclination, his sincerity, aspiration and tenacity to persist are the true guides to his ultimate fulfillment.

Before we can find delight in spiritual practices, we must learn to appreciate their worth. They are not for the person who is unaware of his inner life or its need. Prayer, meditation or habit of communion, all are ways of the soul to reach God for whom it longs. Where there is no longing, of what avail is practice?

However, the great souls who have realized Truth tell us not to give up spiritual exercises even when our zeal for them is lukewarm. By holding fast to practice we can increase and intensify our love and longing, while by forsaking them on the excuse of lack of feeling or urge, we impair our spiritual growth. Master-Spirits like Buddha, Christ and Sri Ramakrishna spent the best years of their life in contemplation, meditation and other forms of*sadhana* even after their personality had been immersed in Truth, never slackening their efforts. From their example and teachings we are to learn the value they placed upon spiritual practice. By following their instructions, we too can strive for the Highest, however difficult, and in time find in it the fullness, tranquility and peace for which our heart longs.

INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY

By Jeanne Anthony

"Thou hast made us for Thysyelf, O God; and our spirits are restless until they rest in Thee." —*St. Augustine*

For a long time in my life one of my earliest recollections was a puzzle to me because, although I could remember the scene, I could not recall exactly what had happened nor why I should want to remember it; and it was more than twenty years before I knew that this recollection was of my earliest spiritual experience.

I could not have been more than four years old when this revelation occurred because I remember distinctly that, at the time, I had been digging industriously with a small tin spade in a child's sand-box. As I dug, there were two things I could think about: one was the little girl that was I, and her play; the other was something else to which I kept turning. In my mind I turned from one to the other; but, as I thought of my playing, the other—whatever it was—was gone. I remember distinctly trying to regain it, and being sorry that it was no longer at hand. I wondered what it was, and by what process I had found it, and why I cared that now it was lost to me. I remember, too, resigning myself at last to the fact that this previous awareness was no more. And at length I went on with my play.

My family was a happy, large and affectionate one; but my greatest childish admiration went to my paternal grandfather. Indeed it was upon what I saw in "Grandpa" that my faith in human nature was built. Grandpa never laughed at little girls; he listened gravely and courteously to what they had to say as he would have listened to an older and more important person. He was steady and reliable; somebody to count on in any emergency; he was kind and patient and very wise. I was eight years old when he died.

Those people who think that civilization has not improved have forgotten how people mourned a mere forty years ago.

I was taken down town, to see Grandpa's place of business draped in festoons of black bunting with enormous purple rosettes. On the day of the funeral, black bands were sewed onto the coat sleeves of my younger brother and myself; then, more filled with solemn curiosity than with any sense of loss (for death was still an unknown experience to us,) we were driven out into the country for the last rites at my grandfather's home.

Our first shock was at the sight of the long line of empty hacks awaiting the mourners. The next somber and oppressive note was cast by the hearse in front of the door. The horses before it wore heavy black nets, fringed with tassels over their backs, and the hearse was trimmed with silver, and with black and purple plumes. Many Knights Templar in full regalia (for Grandpa had belonged to the Order) with their embroidered cloaks and white plumed *chapeaux,* stood waiting silently for the services to begin. Inside the house all the familiar furniture had been removed; the rows of stiff little chairs from the undertaker's gave us a strange feeling that this was a place we did not know. The banks of flowers were no comforting sight, and their odor was nearly overwhelming. But our greatest shock of strangeness was to come from the sight of my grandmother. Ordinarily a cheerful person, fond of bright and "ungrandmotherly" colors, she suddenly came from a doorway, white and strained of face, clothed in black, with a crepe veil thrown back over her bonnet and hanging to the hem of her skirt. At the sight of our familiar faces she burst into a paroxysm of weeping and threw herself on my father. Father led her away.

Before her grief and disorientation, my childish universe

was rocked to its foundations. If cheerful, capable and practical grandmother could look and act like that, how could one count on anything?

Trembling, and with my sense of security seemingly broken and gone, I was led into the parlor "for a last good-by to Grandpa." The room was empty, except for the flowers and a long box-like arrangement at one end, that someone called a casket. But suddenly, to the almost terrified child bidden to look therein there came an instant and comforting revelation. The long, still figure stretched within the casket had nothing whatever to do with Grandpa! He simply wasn't there! It was almost as if his love and kindness had reached from somewhere to wipe away all the fear and terror from the mind and heart of a little girl he had loved; for certainly there was no conscious effort on my part that bade me see the spiritual reality. And that reality was so profound that the rest of the solemn occasion became to me completely unimportant.

That realization of Reality, while of great meaning to my childish mind, was still only a part of life and something that belonged to Grandpa and me alone. Certainly it did not seem to have anything to do with the God or religion that was presented to me at Sunday school. Nor did it ever occur to me to tell anyone; it was definitely a private experience.

My family were not only affectionate; they were also easy-going, and my religious instruction was given spasmodically. But I was a credulous child, and I can remember that one summer at the seashore, I tried to walk on the water, believing that faith and prayer could accomplish anything. My failure to succeed led me to doubt the power of prayer, a doubt that increased over the years. By the time that I

was eighteen, I had learned to bury any instinctive religious feelings, mainly because people often laughed if I permitted them to show. I became extremely critical of church and clergy. The conventional God presented for my enlightenment failed to convince me of His reality; my life was pleasant; I did not worry myself with doubts or questions. I merely left religion alone. I was, I decided, an agnostic.

When I was twenty-eight, my second child was born. I had had a very trying pregnancy and had gone to the hospital rejoicing that the long time of waiting was nearly over. Eventually they took me to the delivery room to give me the gas, and the sound of the doctors' voices discussing petty things exasperated me beyond endurance. If only the baby were born! But the gas was drowning me, and as I went out from consciousness with it and the pain, a blurred awareness settled over me. I saw . . .

A giant fly-wheel whirling through space to the sound of a monotonous hum. As it whirled, I saw that the spokes had names. I had never heard of the Buddhist Wheel of Life, but I saw that the names were those of human experience—sex, hunger, death—and there were others which I have now forgotten. My mind was the center of the wheel, the hub on which it whirled. Suddenly, like concentric circles on water, the hub widened out, blotting out the spokes. The humming stopped. All color, sound, sensation, form, thought, ceased. I went out to a radiance and light.

God was revealed!

I tried to struggle back to tell the others. "There is a God!" I tried to gasp to them. But suddenly they no longer mattered. I was bathed in radiance of light and glory—a glory that I had always known! At last I knew Immortality face to face: I had never been born and would never die! And strangely enough I knew that it was what

I had always known. It was the wheel that I had gone through—the wheel of human life—that alone had kept the Truth from me.

How can words describe the indescribable? How describe the joy that caused the morning stars to sing together? How describe the peace that passeth understanding—the heavenly, heavenly peace in which I rested?

"Why has this been hidden from me?" I wanted to cry.

But then, as I had come to the Light, I began to go back; the humming began again. "Why do you bring me back?" I cried, partly to the God that I had just found and partly to those whom I had left in the delivery room. But I found that I was only whispering, and I was coming back from that far country when I had just learned the Great Secret. I was coming back to a body that, aching and wincing with pain, vaguely belonged to me.

I heard someone say, "It's a girl, darling." But that fact no longer mattered. What could possibly matter, compared with what I had just experienced? I did not want to come back, but I resigned myself.

Cautiously I told my husband, then the nurse. They laughed at me. "An ether dream," they said. But I knew better. Suddenly it came to me in a flash: this was what I had lost that day in the sand-box. This was what I could never remember . . . and never forget. "Heaven does lie about us in our infancy," I thought. Some day I would know more.

Somewhat timidly, but thoroughly convinced of the reality of my enlightenment, I began a private investigation. William James's book, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* proved to me, to my relief, that I was not unique. A friend or two, in a confiding moment, averred that they had had

similar experiences. It was reassuring to learn that other quite ordinary people were also aware of having touched the Infinite.

Several years later I found another book, on Oriental philosophy, and learned that the culturally ancient Asiatics knew all about such things. Had I read the lives of Christian mystics, I might have found the same information through them. One chapter in the Oriental book described an experience similar to mine. I did not attempt any of the exercises said to induce such a state, for I felt that if the Mother of the Universe had given me such bliss, I might know it again when the time was ripe.

Difficulties presented themselves, however. For removed from the light of what I had seen and plunged into practical matters, I found it hard, as time went on, to answer the comments of the skeptics. Now I know that I should never have tried to share my joy; I should have understood that the knower of the spiritual is often laughed at and more than often doubted. Fortunately I knew one profoundly simple and spiritually stable person, whose insight I trusted. When I repeated to her one rather crude comment that "alcohol, as well as ether, might give the same results," she only said, "Of course. Anything that heightens the nervous system (aside from *Yoga* exercises,) while not desirable, has been known to give these experiences. But," she added, "what the scoffers do not see is that the goal of realization is the supreme achievement; the means of getting there is not the end itself." Her further comments were comforting, and also put an end to my desire to share my precious experience with others.

A further spiritual awareness came to me after this child was born, through my writing. Though begun casually as a pastime, my ability to express myself grew through daily

practice; I began to be aware of a stream of inspiration that seemed to flow through me with almost physical sensation, as if it were hitting me on the back, and on out through my typewriter keys.

Perhaps all creative persons are aware of this phenomenon, as many poets have recorded impressions that seem to declare that Creation is using them as an instrument. From Omar, the tent maker, to Emily Dickenson, they have implied that it is not they who create the song, but that they merely serve as an instrument of the Singer. As well as any of them, Eleanor Wylie has said it in her *Nameless Song* (referring to her heart):

> "The waves have whirled it round and round,
> The winds have worn it thin and fine;
> It is alive with a singing sound:
> Whose voice is that? *It is not mine.*"

So, little by little, I began to learn the humility that all creative artists and seekers of the Truth must have. But I should have learned more thoroughly. Four years after my beautiful revelation, a long and terrifying illness came upon me. And this illness found me quite unprepared for the test of endurance it presented. People speak lightly of "nervous breakdowns," but one who has experienced it knows that mental illness is far more terrible than physical.

If "nerves are the curse of sensitive people today, then sensitive people need to know more of the proper use of their instrument—the body and mind. At any rate, some time after my illness, when I was still groping for a more thorough understanding and readjustment, I met the Swami. Or rather, I should say that I first found the Ananda Ashrama, for Swami Paramananda was in India at the time of my first visit. The beautiful atmosphere of the place and the ideals preached there quite won me. I had come several

times to services and met the Sisters before the Swami's return. Almost unbelieving that there could be such broad-mindedness as preached in his books, or that any place in busy, restless America could be as peaceful as his Retreat, I looked forward to his homecoming. Like many others, I was not disappointed. Rather the reverse for, as many will remember of their own meetings, as I shook his hand a strong spiritual conviction took possession of me. Looking into that gentle, smiling countenance that nevertheless expressed such inner strength and dignity, I thought, "Here is the man to lift me out of my troubles . . . and one who knows the answers."

In looking back over the eighteen years since that day when I first met the Swami, there seems no lapse in the continuity of his friendship—as if that, too, were an intimation of the immortal life he preached. "Hear ye, ye children of the Immortal One!" he so often chanted, from the ancient Vedic hymn. Indeed, once I had met him there was never any further question of where I should find the answers to spiritual seeking. He was the answer—in his person, his faith, in everything he did and preached. The extraordinary grace of his movements in the Shrine, the lilt of his voice which, like the corners of his mouth, always went up, and most of all, the greatness of his simplicity, all said that here was more than spiritual genius. Yet here was one, too, who had attained the highest and the best, and who claimed nothing for himself.

By no spoken word he taught the meaning of my own Christian faith. I see him now on a Sunday morning in the Temple, clad in his long white coat and orange sash—the symbol of a *Sannyasin,* a spiritual renouncer—the sunlight from the Temple window falling on his book as he read, "Come unto me, all ye who labor and are heavy laden,

and I shall give you rest unto your souls." And we were lifted up and rested in his light, as his dignity gave us strength; that dignity which he once described in another as "spiritual anchorage."

He had a way of imparting understanding by parables and sayings; "the Oriental way," he once said, smiling. "Jesus, you recall, was an Oriental."

Although he was fearless when a rebuke was necessary, he always took the sting away, so that the one rebuked was healed and not hurt. To one crying in anguish with the burden of a great load of self pity, "What have I done to deserve such a fate?" he merely said simply, "What did Jesus ever do to deserve the crucifixion? Yet He took it just the same." The comment was so apt and true that it silenced that complaint forever.

In these troubled times, although his spirit still lives in the Ashrama he founded, and in his writings, those who love him would give much to hear him laugh. His joyous, buoyant laughter, so spontaneous and merry, simply dissolved worldly cares to native nothingness. To those in trouble now, it means much to recall his cheerfulness and that wonderful healing laughter—unique laughter. To me, brought up to believe that religious matters are gravely serious, this particular characteristic was original and almost incredible. How grateful I was for that cheerfulness! It would heal now, as always; yet surely the Swami has been spared great suffering, for those who were closest to him know how he would have grieved for his children in the tortured world of today. Only a few weeks before his passing, when France was falling, he was not able to sleep. The cries of the people in anguish came to him in the night and he himself could not rest.

His tender thoughtfulness for those depending on him

was unvarying. His patience with the senior Sister's wishes, his remembrance of someone's favorite dish, his love of serving others by cooking for them as much as by preaching to them, his quick response to any need—"look up to the immortal stars," he once commanded one, struggling alone with her problem on the terrace after dark, when he, led by unerring instinct, came out to find her—are all well remembered.

That tenderness went to every corner of the Ashrama. He found little seedlings and transplanted them with his own hands. "If anyone destroys these babies, it will make a breach between us," he exclaimed jokingly, yet meaning it. He was always so pleased to recall that, at the time of the fire, the barnyard animals came to stand patiently, of their own accord, in the protection of the Temple patio.

Perhaps, in these times of suspicion and doubt, the best thing to remember of him is something he said once of one who had turned against him: "I would rather be betrayed a thousand times than fail to believe in anyone."

The Swami's daily life and character were living proof of his faith in the immortal soul, and he acted upon that premise in every move he made. It is summed up in the lines by Sir Edwin Arnold in *The Song Celestial,* which Swami Paramananda loved and which he quoted on more than one occasion:

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

OUR DEAD

By Sister Daya

Our dead are part of us!
Never again the same
We wander along life's way
From dusk to dawn.

These gentle thoughts that stir
They are from her, from her,
Now she is gone.

In divers moods and strange
Emotions flit and range—
From her they shine!

And what her spirit feels
My act or word reveals
As hers and mine.

Our dead are part of us!
Never again the same
We wander along life's way
From dusk to dawn.

There is one mind common to all individual men. Every man is an inlet to the same and to all of the same. He that is once admitted to the right of reason is made a freeman of the whole estate. What Plato has thought, he may think; what a saint has felt, he may feel; what at any time has befallen any man, he can understand. Who hath access to this universal mind is a party to all that is or can be done, for this is the only and sovereign agent. —*Emerson.*

Death is not extinguishing the light, it is putting out the lamp because dawn has come. —*Rabindranath Tagore.*

THE CONCEPTION OF THE SELF IN THE UPANISHADS

By S. C. Sen

The ANNAMAYA KOSHA. The *Annamaya Kosha* is the outermost shell in the constitution of man; it is his coarse physical body. It is built up, according to *Taittiriyaka-Upanishad,* from the gross physical matter and is akin in nature to the gross physical world which sustains it. It is with this body that man carries on his work on this physical plane. Two systems of organs are recognized in it—one under the control of the mind (*manas*) and the other under the control of life (*prana*)—corresponding to the modern physiological divisions of the body into the central nervous system and the sympathetic system.

The PRANAMAYA KOSHA. Behind the coarse physical body the seers of the *Upanishads* saw a subtler *kosha* compound of *tanmatras* as the bearer and vehicle of vegetative life. They also saw that this finer sheath acts on the gross inorganic matter and converts it into a mass of protoplasm, and that as soon as its activity is withdrawn the protoplasmic matter disintegrates and is reduced to its old inorganic state. *The Prasna-Upanishad* ascribes the work of *Vidharana, i.e.,* preserving the organic character of the body, to this *kosha.* This vital sheath, however, performs five different functions, in consequence of which five varieties of *pranamaya,* known as *prana, apana, vyana, samana,* and *udana,* are distinguished. *Prana* performs the functions of respiration, *apana* of evacuation, *vyana* of circulation, *samana* of digestion, and *udana* of separation of the soul from the body at death. These five varieties of the *Pranamaya* occupy different parts of the body, and with the help of the sympathetic system of the body, which they control, they carry on all the vital processes.

The MANOMAYA KOSHA. Behind the *kosha* of vital matter, the sages saw a still subtler *kosha* enveloping the soul, a *kosha* through which the soul performs its conscious activities. This subtler internal vehicle of consciousness is called the *Manomaya kosha.* The *manomaya* or the *manas* is in close touch with and controls the central nervous system of the body, and has organic arrangements corresponding to it. The *manas* has, according to the *Upanishads,* five organs of sensation (corresponding to the sensory organs of ear, eye, nose, skin and tongue), five organs of action (corresponding to the motor organs of hands, feet, mouth, anus, and the organ of generation) and a central organ of direction and control, sometimes called the lower *manas* and sometimes called *Sankalpa* (corresponding to the physical brain). These eleven organs act in waking life through their physical counterparts, controlling and guiding them for purposes of conscious life; but in dream the mental organs are withdrawn from the physical body and work independently of the physical organs. What we call wakeful consciousness is not possible if the mental organs are not in touch with the central nervous system of the body. But the conscious functions of the mind are not on that account dependent on the body. They can go on independently of its help. When, in dream, the mind is released from its physical fetters, it can see and hear and perform all conscious operations. *Brihadaranyaka* 1.5.3. says: "My mind was elsewhere, I could not see; my mind was elsewhere, I could not hear; it is therefore clear that we see with the mind, hear with the mind, and know with the mind."

When, as in the waking state, the mind works through the physical organs of the body it can deal with and know only the physical world, but in dream when it works by itself, independently of the physical organs, it knows and

deals with a higher world which is akin to it in nature and substance. In dream, as *Yajnavalkya* has clearly pointed out, we have two kinds of experience: either we enjoy the mental images of waking life, or we gather experiences of the mental world in which we then temporarily live. The new experiences thus obtained in dream can be brought, as they are sometimes brought, to waking consciousness, if the physical brain on which the waking consciousness depends is fit to receive them.

The VIJNANAMAYA KOSHA. "Behind the *manomaya* but different from it there is a still subtler *kosha,*" says the *Taittiriyaka Upanishad* called *Vijnanamaya.* It permeates the *manomaya* as its very soul. It has the shape of man, as the human shape of the *Vijnanamaya* is the human shape of the *anandamaya.* Joy is its head, Bliss is its trunk, and *Brahman* is its seat and support." This *anandamaya kosha* is a mere husk of the self and not its kernel, as some have wrongly supposed. But it is a much finer husk which performs no active functions. It is a vehicle of mere potentiality. It is described by Gaudapada as *Vijanidrayutah Prajnah;* as a state of consciousness in which the individuality of the *Jiva* lies in a latent seed-condition. Into this *kosha* the soul enters in dreamless sleep and *pralaya,* leaving the other *koshas* behind. Being thus bereft of the active *koshas* the self loses its adventitious characters which it acquires through its association with the active *koshas* and realises its essential nature as bliss. Hence this *kosha* is called *Anandamaya.* It thus serves to lead man to self-realization and union with *Brahman.*

TO BE CONCLUDED

WAGNER AND VEDANTA

By Lawrence Gilman

(Compiled from his book "Wagner's Operas," published by Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., New York, N. Y.)

[It was at a birthday luncheon in a garden high up on the mount of Bellagio, many years ago. The table, set amid the Ilex trees, overlooked the blue waters of Lake Como, which could be seen shining through the green foliage, far below.

Around the table were seated perhaps half a dozen guests, Americans on tour or resident in Europe, and one rather impressive German lady, well past middle-age.

There was laughter and talk of many things, and finally of music. The guest of honor, a young girl fresh from boarding-school and full of youthful enthusiasm, had just expressed herself with genuine ferver regarding the music of Richard Wagner, whose operas she had heard for the first time not long before at New York's Metropolitan. "It was sublime music!" she exclaimed: "It seemed to take me out of this world!"

The German lady leaned forward suddenly and broke in with some abruptness: "Wagner's music is not sublime!" she said; "It is diabolic. It rouses the worst elements in man!"

The girl gazed at her in amazement. She could hardly credit her ears. Such words — from a German? To her ardent, unschooled heart it seemed sacrilege or treason or something equally dishonorable. Her soul rose in protest, but she replied quietly: "It surely wasn't anything diabolic that I felt when I listened to the *Ring*, to *Tristan* and to *Parsifal*. It seemed rather to exalt my spirit and carry me beyond myself."

"My child," replied the older woman, with some condescension, "you are too young to understand the feeling which

that music aroused in you. I repeat that it is diabolic!"

The girl became dumb. In the face of this statement what was there left for her to say? She thought, however, and she remembered. She remembered the lift of her whole being as the mighty Wagnerian themes sounded forth night after night. She remembered the Fire Music, quivering and flickering and dying, bringing to her the picture of primordial flame dancing in the depths of space at some divine command. Under its spell she had felt as if she were witnessing the birth of suns and planets. *Siegfried* had evoked the heroic in her soul—at the moment of listening she had become a warrior for Truth—while the immortal harmonies of *Tristan* had seemed to her to say all that could be said in this world concerning deathless love and longing. If these feelings were demonic, she thought, then surely she did not know right from wrong.

She never saw the German lady again. But she often pondered over her extraordinary comment. What a strange reaction had been hers! Was it due to her own mentality or actually to something in the music? The answer came years later through the words of Sri Ramakrishna: "It is the nature of the lamp to give light. With its help some may cook food, some may forge deeds, and some read the scriptures. Is it the fault of the light?" No more, in this case, was it the fault of the music.

Diving deeper into the Hindu tradition, the great, sweeping utterances of the Vedic Upanishads brought to the girl (now a mature woman) her former Wagnerian reactions. Here again was the lift, the ecstasy, the boundless consciousness of eternity. These scriptures and that music seemed to surge forth from an identical source. Could this concept be solely due to her own mental coloring, she asked herself? What of Wagner himself? Had he ever revealed the foun-

tainhead of his creative power? Again the answer came to her, this time through a secular writer, Mr. Lawrence Gilman, former music critic of the New York Herald-Tribune. His book, *The Wagner Operas* was placed in her hand, and because it is a winged book in its own right, a revealing book that touches the very heart of Wagner's inspiration, an extract from it is given below, for the benefit of the readers of the *Message*. Those who love and live by the monistic teachings of Vedanta cannot afford to miss this work of beauty and significance. It should be read in full along with *Toscanini and Great Music* and whatever else from the pen of Mr. Gilman is available. The fragment which follows is only a crumb from a rich offering and should serve but to whet the appetite for more of such life-giving fare.

[EDITOR]

This music, more frequently than any other, takes us into what a poet of today has simply and profoundly called "that great mood of infinity in which life is all spirit and passion." Wagner is the transfiguring poet *par excellence* because he lets us see his subjects, whether they be human or heroic fables or embodied passions or incarnate symbols of the high mysteriousness of human life and destiny—Hans Sachs or Senta or Wotan or Parsifal or Isolde—under the aspect of eternity, lifted into a universal greatness of implication, and charged with universal beauty and significance. For always there is the prophetic and sublime Wagner, Wagner the mystic and the seer, whose music, for long, incredible moments, reminds us that we are greater than we knew.

Wagner was a spiritual mystic, and neither his dramas nor his music are wholly comprehensible to the student or listener who is unfamiliar with the philosophical backgrounds against which Wagner set his parables of the spiritual life. During the last two years that he worked on the music of

Götterdämmerung, he and Cosima steeped themselves in the mystical literature of the ancient Hindus, "finding in it not only themselves, but also the great conceptions that guided Wagner as a man and a creative artist;" and as late as 1872 Wagner had apparently intended to retain certain mystical utterances in one of the several versions of Brünnhilde's final oration, which he ultimately discarded. In a remarkable passage of that valedictory, Brünnhilde proclaims herself a being enlightened by sorrowing love, about to attain the blessed state of liberation from rebirth. Cosima, as she records in her diary, was not satisfied with some of Wagner's phrases; so he dropped the passage and shortened the close.

Probably the omitted words would not have been comprehended except by those who, like Wagner himself, were students of Hindu philosophy. But though the words that Brünnhilde sings, in Wagner's final version of the close of *Götterdämmerung,* have nothing to say to us of enlightening and redemptive love, Wagner's music, in the orchestral postlude that follows the Immolation scene, tells us only and finally of that.

Tristan is unique not only among Wagner's works, but among all outgivings of the musical mind, because it is devoted, with an exclusiveness and concentration and intensity beyond comparison, to the rendering of essential experience. Wagner is concerned here not only with epic paragons, or elemental beings of fire and of the depths, or gods and goddesses, or a cosmos in distress, or some brilliant and crowded chapter out of a romantic past: but with the inner life of life itself. In this score, he is at the summit of his genius. These passionate transvaluations of love and death have called forth the greatest that he could give; and he has steeped this miraculous music in a beauty that is outside of time.

Which brings us face to face with the truth that it is impossible to understand the basic conceptions of Wagner's dramas and music . . . without knowing something about the ideas that formed so increasingly influential a part of his thinking during the years of his maturity.

The true action of *Tristan,* of the *Ring,* of *Parsifal,* even of *Die Meistersinger,* is interior. Wagner was fundamentally a mystic; and we cannot hope to comprehend his dramas and the interaction between them and his music unless we are willing and able to grant him his philosophical premises, and place ourselves, with him, at the center of his conceptions and their working-out.

An adequately correlating study of the fundamental and inseparable relationship between the later music-dramas—in particular, the *Ring, Tristan, Parsifal*—and those ancient religions and literatures of the East which progressively influenced Wagner's mind, has yet to be made in English. The profounder Oriental teachings are outside the usual range of musical scholarship—to say nothing of the fact that their comprehension would involve the study of a lifetime; and Western specialists in Eastern mysticism have, as a rule, but the dimmest awareness of the intellectual and spiritual content of Occidental music.

In Wagner's case, the whole subject has been unhappily confused by the persistence with which too-casual observers have repeated the dreary chatter about Schopenhauer's presumably controlling part in shaping the ideology of *Tristan* and the *Ring.* It is commonly supposed and often asserted that Wagner derived the philosophical ideas which underlie the drama and music of *Tristan,* in particular, from the author of *Die Welt alse Wille und Vorstellung,* and that those ideas, as Wagner expressed them in *Tristan,* are profoundly pessimistic. Both of these suppositions are highly debatable.

In the first place, the idea of spiritual consummation and appeasement through a mystical Death-in-Love was in Wagner's mind—and is to be found in his writings—before he had even heard of Schopenhauer. In 1851, shortly after he had completed *Lohengrin,* and when he was shaping the dramas that were eventually to be the *Ring,* we find him using these words: "This love-yearning, the noblest thing my heart could feel—what other could it be than a longing for release from the present, for absorption in an element of infinite love, a love not to be found on earth, and reaching through the gates of Death alone?"

This, as other Wagnerian students have pointed out, is an expression of the idea that was afterward to form the basis of *Tristan*—one can almost hear, turned into prose, the very words of the lovers in the garden. Yet Wagner, at the time, knew nothing whatever of Schopenhauer. Later, in 1854, after his first reading of *The World as Will and Idea,* he wrote to Liszt: "His [Schopenhauer's] chief idea, the final negation of the desire of life, is terribly serious, but it indicates the only salvation possible. To me, of course, that thought was not new."

Wagner, admittedly, was fascinated by Schopenhauer's *Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* when he encountered it in 1854 (while he was working on the composition-sketch of *Die Walküre*); and a few years later he was generous enough to say that from Schopenhauer he had learnt to understand his own works, and had been enabled to comprehend them with his reason as well as with his intuition. Yet it was not primarily from the pessimistic and defeatist philosophy of Schopenhauer that Wagner derived the inner substance of *Tristan* and, in part, of the *Ring* and *Parsifal,* but from the mystical doctrines of the East, those profound and noble concepts of enlightened wisdom and the spiritual destiny of man

which suffered so curious and depressing a sea-change when they passed through Schopenhauer's mind. Wagner must have been dazzled indeed by the brilliance of Schopenhauer's writings; for it was scarcely necessary for him to give credit to Schopenhauer for ideas which had already come to him from the source which had been drawn upon by them both—those philosophical speculations of ancient India, into which the poet-composer had penetrated so much more deeply and intuitively than had the philosopher whom he admired and praised. For not only the exaltation of Wagner's greater works themselves, but his letters and prose works and the records of his sayings, give us proof of his absorption in the literature of the East, and his understanding of its luminous and lofty valor.

We find him urging Mathilde, in the Zürich period, to command Otto to procure for her "at once" the "Hindu legends edited by Adolph Holtzmann," and assuring her that "our whole culture stands shamed by these purest revelations of noblest humanity in the ancient East." A year later (1856) he is sketching the scenario of his projected Buddhist drama, *Die Sieger,* which he never carried further, but some of whose elements, as I have already pointed out, found their way into *Tristan* and *Parsifal;* and soon after, he drafts that mystical variant (afterward abandoned) of Brünnhilde's farewell oration in *Götterdämmerung* to which I referred in the preceding chapter—words that are meaningless to those who are unfamiliar with the Hindu doctrines of *Karma* and rebirth. Writing to Mathilde from Lucerne in 1859, he compliments her upon finding her way through Köppen's History of the *Religion of Buddha,* and bursts into a paean in praise of that view of the world [Buddhism] "compared with which all other dogmas must surely look parochial and petty. The philosopher with his broader

thought," he continues, "the explorer of Nature with his most extensive deductions, the artist with his most transcendent imaginings, the man with the wisest heart for all that breathes and suffers—all find in this wondrous and quite incomparable world-myth a home the least confined, and in it their whole selves again."

The opening of the *Tristan* Prelude is explained to Mathilde, seven months after the completion of the opera, in Hindu terminology: "I often look towards the land of Nirvana," writes Wagner. "Nirvana in its turn, however, soon changes into *Tristan*—you know the Buddhist theory of the world's creation: A breath perturbs the heaven's translucence. It swells, condenses, and at last the whole world stands forth in prisoning solidity."

From Paris, where he is engrossed in the preparation of *Tannhäuser* for production at the Opera, he writes Mathilde (at the beginning of August, 1860) concerning "the profound hypothesis of Reincarnation," which alone has been able, he says, to show him "the consoling point where all souls converge in the end to an equal height of redemption, after their diverse lives, running separately though side by side in Time, have met in full awareness beyond it . . . Thus the awful tragedy of life arises from separateness in time and space; but since time and space are nothing but our mode of apprehension, and have no reality apart from that, so to the men of clearest perception even the utmost tragic grief should be explainable as only the individual's defect of vision. So it is, I believe."

Fourteen years later, at Bayreuth in 1874, when Wagner, with all his works save *Parsifal* composed, was within a decade of his end, we find him "absorbed," with Cosima, in that long-familiar world of Hindu literature, and discovering in it "the great thoughts that guided him as man and

artist." On the night before his death at Venice, Cosima heard him speaking, and went into his room. He told her that he had been talking about her, and embraced her long and tenderly. "Every five thousand years it is a success," he said, thinking of their marriage. Cosima records in her diary that she "spoke of the Hindu nature, and of how the soul longs for its other soul."

Wagner, concerning *Tristan*: "Here, in absolute faith, I plunged into the profoundest depths of the spirit, and fashioned the outward semblance of the work from the inmost center of that realm . . . Life and Death, the whole meaning and existence of the outer world, here depend entirely on the hidden mysteries of the spirit. It is the desire of the inmost soul itself that brings about the affecting action of the drama, and it enters the light of day precisely as it was shaped beforehand in that inner shrine."

The Wagner of *Tristan und Isolde* "caught up the whole of love and uttered it:" this music is the last word that any art has thus far spoken about the anguish and ecstasy of human passion. But to look upon *Tristan* as nothing more than a glorification of passionate and tragic human love is scarcely to see below its surface. It is that, of course; and one might reasonably feel that that, in all conscience, should be enough for anyone. But Wagner happens to have made *Tristan* something more than a lyric tragedy of passionate and fateful love. He conceived it as a drama of the inner life of man; and unless we realize that truth, and are moved by that reality, we get only the exterior of the work—overwhelming as that is.

The so-called "love duet," for instance, is no such thing, in the operatic sense. That unprecedented dialogue is an interchange of feeling and experience between two nobly tragic natures who find themselves confronting the pro-

foundest realities and mysteries of the spirit. Wagner has made this clear in the passage quoted on an earlier page, in which he tells us that in *Tristan* the whole meaning and existence of the outer world depend entirely on the hidden mysteries of the spirit's life.

Wagner conceived his *Tristan* as a mystery-play, a parable of the deepest longing and aspiration of the human mind: for the central argument of *Tristan* stems from the timeless Wisdom of the East. It is as old as the *Upanishads,* and as modern as Shelley. Wagner has prefigured in symbols of overmastering power the immortal protest of the human spirit against its doom of separateness, and the answer that resolves it. From the opening measures of the Prelude we are made aware of the terrible disquiet that is to agitate the music recurrently as the lovers come to understand that all delight and all enchantment are no more than "a dream that lingers a moment . . . a breath, a flame in the doorway," until the *éclairissement* at the end—the death-song of Isolde, with its mood of luminous revelation and appeasement in which Wagner has prisoned forever the wonderment of seers and poets at "the idleness of tears." Who that has witnessed in the opera house the music-drama's close can ever dislodge the memory of Isolde, oblivious of all around her, as she sinks at the end upon Tristan's body, while the music, out of its secret wisdom, utters its corroborative word: "I and this Love are one, and I am Death"; or can forget the sound of the transported orchestra as it comes to a close upon that irradiated final chord whose sound is like no other in the whole of music, while we watch the daylight fade, and know that all desire and all regret have become as a quiet fold of evening sky?

"The mystery of love," said a second-rate writer in a moment of first-rate inspiration," is greater than the mys-

tery of death." It is a saying that Wagner's lovers, and their wise, ancestral prototypes, and Wagner himself, would not have questioned. They are distraught, those complementary spirits, by their inappeasable desire for an unflawed realization of their love. But the impassable barrier becomes apparent: they are two separate beings, and not one indivisible entity. Their duality stands between them, and they long to escape the unsufferable solitude of individual existence. They would achieve what the author of *Religio Medici* had in mind when he wrote, almost three centuries ago, that "there are wonders in true affection: it is a body of enigmas, mysteries, and riddles, wherein two so become one. . . ."

Concerning the profound and esoteric concept involved in Wagner's solution of the psychic impasse reached by the lovers in his spiritual fable, wherein he touches hands with the sages and mystics of the ageless East, Wagner himself, happily for us, has spoken confirmingly in certain comments upon *Tristan*.

"The passion of the lovers mounts suddenly to vivid flame, and each avows to each that they belong to none save one another. Henceforth there is no end to the yearning, the bliss, the misery of love. The world, power, fame, splendor, honor, knighthood, loyalty, friendship—all are scattered like a baseless dream. One thing only remains: desire, desire unquenchable, forever born anew . . . one sole redemption—Death, surcease of being, deliverance.

"Here, in the boundless realm of Music's very element, the musician who chose this theme for the Prelude to his drama could have but one care: how he should set bounds to his fancy; since the exhaustion of the theme was impossible. Thus he took, once for all, this insatiable desire. In long-drawn accents he let that unsealed longing swell from its

first timid avowal, through gentle sighs, hopes, and fears, laments and wishes, joy and torment, up to the mightiest onslaught, the most powerful endeavor to find the breach that would open to the heart the ocean of the endless joy of love. In vain! Its power spent, the heart sinks back, to pine with desire, with desire unfulfilled; since each fruition only brings forth seeds of fresh desire. Till, at last, in the depth of its exhaustion, the starting eye sees the glimmering of the highest bliss of attainment. It is the ecstasy of dying, of the surrender of being, of the final redemption into that wondrous realm from which we wander farthest when we strive to take it by force. Shall we call this death? Is it not rather the wonder-world of night, out of which, so says the story, the ivy and the vine sprang forth in tight embrace over the tomb of Tristan and Isolde?"

Wagner's phrase, "the highest bliss of attainment," has a curiously exact parallel in one of the Eastern scriptures: and it is hard to believe that Wagner, to whom the sacred literature of the Hindu was an open book, did not have that passage definitely in mind when he was writing his explanation for Mathilde. It cannot be too often emphasized that the true parallel to the philosophy of *Tristan* is to be found in the ancient mystical writings of the East, rather than in Schopenhauer's brilliant but superficial variations upon a system of ideas with which Wagner was already familiar when Schopenhauer first dawned upon his mental world. Wagner would certainly have written, in some form, a *Tristan* and a *Ring* if he had never read a word of Schopenhauer or heard of his philosophy.

Whether that mystical conception of spiritual consummation upon which he based the dramatic and musical structure of *Tristan* is or is not "pessimistic" remains a point upon which students of Eastern thought are not agreed. Some

of the most enlightened and profound among them have found those Indian teachings full of high and kindling wisdom, full of exalted courage and the noblest aspiration. Nirvana does not, they tell us, mean annihilation: it means fulfillment and realization—the full and present eternity of life. "Not wisdom, or love, or beauty, or power, but all in one, is that for which all things exist." Hearing Isolde's death-song, the student of Eastern thought recalls the question asked of the Vedic Master by Sauryayanin Gargya, and the sage's answer:

"Who is the shining one who sees dreams? Whose is that bliss? And in whom are these set firm?"

"As, Gargya, the rays of the sun, at setting, all become one in the shining orb, and when he rises, all come forth again, so all becomes one in the being that is made radiant . . . The seen and the unseen, heard and unheard, enjoyed and unenjoyed, real and unreal, he sees it all; as All he sees it. And when he is wrapped by the radiance, the shining one no longer sees dreams. Then within him the bliss arises" . . . wherewith we come again almost to Wagner's very words.

Wagner espoused many doctrines in the course of his tireless intellectual life; but none survived so long or made so deep an impress on his work as those teachings which he absorbed from his studies in the sacred literature of the East—"the oldest and holiest of human religions," as he called it; and Wagner the mystical philosopher conditioned the dramas and the music of the greater works. Always he had the mystic's assured perception of reality. Always, as in *Tristan,* he spoke from "the mind of the mind."

Each of Wagner's essays in musico-dramatic symbolism is based on some phase of the conscious or unconscious human struggle toward spiritual achievement and perfection. It is

evident that his works are connected by a philosophical and symbolistic thread that was always present in his own mind.

Wagner would have us realize that this is the true awakening, the true enlightenment: the perception of our common humanity, our common destiny. With that intuition and that knowledge, and not without them, can regeneration be attained. Only thus can we discover our own selves. Only thus can we come closer to immortal things, and know, with a certainty beyond dismay, that, in the Supreme Self, ourselves and all other selves are set, "as the rays are set in the sun."

Wagner's *Parsifal* is rife with marvels; but perhaps the greatest of these is the sense of mysterious and profound assuagement with which the music at its noblest is filled, as if the old master in the evening of his tempestuous life had wanted to show us, as he unveiled for the last time this glowing chalice of his miraculous art, that the innermost secret of all beauty is its benison of profound appeasement.

His final masterpiece reveals with unexampled clarity the source from which his greatest music sprang, the music of certain transcendental pages in *Tristan* and *Parsifal*: pages in which we find a stainless image of that central peace, existing at the heart of endless agitation, which Wordsworth knew. Wagner, like Wordsworth and like Beethoven, could find his way to that region of mystical reverie and contemplation, "in which self itself evaporates, and consciousness floats free, intense and luminous and serene."

Perhaps it is not possible, as we have been reminded, to speak of poetry or of music or of those other immortal energies of mortal man without submission to something not understood, something that is greater than the perishing self. But we may know in what presence we are standing if we bear in mind that the language of the gods is such that it

survives forever in the ears and hearts of men, "Triumphant over Death and Time." It is true that Time is full of lost and wandering airs that once had fame and habitation. Yet some will continue to cherish that bravest of delusions: that there is, after all, a deathless beauty. Listening to music such as Wagner's we believe again, and we are taught once more what it will always mean to stand beside a dead man's marvels, and (as Chesterton said of his St. Francis) have nothing to offer in response but some brief candle burnt out so quickly before his shrine."

FROM A DISCIPLE'S NOTE-BOOK

(*Continued from the Winter Issue.*)

Greater Boston has many fine roads that weave in and out of the townships which compose it, connect its lovely wooded parks, and ultimately lead into the beautiful open country which "clips" it closely on every side. Along these highways of a late afternoon the Swami often could be seen driving with a full car, around Jamaica Pond, to City Point, the Arnold Arboretum, or the Felsway. Occasionally, starting earlier, he would go farther afield, to the Blue Hills—perhaps when autumn had turned the foliage into a glory of crimson and gold and the air was keen with a foretaste of winter—or, on a warm summer day, to Revere Beach for a picnic and a swim.

The Centre never closed its doors at any season and the Services were at no time suspended, therefore these occasional outings gave to the community the equivalent of a vacation taken little by little throughout the year. Also city life is very confined and the Swami never could reconcile himself to the idea of a spiritual centre, steam-heated and shut in by four walls. Nature he once called "an undiluted part of God" and he craved its healing touch and liberating

influence for all who came under his guidance. Ultimately his dream took form in the Ananda Ashrama, at La Crescenta, California, and in its smaller counterpart at Cohasset, Massachusetts; but in those early days he had to depend upon the open road.

During May or June, when the shell-pink laurel was in bloom in the woodlands and the city heat began to be oppressive, that friendly road would uncoil itself, so to speak, after its winter's sleep, and stretch in a long, inviting line out Concord way, past the Emerson home and the home of the Alcotts, past barns and orchards and pretty tea-rooms, past rushing streams—on and on over the Massachusetts state line into New Hampshire, its macadamized surface finally giving way to dirt, just beyond the town of East Jaffrey, where it dwindled into nothingness at the very door of Miss Katharine Sherwood's farm.

Naturally the Swami accepted the road's invitation and week after week found him rolling along with a happy group of students to this lovely retreat beneath the shadow of Mt. Monadnock, or "the Mountain" as the native dwellers call it.

Simple and peaceful was Miss Sherwood's farm, adapted by its mistress to meet modern needs, if they were not ultra-modern. One approached the white, two-storied dwelling by way of a terrace where roses and other flowers grew. At one side and a little to the rear a large vegetable patch was spread out. Here Miss Sherwood labored mightily and evoked from the earth wonderful golden squash, eggplant of a royal purple, carrots, cabbages and similar prize products, destined, in part, to fill the Swami's car on many a homeward journey.

Beyond the house were some tree-bordered meadows, resembling a tonsure thickly fringed all around, and finally

the apple orchard, heavily flowered in the spring and fruited in the fall. The disciple recalls visits in September when the Swami would climb these trees and throw the apples down to those waiting below with the baskets, moving from branch to branch with extreme lightness and agility as he did so.

Facing the front of the house, a little below it, was the barn where Connie, the Irish hand, presided over the cow. His brogue and quaint remarks were Miss Sherwood's delight, and she loved to pass them on, with embellishments, to the Swami. One anecdote especially drew forth his merry laughter. Said Connie: "That cow knows a heap more than most folks. Sure I think she knows to the minute whin it's toime fer milkin'. I niver can fool her by wan little tick o' the clock. Sometimes I think she wears a wrist-watch!"

Certain it was that the Swami delighted in this place with its cheerful, friendly atmosphere, to which he added the priceless ingredient of his own bright presence. Miss Sherwood, with an inborn efficiency, took care of everything, even to the cooking of the meals, with seemingly small effort, and had a genius for making everyone feel most happy and at home. The Swami loved her devotedly and always addressed her as "Mai" or Mother, a title she had earned during the first years of his mission in Boston, when her sponsorship, hospitality and solicitous care helped to make less arduous the path of this young Hindu teacher in that most difficult and exclusive of cities. At the farm one could hear his voice every now and then gaily calling her: "Mai! Mai! bring your yardstick—I want to measure this beet; it must be at least a foot long!" Or (toward sunset) "Come, Mai, come!—Everybody come! We'll go down to the lake for a meditation. And be sure to bring the cans so we can pick berries on the way!"

The lake lay about an eighth of a mile beyond the house, hemmed in by pine and spruce and maple and other brethren of the forest. Blueberry bushes higher than one's head grew along the path which led to it, while rosy laurel glimmered here and there through the dark surrounding foliage. Its waters were cool and still, and the bloom of its wildness had not been rubbed off by too many intrusions. The disciple even now can see the Swami seated there beneath the quiet pines. His eyes are closed as he draws into an exalted mood of meditation his comrades ranged in a circle around him on the warm pine-needles. She can hear the silence underlying the murmur of the wind in the trees, and the soft lap-lapping of the baby waves upon the shore. There was only one sound, apart from these sounds of nature, which could break the silence yet lead one deeper into it: the sound of the Swami's voice as he read from his poems, spoke spontaneously of great eternal things, sang holy song or chanted some ancient Sanskrit prayer.

Now and then the stillness would be shattered by a resounding slap as someone would strike back at the ubiquitous mosquito. But not the Swami! If, while he was talking, one of the little creatures would light on his slender and almost transparent hand, he would pick it up very carefully between his thumb and forefinger and put it gently to one side. The disciple saw him do this not once but many times and it forms one of her most vivid memories. She never knew him to kill a mosquito and she never knew one to bite him. It was not that he had any sentimental objection to the war against them; it just did not seem needful or native for him to obliterate one with a blow. This whole matter was covered by Sister Devamata who had a pet narrative which she used to relate whenever the question of taking insect life would arise:

A follower of Sri Ramakrishna, so she told us, was filled with serious scruples in this regard. His problem was a serious one because tropical India is so densely populated with things which creep and things which crawl that human beings have to struggle to retain their foothold. This poor man used to lie awake nights trying to decide whether he should endure the ravages of ant, mosquito and cockroach (not to mention bedbugs which in India respect neither caste nor social station) or seek to do away with them. Finally he decided to lay the whole matter before his master and let him decide. When he arrived at Dakshineswar, he found Sri Ramakrishna busy supervising certain activities having to do with his bed, which left no doubt as to their purpose. The man went away satisfied, his question answered before it was ever asked.

Of the great Swami Vivekananda it has been written that sometimes when he was immersed in deep meditation he would be seen with his bare back entirely covered with mosquitoes, but so profound was his immersion he would never even know that they were there.

Great Swamiji, it was said, had also blessed this very Monadnock country with his presence and had acknowledged its spell, due largely, he felt, to the Mountain which for centuries had been a place of holy pilgrimage for the Indians who were wont at certain times to gather on its lower slopes and perform their sacred ceremonies. The influence thus engendered, he was quoted as saying, was so potent that even today it extends for at least ten miles around the Mountain in every direction. The disciple calculated that Miss Sherwood's farm lay within that radius, and at night as she lay on her bed, listening to the endless call of the whippoorwill in an otherwise unbroken stillness, she liked to feel that this ancient benediction was flowing in and

around her with its burden of old, old wisdom.

It may well be that these memories linger on in such detail in the disciple's mind because the Farm is associated with her very first days at the Boston Vedanta Centre.

Induction into a new way of life is never easy, no matter how wonderful the way or how kind the people. And this is particularly true of entrance into a religious community. Close relationships have to be established with little or no preparation, and endless adjustments made. Body, mind —the whole nature—is keyed up to meet the situation, and all this causes an unconscious strain. There had been with the disciple also the change from the free, out-of-door life of the west to the shut-in conditions of eastern city living. Therefore, when after about a fortnight at her new home, the Swami had invited her to accompany him on a brief visit to Miss Sherwood's place in the country, she had responded with enthusiasm—an enthusiasm which increased tenfold on the day of departure when she discovered that she was to have the rare privilege of being the Swami's sole passenger. Just how rare, she did not then know, but she found out later. For the Swami enjoyed a happy occasion most when he could share it with many.

Imagine the fair prospect: early June, the freshness of young morning, a car running smoothly, rhythmically through a landscape of such tender beauty as to make it worthy to be called "the garment of God"; at the wheel, the Swami, and beside him the disciple, free at last to pour into his receptive ear all that was so eagerly waiting to be poured. And she poured and poured; first from the depths, then from the middle, and finally from the surface of her consciousness where floated the verbal foam of her little self. Like many a novice who comes to a teacher for training, she was too absorbed in giving voice to her own opinions

to listen to what the Swami might have to say. No doubt a vessel has to be emptied before it can be filled, but no doubt too, it is the foolish who talk and the wise who listen, and so it was in this case. In her exuberance the disciple made no pause; she took no breath; and though the Swami attended to her every word with courtesy and a genuine kindness, he managed to convey to her, before the trip was ended, the fact that she was missing what they might have shared: the soundless symphony of earth and sky, and that no word can equal the power of silence to express what is most real and sacred in the human heart. It was a lesson she could never forget.

In later years he would sometimes call her to his study, and after dictating a short article or a poem or two, would ask her to stay on while he worked. She would sit quietly to one side watching him at his task, whatever it might be, or else would busy herself with some writing of her own. Not a sound would pass between them, but when the time came for her to leave, he would look up with a smile and say: "What a happy visit we have had!" and she would know that it was true.

Now that he has gone beyond the reach of any voice to summon him, she is aware that the silence of death which has fallen between them is not dark and empty, as so many think, but is the same blessed silence which filled her heart with peace in those sacred hours, and though his form is now hidden from her eyes, she feels that she is still seated there in his living presence.

There was another lesson she learned on that memorable morning in June. It had to do with a horoscope, recently cast for her by a clever English astrologer. This delineation had so impressed her with its accuracy and thrilled her with its promise of good things to come, that she had brought it

along with her at the last minute, hoping for an opportunity to share it with the Swami during the drive. It was at least fifteen pages long, but its length did not deter her, when the propitious moment came, for she produced it and read it aloud to the last syllable. On finishing it, she did not put it back in her bag, but absent-mindedly laid it on the seat beside her, while she went on discussing its fine points. In fact she gave the paper no more thought till after the time of arrival, then she looked for it, but it was not there. She searched and searched, but in vain: the horoscope had vanished!

At last she went to the Swami, thinking that he might have picked it up, but he assured her that he had not seen it and knew nothing of its whereabouts. He added, however: "I am rather glad that you have lost it. These things are interesting and all right when you are living the life of the world, but when you have offered yourself to the Infinite Mother, they have no more meaning for you. They become only a limitation once you have placed yourself in Her divine care." Presumably it was the Mother's hand that had snatched the precious manuscript away, for open cars were in fashion, so no doubt it had literally "gone with the wind."

His remark was pregnant with wisdom and struck the keynote for the disciple's future spiritual endeavor. Life in God is lived from within out; worldly existence is just the reverse. For instance, the Swami yearned that the Centre he had founded should express all gracious and holy qualities. Every breath that he drew was for that end. Yet well he knew that this could never come to pass through a mere external chiseling of rough edges and cutting away of undesirable elements. The dream could be realized only through an inward growth in the hearts of the members. Secular life deals with externals and is concerned more with

a mechanical efficiency and certain immediate results than with the development of the human psyche, whereas spiritual life occupies itself not so much with the outer event as with the soul's reaction to it.

The Swami was like a physician. He meted out his treatment according to the requirement of each patient and was willing to wait endlessly for the result. Sometimes this meant giving to one and withholding from another, sometimes it meant disciple and again, indulgence; but always it was inspired by a profound loving care and an intuitive perception of individual character and need. Those who could see from this loftier point of view preserved their serenity and their balance, but the less fortunate ones who weighed everything on a purely personal scale suffered through their own blindness and false interpretations. There were few indeed of the community, however, who had not at one time or another gone through this dark valley, who had not said: "Why does Swami discipline that one?" or "Why does Swami not discipline this one?" But the Swami was there to bless and heal, not to sit in judgment and they were there (had they only remembered) to conquer all outer difficulties through faith, comprehension and surrender to God. The critical, calculating attitude could only serve to destroy their spiritual fabric and undermine the work. What the Swami thought of this state of being is revealed in an entry in the Note-book for November 22, 1919.

"Today I was talking to Swamiji alone. I was discussing some matters that troubled me. In the course of the conversation I mentioned a fear I had that Swami would forget a condition that had wounded him many times and because of his compassion open himself again to it. Swami said:

" 'I hope I will forget. Times that I have borne insult, have felt crushed and saddened, I have prayed that these

experiences would not make me so wise that I would ever lose my faith in people. I would rather be fooled and betrayed again and again in the same way than lose the power of loving. Many would think me a fool, but that is how I feel about it. Don't brood over these things with your mind; you will only get into a muddle. Don't you think that Divine Mother has something to do with this work? Don't you think that I may be acting from a deep spiritual conviction? If you dwell on the failings of others you will begin to have the same weaknesses. Keep your mind off of them. That is my advice to you. Jealousy, lust, anger come from down below—not from up above. I think they come from H-e-l-l.'

"In the evening Swami was very gay—not so gay as on other evenings; still very much Divine Mother's child. He looked at a picture of himself framed on Sister Devamata's desk and remarked: 'How serious he looks. Smile, brother—smile, smile, smile!'

"After the regular evening exercises he stood talking to us as usual. He told us some incidents of his childhood, always of peculiar interest to us, as he well knew. He described to us how as a little boy he fell from a mango tree.

" 'It was at the noon hour. At that time when everyone went to sleep, I would crawl out and run away. A gentleman had asked me to pick some mangoes, so I climbed the tree and procured them. Then I felt so proud that I tried to climb higher. In doing so I put my foot on a dead branch and down I came. It was a big fall. I was so small that it is hard to say now how far I fell, but I should think about twenty-five feet. The noise woke the people up from their naps. But I wasn't hurt. That is, I hurt my neck a little but no bones were broken.

" 'Among the servants in the household there was one who was just for me. He had great love for me. He thought I was the most beautiful thing in the world. It was strange! The others used to tease him by disagreeing with him and then he would want to fight them. He really had a wonderful devotion. He lived on a houseboat and sometimes he would call me down there and give me sweets and bring me all sorts of presents—little eggs and such things. It is curious why I think of him—it was so long ago. Perhaps he is passing out. You know there is a tradition in India that anyone who takes up the spiritual life saves his whole clan. The members of the clan don't like it and fight against it, but it affects them subconsciously. My father was always the greatest help to me spiritually. He used to call me at five-thirty and sing beautiful hymns to me. Then I would sing to him and the tears would flow through his eyes and roll down his cheeks. Later, when he realized how much the life I had chosen meant to me—that I was determined to follow it—he accepted it and called me "*kula-pavana*"—one who saves the clan.' "

"Here Swami stopped and whispered: 'And so good-night,' and was off after a few more words in the hall."

Set thyself first in peace and then shalt thou be able to set others at peace.

A peaceable man availeth more than a great learned man.

A passionate man turneth good into evil and soon believeth evil: a good peaceable man draweth all things to good. . . . Have therefore first zeal to better thyself and then mayest thou have zeal to thy neighbor. . . . If thou wilt be borne, bear thou another. . . .

—*Imitation of Christ.*

ROMAIN ROLLAND ON VIVEKANANDA

From "Prophets of the New India."

His athletic form was the opposite of the fragile and tender, yet wiry body of Ramakrishna. He was tall (five feet, eight and a half inches), square-shouldered, broad-chested, stout, rather heavily built; his arms were muscular and trained to all kinds of sports. He had an olive complexion, a full face, vast forehead, strong jaw, a pair of magnificent eyes, large, dark and rather prominent, with heavy lids, whose shape recalled the classic comparison to a lotus petal. Nothing escaped the magic of his glance, capable equally of embracing in its irresistible charm, or of sparkling with wit, irony, or kindness, of losing itself in ecstacy, or of plunging imperiously to the very depths of consciousness and of withering with its fury. But his pre-eminent characteristic was kingliness. He was a born king and nobody ever came near him either in India or America without paying homage to his majesty.

When this quite unkown young man of thirty appeared in Chicago at the inaugural meeting of the Parliament of Religions, opened in September, 1893, by Cardinal Gibbons, all his fellow-members were forgotten in his commanding presence. His strength and beauty, the grace and dignity of his bearing, the dark light of his eyes, his imposing appearance, and from the moment he began to speak, the splendid music of his rich deep voice enthralled the vast audience of Ameri can Anglo-Saxons, previously prejudiced against him on account of his colour. The thought of this warrior prophet of India left a deep mark upon the United States.

Death is not extinguishing the light, it is putting out the lamp because dawn has come. —*Rabindranath Tagore.*

THE THIRTY-EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY

The evening of January 17th was auspicious in the recent life story of the Vedanta Centre. That date was chosen to observe its thirty-eighth anniversary jointly with the birthday of Swami Vivekananda, the first messenger of Vedanta to the West. For several years since the passing of Swami Paramananda, the Centre's founder, the Vedanta Centre had not marked its anniversary by any special festivity. Enthusiastic preparations were therefore carried on to make the occasion memorable.

On this frosty starlit night, many lights burned brightly at the Centre, bidding welcome to its friends old and new. As they entered, singly or in groups, climbing the stately marble stairs, their gaze was first drawn to the large portrait of Swami Vivekananda hanging beneath one of the illuminated panels bearing inscriptions from the great religions of the world. This particular picture of the Swami in his orange robe and turban was taken as he appeared before the Parliament of Religions in 1893. It was garlanded with soft greens. Before it stood a vase of mixed spring flowers, and a fragrant candle burned gently. His living spirit seemed to be the presiding host welcoming one and all.

The reception hall, library and reading room were transformed to provide accommodation for one hundred and twenty-five guests who attended the Hindu banquet. Long narrow tables, covered with white linen and decorated with many colored candles, stretched graciously into each room. A spicy Indian dinner was prepared by Srimati Gayatri Devi herself, who personally supervised the seating of all the guests as well as serving of the dinner. The feast consisted of fragrant spiced rice, curried vegetables, eggs with Indian sauce, together with certain American dishes to make it an Indo-

American meal. Happy voices and merry laughter resounded to the dome, as all shared pleasant comradeship in a spirit of good will and harmony.

There were several in the group who had come from long distance especially to be present on this occasion. One of them, Miss Dorothy Hanson, read some of the congratulatory greetings which had come by wire and mail. Mrs. Georgiana Tree West, Leader of Unity Center of Practical Christianity in New York, wrote as follows:

"My heart is with you on this feast day—first as you break bread together in loving fellowship and then as you feast souls on music and inspiration.

"On this, your 38th anniversary, you stand a living memorial to your founder whose great heart and wise mind established the ideals which have borne such rich fruit throughout the years. Swami Paramananda lives on, not only in this great work, but in the lives of all who know and love him. His mantle has fallen upon one who wears it with graciousness and integrity. May this great privilege of service be hers for many years to come and may the richest of blessings be showered upon Gayatri Devi and all the faithful workers in this noble Cause. God bless you all!"

The resident community of Ananda Ashrama, California, the twin sister of the Centre, sent a heart-warming message which we quote in part:

"On this, the thirty-eighth anniversary of the Vedanta Centre of Boston, we, her children of the Ananda Ashrama of California, send the homage of our hearts.

"To us she is not just brick and stone. She is spirit—she is light and love and unshakable Truth. She is the habitation of all that is pure and lofty. When we think of her, we think of the great Master Spirits of the world,—of Christ and Buddha, of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda,

and of our own Swamiji in Whom all blessed qualities meet and mingle.

"May the Centre, the child of His heart, the creation of His hand and mind, be glorified. . . .

"May its light shine ever farther and farther afield into the hearts of men and gradually help to dispel hatred, darkness and ignorance, and those most destructive evil qualities —racial and religious intolerance.

"May His peace dwell ever with the Centre—with all you who serve there,—with all who enter its portals or come within its influence.

"This is our birthday wish and prayers."

The Vedanta group in Cincinnati was also represented by a telegram and letter.

Madame Olga Averino, distinguished concert singer, presented a group of songs in German, French, Russian and English. She sang beautifully and with great feeling, ending with the well-known Hebrew "Kaddish." Miss Verona Durick accompanied her at the piano.

Professor Robert Rankin, of Simmons College, and Mr. G. B. Pant, Professor at Benares University and now a student at Harvard, were the two guest speakers of the evening. Mr. Rankin, who had lived in India and taught at one of the colleges there some years ago, spoke spontaneously. In his address he emphasized repeatedly what had impressed him most during his stay. He termed it "friendliness," illustrating his point by many anecdotes in which he had received kindness and hospitality from people of all classes.

Mr. Pant gave a splendid resume of the evolution of Vedanta in the West and the influence of Swami Vivekananda, paying high tribute to the work being done by different Vedanta Centres in this country.

The Indian part of the musical program was presented

by two young ladies, Ranu Devi, already known to readers of the "Message of the East" through her dance recitals at Ananda Ashrama, California, and Miss Leela Madgavkar, from Bombay, India. Ranu Devi sang two Bengali songs, one of which is called "Longing at Moonlight," an outcy of devotion which was a favorite of Swami Paramananda. Leela Madgavkar appeared in two Manipuri dances which were greatly appreciated by everyone present.

In conclusion, Gayatri Devi, who had presided over the ceremonies, spoke briefly. She outlined the purpose and the ideals of the Vedanta Centre and its far-reaching influence for nearly forty years, especially during the leadership of its inspired founder, Swami Paramananda. She asked for the good will and prayers of all assembled upon its entry into another year and thanked them saying that the success of the Centre's work was due to the interest and unfaltering support of its many friends, who have made its existence possible through many vicissitudes.

Through the open door into the Chapel one could see thirty-eight vigils burning softly on the altar. At its base lay bright volumes of Vedanta literature. Gayatri Devi explained that each candle represented a year in the Centre's history and expressed her genuine desire to keep the light burning there in the years to come.

The evening came to a close with the pronouncement of the Benediction:

"May He who is the Father in Heaven of the Christians, Allah of the Mohammedans, Jehovah of the Jews, Ahura Mazda of the Zoroastrians, Buddha of the Buddhists, Divine Mother,—Brahman, Infinite and All-abiding Spirit of the Indo-Aryans, grant unto us all His peace and blessing."

The clock chimed eleven when the last guest left the Centre's door, while the resident community set the house in

order, replenishing the light on the altar which burns day and night without ceasing, as a symbol of the vigilant spirit and a reminder of the dedicated life.

REPORT

VEDANTA CENTRE OF BOSTON

In Bengal, India, there is a proverb which runs, "The year consists of twelve months but the Festivals are thirteen." In keeping with this tradition, the Vedanta Centre is frequently animated by its joyous Festivals commemorating the holy days.

The first celebration of the winter season was that of Christmas, especially significant in its expression of tenderness and beauty. The Service before the altar of Nativity during the twilight hour was attended by a large audience which filled the Chapel and the reception hall to overflowing. Afterwards the Centre kept house to extend hospitality to all its friends. A great many Indians were present, some of them visiting students from other states. Dr. Radhakamal Mukherjee and Professor Lanka Sundaram, delegates to the United Nations, were two distinguished guests. It was a very happy evening and most impressive, as both the East and West paid tribute to the Christ Child by singing together the Christmas carols.

The Candlelight Service on New Year's Eve marked the beginning of 1947 and was reminiscent of the past in its quiet and earnest prayerfulness. A very appreciative group was present, seeking new courage and refreshment in order to start the year right.

Next in order was the birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. On Monday the 13th the Centre's resident community kept a day of prayer and feasting in his memory.

On Sunday the 19th both the Services were dedicated to the life and teaching of this illumined prophet of India.

Swami Paramananda's birthday fell in the first week of February. On the 7th a special Service was followed by a reception. Many came to pay the Centre's inspired founder their tribute—friends who had known him and those who had become devoted since his passing. The evening's program was shared by Mr. William E. Ennis, who expressed his deep appreciation and reverence, and by Mr. Einar Hansen, violinist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Hansen's selections were "Ave Maria" and "Serenade" by Schubert and "Reverie" by Schumann. Mr. Amarjit Singh, a young Sikh student from M.I.T., made his offering in the form of a devotional song of his native land.

On Monday, February 17th, the Centre held a reception and tea for the Boston Y.W.C.A., which is now working on a round-the-world reconstruction campaign. Forty women came to enjoy good fellowship and to partake of the Hindu delicacies prepared especially for the occasion. One of the ladies, Miss Marcia A. Seeber, gave a brief talk explaining the activities of the Y.W.C.A. in different parts of the world. Miss Binapani Roy, a student in the Education Department of Harvard University, spoke on the various branches of women's work in India. The following excerpt from a letter written to Gayatri Devi by Mrs. Mary A. Booth expresses the appreciation of the group:

"This is to bring to you the grateful thanks of the Board of Directors of the Boston Y.W.C.A.—as well as my own personal gratitude for the delightful tea at the Vedanta Centre last Monday afternoon. The atmosphere of hospitality and fellowship was one we will never forget.

"The report of all who attended, given the next day in Board meeting, was of such genuine enthusiasm and ad-

miration for you, personally, and the philosophy by which you live and work, that it would have warmed your heart to have heard it.

"Two of the ladies asked for time on the program to read paragraphs from that little pamphlet I gave them. May we have more of those?

"Thank you for making it possible for us to meet so fine a representation of Indian women, and will you convey our appreciation to Miss Roy for her fine presentation of the role of women in India."

The birthday festival of Sri Ramakrishna was continued over a period of nearly a week. On Sunday the 23rd a goodly-sized audience attended the morning Service which was entitled "Man of God." Again in the evening Srimati Gayatri Devi spoke of the great Master, particularly emphasizing his realizations. Her subject was "Spiritual Explorer." The following Friday a Hindu banquet was held commemorating the same event. Over one hundred persons were present, who afterwards enjoyed an evening which kept alive the spirit of Sri Ramakrishna. Miss Lois Houghton, a friend who had visited India, spoke briefly and fittingly. Professor Hashmukh P. Oza from India gave a discourse on the evolution of Vedanta, and Ranu Devi, accompanied by Mr. Shirish Gor with his drums, charmed the audience by a presentation of two dances. In conclusion, Gayatri Devi narrated several parables of Ramakrishna, leaving upon the minds of her listeners the impression of the Master's sparkling humor and commonsense, his universality and tolerance.

ANANDA ASHRAMA

There were three special occasions which marked the close of 1946 at the Ananda Ashrama. On the night of Tuesday, December 3, a special Service was held at the Temple of the Universal Spirit, at which Strong Heart, one of

the chiefs of the Yakima Indians of the state of Washington, was to be Guest Speaker. At the eleventh hour, however, he was prevented from coming, (being detained on location by the Moving Picture Company for which he works) but sent as substitute one who is a very old and honored friend of the Ashrama,—Mr. David Villasenor, or just "David", as he prefers to be called. The drama of a human life must always be of intense interest to human beings, especially when it is associated with honesty, simplicity, and a sort of basic humility, as is the case with David. He told us his story, from the time when, a desperately lonely, bitter child, be lived in something comparable to an orphan's home in Mexico, through the days of juvenile delinquency out in the world, to the present day when he is an authentic artist in wood-carving, a valued teacher of other young delinquents, and a man of unshakable faith in an unfailing divine guidance. There was no one present at the Service who did not go away richer in spirit for having heard him. One little incident of his babyhood, not told at the lecture but recounted afterwards, lingers in the memory. "I remember," he said, when I first was aware of a grasshopper's song. It was early evening and the stars looked very bright and near, especially the evening star. I felt so alone, so forlorn, and somehow it comforted me to look at that star. Then suddenly I heard a little sound, 'chirrup, chirrup,' which came floating on the air. I thought that it was the star crying, and I said to myself: 'Poor little star, it is crying because it is lonely too,'—like me."

The Christmas Eve Service brought its yearly benediction of tenderness and love, in a Temple decked with redwood and deodar, gathered from the Ashrama grounds.

The New Year's Eve Watch Service, drew a goodly number, who felt the spell of the place, the hour and the occa-

sion, and on leaving, turned their faces toward the New Year with new courage and inspiration.

During the months of January and February, the birthdays of Swami Vivekananda on January 12th, Swami Paramananda on February 2d, and Sri Ramakrishna on February 23d, were celebrated with fervor. It was gratifying to feel the response in all hearts to the challenge which these holy lives embody. At the morning Service in honor of Swami Paramananda two friends of long-standing—Mr. and Mrs. Harold Miles—were called upon by Sister Daya and both responded with deep feeling and a genuine emotion which found its echo in many hearts. Mrs. Leni van Thign gave her tribute in the form of exquisite violin music rendered with true musicianship and delicacy of interpretation.

The weather at the Ashrama since the first of the year has been like mid-summer which has meant an early bloom everywhere.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Weather permitting, the Vedanta Centre intends to prepare the retreat in Cohasset for an early opening. As the accommodations are limited, those who desire to spend their vacation in the serene atmosphere of the woodland Ashrama should communicate with the Centre in advance. For all information please write to the Secretary, Vedanta Centre, 420 Beacon Street, Boston 15, Massachusetts.

We would like to thank our friends and subscribers for their donation to the India Relief Fund. It is being sent from time to time to the Ramakrishna Mission and to Charushila Devi, Head of Ananda Ashrama, Dacca. Charushila Devi has recently given shelter to a number of girls who have been victims of the riots. The Ramakrishna Mission is indefatigable in its service to India's needy children.

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Message of the East

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SPRING ISSUE

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ISLAND OF REFUGE

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VEDANTA CENTRE, 420 Beacon St., Boston, Mass.
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Class: Tues. 8 P.M.
Gayatri Devi in Charge

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Cincinnati, Ohio: Mr. W. H. Starick, 2360 Rohs St.

New York City: Brentano, 586 Fifth Ave.; Baker & Taylor Co., 55 Fifth Ave.

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Message of the East

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

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

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GOD'S BOOK

By Swami Vivekananda

I accept all religions that were in the past, and worship with them all; I worship God with every one of them, in whatever form they worship Him. I shall go to the mosque of the Mohammedan; I shall enter the Christian's church and kneel before the crucifix; I shall enter the Buddhistic temple, where I shall take refuge in Buddha and in his law. I shall go into the forest and sit down in meditation with the Hindu, who is trying to see the Light which enlightens the heart of every one.

Not only shall I do all these but I shall keep my heart open for all that may come in the future. Is God's book finished? Or is it still a continuous revelation going on? It is a marvelous book—these spiritual revelations of the world. The Bible, the Vedas, the Koran and all other sacred books are but so many pages, and an infinite number of pages remain yet to be unfolded. I would leave it open for all of them. We stand in the present, but open ourselves to the infinite future. We take in all that has been in the past, enjoy the light of the present, and open every window of the heart for all that will come in the future. Salutation to all the prophets of the past, to all the great ones of the present, and to all that are to come in the future!

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

God has put you in the world. What can you do about it? Resign everything to Him. Surrender yourself at His feet. Then there will be no more confusion. Then you will realize that it is God who does everything.

—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

Believe in Me and have trust in My mercy. When thou weenest ofttimes that I am far from thee then am I next. When thou weenest thyself almost lost then ofttimes cometh greatest gain of merit.

—*Imitation of Christ.*

Your God is the one God. To Him therefore surrender yourselves. —*Koran.*

There are few saints who, though wise, are simple, though strong, are weak, and though having naught, divide what they have.

Sloks of ShaikhFarid.

Should you ask me, What is the first thing in religion? I should reply, The first, second, and third thing therein—nay, all—is humility.

—*St. Augustine.*

The secret of happiness is renunciation.

—*Andrew Carnegie.*

All humble, meek, merciful, just, pious and devout souls are everywhere of one religion, and when death has taken off the mask, they will know one another, though the divers liveries they wear make them strangers. —*Penn.*

To will what God doth will, that is the only science that gives us any rest. —*Malesherbes.*

Only when men shall roll up the sky like a hide, will there be an end of misery, unless God has first been known.

—*Svetasvatara Upanishad.*

ISLAND OF REFUGE

By Swami Paramananda

The greatest attitude man can hold is the attitude of surrender. Surrender is never accomplished through violence. It is never accomplished through calculation. It is a spontaneous feeling of the heart, and comes through realization. When we know, when we feel that there is nothing more trustworthy, more secure, more wise and more potent than the Supreme, it becomes very easy, very natural for us to surrender. Then there is no questioning, but until that time comes, we must struggle on and do our best.

Even when we do not have the spirit of surrender, it is vital for us to seek something other than our own; for our own egotistic sense plays a most treacherous, a most unhealthy part in our life. It holds out such great promise and it gives so little. It seems almost to want to take the place of God, with its self-importance and distorted notions. When, however, we have even a small flash of spiritual understanding, we come to see how unwise it is to depend on things which are mundane and fleeting. Our spiritual understanding grows deeper, and by means of that we learn to surrender not only sometimes, but all times—in happiness and misery, in success and failure.

Life should be lived not just to suit our own convenience, but rather it should be adjusted in relation to the divine order, whatever it may bring of pleasure or pain. A devotee, a real lover of Truth, accepts life in this way, with a glad heart. He would rather have poverty with God's will than riches without it; but this attitude is not possible so long as our self-will is in the ascendancy—our little will which leads us into all kinds of complications and miseries.

The real life, the life that is inspiring and full of peace is that life which has no trace of egotism, but ever points toward

God in all things. One whose life is thus God-given, should he be thwarted by circumstance, does not become irritable and rebellious; he takes his misfortune as a blessing, and the good fortune that may shine upon him he takes thankfully, in the same spirit.

Sri Ramakrishna gives us a parable illustrating this state of absolute surrender. There was once a poor working man who was also a great lover of God. Love of God is not confined to any one station in life. It has nothing to do with riches or poverty, ignorance or culture. What it does require is sincerity, guilelessness and purity of heart, man's natural heritage. Therefore with this poor man his lowliness had not in any way interfered with his spiritual unfoldment. When his day's labor was at an end, and he had finished his evening meal, it was his custom to sit outside his house all by himself and chant the Name of the Lord. That was his form of recreation, his source of re-creation, and so absorbed would he be in his communion with the Divine Presence that he would lose all sense of time.

One night a band of robbers came that way, loaded down with things that they had stolen. Seeing him sitting there in meditation, they grabbed hold of him and forced him to carry their loot. Just as they were about to rob another house, they were surrounded, but they broke away and escaped, all except the poor man who, far from being a thief, was the only innocent one among them. He was captured and brought before the judge. The whole community recognized him and protested. They declared that he was a holy man, incapable of doing a wicked thing. They pleaded with the judge who began to question him and asked him to tell his story.

"Through God's will," said the poor man, "I ate my supper, and through God's will I was resting and was chanting

the Lord's Name. Through God's will it was a late hour, and through God's will these thieves attacked me and dragged me away with them. Through God's will I was arrested and through God's will I am now standing before you."

The judge was convinced and let him go, at which the man declared that through God's will he was now given his freedom.

One who has the right feeling of surrender never forgets, nor does he assert his egotistic sense. How often in the life of Christ it was said: "He brings healing to others, He saves many souls, why then does He not save Himself?" It was because He did not wish it otherwise. Was not His highest prayer: "Thy will be done in all things?" Is it not the prayer of all great souls? Our vision is not far-reaching, we often blunder. Even apparent good is apt to be neither good nor permanent. Therefore the devotee puts aside his self-will, offering his body, his mind, his heart, his soul—everything—in order that God's will may work through him and reach others. This is surrender.

Of course one cannot achieve it all at once. We are born and brought up with certain notions, and ego is dominant. Our whole education, our surroundings and atmosphere show very positively the opposite of surrender. Naturally it will take time to manifest it in our life, but we must never lose sight of the goal. It is a beautiful thing to be able to feel and to know that we are in the hand of God. Whether our life is apparently insignificant or of great importance makes no difference—all lives are equally in His hand. These outer things do not count, these relative matters of lowliness or worldly grandeur. What does count is the deeper note in life.

In the profound awareness of spiritual existence two seemingly opposite ideas meet and mingle. The wise man who

knows his Self to be of the same nature as Deity, who affirms "I am He!—I and my Father are one!" and the other wise man who says "Not I! Not I!—Thy will be done in all things!" have both transcended the little limitations of name and form and self-will, and have found their refuge and resting-place in that unbounded Spirit. They are both surrendered there. They voice the same experience in two different utterances. The one who says "I am He!" is not speaking of the flesh, is not referring to Mr. So and So, nor any of those limited senses, but to That which permeates and pervades the whole. "I am That! There is no other existence!"—one who has become thus filled with the presence of God, the infinitude of Deity, he surrenders; he is awe-stricken, overwhelmed with the wonder, the marvel of it. He can only say: "Not I, but Thou! Thou art all—all in all. I am but an instrument. May Thy will be done in everything!"

That is a very beautiful sentence. It marks the height of spiritual realization. All our unrest in the world, and in ourselves, would cease at once if we could have a sense of the Divine Presence within us. Therefore we should aspire for it. For if we try with our whole heart and being we can create an atmosphere of restfulness, wholesomeness and peace.

How we long, in one way or another, to find a place where there is security, an island of safety, yet how difficult it would be for any one to lead us there. Even those who succeed in drawing close to such a shelter, often at the last minute turn away from it. In my own life and experience I have seen people brought very near to a spiritual turning-point when one more step would have meant new life, new vision and peace of mind and heart, yet they did not take the step. Something happened in their consciousness, some self-

created feeling or emotion or thought arose and again they lost their direction.

Our great mystic teacher, Sri Ramakrishna, used to teach his disciples the value, the necessity, of protecting themselves against alien influences. He said that when a plant is tender and unformed, if it is exposed, a wild animal may come and root it up, or flocks and herds may nibble its leaves; but if a little fence is built around it, it will grow to be a big tree. Then not only will there be no danger of its being eaten or destroyed, it can even give shelter to those same flocks and herds and to weary travelers. A great forest tree lends its cool shade to everyone. When we are caught in a storm we can find our refuge there beneath its branches, but when it was small things could easily destroy it. Same way it is with our spiritual interest. Perhaps we receive just a glimmering of the light, but before it can grow stronger we come in contact with someone who has not the same point of view, the same devotion, simplicity or purity. This person plants in our thought a subtle seed of doubt. It may be very vague and we may feel that we are protected against impure thoughts and all such things, but nevertheless, the freshness is taken away. One can bring people to the point of vision, but unless they themselves have the right sense of discrimination, they hamper their own progress and often turn against the very thing that brought them help, and tear it to pieces. As a result, they find themselves back where they were before the opportunity came to them. It is a very strange phenomenon. Spirituality which is the greatest strength in our life, nearness of Divinity, which is our heritage—we can approach so very close to these things, yet if we have not sufficient purity, if we have not the gift of retaining the divine blessing, we may lose it again. It is entirely left to the individual. We have the power to retain

it; we have the power to keep it with us always, to make it abiding and thereby to become strong, or we can forfeit it through our own thought and action. It is only as we become strong that we are able to be a help to others; but if at the very outset of our spiritual venture we go about preaching and trying to convert others to our viewpoint, we may lose even the little sparkling glimmer of faith and vision that have come to us. That is one of the things against which we have to guard ourselves.

The nature of the devotional life, of real spiritual understanding, means that we go deeper. It is our character which represents it. I do not have to ask a person what his faith is or his belief; just watching him, I know. It is not indicated by much talking. A man may use big sounding words and may seem to over-rule you, owing to the fact that he has mastered a certain amount of external knowledge, but when the heart is empty all that he says is like "sounding brass"—there is nothing to it at all. This world is full of such sounds, because raw materials always make a great noise. If you place an unbaked cake of wheat-flour in hot butter or some sort of grease, it spatters and sputters, but as soon as it is baked it ceases to be noisy. When it is fully baked, there is no sound at all. The same way it is with human nature. The more raw material there is in a man, the greater the noise. Such people not only are disturbing to themselves, they make life unbearable for other people. They offer their advice unasked. One doesn't have to ask for it, they give it in abundance; they strive to direct you in every way; they disturb you without ever knowing it. Sometimes these people are well-meaning, but seldom are they wholly well-meaning, because they are impelled by some selfish, egotistic feeling which urges them on. Unfortunate—lacking in peace, they help to destroy other people's peace.

One of our great teachers used to say: "Let no one take pleasure in village talk," or in other words—in gossip. No one need gossip and no one need listen to gossip. Of course this teacher's definition of village talk was—anything that is apart from God, anything that means harming another. What mischief it plays with us when we talk ill of others! It always means that we fill our minds and hearts with poison, and a mind so filled can never think of anything high and lofty, nor can that heart ever have any peace, because it has destroyed the foundation for peace. Then think what harm it has done to other persons, to the very atmosphere. Unless a man's heart is pure, of what avail for him to go to church and kneel before the altar and go through all kinds of ceremonies. He may sing all the hymns of the world and yet they will not reach the heart of God, whereas one filled with child-like simplicity may call just once on the Divine and his call is heard and answered.

The devotional life doesn't mean anything dogmatic. Spiritual strength does not lie in the word; it does not come from the outside. It is inward. If your heart is clean and pure, then you have the right to enter that inner province. If it is not pure, no one can give that blessing to you. You may come very close to it and yet miss it. As I have said, I have seen so many who came and found something and then lost it again. The same truth is there, but they cannot see it any more. The trouble is within themselves. They have allowed some alien influence to come and take the place which belongs to God. The heart becomes clouded; its happiness is marred; its serenity is disturbed. Completeness of life—the sense of real peace, of the Divine Presence—these things are not procured by material means. You cannot take a tape-measure and measure up the ways of God. In fact, if you try to do it, you find yourselves moved farther and farther away

from the Source of things. It is only when we approach with childlike heart, uncalculating, undemanding, that we are able to open a channel through which we may reach that Source and receive its down-flow.

In the Bibles and in the sacred books we read of the experiences of great souls; we feel exalted; we feel thrilled by them; but our exaltation is not half so great as when we ourselves have experienced these things, and we can experience them. Realization of great Truth is our heritage as much as it was theirs. We have, however, to make ourselves fit and ready. When the mirror of the heart is cleansed and polished, then the perfect image falls upon it unbroken; but if it is covered with dust and dirt and filth, we shall not perceive clearly. We may imagine that people and outer circumstances are the cause of our lack of vision. That is not true. There is no one who has power over our inner life. We alone can enter there.

Let me give you here certain simple themes pertaining to the devotional life:

From the very first be modest, be watchful. If you have a voice and like to have that voice heard, learn to forget about it. Patience, silence, deep inner reflection—these are the qualities which give us access to the higher things of existence. If we do not practise them, we find on the beach of the infinite ocean only little pebbles instead of the real pearl—little insignificant things on the shore of life, instead of spiritual treasure.

Devotees, real seekers, those who desire direct vision of Truth, they are never satisfied with the external. Their souls long for the Real, and they can find the Real where alone we all can find It—within. There in the depths of the Spirit is an island of peace unbroken where man at last can know and experience eternal joy and the fulfilment of life.

Let us strive to grasp the magnitude, the power, the sub-

lime atmosphere of that inward Reality. Let us pray that we may never turn our back to It because of harsh and discordant thoughts, egotistic feelings or selfish desires. May our heart never harbor ill will toward any creature, for such a heart we cannot bring before the altar of God. He sees the heart and according to that, He gives.

Let us then, in this hour of silence, lift our thoughts and prayers to that One who alone can grant all our desires and give us what is needful for our souls.

Let us gather up all the faculties of body and mind in genuine, guileless, true spiritual fervor.

Let us lift ourselves and transcend all bodily limitations,
That we may feel we are part of that great Spirit,
That our real life is bound up with That,
And that without it we have no real existence.
O Thou infinite and all-merciful One,
Thou knowest our innermost need!
Penetrate our depth so that our whole being may be filled with Thy divine radiance.
O Thou all-seeing, all-loving Spirit!
Thou art our light in the hour of darkness;
Thou art our strength in our moment of weakness;
Thou art our comfort in our hours of depression.
Thou art the Source; Thou art the sustenance!
Awaken in us the consciousness of Thy Presence within us,
And keep us ever in Thy peace.

Acknowledge your faults humbly, seek detachment, give yourself up, try to love God more than yourself, and His glory more than life; at all events, desire to attain such love, and ask it of Him. He will love you, and you will fill your heart with His peace. —*Fenelon.*

MATTER, SUBTLE AND GROSS

By Sister Devamata

(A class talk given at the Vedanta Centre, Boston, on February 13, 1919)

In all life—up to the spiritual plane and including the moral plane—there are only two elements: matter and force, their variation depending upon the state of the matter and the freedom of the force to manifest. The ordinary capacity for vibration in the gross elements of the body is very limited. A force playing upon them can create only a very low rate of vibration. They react slowly to stimulus. When we reach the plane of sensation, where we first experience perception of the invisible, the material substance is finer, the reactions more rapid, while on the plane of mind the reactions are still more immediate and are capable of being controlled by us.

The average person, however, has not developed swiftness of will sufficient to enable him to control his mental reactions. That is why we are open, for instance, to impressions of anger. Passions are nothing but the unsubdued vibrations of the mind. The mind acts more quickly than we can deal with it. The controlled man is the man who has risen in his development to the point where he can react upon his own reaction; so instead of the original reaction being merely a waste of *prana* or vital energy, he is able to swing it in another direction. We cannot measure as yet the higher reactions of the intellect and of the moral nature.

There are human beings who are neither moral nor immoral. They are unmoral. That is, in them there are no moral reactions. Their moral sense simply lies inert. As we understand this, we shall begin to understand many cases of so-called immorality that are being dealt with as feeble-mindedness. It is really a state of absolute lethargy in the

higher grades of matter. Those people are not awake. They have not been reached. There is no action or reaction. It is impossible to make them understand why there is any reason for them to curb themselves. Others again have not yet learned how to direct their moral reactions. They are the ones whom St. Paul describes as having the will to do good but who do evil. They have not sufficient control of their reactions on that plane to meet the temptation.

Temptation is nothing but the setting of the *Akasa,* or primordial substance, into vibration with no power to control it. We have a much better idea of that with which we are dealing when we state it in these terms. Each of these states or planes is really matter in a subtler condition. When matter is purged of its grosser elements it appears in its finer aspects. It is not something new. And what is true of matter as a whole is true of its smallest particle, the atom. In every atom of gross matter, there is a capacity for the most transparent, the highest form of manifestation. It is not that as we change our state of being we have a new type of matter to deal with, or that as we rise to a higher plane we contact a new substance. It is actually the same substance manifesting in a finer form. All through the universe are particles of matter in different grades of development, just as there are human beings at different levels of consciousness. Take ether and air, for example. They are the same element with different rates of vibration. The ether is far more subtle, hence it has gone beyond the understanding of our science or its capacity for observation. As a result, in the West we did not recognize ether at all. There was air and then there was a void.

We have a physical, a mental, an intellectual, and a moral body. We are really building these every day. We ourselves are nothing at all but a whirlpool. That which is in

the middle, that which we cannot see, cannot feel, and cannot know—that we are! All the other things which whirl around us are our different bodies. They are absolutely fluid, save at the centre, which is hollow. Fluid is fluid, but some fluid is like molasses while other fluids flow with speed. Each individual whirls according to his specific gravity, which is determined by his state of purification, and as he whirls he draws to himself particles of matter, in a finer or grosser state, in harmony with his own evolution. As he draws them, they fall into the pattern of his being on the different levels of consciousness, just as do all particles of matter anywhere that are in a state of revolution.

When we draw matter to us, naturally it drops into position according to its specific gravity. Thus a person who has gross interests and desires is heavy, dense and dull because all the matter he draws to him inevitably falls onto the lower shelf, so to speak. Men build their bodies this way. One who thinks only of physical prowess will attract into the physical body those elements which make for physical strength. His mind, however, will be loosely put together and even vapid. His intellect will be so vaporous it will not be perceptible at all. One who is of intense mental interest, on the other hand, draws to himself that material in a state of vibration capable of building his mind. A child of this type will mentally over-top its physical body; it will begin to look peaked and frail.

Now there is no advantage in attracting just one kind of material. In the practice of *Yoga* one is not supposed to get out of balance and become visionary by always reaching out for some single expression of existence. Everyone should have a certain amount of external occupation. This keeps the outer part of one's being moving along nicely. There should be some manual labor, some mental activity—not only intel-

lectual but in the form of intelligent observation—and some study. Also, in connection with this balanced expression by which matter in a fluid state is kept cleared out and circulating freely, there should be the thought of purification.

Our effort should be to keep each part of our being in the most purified state possible. For example, when you are seeking to develop your physical body and have the thought of strength, do not have the idea of big muscles, but rather that you may have a very pliable instrument which will respond quickly to all demands that are made upon it. Thus you must be careful to have only the purest kind of food. Hindu aspirants attach great importance to this. They strive to build their bodies out of the subtlest and purest form of gross matter. The food must be very clean; not merely clean in the sense that you do not see black streaks in it or bits of sand, but clean in a finer sense. It must not be soiled by thought. Every atom of food contains a fine particle which easily can be rendered unclean through impure thinking. In India the mother of the house prepares the food. She does so with the greatest care, chanting holy songs, or repeating some holy text as she goes about her task. She is careful to fill her whole kitchen with this higher thought that it may permeate the food that she is making ready. Therefore you must be careful. You must try to have the better type of human being in your kitchen. Of course, we cannot always be looking after the thoughts of those who cook for us; we may not always be able to control the preparation of the food; but we can control the thought with which we eat it. When we eat, let us do so with an uplifted feeling. That is the purpose of grace, of first offering everything up to God. We put the God-thought into it.

You must never eat food over which you have not prayed, and you should have the same care in regard to the air that

you breathe. When you sit down for meditation the air in your room should be perfectly fresh and clear. You should try all through the day to keep your body in every way free from the denser conditions of matter. Nearly always when we feel heavy we think that that is the time we should go to sleep. Do not yield to that heaviness. You must guard against it and against any gross manifestation of matter in your body. Keep your body pliable, and receptive only to the highest vibrations of the physical plane. In the same way you must guard your mind.

When a Hindu desires to practice *Yoga* he goes away from his ordinary associations. Perhaps he goes away for six months. Immediately he begins his practice by gradually reducing the quantity and the heartiness of the food which he eats. He eats a smaller quantity of food and of a much lighter quality. He will be very careful about the water he drinks and the place where he lives. He will usually choose some spot in the forest, a very clean spot near a cool, flowing stream. Before he commences the inner practice of *Yoga* he will go through a certain amount of outer practice. Thus by degrees, in a perfectly sensible and ordered way, he will attune himself, his whole system. Never will he force his practice to the point where any state he may acquire will seem unnatural or abnormal.

Our external and internal conditions should be absolutely harmonious. Gradually the finer forces will take command, as they should do always. Everything must be pointed one way. When the eye is single the whole body will be full of light. The light is shining everywhere in the universe all the time. These gross bodies of ours block it, but the finer body in us does not block the light at all. The very moment that the veil of dense matter is removed, there the light shines in full glory.

The finer part of our being should dominate. I do not mean the psychic. The psychic is nothing but the sense experience of the subtle planes. It is just as dangerous and useless as is any thought or feeling with no intelligence behind it. When we are wholly purified our subtle body will be as real to us as our gross body is now. We must go from this gross body on to the mental body, and then up higher until our spiritual body becomes for us the real. We should never seek to make any jump. Nowhere in nature is there any jump. You cannot have a pure mind unless you have a pure body. You cannot have a pure moral sense unless you have a pure discriminative faculty. It must be an absolutely continuous and homogenous development on all planes.

The finer the forces we deal with, the more terrific the blow and the greater the reaction on ourselves. I should not dream of giving you a cup of poison to drink, but if I sat down and engaged in a conversation with you which was filled with most angry and bitter thoughts, and if I made hateful remarks, then I should be giving you the worst kind of poison. You would be poisoned through and through and I should be also, for both of us would have the same reaction.

On the inner planes there can be worse murder than on the outer. If a man suffers from some physical or mental condition, it may be that way back angry words have poisoned his whole system. Conditions in our subtle bodies can remain latent for years and years and then spring to life suddenly in the form of physical illness or mental disturbance, often of a very severe order. Long ago, those fine particles of the subtle body were perhaps poisoned by some terrible thought or act, and this comes out today as some incurable disease or even as insanity. It may have been twenty years ago, or two hundred, for all we know, but

there it has been lying latent all this time in the subtler aspects of our being, waiting until the hour came for it to manifest. This condition, however, can be counteracted by thoughts of an opposite nature, or even wiped out by supreme devotion to God.

Therefore we should strive to avoid all poisonous mental atmosphere as we seek to avoid a deadly epidemic. The epidemics of the subtle body are infinitely more to be feared than those of the physical. If at any time you find yourself holding thoughts which will stain or clog your inner being, begin to pray, repeat some holy word, or go to a place that has holy associations. Do not let thoughts of a lower order seize upon you. Take some precaution immediately. Strive to do the same with those with whom you are dealing. If you see children getting angry or having uncontrolled reactions of any kind, seek to change their thoughts. Try to start up a new vibration in their minds, because a wrong mental vibration, once started, is most difficult to check because of its subtlety.

At the beginning of our spiritual life it is vital that we attach the utmost importance to our associations. There is nothing that helps more in our inner development. Those holy, clean, pure, uplifting thoughts will start up vibrations in all the higher and finer particles of our being. We should go to those places where the atmosphere is vibrant with such thoughts, stimulating to all that is best in our nature. The more we can surround ourselves with this type of influence, by means of the places we frequent, by books, by prayer, by study, the more we shall be creating for ourselves not merely the possibility of successful meditation or of higher vision, but of real help and joy in every possible way.

Time cannot bend the line which God has writ.

—*Thoreau.*

IN THIS UNCERTAIN WORLD

By Srimati Gayatri Devi

(An address given at the Vedanta Centre, Boston, April 1947)

In this world of ours where we live from day to day, circumstances frequently remind us that there is considerable uncertainty in life. We may not want to face it, we may like to close our eyes to it, we may desire to forget about it; yet the fact remains that life is full of uncertainties and we are not able to alter the fact.

Man builds his home on earth thinking he will abide here forever. Then suddenly, and sometimes quite unexpectedly, the call comes from the Unknown and he is taken away. Or let him secure himself—shall we say—on the shifting sands of life; he will come up against changes and disasters which will rock or even demolish the very foundation of security.

It may seem to some that facing the realities of life is looking at its dark features. But in this world where dark and light, shadows and sunshine play side by side, how can we accept one and forget the other? It is always better for us to be fortified by an understanding and intelligent attitude so that it may act as our safeguard. Unless we do this, emergencies will ever be instrumental in dislodging us from our very mooring. We will be disturbed and caught in upheavals and fall prey to those reactions which are not altogether desirable.

In order to withstand the inevitable tide of events, we need to become philosophic. We need to learn to look at life quite clearly and as objectively as possible. There is in every one of us an element that chooses to conceal facts. Although we seldom want to admit to ourselves that we are not realists, we like not only to overlook truths but try to change them that they may suit our convenience. This could be regarded as a form of distortion. The more we try to

camouflage reality, the more insecure we become because our distortion or camouflaging may comfort us but does not in any way alter what is inevitably before us.

Today we are living in a very crucial period of human history. The events of our present times are shaping themselves in accordance with a major catastrophe that has shaken the very foundation of civilization. As sane, sensible and thinking human beings we need to remember that this is not the first time in its existence that our world has passed through such a crisis. The difference between old history and the new is simply this: in the past possibly small sections of humanity were affected by wars while now their range of destruction is world-wide. A global disaster is always followed by a period of uncertainty. At such a time individuals are called upon to make tremendous adjustments. They cannot run away from them. Only those who are able to make this adjustment with understanding endurance escape its soul-shattering impact.

We are passing through such a state. Let us look at the world over. Everywhere upon this globe struggle is going on; all over the world there is uncertainty and upheaval. No one knows what tomorrow holds for us. We cannot tell from day to day. In spite of all the scheming and planning and preparation of human beings everywhere who are concerned with the well-being of mankind, the future still remains greatly uncertain. Men who are working enthusiastically to raise their fellow-men socially and economically to a higher level and to bring about a better way of living, are finding out the difficulty of such a task. Their plans are not working out altogether to their satisfaction. When they solve some problems, new ones appear. There is always something waiting around the corner—the unexpected and frequently the undesirable.

What shall we do? We may answer, "Let us try to make things right. Let us work to bring about the results which give us a sense of comfortable feeling, an awareness of security." Everyone is striving for this end. We are all working toward it, each in our own way. But in spite of our efforts of organization and global activities, we are not altogether satisfied with the results. What, then, should be our attitude under the circumstances? Should we become depressed, disillusioned, and maladjusted to the degree that we are unable to live with a certain measure of peace, order and well-being? In other words, shall we allow the monumental changes to affect us in such a way that we live in a perpetual state of disorder and turmoil? No one wants to live in an unsettled manner. That brings a very uncomfortable feeling. Sometimes when we are making a decision or choosing a right course of action, we feel unsettled. We know that a change is to be made, whether we desire it or not; we know it may even be forced upon us. What saves us under such situations is our own sane common sense and mental and emotional balance, and above all our faith in things that have abiding value.

Now we come to real philosophy. Philosophy has again and again aspired to instill steadiness and sanity into us. It has shown us the way by its clear-sightedness and enunciation of Truth. Philosophy explains life and reveals what lies behind the screen. It asks us to look at life in a straightforward manner. That only means we must accept that which is uncertain as uncertain and lean upon that which is certain.

What is certain in this life? We can answer the question in a humorous way, "Uncertainty is the only certain thing." This is the truth. Do any of us know what is going to happen tomorrow or a year or ten years from now, either in our per-

sonal life or our national life or in our international life? Could we predict the future? It would be wonderful if we could. There are people who would like to prophesy. They often utilize the knowledge of the past to formulate the pattern of the future. We are often amused when observation reveals to us that the experts in the affairs of mankind have been erroneous in their predictions. They told us we were going to go through exactly the same phase in this particular period as we did twenty years ago when a similiar episode took place. But we find that nothing is running "according to Hoyle"; nothing is happening according to the formulated pattern. What is the matter? No one seems to know the correct answer. Here again is the element of uncertainty. How simple it would be if we could first predict and then organize our life to fit the prediction. But we cannot do this because life is unpredictable. Therefore, I repeat that the only certain thing in this world is uncertainty.

To meet the unpredictable we need to cultivate good sportsmanship. That is our indispensable requirement at the present time. Besides, people who cannot accept changes never grow. Those who like to hold onto the set ways, the old order, suffer tremendously. We see this so clearly in the experience of men who like to have the years run by in the same way as they did previously, without the slightest deviation. How unfortunate it is for them when they cling fast to the old or do themselves damage through their inability or unwillingness to accept change. Let us remember this: change is always a sign of growth. It is the sign of progress and development. It is the sure indication that we are going forward. If we want to remain stagnant, then we say, "Let us put off changes indefinitely." The result is that we live in a static and comfortable state. People of our world who have done this, have been left behind on the path of advance-

ment. We must be far-sighted if we believe in progress, not only in the progress that improves our outer way of life but also of mind and spirit. Then alone can we go ahead with a broad and free outlook, making use of the uncertainties and changes and becoming stronger by the experience.

There are two ways by which we can approach life. One is the long-range view and the other the short-range which is the result of our selfish desires and personal will, and of those hankerings after small things which often hinder our growing spirit. When our mind is enlightened by the knowledge of Truth and awakened by its true significance, we can no longer take the short-range view. Our experience with circumstances helps us to evolve a personal and sensible philosophy. We say, "Well, we cannot change life's natural course, but let us so orient ourselves that we may live with the changes and be benefited by them." We must constantly remember that no change, suspense or uncertainty can thwart us if we are spiritually anchored. Therein lies our fundamental strength.

When we analyze our mode of living, the philosophy which governs it, we may find that we have placed supreme trust in the very uncertainties of life which are evanescent. We really cannot depend on them. Our reliance on the changing creates a real leak through which our strength, vitality and fortitude escape. It is not safe to lean too heavily upon the unsubstantial or try to make the impermanent, permanent. Can we ever do it? That is folly, a sign of ignorance and unwisdom. Those who want to live wisely will learn not to depend too much on the externals because they are always undependable. They will so focus their life that changes may happen around them, or come very close to them, or even alter the passage of their material life, but their inner strength will help them ride over all difficulties and leave them either unaffected or changed for the better.

First, we must realize that in order to help ourselves we may have to change our mode of thinking. We are to introduce in it a practical philosophy and demonstrate it by action. Let us say to ourselves, "I will not be so dependent on the changeable realities of life that I become unfit when they come on my path." How many of us prepare or fortify ourselves for emergency? Emergency may mean anything. How many of us are ready for it? The answer is: only those who do not neglect their spiritual life, who do not allow themselves to be weakened by a falsified philosophy or a selfish outlook. We must be very careful in our living because we need strength, and more than that, we need protection against the forces of life. You will find that those who are conscious of the things eternal and those who have learned to place value upon them, are safeguarded to a great extent because they know the Truth. Knowledge of Truth is not merely an intellectual comprehension. It must be actual experience. Often we say, "I know that I cannot depend on the material things." But do we know this truth so well that we try to be independent of them whenever necessary? Let us analyze and survey our attitude carefully. We plan; we build provisions for the future with caution and care. Yet our precautions to preserve security and prosperity may prove futile. Will it not be better for us to take measures to build for spiritual health, wealth and security? Should we not store up deep spiritual understanding within which will enable us to accept the "pairs of opposites?" In the *Gita* again and again Sri Krishna instructs his disciple: "He is fit to attain immortality who is serene and not afflicted by these sensations, but is the same in pleasure and pain."

We must put as much effort, attention and interest into acquiring spiritual consciousness as we use for material acquisition for protection against future want. This will serve

to enhance our strength of character, mind and spirit. To cope with life we cannot afford to be weak. We must be strong. Real strength does not come from our clinging to the perishable existence. Our very being must be established in that which does not pass away. I have often shared with you that prayer of St. Teresa of Avila: "Let nothing disturb thee, let nothing affright thee. All passeth away; God only shall stay. Patience wins all; who hath God lacketh naught, for God is his all." We may argue, "She was a nun. She did not have the cares of the world. She lived a secluded life and had few wants, and therefore could express such ideas." When we read her life we learn that she had a very difficult time. Hers was the mission to bring about changes, to purify a corrupt and stagnant spiritual order. Her path of action was by no means smooth. It was strewn with high rocks of opposition and thorns of difficulties. Personal experience taught her what she expresses in the prayer out of sure conviction: "All passeth away; God only shall stay."

Sooner or later everyone of us, through life's vicissitudes, will come to the same realization. We recognize that there are difficulties, changes, dangers—multiple diversified experiences awaiting us on life's passage. But they are all passing scenes. We must let them pass, either being players in them or witnessing them from outside. Our roots of living, however, must be held firmly by that which does not pass. Then, and then alone, will we be able to accept the passing without fear, without a sense of loss, with rather an increasing sense of spiritual gain. It is interesting how we eventually arrive at the conclusion that in life even loss is a form of gain. No matter what has passed from us, there has not been any real loss because by losing materially we have been enriched spiritually. Will it not be wonderful if you can say, "I have

had many experiences, I have gone through much, seen and suffered much, and as I look back I am conscious of what I have learned, the benefit I have gathered, how rich and full my life has become."

This attitude is possible only for the one who lives consciously by a high philosophy and is eager to gather from life the best it has to offer—the precious things, enrichment not of material goods but development of mind and spirit. How can we ever grow wiser, or move from strength to greater strength, from truth to larger truth, without paying some price for them? That price is our experience—hard and smooth, happy and painful, easy and troublesome. We earn wisdom, enlightenment and a deep sense of inner security at its cost.

Living should ever be concerned with high thought and noble philosophy. Every one of us has a philosophy of our own. It may be drawn from Christian tradition or Oriental background. We may be influenced by various conceptions and ideals. Out of all these we must gather what is suited to our need and formulate our own way of life. If we have not already done this, let us do it now. We should try never to forget what is self-evident: life is the sum total of a number of uncertainties and our part is to accept them in the best spirit and be neither frightened nor overpowered by them. That is what we must practise and thus by practice of Truth and equanimity of behavior protect ourselves against the inevitable ills.

Fear of the unknown and the unexpected often saps our inherent vitality. To this sometimes we add rebellion against what we do not desire. These destructive forces in our nature must be checked and gradually overcome through the cultivation of graciousness and practice of detachment. Perhaps you hear me speak of this frequently, and yet I cannot

emphasize our need of it too often. We are so attached to and bound by the material. The loss of it upsets us; its absence makes us unhappy. We are wound up by a thousand knots to the unrealities and need to disentangle ourselves.

Detachment does not mean indifference, nor does it imply lack of zest, nor does it indicate carelessness. It means living with understanding: let things come and let things go. When they come we accept them, and when they go we do not hold onto them. This is the way of practice. What we have today is taken. It is a tragedy that so many people live in fear. I come in contact with individuals who suffer because they are uncertain and apprehensive of the morrow. Such uneasiness of mind may eventually result in nervous breakdown. Nervousness or fear are unhealthy liabilities and never our assets. They demolish our fundamental state of security. What we need most is freedom from them, and we can have it if we allow our life to become established in the One Who does not change. "All passeth away; God only shall stay." This is the realization of all thinkers and men who faithfully depend upon the Eternal. They tell us that in this uncertain world the only certain Reality is that which seems uncertain to most of us. "Is God certain? How?" We do not find Him so until we make Him real. It is by our faith in Him, by our awareness of His power which moves the universe, that we gain the confidence. If we learn to trust in that Power completely, depend upon it fully, we ourselves become the most certain factors in this uncertain world.

Every one of us has experienced the undependability of all things, has known disappointments, failures and fickleness in human relationships. None of us has escaped from loss, separation, or the disappearance of all that is most desirable. If our peace and happiness vanished with the passing of all things, where would any of us be? We would be broken.

Fortunately often a shocking experience awakens us spiritually and leads us toward the Unchangeable. Many a man and woman first turned their face to God when there was no other way, and by seeking found what they sought and with it rest and peace. Today we frequently hear or read about men and women who are being miraculously sustained amid devastating changes, men and women who have not lost their grasp of Truth. In starvation, in misery and death, their voice rings with supreme faith: "God has not forsaken us. We are not lost." We may not come face to face with such brave and sturdy people, but they exist. By their example they are proving to others the dependability of the spiritual. We should try to bear in mind that only by building their life from within are they able to endure the onslaughts of misfortune.

A valuable instruction Swami Paramananda gave us shortly before his passing from this plane of existence has helped us greatly through the past years. It was in 1940, just when the whole world conflict was breaking out. The horizon seemed very dark, and we became conscious of the uncertainty facing us. One morning while we sat at the breakfast table, Swamiji said very seriously—for he knew that terrible things were going to take place: "If you remain ever in the shelter of the Most High, not even a hair of your head will be touched." Let us not give a material interpretation to these words. Those who take shelter in the Most High are not seeking escape from small blows or hurts. What they want is the certainty of God, the Divine Shelter in which they feel safe no matter what happens. As long as they are sustained by His grace, all is well in spite of the outward changes. We can, every one of us, in our own way, find that Shelter. If we can be strong in the strength of God, nothing will ever frighten us. If we live with ever increasing consciousness of His nearness, we will always be safe and

convey to others that feeling of safety and security. The struggling men and women of our times need this assurance desperately. Sometimes we come in contact with a person who impresses us by his inner conviction. He touches our hand or says, "Do not be afraid, my friend. All is well." Our faith is aroused and we become convinced. He is imparting to us his certainty—something he has acquired from his own inner life. We too must cultivate it. Yes, we may have to ride over many fears. We may have to win a few battles, especially those raging in our small self, but we can be victorious by increasing our divine strength. We possess it inherently. We must draw from it and by its help become absolutely secure. A person who is detached lives happily, with a mind free of care and burden. He lives fully. He possesses what is abiding in a perishable world.

This can be our possession, acquired through our aspiration and the cultivation of spiritual values. Again and again we should strive to establish ourselves in the Spiritual. Thus shall we find our way through life safely, in light, darkness and change, in good fortune and ill. Then we will be those fortunate men and women who are carried above trials and tribulations. "Not even a hair on our head will be touched" because His protecting Hand will guide us onward and forward.

Those who love God as dearly as themselves; those who have affection for him as for their children; those who trust Him as their beloved companion, and reverence Him as the Teacher of all teachers; those who love Him as their dear friend, and worship Him as God—theirs is eternal life. Blessed indeed are they that steadfastly devote themselves to the worship of God, for they shall obtain to absolute freedom. —*Srimad Bhagavatam.*

A MIRACLE MOVEMENT

By Ruby Frasch and Sister Daya

Swami Paramananda tells us: According to the teaching of Vedanta, realization of God or at-one-ment with Him is the aim of human life. Forgetfulness of our true nature is the source of all misery.

Amidst the turmoil and struggle of our present day life, here in the United States there exists a Fellowship of earnest men and women, known as *Alcoholics Anonymous*. This Fellowship was born out of the personal distress and experience of one man. While in a hospital for liquor addicts, his days having become a series of drinking bouts and "cures," he realized that his life was unmanageable, that he had reached the depths. He knew he was a complete physical and moral wreck, so tortured through mind and body by the use and abuse of alcohol, that only through a Power greater than himself could he hope to maintain sobriety. Admitting his own utter helplessness in the face of his terrible foe, who had control of every nerve, every cell of his body, he gave himself over without reserve to that greater Power, and, lo, the miracle was achieved, the impossible had come to pass: he was healed; he was free!

But the process involved, among other things of a cleansing nature, the sharing of his discovery. The thought came to him that there were thousands of hopeless alchoholics who might be glad to have the help that had rescued him. Through this spiritual realization, this working knowledge of a supreme directive Intelligence, perhaps he could convey to some of them at least the light that was now his. Then they in turn might work with others. His doctor, a medical director of one of the leading hospitals in the country dedicated to the treating of alcohol and drug addiction, was interested in his idea. With some misgivings he consented to this patient's

request that he be allowed to tell his story to some of the other inmates. The doctor reports that the result was more than amazing, for up to that time alcoholism had been found to be practically incurable. "This man," he writes, "and over one hundred others appear to have recovered."

Here is a strange fact. Highly competent psychiatrists find it sometimes impossible to persuade an alcoholic frankly to discuss his case; but an ex-alcoholic who has found his solution, being armed with facts about himself, can generally win the entire confidence of another alcoholic in a short time. The man or woman offering help has no other reason than a true desire, an altruistic and unselfish wish to be helpful. This prepares the way of approach. He is perfectly familiar with the sufferings, the mental tricks and the self-deceptions of the alcoholic, so this disarms the one he is trying to help. Finally he lifts from the mind of the victim the terrible sense of shame and guilt with which he has been branded. For now it is known that the alcoholic is not necessarily a weak character, a flabby creature without will to refuse the drink when it is offered. The alcoholic is one overcome by a terrible disease. Others can drink with comparative immunity, can even become drunk without any permanent harm done, but not the alcoholic. One drink for him means a life-long slavery under a most cruel tyrant, and beneath this slavery have fallen some most powerful natures, men who once healed have proved themselves capable of leadership and incisive action.

This original group then, of one hundred men, with their new knowledge and their new hope, began to plan how to reach out to help others. A wonder book was written, named for their Fellowship *Alcoholics Anonymous,* in which was given not only their program for recovery, but in addition, a description of the individual case histories, all seemingly

hopeless until there came the surrender to a higher Power and the resultant spiritual awakening. From the chapter on *How It Works* I quote: "Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path."

The book goes on to say that those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves. There are those, too, who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders, many of whom do recover, however, if they have the capacity to be honest.

"Remember," so runs the book, "that we deal with alcohol—cunning, baffling, powerful! Without help it is too much for us. But there is One who has all power—that One is God. May you find Him now!" . . .

There are twelve steps which are suggested as a program for recovery. These steps follow very closely the teaching of Vedanta which tells us that "Life is a ladder up which we go step by step."

> *Step One*: "We admitted we were powerlesss over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable."

Sri Ramakrishna, the great modern saint and seer of India, describes what he calls man's "ripe and unripe ego." The unripe ego is completely satisfied with its own little powers, it dwells immersed in the consciousness of separateness. Like the green cocoanut whose outer rind closely adheres to the pulp, such a man identifies himself with the body and the various attributes of his personal nature, and feels that unaided he can win in the battle of life. The ripe ego is just the reverse. Like the ripe cocoanut, the man who possesses it has separated his essential being from the outer husk of name and form, and lives as the servant of God. Not till this surrender has taken place can the God within, his essential being,

take control of his destiny and guide his actions, and often this does not occur till the little self, the little outer man, has admitted his utter helplessness and called with his whole soul upon the Supreme. Thus in the great Hindu scripture, the *Bhagavad Gita,* Arjuna, faced with a desperate crisis, which he finds himself powerless to meet, sinks down at the feet of his divine Teacher, the Incarnate Lord, Sri Krishna, and cries out: "With my nature overpowered by pity and depression and mind confused about duty, I implore Thee (O Krishna) tell me with certainty what is good for me. I am Thy disciple, instruct me, who have taken refuge in Thee." That appeal of Arjuna's drew down the whole wisdom of the Gita.

> *Steps Two and Three*: "Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to God *as we understood Him.*"

This decision of faith is absolutely vital in all spiritual practice. Without it, no direct experience of Divinity, no realization is possible. With it, all things are possible. An Eastern scripture calls faith the "hand with which we grasp great treasure." It is the essential element in the practical application of spiritual ideals. Sri Ramakrishna says: "Yes, faith is at the root of all spiritual progress. Thou canst do without all other things; *only thou must have faith.*"

Most vital is the freedom of interpretation granted to each member in his understanding of that Power greater than himself. Many who could not tolerate the word *God* accept the conception when given in this form. The Eastern spiritual approach is likewise one of freedom. Every man must be free to worship God according to his own inner vision and conviction. The *Rig Veda,* probably the most ancient scripture in the world, contains this magnificent statement: "Truth (God) is One; men call It by various names." Dogmas shut

out Truth which must be free and universal, and as available to man as sun and air.

> *Step Four*: "Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."

There must be complete honesty, complete integrity in the life of the disciple. The real Truth-seeker will not try "to cover a corpse with flowers," but seeks to become the clear-eyed witness of his own life, appraising with complete detachment the materials with which he has to work: his body, his emotional nature, his mind. In India the *guru* or teacher strives to draw out from the disciple all that lies hidden in the consciousness. The pot must be put on to boil so that all the materials may rise to the surface, and be skimmed off.

> *Step Five*: "Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs."

Here again is indicated the necessity for inner clarification. In opening his heart to his *guru,* the disciple sets himself free. Occasionally people would come to Sri Ramakrishna burdened with a sense of wrong-doing. Often they would be in agony because of their conscience. Sri Ramakrishna would feel that he could do nothing for these men till they had told him frankly and freely the full story of their trouble. It is recorded of one man that he could not bring himself to make the confession, whereat this great Teacher replied, "Then go down to the river-bank and speak out the whole truth to the trees. Tell everything to them and all will be well." The man did this very thing and the great weight of his guilt was lifted from him.

One thing that is observable at a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous is the integrity of the members. They are looking facts straight in the eye, no matter how closely they hit home, and in this way too they are following the path of the spiritual disciple. They know they have to take stock honestly. If

they are to live, they know they have to be free of anger and resentment and all such feelings. They ask God to show them how to correct their mistakes, to save them from all these things through His Presence and His will. This brings great comfort and hope and establishes them in humility, which is basic to spiritual striving.

> *Step Six*: "Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."

Often though we pray that we may be made over we are secretly fearful that our prayers may be answered. There can be no true surrender where there is half-heartedness or fear. In the *Bhagavad-Gita* we read: "Giving up all other ways and means, come unto Me alone for refuge. I shall free thee from all sins; grieve not."

The prayer of the Fellowship runs something like this: "My Creator, I am now willing that You should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that You now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to You and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do Your bidding. Amen."

> *Steps Eight and Nine*: "Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others."

Swami Paramananda used often to tell his students that what had been done could be undone, that there can be a neutralizing effect through right action. In his article, *Karma and Divine Grace,* he writes: "The law of *Karma* shows us that whatever may be stored up in man's destiny as the result of his past errors or misguided zeal need not come to manifestation. He does not have to accept as inevitable these accumulated results, but can set himself resolutely to counteract them, whatever they may be, by means of right action and noble aspiration." What the man's attitude should be is

indicated in the *Gita*: "He who works for Me, has Me for his highest goal, is devoted to Me, is free from attachment and bears enmity toward no creature, he enters into Me."

Step Ten: "Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it."

The aspirant, along with the alcoholic, should ever seek to grow in understanding and effectiveness. This is not an over-night matter; it should continue for one's lifetime. The poet Kabir writes:

"It is a hard fight and a weary one, this fight of the truth-seeker: for the vow of the truth-seeker is more hard than that of the warrior. . . .

For the warrior fights for a few hours. . . .

But the truth-seeker's battle goes on day and night; as long as life lasts it never ceases."

When selfishness, resentment, dishonesty, fear or any of these detrimental things crop up, the alcoholic (or the disciple) should ask God at once to remove them. If he has harmed any one, he should quickly make amends, then resolutely turn his thoughts to someone else he can help. Love and tolerance of others is the alcoholic's code, as it must be the code of the genuine disciple.

The injunction to admit the fault is one of the most difficult to comply with; for it comes into direct conflict with the little self. But the little self must surrender. In the *Song Celestial,* Sir Edwin Arnold's translation of the *Bhagavad Gita,* Sri Krishna, the Lord, says to His disciple: "Bring Me thy failure. . . . Near to renunciation, very near, dwelleth eternal peace."

Step Eleven: "Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him,* praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out."

Here we come very close to the heart of pure spiritual venture. Prayer, meditation—what a tremendous step this is for many of these men and women who, driven by their

desperate need, were turned by the force of necessity from denial of everything to surrender to that Power greater than themselves. The saints in the West, the *sadhus* in the East, tread that identical path which, if followed faithfully must lead to the illumination of the spirit of man. "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 (I carry their burden)."

> *Step Twelve*: "Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of those steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practise these principles in all our affairs."

This last injunction is considered as one of the most important. It fulfils the Golden Rule, it is encompassed in the saying of the Gita: "O Arjuna, he who looks upon pleasure and pain everywhere with the same regard as when it is applied to himself, that *yogi* is highly esteemed."

The true member of Alcoholics Anonymous is ever on call. Night or day, he will come to share his treasure with others who are afflicted with the terrible sickness which once held him in its grip. The most ideal physician could not be more active or devoted. But in this devotion and activity lie sanity and wholeness, and ultimate holiness, for they rise from a sense of oneness, and according to the great Vedanta philosophy, there is in reality but one Being, one Doer, in the universe, and only as we realize this do we find our complete liberation. When we see that oneness through the veil of the many we call it love. The envisioned man regards himself not just as his brother's keeper: he *is* his brother. "He who sees all beings in the (One) Self and the Self in all beings, how can there be delusion or grief for him who sees this oneness everywhere?"

Without this closing of the circle, without this reaching out of the physical hand in self-forgetting service, the alco-

holic cannot be safe; but fortified by works as well as by faith it can be said of him with full conviction: "The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide." More than safety, however, shall be his portion who faithfully follows out the alcoholic plan. "The day never passes," writes a member, a former agnostic, "that I do not silently cry out in thankfulness, not merely for my release from alcohol, but even more for a change that has given life new meaning, dignity, and beauty;" and in the book we find this promise: "Follow the dictates of a Higher Power and you will presently live in a new and wonderful world."

For example, there was my friend. He was a young man whose early life was handicapped by threatened tuberculosis. His mother took him to a well known mountain sanitorium. He had an unusual education and made many friends, always with people of higher mental attainment and social standing. He became a writer of sketches and plays and short stories. Soon he got into a sort of Bohemian, intellectual, atheistic crowd who drank freely—who scorned the mediocre—the "little man"—and were amused at the idea of religion. My friend's talent for writing, never brilliant, now needed urging. A few drinks at first helped ideas to flow, *then* followed the usual story of the alcoholic. Like the poor soul in the story, *Lost Week End,* he only *talked* about writing a book. He became a soul confused and lost, so far down in the depths of human misery that he was without even a glimmer of hope. After trying in vain every human and physical avenue and agency for relief and realizing he must find help or be destroyed, he cried out in his despair: "God help me—I cannot help myself!"

His family by now were ready to have him committed to an institution, but God had heard his cry for help. He contacted a member of Alcoholics Anonymous and was received into a

new kind of Fellowship. He had been an agnostic and was unwilling to use the word *God*, but a *Power greater than himself* he could understand. That was all that was needful. As soon as he began to admit the possible existence of a creative Intelligence, a Spirit of the Universe, he found a new sense of strength and direction and began to put his new ideas into practice. Today he is a sober, healthy, happy, successful and shining personality who has found rebirth through the secret as told in the *Gita*: "Surrendering mentally all actions to Me, regarding Me as the highest goal, resorting to Self-knowledge, do thou ever fix thy heart on Me. Fixing thy heart on Me, thou shalt by My grace overcome all obstacles; but if through egotism thou wilt not hear Me, thou shalt perish."

Now this friend is working to help other alcoholics overcome their difficulties and find what he has found—a deeply religious life.

In the year 1939, Alcoholics Anonymous numbered one hundred souls, today it boasts a membership of over twenty-three thousand, each one of whom is an active centre of ever widening influence. Twenty-three thousand men and women saved from disgrace, tragedy and death! A miracle movement! A miracle movement indeed, in a far deeper sense than appears on the surface. For it is more than a way out for alcoholics. In this present-day world, sick with its own cynicism and despair, it is proving a cure for the most destructive disease of all, the disease of unbelief and materialism. It is in truth a vast spiritual movement, unfettered by creed and dogma, which silently and inevitably will spread over the face of the whole world; and because it is so direct, simple and fundamental, it is able to carry its life-giving message to any land or any people without the revision on its program of a single word.

Thomas á Kempis, in the *Imitation of Christ,* makes the Lord to say: "Thou shouldst overcome thy pride with My meekness." Here is given the formula which the modern alcoholic has found, in most cases, completely effective, when applied to the disease of liquor, instead of to the disease of pride. But that Power which can lift a man above delirium tremens and insanity can also free him from the ravages of self-love, lust, hatred, greed and all uncharitableness.

Looked at in this light we can see Alcoholics Anonymous as a great cover movement, hiding beneath its ostensible purpose a deep underlying purpose of spiritual regeneration. Beneath its banner, men of all creeds and all races can meet on a common spiritual ground, without any antagonisms. And what a play of the Divine humor! That infinite Power which has been denied, ignored, derided, suddenly reaches down into the muck and mire of human society and finding the most wretched, the most abandoned members of the human family, confronts them with a choice: "Either accept Me and know life, or reject Me and know death." There is no way of escape; the choice is inevitable and the same for the sophisticate, the moron, the atheist, the ignorant, and the man of the world. Moreover, God holds each to his choice. He will remove the craving for alcohol from the victim's heart only so long as he keeps away from alcohol; but let him take one drop and the ancient fire once more will burn through his veins.

Thus the seed of new life in and with God has been planted, not just in the churches and the philosophical societies, but in the refuse heap of the world. It will grow, it will spread; it may help save mankind. But as Alcoholics Anonymous has twelve steps leading to ultimate freedom from drinking, so the movement itself is only the first step upon a path whose ultimate end is not merely liberation from

this or that, but final oneness with the One Divine. It is the beginning of the way of *yoga* or union; it is the entrance to the narrow path of the Christ, to the path as sharp as the razor's edge which leads to Ved-anta—the Final Goal of Wisdom—to "that happiness which is like poison in the beginning and like nectar in the end," the happiness "born of the blissful knowledge of the One Self."

"That Self (that Immortal Spirit) is a boundary. . . . All evil-doers turn back from it, for the world of *Brahman* (the Supreme) is free from all evil. Therefore, he who has crossed that boundary, if blind, ceases to be blind; if wounded, ceases to be wounded; if afflicted, ceases to be afflicted. Therefore, when that bank has been crossed, night becomes day indeed."

THE CONCEPTION OF THE SELF IN THE UPANISHADS

By S. C. Sen

(Concluded)

We have considered the vehicles through which the soul carries on its work. We have also seen how they influence consciousness and give rise to the three conditions of wakefulness, dream and sleep. Let us now briefly discuss the nature of these three states so as to bring out clearly the truth that the objective limitations which are imposed upon consciousness in dream and waking hours and which are absent in dreamless sleep are due entirely to the association of the soul with the active *koshas*, and are not essential to its real nature.

In dreamless sleep, as we have shown above, the soul leaves all the active *koshas* behind and enters into *Brahman* with a thin veil of potential individuality, which is void of function. The soul then loses its objective reality which characterizes

its two other states and realizes its true nature as pure consciousness and bliss. But the latent individuality asserts itself after a while and the soul is again encircled by a variety of active organs. In dream, the awakened soul is enveloped by the *Vijnana* in close association with the *manas,* while in the waking state it is encased in a highly complex apparatus consisting of the *Vijnana*, the *manas*, the vital sheath and the physical body, all in close association with one another.

In dream the *manas* forms the outermost shell in the wrappings of the soul. Hence, in dream, the soul cannot go beyond the range of *manas;* it enjoys the objects which the *manas* presents to it (*provivikta-bhuk*)[1] and suffers from the limitations which the *manas* imposes on it. In the waking state, the soul is wedded to the full complement of its *koshas* and depends upon the physical body which then forms its outermost covering. It then enjoys physical objects (*Sthoola-bhuk*)[2] and is confined within the range of its physical senses. It becomes subject to the laws and limitations of the physical body and falls an easy prey to the ills (such as death, diseases, etc.) to which the physical body is an heir. Thus the soul which remains pure and blissful in dreamless sleep becomes impure and afflicted with evil, suffering, and objectivity through its association with the active *koshas*.

But even the husk of potentiality (*i.e.,* the *Anandamaya kosha*) which clings to the self in dreamless sleep is not an inseparable adjunct of the soul. Like that of the other *koshas* its relation with the self is only accidental. The soul leaves it, along with the active *koshas,* in beatific vision or *Samadhi*. By *tapas* or *Yoga* the soul can free itself completely from the influence of the *koshas* and attain what the *Katha-Upanishad*[3] describes as the highest goal (*paraman gatim*),

[1] See Mundaka-Upanishad. 4.
[2] See Mandaka-Upanishad. 3.
[3] In Katha-Upanishad. 11. 3. 10.

i. e., union with *Brahman*. In the highest form of *Yoga* called *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*, the soul is said to be divested of all the *koshas* including the *Anandamaya*. It then realizes its complete unity with *Brahman*. The soul, therefore, is a Sojourner stranded in an alien land where it lives for a time, until it finds its way back to "God who is its home."

If in the moments of highest experience, such as dreamless sleep and beatific vision, the self becomes one with *Brahman*, and knows itself as infinite, it follows that that must be its real nature and that its finitude, such as prevails in dream and waking life through its association with the finite vehicles, must be adventitious. The finite vehicles, from *Anandamaya* down to the physical body, are all objective and can have nothing in common with the subjective self. "Subjectivity" in the *Upanishads* is not merely a logical idea, but it is also a metaphysical concept. It involves the idea of being a knower, a witness, as well as the notion of being a permanent and eternal substance, of being that which stands firm behind the fleeting phenomena. The object is *Satyam, i. e.*, empirically real, but the subject is *Satyasya Satyam, i. e.*, the eternal element behind the fleeting empirical reality.[1] The association between such opposed principles, *viz.*, the subjective self and the objective *koshas* cannot, therefore, be anything but adventitious. Moreover, the pure blissful consciousness which we enjoy in dreamless sleep and more fully and adequately in beatific vision (*Samadhi*) can find no interpretation in terms of the *koshas* which are well nigh non-existent in those states. Such consciousness must, therefore, be regarded as the very essence of the self which then subsists alone; and the finitude, duality and other aberrations of consciousness, which we experience in the waking and dream states, must

[1] In Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad. 11. 3. 6.

be conceived as the results of the influence which the *koshas* then exert on the imprisoned self. Thus, in its essential nature, the self is pure consciousness and free from all limitations—it is in fact one with *Brahman.*

But one further question has still to be answered and it is this: If the soul of man is really infinite and one with *Brahman,* how is this identity to be conceived in the face of his undeniable limitations, even though the limitations be accidental? Is the soul of man to be regarded as a part or as a modification of *Brahman?* No, there cannot be any distinction of part and whole in pure consciousness, for it is beyond time and space, and beyond distinction and duality. Any one who sees plurality in this, declare the *Upanishads,* wanders from death to death. There can be no distinction of part, no "*Svagata bheda,*" as Sankara would say, for if parts existed, *Brahman* would cease to be infinite and assume a finite character as towards its own parts. Nor can the human soul be a modification of *Brahman,* for *Brahman,* according to the *Upanishads,* is pure consciousness. He is *advam avyayam aksharam,* one undual, eternal and unchangeable being. To admit a change or modification in *Brahman* would be tantamount to an admission of plurality and objectivity in the nature of pure consciousness.

But on the plane of manifestation the divine consciousness appears in two different ways.[1] It appears synthetically through the entire creation and analytically through special parts; the former gives rise to *Hiranyagarbha* or the cosmic soul who sustains the world, and the latter to a plurality of *Jivas.* In *pralaya,* [the period of cosmic non-manifestation], the cosmic consciousness is withdrawn into its source and the world is dissolved. In *Samadhi* and dreamless sleep,

[1]**The problem of manifestation is not discussed in this paper.' The manifested world is taken as a fact of experience—only its incompatibility with pure consciousness is insisted upon.**

the *Jiva*-consciousness is withdrawn and is united with *Brahman*. But consciousness, whether in the part or in the whole of creation, or beyond it, is one and the same. In reply to a question from Uddalaki Aruni, Yajnavalkya says in the *Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad*: "There is no other seer but He (the highest self, *Brahman*), there is no other hearer but He, there is no other perceiver but He, there is no other knower but He; He is thyself, the ruler within the immortal." Again in another place Yajnavalkya says: "Thou canst see the seer of all sights, thou canst hear the hearer of all hearing, thou canst know the knower of all knowing, He is thyself, He is *Brahman*, He is within all."

Now, to sum up: there is only one consciousness, one knower, one witness, one self. He is *Satchitananda*, such as we experience ourselves to be when bereft of the *koshas*. He is *Brahman*. When He works through the microcosmic *koshas* He is *Jiva*, the soul of man; when He works through cosmic *koshas* He is *Hiranyagarbha*, the cosmic soul. But these *koshas*, whether microcosmic or macrocosmic, are mere adventitious accretions, and do not touch the essence of the soul. He who is the soul of man, He who is the soul of the cosmos, and He who is beyond—all are one. Just as pure water, whether taken from the jug or tank, or the sea, is always H_2O, everything else in it being foreign matter, so the pure self, whether of man or of gods, whether of *Hiranyagarbha* or of the absolute *Brahman*, is always *Satchitananda* [Being, Knowledge and Bliss absolute], everthing else with which it may happen to be united for a time, being entirely foreign to its true nature.

In the ocean of the world One only was, is and will be. You have neither bondage nor liberation. Live contented and happy. . . . Be calm and abide happily in your own Self which is Bliss. —*Astavakra Samhita*.

FROM A DISCIPLE'S NOTE-BOOK

(Continued from the Spring issue)

There are times when the disciple, seeking to reproduce in more permanent form the lights and the shades, the voices and the shapes of a day that is gone, has felt a sudden and paralyzing fear. So swiftly is the past swept into oblivion, so inadequate is the little mind to recall or to retain its greatest blessings, that even as one struggles to recapture in the net of remembrance what a brief moment ago was immediate and lovely, it is dissipated in thin air, and as one listens breathlessly for the sound of a voice, it has already become but an echo of an echo of an echo.

Indeed how strange is memory! It seems to transcend time and space, yet it is interwoven with time and space and could not exist without them. It is so fragile that a blow on one's head, excessive mental or emotional strain, shock—any one of these things—can apparently dim or destroy it, and with it, the treasure of countless experiences, integrated with our personal life to such an extent that almost we feel that they are that life.

When a man's mind suddenly goes blank, what becomes of his loves and his hates, his gains and his losses? What becomes of the man himself? He goes on living but apparently as another human being, as we see in cases of amnesia. He carries often a different name, forms new associations, creates a fresh environment. It is almost like a reincarnation, including the forgetfulness of past lives.

Does nothing remain connecting the old and the new? It would seem that the central consciousness remains—the sense of identity. Not identity in reference to the evanescent name or form, not identity that leads one to say, "I am Mr. Brown," or "I am Mr. Smith," but the sense of identity which causes one to affirm "I am I." This remains intact

through a thousand mental blackouts. It is always the same "I" that remembers or forgets.

But to what end if all past associations are lost to one through lapse of memory, along with their effects upon one's being, their resultant good or ill? Must the influence of such a pure spirit as Swami Paramananda—an influence conveyed through the beauty and holiness which he shed into the lives around him, into life itself—must it be dependent on such a frail instrument as memory, so that it lives only while the memory lives and is gone when the memory perishes? What a tragedy this would make of all our efforts toward the Ideal, what a soap-bubble it would seem to make of existence!

We are told, however, that not one effort to realize truth can ever be lost. Whether we know it or not, every thought, every word, every deed is recorded in the great Book of Divinity, in the records of the cosmos. We may forget, but that Divine Power which dwells within us and "in which we live and move and have our being" does not forget, and to the extent that we have striven for our Ideal, have realized it and assimilated it into our very essence, will its beauty and its blessing continue to flow down into our personal life, no matter how protean it may be. The love will be there, although for the moment we may have forgotten the one who evoked that love. The surrender to God will be there, although we cannot recall who awakened in us the will to surrender. The yearning and the faith will be there, even though we connect them no longer with any outer event or personage. The memory will have become an instinct for these great qualities—or their reverse—(for the Law works both ways); it will manifest through the voice of conscience--or its lack—in our soul. This for the moment must suffice the pilgrim spirit, struggling with an intermittent consciousness and a partial vision, until realization

unseals the full vision and we rediscover at the heart's core, at the center and fountainhead of being, all that we have lost—and infinitely more.

At the close of the *Isa Upanishad,* in a verse which is a command rather than a supplication, we find these lines: "Om! O mind, remember thy deeds! O mind, remember, remember thy deeds! Remember!" And the disciple, as she focuses her gaze upon scenes that rapidly grow dim, prays that same ancient prayer: "O mind, remember, remember!" As she prays, soon it is the present that fades away or rather, the past becomes the present, and she finds herself back once more with the little group at Queensberry Street, as they were then: Sister Devamata, tiny erect, executive, uncompromising with herself and others, ardent for attainment; Sister Satya Prana, with the clear light of her true eyes attesting her nature; Miss Sherwood, devoted, independent, full of humor and hospitality; Sister Seva, warming all with her great, generous mother-heart, eager to share her blessings; the others, like the disciple herself, newly entered upon the path of the Spirit; and, brooding over them all, that sunlike being, the Swami Paramananda. There are words and laughter and the more intangible values.

The picture emerges. This time it is a room, the upstairs study. The lights are aglow. It is the close of an evening together and all stand in a row before the Swami, listening with their hearts more than with their ears to what he is saying. The Note-book gives the date as November 23, 1919. The record is as follows:

"When the physical exercises were over which Swami gives us now every evening, we stood in line and said the little nightly verse: 'True shall I be, ever unto Thee, forever and ever and ever, Amen.' Swami started to speak about the public Services. He said: 'Sometimes the words flow through

me. When the inspiration does not come I can do very little, for I have not the intellectual training. But there are times when I do not have to think, when things come spontaneously—like last Sunday at Vesper Service. When those times come, the right word passes through these lips!' There was a pause. His eyes moved from one to the other.

"Swami: 'Is there anything special to add from the day? It has been a nice day?' (*There is silence*)

"A Disciple: 'A lovely day, Swami, but it ended unhappily for you and that makes us sad.'

"Swami: 'Oh, I am not sad!'

"S—: 'Swami does not look sad now.'

"Swami: 'I am really grateful for the times when I have had to go through ordeals, have experienced suffering and mistakes. They make me understand these things better. One cannot really understand them till one has passed through them.'

The Disciple: 'Is it not true that great souls need only to touch an experience to get the whole of it, while small petty souls have to go through things in their entirety again and again, and even then they have no understanding or sympathy?'

"Swami: 'That is true. Sri Ramakrishna said that what you were able to get from the ocean depended on the size of vessel you brought. Some had little cups and some had big cups, but whatever was brought was filled to the brim. Some were of solid iron, impervious to any water, and went away unfilled.'

"At the door Swami paused and said: 'We learn through accidents. Sometimes they come so that worse things will not happen, but even if worse things do happen, they are all from the Divine Mother. It is Her Will working through everything.' Then he stood in the hall, leaning against the stair railing.

"Swami: 'I thank you all for——' (*There was an interruption*)

"The Disciple: 'How can we ever thank you, Swami? How can we repay you? Tell us that.'

"Swami: 'I appreciate very deeply the blessings that have been mine. I would not want anything of anybody else's. My own life has been so full to overflowing of riches—not material riches; I do not mean that. If you are poor in spirit material riches will bring you nothing, but if you have spiritual riches you can be deprived of everything and cast into prison and you will bring happiness to the prison. I remember what Swami Ramakrishnananda said to me when I was first at the monastery, before I knew him very well. It was when there was the question of my having to go into the midst of some very disturbing conditions. I did not want to go, and then finally when I had to go, Swami Ramakrishnananda said: 'I have no anxiety for you at all. If you were to reach hell it would cease to be hell.' That was the kind of thing he said to me all the time. I know what he meant. People of bright, sunny disposition carry that with them. No matter where they are placed they bring their own atmosphere. It is people who control conditions.

" 'The greatest thing that a really great teacher does for us is to restore our faith in ourselves. People come to him broken in faith, full of despair and doubt. It is by his faith in them that he lifts them. The real teacher does not demand anything for himself and keep his followers at a distance, the way the small teacher does who seeks to keep his hold on people that way. He plays like a child and makes others feel that they are just as important as he is. It never occurs to him to expect reverence. Swamiji was like that. He made every one feel equally important with him. When big souls meet such teachers they fall down and worship.

Other people don't understand; they think them very foolish and. . . .

" 'If I should ever fail—I might fail; I am human; I have my weaknesses—I beg of you to hold to the great main ideals we follow. They are true. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that we should be like dry leaves blown by the wind. Devotees should follow the wind. It may land them in a ditch or it may take them to heaven. Ours is but to follow the path where the Hand points. Think these things over. *Absorb* them.' "

The entry for November 29th stands out with peculiar clarity in the disciple's mind:

"This afternoon Swami called us down to the study for afternoon tea. It was late dusk and the fire was lighted, throwing a lovely soft reflection on the wall. Swami commented on it. We asked him to sing, and then he said in his poetic, half dreamy way: 'When the music stops coming I cease to sing, and wait, and then within me I hear such wonderful music that I am lifted up and up into silence and blessedness.'

"He spoke of the Sunday lecture tomorrow and of the many who would like to come if they only knew. He said: 'Pray for many people to come. Attract them here. It is not wrong to do that. Sri Ramakrishna used to pray with great earnestness: "O Divine Mother, send to me all the yearning hearts!" Such prayers are good and will draw.'

"We sat in silence looking at the fire. Then Swami spoke: 'The fire,' he said, 'has a voice, and those who understand what it says have no fear of it, but bring each day their burden of cares and worries and worldly troubles and lay them on the fire to be burnt up. And the fire never destroys: it transforms. It changes into the subtle, the ethereal, the imponderable all that which is base and material. It turns all

that is coarse and unworthy and egotistic in us into that which is pure and divine and high. So the true devotee does not fear each day to bring his offering to that which is the purest expression of Deity.'

"In the evening after the exercises, Swami wrapped in his long coat stood at the door to Sister's study and talked to us on cheerfulness. He said:' Be cheerful, be serene, be bright! To be grouchy and go around with a grouchy face is pure selfishness. It simply makes those that love us most unhappy. I know that whenever I have shown sadness it has given those near me much pain. I do not mean that we should be fickle or frivolous, but that we should carry a light within us that shines through. The motto of our Order was cheerfulness. Remember these things and practise them.'

"In the hall he said: 'I do not ask you to follow me. If you do so you do so of your own free will. In the path I may stumble; I am not certain always of my own way. But if I find high and beautiful things I am glad to share them with all. I want you, each one, to feel perfectly free to leave me if you find something greater and better. When Sister Devamata went to India I said to her: "You are going to the land of great souls. If you meet an inspired teacher do not hesitate to become his disciple if you desire it." '

"Finally as he bade us good night, Swami remarked:

'We have a nice time with a little play and a little serious talk. If we can reach real illumination this way it will be interesting.' "

It was seldom that the Swami gave any reality to failure. Both in his being and in his teaching he laid stress on the positive aspects of life. Failure, ignorance, superstition, depression, all such things he held to be of the nature of darkness. They had no actual existence and would vanish completely before the light. As to his reference to his own

fallibility, the Swami never assumed immunity from error or wrong judgment. His humility was profound and innate, his nature, that of a little child entirely dependent on its mother. This childlikeness was reflected in his whole make up, even in the lines of his throat and the curve of his cheek. It was profoundly genuine, as he was profoundly genuine in thought, word and deed. Once he said to the disciple: "I can tell you this, whatever mistakes I may have made, they have always been from unselfish motive." These small imperfections he knew to be part of the rental which must be paid for material embodiment, and knowing this, he was able to rise above them and appraise them at their true value. His great master, Swami Vivekananda summed up the spirit of the Sannyasin in a letter written shortly before the close of his heroic earthly career: " I am glad I was born, glad I suffered so, glad I did make big blunders, glad to enter peace."

In the Note-book for December 5, the Swami again speaks of failure, this time from another point of view:

"Tonight in the hall on going to bed Swami said, referring to a little prayer we had repeated after him: 'We talk of these things and we do these things until after a while they are constantly in our consciousness and flow out from us continually, without interruption, like the songs.'

"Reference was here made to somebody's failure. Swami said: 'Failure is not a terrible thing, but to accept failure—that is terrible. No doubt this has been said before, but tonight it comes to me with a new meaning: to accept a failure is terrible. It springs from egotism. When we are not egotistic we realize that God dwells within us and we have trust in Him to lift us out of all mistakes; but when we believe only in our little self then we are overcome by darkness and materialism and a failure becomes a dreadful burden on our souls. Mistakes are very helpful. We learn from

mistakes. We must never forget the goal. We can have fun and play, that is all right, but we must always remember the goal. That is all I can say; I have always remembered it. Good night. Think these things over. When you go to bed, go like little children. Do not be too wise, too calculating. Do not feel that you understand the great, divine mysteries, just accept what comes with grateful heart. That is the way I have done. Now some of the freshness may be worn off by the world. I have had to come much against the world, but you have great devotion and can do this. Put aside all cares and all unworthy feelings and think of yourselves as in Divine Mother's arms, helpless—like little children.'

A few days later we find this brief entry in the Note-book: "One evening after saying our prayer, Swami said: 'I do not demand this devotion for myself, only if you have found your Ideal, hold to it; hold to it; hold to it.' "

Loyalty—loyalty to the Ideal and to one another, this was a paramount virtue in the Swami's eyes. Without absolute loyalty one could not enter into the spirit of discipleship. One could not be untrue to one's fellow students and still be true to the teacher. The whole nature must be true. When such truth was present, then no matter what other failings there might be, the way was open between the teacher and the taught. Only the faithful and the strong could attain. Only the faithful and the strong could know the true happiness, *anandam,* bliss.

It was of happiness that the Disciple wrote in her Note-book on December 13:

"Almost always now, after saying our regular little prayer, which Swami says too, softly, under his breath, he gives us another prayer to say after him. How I wish I could remember these prayers word for word. Tonight the prayer ran something like this:

" 'Make us full of love and forgiveness and cheerfulness, that our hearts may be so fragrant and full of bliss that Divine Mother may dwell within us. Amen.' It was longer, but this contains the idea.

"Swami stood just at the landing, wrapped in his brown cloak, and talked to us: 'I hope you take these prayers to heart. I may have begun them with seeming lightness, but I feel deeply about them. I strive all the time. You also should strive. When you go to your room think this over. One should be happy in the knowledge of these things. In the monastery, in the early days, that was so marked. All who came there used to say: "What are these people—so joyful, so care-free?" We were conscious of the presence of the Divine Mother. In Divine Mother's house there should be no unhappiness. And it is so easy! It is only because we grow up and allow worries to enter our minds and hearts that it seems hard. Sri Ramakrishna used to say: "When a man sits under a tree and claps his hands, all the birds fly away. When we sit under the tree of life and clap our hands, repeating the name of the Mother, all the birds of worry and depression fly away. In the Lord Rama's house there can be no evil. In Siva's house no evil can exist." That means, where they are, nothing but the highest can be, nothing else can come near us. Good night.'

"When he reached the top of the stairs, he stood in the dark and said a few more words:

" 'May your rest tonight be helpful, not only to yourselves. May others when they meet you feel that you have something within. One can give not only by preaching from the platform, but by being. Do you understand?' (*Calling out to E—and S— down stairs*). 'You can give by being.' "

The saints of God are ever happy. —*Kabir.*

A TRIBUTE

In the passing of Katherine F. Sherwood, we have lost one of those few and rare persons who have won distinction through a long and unbroken association with Swami Paramananda. The very mention of her name brings to mind the early days of the Vedanta Centre in the years 1909 and 1910 when the Swami, as a young spiritual teacher, was laying the foundation for his work in this city of severe climate and cold prejudices. Her motherly solicitude and care, her enthusiasm for his teaching and energetic efforts to make it known were a source of constant encouragement to him. It was at Miss Sherwood's lovely home in Milton, Massachusetts, that the Swami held some of his first classes on the Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita and Bible. With natural grace of sociability, she opened wide the doors of her home to all the friends who might be benefited by their contact with the Swami and his philosophy. He called her "Mai" or "Mother," a name she inspired and cherished all her life.

All the early members of Vedanta well remember the many services Miss Sherwood rendered to the Centre from year to year. She was exceptionally versatile and talented. Her gift for making a home and her domestic qualities were equalled by her literary and artistic contributions.

A familiar picture is Miss Sherwood at the organ, assisting in the Services, improvising, and creating that atmosphere of hush and sanctity which brought forth many hearty compliments from her listeners. Quite frequently she was called upon to speak at receptions and celebrations. Her keen and sparkling humor and delightful way of relating stories found a warm response in her audience. Many times through her long life, she conducted Services at the Centre

during the Swami's absences and contributed thought-provoking essays and poems to the Vedanta periodical, "Message of the East."

The last nine years of her life were spent at Ananda Ashrama, California, where she had built an attractive home. It is situated on a knoll between the Cloister and the Guest House. Often the garden, the terrace or the enclosed porch of Miss Sherwood's house resounded with happy voices of visitors who paused there after a Service or Class in the Temple to partake of her hospitality and companionship. Her vitality of body and mind were boundless. Her zest for life kept her perennially young in spirit, and her eager interest in people gave her an ever-widening circle of friends.

Death held no fear for her. She spoke of it as an adventure into a far country and was ready to move on. After a rich and full life, her departure has come as a timely and blessed release. Our hearts rejoice at her freedom and humbly pray that His protecting love may light her passage through the mysterious Unknown.

TWO POEMS

By Katherine F. Sherwood

LIFE'S PURPOSE

O Bee, as on you go from flower unto flower,
Does God not let you know the purpose of the hour?
Intent you are on draining the honey from each cup,
Unconscious of the part you play in lifting Nature up.
Without you many plants would die,
For lack of making seed,
And yet you know no more than I
The nature of the deed.
I say—no more than I,

For as I tread life's way
What know I of the purpose deep
Which guides my steps today?—
Fulfilling the desire which grows within my heart,
Feeling a sense that it is I
Who play this humble part;
Not knowing that 'tis only an instrument I am
To further some deep purpose, to carry out some plan
That is as far beyond my ken
As 'tis beyond the bee—
And not till higher planes are reached
Can we look back and see.

WHAT USE AM I?

What use am I, O Lord?
If I should die today
And leave undone the things that look so needful of my care
Who of the many friends who now most criticize my act.
Or even those who think they love my face,
Would really care or mourn the loss?
What is there that I do
That others would not do as well—or better it may be.
'Tis pondering thus that I a deeper reason find for my existence.
'Tis not ability alone for which we live:
'Tis being and becoming, by Thy grace,—
Learning each day by each experience which we call ours
To know our littleness,
To see in every opportunity to serve
Another way of help toward Thee,
Another way to lose the sense of "I"
Which blinds our feeble sight to Thy great glory.

If in Thy mercy we can see in everything we do
Not something which needs us
But something which we feel a privilege to do,
Perchance one day the veil may fall
And we may see the reason for our lives.

HEAVENLY TOLERANCE

By Jeremy Taylor

When Abraham sat at his tent door, according to his custom, waiting to entertain strangers, he espied an old man, stooping and leaning on his staff, weary with age and travail, coming towards him, who was a hundred years of age. He received him kindly, washed his feet, provided supper, caused him to sit down; but observing that the old man ate and prayed not, nor begged a blessing on his meat, he asked him why he did not worship the God of heaven. The old man told him that he worshipped the fire only and acknowledged no other God, at which answer Abraham grew so zealously angry that he threw the old man out of his tent and exposed him to all the evils of the night and an unguarded condition.

When the old man was gone, God called to Abraham and asked him where the stranger was. He replied, " I thrust him away, because he did not worship Thee." God answered him:

"I have suffered him these hundred years though he dishonored Me, and wouldst thou not endure him one night, when he gave thee no trouble?"

In the second place, there is a mental equivalent to this bodily endowment, which is just as important as imperturbability, and that is equanimity. How difficult it is to attain, yet how necessary, in success as in failure! Natural

temperament has much to do with its development, but a clear knowledge of our relation to our fellow creatures and to the work of life is also indispensable. One of the first essentials in securing a good-natured equanimity is not to expect too much of the people amongst whom you dwell. Deal gently with this deliciously credulous old human nature in which we work, and restrain your indignation.

—*Sir William Osler.*

Truth is of God, and was with God, and in God, before anything else had a being. Truth was before error or deceit; for it was from the truth that the error was, and it was about truth that the deceit was. . . . Truth remains the same . . . keeping its pure, eternal, unchangeable nature, and is not, nor ever was, nor ever can be defiled or tainted with any error or deceit . . . but draweth out of it, and delivereth from its bonds and captivity all those that hearken and cleave to it. —*Isaac Pennington*

REPORT

ANANDA ASHRAMA, CALIFORNIA

The sun of Easter shed its full glory over the Ashrama on Sunday, April 6th, nor was it partial as so often was the case in former years, for it flooded the whole Southland with its radiance. It was as always—as one friend remarked—extremely coöperative, for its dramatic arrival coincided with the climax of the Sunrise Service, its rays stealing down the hills just in time to illuminate platform and speaker for the final benediction, after which it spread out over the entire congregation. As usual many friends were present and the atmosphere, fragrant with spring, was also redolent of happiness. At the Community house, both at

breakfast and luncheon, Sister Seva and her helpers were as busy as the Sister's own bees, serving the hungry ones who flocked there.

All three Services during the day were excellently attended and great appreciation was expressed for the message, given by Sister Daya, of spiritual transcendence—the real resurrection. Music and flowers added their charm to the whole occasion.

The 24th birthday anniversary of the Ananda Ashrama was observed on Sunday, April 27th. People were warmly responsive to the day, which was marked at the two Services, as has been the custom, by spontaneous tributes from friends, called upon by Sister Daya. At the morning Service Mrs. Franchon Mowers spoke with her accustomed feeling and felicity concerning the Ashrama and its ideal. Following her, Mrs. Marjorie Smith, with a warmth of emotion which moved her hearers, sought to put into words a little of what Ashrama had meant to her. Finally, Mr. Darrell Miya, a new Ashrama resident member, analysed with clearness and logic the practical aspects of the inner life, as he has experienced it at the Ashrama.

Music, organ and vocal, again enhanced the atmosphere of devotion, both at the morning and at the afternoon Service when Mr. David Villasenor (whose delightful talk in the Temple was reported in the 1947 Spring issue of the Message of the East) spoke a few words of greeting and friendship.

The birthday of Lord Buddha fell this year too close to the Ashrama anniversary to be observed on its proper date; but in order that the "Blessed One" should be honored during this holy Buddhistic season, a Buddha celebration was announced for the evening of Thursday, May 29th, to be held either out of doors—if weather permitted—or in the Temple of

the Universal Spirit. As the evening was a bit chilly, the Temple opened its doors and shared with those who came the magic of its flickering lights and glowing altar. The very presence of the Lord Buddha presided, for the beautiful large Buddha image with its serene countenance, was placed in the Temple on a stand to the right of the platform and shrine. A garland of marigolds was hung around his neck, flowers were placed on his hands and feet, while right before him, a lighted candle threw its reflection upward, illumining his smile and bringing out the rich tones of black walnut, patine of gold, streakings of crimson, and all the other elements contributing to the beauty, dignity and benign peace which characterize the figure.

Sister Daya spoke on the Buddha's far-flung influence, and the effect of Buddhism upon the civilization of the world, and helped to make living for her listeners this mighty figure of a far away time, who gave to Asia a "light that still is beautiful."

VEDANTA CENTRE, BOSTON, MASS.

Spring came to New England slowly in 1947, as if reluctant to part from his forerunner Winter. Heavy rains and cold temperature again and again obscured the face of Mother Nature, eagerly waiting to wear her tender garment of green and bloom. Easter, falling on April 6th, was an early visitor, unaccompanied by out-of-doors wealth of color and fragrance. Within the walls, however, especially in the sanctuaries of God, masses of flowers gave their silent assent to the belief in resurrection. From all pulpits voices proclaimed the message of immortality, the significance of the risen Christ—each in its own way. In the hushed atmosphere of the Vedanta Centre, Srimati Gayatri Devi spoke

on "Who Is Immortal" at the eleven o'clock Service and again on "Life Hereafter" in the evening, before a beautiful altar and enthusiastic listeners.

As a part of the Easter festival a dinner was held on the following Friday. It was attended by a moderate number of persons—approximately seventy-five. The entertainment of the evening was arranged and directed by a devoted friend, Mrs. Geoffrey Hall. A tableau, based on Massenet's opera "The Juggler of Our Lady," translated by Isabelle Butler, was presented with the accompaniment of narrative and music. The players comprised different members of the congregation, all of whom did their part admirably to make the pantomime a work of art. Mrs. Hall read the story with feeling, while Eunice Langenbach at the piano, Frederic Langenbach with flute, and Effie Brown with violin lent their full share toward a finished program.

Lord Buddha's birthday was next in the series of the Centre's Spring celebrations. It was observed on the evening of May 2nd in the midst of a steady downpour. However, it did not deter a large group of the faithful from attending the Service honoring the Compassionate One. His woodcarved golden statue stood upon the altar, surrounded by sprays of forsythia, making a picture of delicate loveliness. After Gayatri Devi's address on "Buddha's Message of Non-Injury," everyone gathered together in the reception hall to see a short film of Ananda Ashrama in technicolor and to partake of refreshments.

Mother's Day Service on May 11th was in part a memorial to Miss Katherine F. Sherwood whose passing has left a big gap in Swami Paramananda's work. Gayatri Devi paid her a tribute speaking of her services to the Vedanta Centre and the Ananda Ashrama throughout her thirty-eight years of association with both these places.

Apart from the Centre's regular schedule of weekly Services and Classes, Gayatri Devi's time was taken up during the month of May by teaching a class on Indian Literature at Bradford Junior College. It is most gratifying to discover the increasing interest and enthusiasm of American youth in India's age-old treasures of mind and spirit. A group from the Unitarian Church of Roxbury attended a Sunday evening Service. The minister himself came with the young people and expressed great appreciation for the work of Vedanta.

ANANDA ASHRAMA, COHASSET

At the little retreat, Spring has been a time of swift preparation and rapid construction. An annex to the Lower House is being finished by many hands, that it may be consecrated before June 21st, the day of Swami Paramananda's liberation. It represents a small room for the Shrine, with an adjoining porch to be used for indoor worship in inclement weather. Much of the labor toward the new building has been donated by the Centre's devoted members and friends. Richard Creesy is chief among them, responsible for the design of architecture and laying of the foundation, as well as a great deal of craftmanship in detail.

The Ashrama was opened with the first public Service on Memorial Day. A group of over fifty persons traveled by car and train in order to spend the entire day in the quiet of the woodland out-of-doors. A luncheon, partly Hindu in ingredients and served under the trees in picnic style, was enjoyed by all visitors.

Plans are now being made for special Services to be held in memory of Swami Paramananda on June 21st and on July 4th to commemorate Swami Vivekananda's day of freedom.

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"Truth Is One, Men Call It By Various Names." —Rig Veda

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Message of the East

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NATURAL AND SUPERNATURAL

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Message of the East

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

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

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WISDOM OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

(From "The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna," translated by Swami Nikhilananda. Published by Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, New York.)

God cannot be realized by a mind that is hypocritical, calculating or argumentative. One must have faith and sincerity. Hypocrisy will not do. To the sincere, God is very near; but he is far, far away from the hypocrite.

One must have for God the yearning of a child. The child sees nothing but confusion when his mother is away. You may try to cajole him by putting a sweetmeat in his hand; but he will not be fooled. He only says, "No, I want to go to my mother." One must feel such yearning for God. Ah, what yearning! How restless a child feels for its mother! Nothing can make him forget his mother. He to whom the enjoyment of worldly happiness appears tasteless, he who takes no delight in anything of the world—money, name, creature comforts, sense pleasure—becomes sincerely grief-stricken for the vision of the Mother. And to him alone the Mother comes running, leaving all Her other duties.

Ah, that restlessness is the whole thing. Whatever path you follow—whether you are a Hindu, a Mussalman, a Christian, a Sakta, a Vaishnava, or a Brahmo—the vital point is restlessness. God is our inner Guide. It doesn't matter if you take a wrong path—only you must be restless for Him. He Himself will put you on the right path.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

There is one great idea to learn and to hold on to, this idea of realization. This turmoil and fight and difference in religions will only cease when we understand that religion is not in books and temples. It is an actual perception. Only the man who has actually perceived God and soul has religion.

—*Swami Vivekananda.*

We are to know that we are never without a pilot. When we know not how to steer and dare not hoist a sail, we can drift. The current knows the way, though we do not.

—*Emerson.*

It is one thing to show a man that he is in error, and another to put him in possession of truth.

—*John Locke,*

The abode of God, too, is wherever is earth, and sea, and air, and sky, and virtue. Why further do we seek the Gods of heaven? Whatever thou dost behold and whatever thou dost touch, that is Jupiter.

—*Lucan.*

You never enjoy the world aright till the sea itself floweth in your veins, till you are clothed with the heavens, and crowned with the stars, and perceive yourself to be the sole heir of the world, and more than so, because men are in it who are every one sole heirs as well as you. Till you can sing and rejoice and delight in God, as misers do in gold, and kings in scepters, you never enjoy the world.

—*Thomas Traherne.*

Remember when life's path is steep to keep your mind even.

—*Horace.*

For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

—*St. Paul*

NATURAL AND SUPERNATURAL

By Swami Paramananda

May our hearts in this hour be full of noble thoughts.

May our prayers include the welfare of all our fellow beings, that we may transcend the feelings of self and thus be aware of the Presence of the infinite and all-loving Spirit, who is within us and all about us.

O Thou Supreme One, Giver of all blessings, Sustainer of Thy children, do Thou manifest Thyself in our hearts, in our thoughts, in our entire being,

That in Thy light we may find our way,

That in Thy Presence we may find our rest and recreation,

And that in Thy love we may find peace.

Peace, peace, peace be unto us and to all living beings.

The idea of natural and supernatural has no hard and fast boundary lines. Sometimes we think that certain things are natural to our life and to our mind, while other things of a higher order we call supernatural. But that which seems supernatural to us may be natural to others. With some people it is as natural to pray, to think of higher things, to transcend their ordinary consciousness, as it is for the worldly type of man to live in the material. The first type rises above all thought of self, the second type finds it impossible to forget himself under any circumstances. Wherein lies the secret of these differences? We ourselves create them. According to our attitude of mind we have either the power to open a vista of spiritual consciousness or to block the radiance of that existence by our own gloomy point of view. When a man thus stands in his own light, his heart becomes filled with despair and doubt and then infects other hearts with its evil.

Evil does not necessarily mean a deliberate effort to harm

someone, though there is of course that gross aspect. Whenever we fail to express the natural beauty and exuberance of life we do injury to those around us and that in itself is a form of evil.

Here a doubt may arise as to what is natural. Certain individuals feel that it is natural for them merely to fulfil bodily needs. Of course we never want to neglect the body, because it is the dwelling-place of the Spirit; but when we care for it with this thought and in relation to spiritual consciousness, it does not become a bondage; rather it fills us with a glowing feeling which sustains every particle of our physical being. Then instead of regarding it as an isolated factor which has to be cared for and looked after, we see it as a definite part of God's plan.

People who possess what we call supernormal vision are not aloof from this world of ours. Even in the midst of worldly conditions they find a light beyond this world and are able to reflect that higher radiance. They help to destroy the gulf between the physical and the material, and for that reason our gratitude to one who is spiritually awakened should be incalculable.

Spirituality is not a matter of theory, dogma or creed. This is my conviction. The greatest mistake we make in our spiritual study is when we think that if we belong to some sect or profess some particular religion, our salvation is made secure. It is not in this way that we are going to find our access to the Kingdom of God. It is by going within. "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you." That is the voice, that is the teaching which has come down to us from time immemorial. We read it not only in the Christian Bible and in the Aryan sacred books, it is the discovery of every sincere seeker after Truth, and it is just as true today as it was two thousand years ago, because it forms, as it

were, an opening through which we find our way to the Divine. The struggling, turbulent mind must gain access to that which is within and more within, for only there can it know rest.

Once a man said to me after hearing a lecture on *Meditation and Superconsciousness,* that when he closed his eyes it was very difficult for him not to fall asleep, owing to the fact that there was nothing within him but blankness and unreality. This, in a sense, may be true, but it does not mean that absolute blankness really exists there. We create this sense of blankness. Our minds are so absolutely saturated with material things and thoughts of a trivial nature that they cannot connect themselves with anything that is subtle or transcendental, in fact with anything that is not of a gross order. They lose their ability for fine and subtle thinking, but they can be cultivated in such a way that they will find their delight in higher activities and quickly unfold their powers and possibilities. For this reason they have to be trained.

Who after having found the higher can be satisfied with the lower? There may be, as the saying goes, bliss in ignorance, and it may be that once we have the light we may also have an increased vision of human misery, but it is far better to overcome misery by wisdom than just to settle down and try to cover it over with little flowers which only conceal it momentarily. A genuine soul must know truth at all costs. He must face the problems of life, and that means to come face to face with his own inner being. We have within us that which is undying, that which is the direct stream, descending straight from Godhead, from the Supreme Source. If we are not conscious of this, our consciousness will be of little avail. Mere bodily consciousness and a sense of material importance play havoc with our life

and with the lives of others, because they are saturated with egotism, selfishness and petty feeling. All war and intolerance, all turbulence and hideous conditions exist solely because of the lack of true perception. This can be said also of the individual existence. Whosoever is able to remain tranquil in the midst of all life's varying conditions, he is established in Truth, and being established therein, he is able to offer something worth while to others. Nor is it as arduous a task as we may think; not nearly so arduous as to be without Truth or vision.

Today we have something which we call our own, but tomorrow we may lose it. Today we are surrounded by friends, a loving atmosphere, tomorrow, without any evident cause, entirely opposite conditions may overwhelm us. We cannot afford to rise and fall with these waves of circumstance. What we need is to find our centre of balance, to make our adjustment to these changing events, and if we do this through the spiritual, that adjustment will take place even without our seeking it. All that is needful is for us to open our hearts to the Supreme Power. Instead of thinking of our limitations, instead of dwelling on the thought that we are disconnected from the Source and that life can mean nothing but struggle and human drudgery with no hope for anything higher or better, instead of this we should hold the thought that there is nothing impossible. The lives that we revere, the characters that we hold in esteem, are not the result of accident. Holiness, purity, sanctity, spiritual illumination—these qualities are theirs because of right living and because of their habit of contemplation and of devotion to an ideal. They made them theirs through their own aspiration and effort, and it is intended that we should make them ours. Thus we see that what at first we looked upon as apart from our life, something unnatural, or even

supernatural, can gradually be made to seem absolutely natural.

Just as we breathe, so, in the same manner, do we learn to pray, to meditate, to find our contact with that which is now hidden from our sight. We have eyes with which to see and there are objects to see, but a third element is needful —light. In the dark many things escape our sight, and that also is true of the days of our ignorance, of the days of inner darkness, the darkness which overpowers. The soul should never be left without light. The symbolic lights in a church or a temple are to remind men of this fact. Unfortunately man finds it very much simpler to keep a vigil light burning on the altar than in his own heart. We should, however, never leave this home, this body of ours where the soul dwells, this temple, in darkness. Actually the light is never really absent, but sometimes we cover it with heavy thoughts till it becomes so dim that we cannot perceive it, or else our inward lamp dies down for the lack of fuel. What then should we do? Refill it with fresh oil. Keep watch over it. That is the idea of vigil.

People who fall under the sway of spiritual lethargy take the easiest course. They follow the outer and, as a result, their inner life becomes barren, and they feel a sense of utter helplessness and desolation. In time they come to realize how unreal are material riches. True weath does not consist in outer possessions or outer advantages, although it may be difficult for the average person to grasp this fact. He struggles to acquire them and in this way takes on a tremendous burden of care and anxiety. Almost always we create our own burdens; also we have the power to cast them off. No one imposes them upon us; they are self-imposed. Our mind with its egotistic sense, its feeling of self-importance, its twisted notions of gain and loss, can bind the fetters of

delusion so tightly around us that we feel it is useless even to hope to be freed. But in the light of wisdom, in the light of spiritual consciousness, these things have no reality.

Man has no burden. The soul is ever free, and as soon as we are able to see ourselves in the light of the soul we have that sense of freedom. Also we have a sense of joyousness. There is a song in our heart. You know how it is when a person is very happy and care-free, he sings, he whistles, he does something to express his exuberance. That is the natural state of man. Why then can we not always be in that state? Why cannot there always be a real song in our heart, a spiritual radiance shining out from within with such glow that all who come near us will partake of it? This state of being is not so difficult to acquire as we may imagine. It is not difficult because it is natural. We make it difficult, however, by our own preconceived ideas. We give coloring to our mind. Mind can be compared with a piece of white cloth; it takes on very readily any color with which it is brought in contact. If it is soaked in some deep color, it is not so easy to wash it clean again. Thus when we consciously or unconsciously, carelessly or perhaps deliberately, allow our mind to mingle with vulgar things, with thoughts which we know are not wholesome and are even definitely injurious, if it should take on a heavy color, whose fault is it? And if we suffer from a sense of melancholy or depression, who is responsible for it? Therefore if we want to keep our mind free from such conditions, all we have to do is to be ever on the alert.

Man has a sense of right and wrong, also he has the power to quiet the mind and direct it toward that which is exalting and strengthening to the whole being. With these qualifications we can cultivate the habit of right thinking, we can learn to color the mind with a divine dye. This

constitutes a very simple rule for living, to be put into practice not just on Sunday or on any particular day or hour, but at all times, as the perpetual working out of the rhythm of life. If our mind and heart and our whole consciousness flow in rhythm, then everything will go beautifully and harmoniously and our life will seem like a joyous feast. On the other hand, when we fall out of rhythm we are unhappy, we carry a frown on our countenance and a bigger frown within.

Life flows through the channel toward which we direct it. Mind takes the color we give to it and it takes color very easily, and though it be true that it takes on sadness and wrong elements, it has equal capacity for taking on the right. Even the spiritual province that seems so unfamiliar, abstract and distant, can be brought close to us. Through the aid and co-operation of this same mind, we can partake of its divine flavor, we can taste of its joy, we can carry its atmosphere with us, not just for a moment but at all times. Moreover, no matter where we are thrown, even though it be in the midst of the greatest darkness, we shall not need to hunt for a light outside, we shall have our own light within; in the midst of the most intricate perplexities the light of the mind will always aid us, it will never fail. That is why above all other things we should try to cultivate this consciousness.

Our body requires food and drink for its nourishment, for its preservation, but our soul also requires care. If we fail to care for it, sooner or later we find that we have neglected the most vital part of our being. No matter how much we may acquire through outer training, if we leave out the aspect of soul, our life will be incomplete, and the feeling of incompleteness always brings unhappiness. The sense of happiness, peace and rest comes upon us when we

feel that nothing is lacking, and is possible only for that soul who has ascended, who has experienced the higher flight of consciousness. It is not limited to any particular religious form or code, it is not contained in any particular book or scripture. These have their value and convey their inspiration, but we have to open our hearts in order to receive it. When we have found it within us, then we are able to draw it from every source, even where one might least expect to find it. Among crowds of people, amid turmoil, disorder, confusion, where no one would think of looking for anything spiritual, it will be found by one who has the eyes to see and the heart to receive.

Life is full of beauty, but only he whose vision is clarified finds that beauty. One whose vision is not clarified, through distortion sees the ugly even in the midst of the beautiful. Therefore we find that the illumined men of all ages and of all countries have ever devoted themselves to the unfoldment of the higher faculties of mind and spirit, not with any selfish calculation, but in order to discover the true Self. When man has found his real Self then he has something to give to others. This requires wakefulness. We must be wide awake spiritually, and there are very few people who can claim that they are really awake. We are, of course, awake on the material plane and for that reason we feel very quickly every ache and pain, every little insult, every trifling happening, but are oblivious to the fact that there is any spiritual reality. When this order is reversed, we become so filled with the higher power, the spiritual power, that these little things do not matter. They come and go, they are changing and passing, and because they are so passing we maintain our equilibrium.

Steadfastness of devotion, that is the highest ideal. Only as we learn to fasten our heart to the infinite, the abiding,

do we find the real joy, the real beauty, the real sense of security. Then no matter where we are placed or how we are placed, nothing can mar our serenity or destroy our peace.

Are these not wonderful ideals for us to think about, to carry in our consciousness? They become more wonderful, however, when they are realized in our lives. There is no one who can realize them for us, no one! No teacher, preacher, priest or minister—no Bible or temple or church! Realization is a matter that lies wholly between us and God. These outer things may be of great help to us, they may inspire us and sustain us in our weak moments, but the real teaching comes to us from the Ideal. Therefore the practical life—the life of devotion—is not a matter of form or the observance of ritual: it is a living thing which rises spontaneously from the depths of the heart.

The idea of devotional life is to give us definitely a sense of the Presence of God, the Presence of that great, infinite Reality. There comes a time when we feel that there must be a God—there must be! We behold the creation and we realize that it calls for a Creator. Longing awakens in our heart to know that Ineffable, mere intellectual theories drop away from us, and from that moment our spiritual life begins to grow fruitful. We no longer want to prove God intellectually; we want the reality, the actual contact. We want that loving Father to come in our moments of need; we want His guidance, His protection. We want His love. We who feel so much love for our earthly parents, how infinitely much more must we feel toward that One from whom all love flows.

Thus devotees, people who are really full of spiritual yearning, do not stop with mental concepts. Only the actual, living Presence of Truth, of God, will satisfy the hunger

of their hearts. Words will not suffice; they have gone beyond words. Devotion is something which cannot be expressed by word of mouth. It is deeper than any words the tongue can utter. It is the innermost feeling of the soul and no prayer can truly express it save the prayer which we utter in silence. When that Presence arises within us, there is no sense of distance, of natural or supernatural. We are aware only of that One who knows every thought of our innermost being. When we learn to commune with Him, speech dies away; we go beyond speech, beyond all doubt and despair, and our heart, overflowing with ecstasy, melts, as it were, into the Infinite and the Eternal.

O Thou all-abiding and compassionate Spirit!
Free our minds from the delusion of egotism and the attachment to material things,
That we may see Thy face before us and learn how to follow Thy will in all our thoughts and actions.
Thou art the effulgent Light of the universe.
It is through Thy Light that all things shine forth;
It is Thy glory that they all manifest.
Thou art the Source; Thou art the sustaining Power!
Teach us how to love and how to kindle within us the light of understanding,
And give us unshakable faith.
May Thy peace, peace, peace be unto us, and to all living beings.

Peace is in heaven; peace is in the sky, on the earth and in the waters. The herbs, the plants and the trees are all full of peace. The gods are peaceful. Everything in the universe is pervaded by peace. May this eternal, universal peace enter our soul and being!

Om! Peace, peace, peace be unto us all!

TRUTH WILL PREVAIL

By Sister Devamata

(A Class talk given at the Vedanta Centre, Boston, on March 11, 1919.)

Constantly we are being told that our only salvation lies in Self-knowledge, that Self-knowledge alone will make us free. The question naturally arises: How are we to gain this knowledge? Self is at the very root of our being; it *is* our being; therefore we cannot seek it as we seek things that are objective to us; but we can strive to identify the small personal self with the great Self within. The Upanishads tell us that we do this through Truth. Truthfulness is the first condition, and this does not mean merely telling the truth, it means having the sense of truth developed in us. At the present time we do not possess a fully developed sense of truth. If we did, untruth would be impossible to us. The reason we occasionally swerve from the way of truth is because at the moment something else seems more important. Telling the truth does not always mean expressing our opinion. There may be greater truthfulness in remaining silent. We must strive to cultivate a feeling for truth, not only through words but in all things. Truthfulness means extreme perception in thought, a direct cognition. For instance, in discrimination one who is attuned to truth does not argue to himself, does not say: "This is right," or "This is wrong"; he perceives truth by the truth that is in him. He gravitates toward it.

There is nothing more harmful in the spiritual life than the habit of self-justification, because it so often means protecting the little self by untrue explanations, half truths, or a juggling of trivial things in our outer existence. False explanations make us slaves to custom and tradition. There are no excuses in the spiritual life. So long as we indulge in them we

can never develop our instinct for truthfulness. The sense of truthfulness is the sense of sight by which we perceive truth. That is what is meant in the scriptures when they speak about seeing everything just as it is, with direct vision, or face to face. There is no reason for a man who is striving to find union with his higher Self ever to follow anything but the right way.

Frankly to admit an error is the first discipline in spiritual living. One who is developing the sense of truthfulness stands right up and says: "I did it; yes, I said it; I acknowledge the mistake." There comes a time when he cannot say it fast enough. The frank admission of an error is one of the quickest ways of getting rid of it. How we struggle to justify ourselves in a wrong act! Can there be any form of untruthfulness greater than that? The quicker we admit that we are wrong, the more quickly we free ourselves from the effects of that wrong-doing.

Self-discipline means never allowing the little self to prevail. This does not mean just once in a while, it means *never* allowing it to dominate. Keep the lower self where it belongs, and the higher nature on top; otherwise you will be upside down, and you know what is apt to happen when things are in reverse. The man who is practising self-discipline always keeps his higher nature above and his lower nature below.

Right knowledge, (and that is what we are seeking), is gained through precise discrimination and unswerving obedience to things as they are in truth. It is the same as self-denial. That is, refusing to listen to the voice of the little self. That voice says, for example, "I will lie in bed a little longer," but the higher Self says "No, I will get up and meditate." If we would know truth we must live as God pleases us to live, not as we please. We must constantly listen to the higher voice and deny the alluring arguments of the lower one.

In the Bible it says that we should keep our eye single. That singleness means not seeing two. The single eye sees but one. So whoever has the knowledge of the One Self, the real Self, his whole body is full of light. It is by means of this light that we know that we are gaining, or at least approaching, the goal of higher consciousness. So often we have the sense of darkness, heaviness, but when we grow even a little aware of our true being, there comes that feeling of lightness, there is no sense of weight, and there is a radiancy within and without us. Joyfulness and cheerfulness are signs of spiritual growth. When the joy of the Lord is felt in the heart, then no matter what happens, life seems beautiful. There is always that optimism, that light, and an ever-growing sense of brightness. When these conditions exist, we understand things easily and quickly. Our mind no longer plods and drudges along, our mental perceptions become more nearly instantaneous. We are able to pass without the slightest hesitation from any premise to a conclusion. Our reasoning becomes very rapid and at the same time very accurate. We find ourselves knowing things, not by long processes of reasoning, but by actual vision. That sense of inner sight is indeed wonderful! For many years people have cried down intuition and upheld reasoning. Now they begin to discover that intuition comes to us only after the possibilities of reasoning have been tried out to their uttermost.

Truth prevails, not untruth! The ancient Rishis of India undoubtedly told this to their disciples in order that they might not grow weary and full of doubt along the way. There is no form of life which is not subject to constant change. On this human plane we proceed wholly on an upgrade and downgrade course. Everything comes in the wave form. We must not always expect to be on the crest of the

wave. We are sometimes on the top and other times in the hollow, but none the less, we go forward, and no matter what the condition, we must never forget that truth is all-powerful.

Light prevails, not darkness! Darkness is nothing but the absence of light. Light always prevails. A room may be full of darkness, but one match will dispel it. Really there is no such thing as darkness—it is only a lesser degree of light. What seems darkness to us is light to certain animals, the owl, for instance. We can easily imagine that there may be other animals that see even in less light. Of one thing we can be sure, the light is ever there. So it is with truth.

If we can keep this constantly in mind during the fluctuations of success and failure, heat and cold, pleasure and pain, we shall never lose hope or let go of our courage. It is for us to remind ourselves and keep on reminding ourselves. For as long as we believe in the power of untruth, as long as we fear that darkness may overwhelm us, we are bound to grieve and to suffer. Once we say, however, that truth will conquer, and hold to that conviction, the result will be quickly apparent. Practise these things and your spiritual growth never will be retarded.

He who does good never attains an evil condition. Doing good means, among other things, having a right motive. If our motive be right, if our determination to devote ourselves to Truth, to God, remains firm, then we may know that whatever comes from the outer world cannot affect us. It is but truth in another form. A seed when it breaks up begins to germinate. This germination is apparently a decomposing process, but in reality it is the beginning of a great constructive period. So it is with us. We have to be broken, as it were, but it is only a different manifestation of the power of truth working in us. Keep saying to yourself: "Truth prevails, not untruth!" and you will gain the courage to go

on. That truth must shine forth. It is always shining within us, whether as the light of spiritual power, of intellectual power, or mere physical force does not matter. It is the light of that Supreme One in the heart of man.

Every manifestation of light in us is a manifestation of that supreme light. We cannot be separated from it for a moment. What, then, are we worrying about? If we are bound to that wisdom and light what should discourage us? Of what should we be afraid? We fear because we are not firm. Therefore the realization that there is only God, Truth, and nothing else, is absolutely essential. All other things which we see about us, however, do not mean absence of God; they are merely His lesser expressions. That One cannot be apprehended by the eye, nor by speech, nor by any sense, not even by penance or good works. None of these things can possibly give us that vision. Only when a man's nature is purified by the light of knowledge does he see, does he attain. There is no other way. This knowledge must permeate the whole system. At the present time very few of our mental processes are based on knowledge; nor is our morality, for the most part, based on it. That is why we struggle. Morality means following the way of freedom. As we come to realize the nature of our bodies and what is their use, we grow just as careful of them as a musician is of his violin.

It never pays to go against the universe. One of the reasons people do wrong is because they think that morality is an individual matter and that if they can keep their actions from the knowledge of their neighbors no real harm will be done. We must always remember, however, that there is a cosmic order of truth, a cosmic mind, and that anything happening anywhere is known at once throughout that whole mind. A man, say, commits a murder. He buries the body

and gets away. Apparently he has wiped out all trace of his deed. Yet after a little while, his neighbor begins to wonder and gradually this thought increases and goes seething through other minds. Actually there is nothing in this world that is not known always. There are electric communications passing through space at all times. Here and there is a receiver that catches them. Here and there is a mind which catches the cosmic thought. When we realize that the moral sense is a cosmic sense there is only one thing for us to do. In fact, when we know what morality means, and its value, all our struggles will be over.

Always we find that struggle is based on ignorance and that at whatever point nature is purified, there struggle has an end. The man who knows walks fearlessly. He lives fearlessly. He is absolutely unwavering. Nothing can move him, for the reason that he sees only one way to go and that is God's way. Thus in all circumstances he remains fixed in truth.

It becomes apparent that if we wish to escape struggle, we should seek knowledge, and we do this by purifying our nature, by making it single—one. Emerson says, stop practising virtues and rise to the realm of virtues. Religious life practices virtues and the spiritual life goes to the realm of virtues. Virtue must be absolutely fundamental. Every failure on our part shows some defect in our character. The outside has nothing to do with it, the cause is within ourselves, and the cure also lies within. As we begin to relate everything to the soul nature, then we begin really to lead the life of the Spirit. We can practise meditation, read the scriptures, and do all manner of similar things, but unless we get down to the basic facts of our character and really seek to transform our life there at the root, we are not leading the spiritual life.

Our nature must be purified. Purity always means singleness. There must be perfect singleness. We must take every part of our being and tie it to the Spirit. If you want to be impatient, if you want to be discouraged or to give way to any passion, make God the object of that passion. The very moment you turn to Him, it has lost its power. We always turn away from God in moments of unkindness, but if we go straight to Him, in a few minutes everything that was crooked will be straightened out.

We must remember that the man whose nature is purified never wants anything that is not according to cosmic law. He never imagines a state contrary to the universal plan. Do we ever stop to question why we sometimes succeed and sometimes fail? We think fate is against us, but we do not know why. The reason is that whenever we have succeeded it has been because we sought something that was in the cosmic plan, and when we have failed, we sought something that was not in the cosmic plan. The one whose mind and heart are purified never seeks anything apart from God. His whole thought is fixed on God. When we really love God we have but one thought, and that is never to be separated from Him. When we reach that point it is perfectly safe for us to desire, because our desires cannot ever be out of line with the Divine Will. One who is thus imbued with Divinity always succeeds because he is moving along naturally with truth, and truth prevails.

It is a perfect safeguard always to say: "Let the universal plan fulfill itself; let the great cosmic Will dominate; let truth be victorious!" We then move according to the law of ultimate success, of ultimate conquest. We cannot fail. Truth cannot fail! What a wonderful sense of relief! God's way always turns out well, following it, we must attain to Him. What a simple rule of life! Instead of trying this or

that, instead of striving to attain what you think is a spiritual state, (which probably is not a spiritual state at all), do not trouble about anything. Just try to unite yourselves with that Infinite One, with mighty Truth.

Sometimes it is in the moments when we seem utterly crushed that the light begins to shine. That is why we should never regret hard experiences. Therefore every time we feel that terrible pressure of the universe against us, let us remember that it is nothing but a loving Hand, pushing us back into line with the law. Once we realize this, we shall not mind the pressure. We shall be grateful for it; we shall recogonize it as the pressure of that Truth which must and shall prevail.

A SEED TO CARRY

By Charlotte Miles

So swift, so brief, the seasons come and go,
The burst of spring, the bitterness of fall,
The golden hour flies beyond recall,
But sun and moon renew what they bestow.

And so I watch in wonder cloud and tide,
The shimmer of new life on wintry trees,
The single bloom, the meadow's summer fleece,
And burning autumn on the mountainside.

Already shadows fall, my eyes are dim.
Oh fill them, God, before their light is lost,
With earth's rich beauty to the rim,
Oh let me know her essence in my heart,
That I may name it, hold it innermost,
A seed to carry, when I shall depart.

A PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

My way has been studded with some experiences which, upon leisurely reflection, do not now appear to have been the series of casual or accidental events which merely happened to have been in my life's roadway. It had been my habit to regard them as such and so dismiss them; but they would not stay dismissed.

I do not wish to convey any idea that I now am able to explain either their significance to myself nor the probable reasons why it was my lot to have encountered them.

On the occasions of discussing such experiences, and those in the same category, I had usually felt greatly dissatisfied in my own inability for proper expression of both idea and impression, of feeling a disturbing vagueness which I also found in the other parties to the conversations, notwithstanding that some spoke with great assurance in their self-belief. As the importance of the subject to myself began to assume greater proportions I became conscious of a very definite apprehension that most of those with whom I chose to open the subject for conversation were gifted with more vivid and distorted imagination than with personal and factual knowledge. Over a period of years in which leisurely hours were spent in this manner, in company with clergymen of various faiths, professional men from different lands, men well-travelled, well-read, well-educated, and some in an identical boat with myself, an insistent criticism, becoming more discriminating with time, began to make the theme a distasteful one inasmuch as I was developing a habit of condemnatory judgment. I found I was telling myself: "He must quote someone else, or a book;" or, "He does not speak with any conviction"; or, "This is just dogma!" or, "He does not know." At any rate, discussion never elicited any satisfactory answer

to the questions which would continually arise; discussion apparently was fruitless. If I was not able to comprehend with satisfaction the opinions and explanations given by one very earnest clergyman, the fault was with myself. Be that as it may be, I was able to comprehend his words and his philosophies but not with satisfaction.

It is a quite common experience to have felt the breath of death as he touches one at one's side and rides on, sometimes silently, sometimes accompanied by terrific, dissonant roar. The instantaneous resulting emotions vary with the temperament of the individual and other factors. The circumstances vary as widely as individual temperaments, possibly more so. However, I am considering the particular circumstances attending such a visitation which leaves the survivor asking himself, "Why he rather than I ?"

This is a common enough experience on the field of battle, and for many has been a repetitive or daily event, but the repetition is also encountered by many in civil pursuits; not daily, of course, but at recurrent intervals. The notable difference between the two cases being that in the latter, due to the longer time interval between events, more opportunity for leisurely reflection thereon would be afforded.

If one should consider, for the sake of argument, the repeated occurrence to one engaged in hazardous occupations in addition to those encountered in armed conflict and the chaos of revolution, and if these encounters were spread over a period of, say, from thirty to forty years, one might conclude there had been a regular manifestation quite throughout his entire life, and he would be dull-witted indeed not to have seriously pondered the question: "Why not I ?"

Most soldiers, I dare say, respond with a significant "Not my number," implying vaguely that there is a time for all things. Many attempt no explanation, shrug their shoulders

and indifferently point out that one cannot live forever. Some of the more thoughtful offer, "the inscrutable Will of God." Then too, there is the attitude which scorns anything or anyone who can see anything but pure, unadulterated luck in the whole business.

It is not so difficult to understand one's acquiring a forcefully growing conviction of and belief in the existence of a Power higher than oneself, provided the setting of events is sufficiently dramatic. One can readily select individuals with most imposing array of experiences of the sort we are dealing with, apply the question to that case, and come away with the answer that many feel is the correct one, "Not he, because it is evident he has been 'spared' for some other purpose, he has other work to do." What purpose, what work? I fear that the natural reaction to this answer is to misunderstand in vain imagining and to intensify one's ego to no useful purpose. If it is a correct answer, many will be disappointed in it. For in following through the later lives of the selected cases, one finds that in the majority of cases there were the only notable outwardly manifested events in their otherwise mediocre existence.

It would appear to me to be more purposeful to see in such a series of events something in the nature of a wayside direction-post reminiscent of the Old Testament preacher's. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth," etc. If one is led to expand on this suggestion, he may find himself initiating a chain-reaction of thought and speculation without end, and commensurate in degree with his capacity and ability. In this I can see a real purpose, a real work; a bidding to bring into one's consciousness a sense of dependence upon God; not in the sense of a fear-reaction, begotten of a feeling of "Remember now—you are next if you do not," for one finds such foundations to be neither deep nor abiding, but

rather in the sense of being involuntarily struck with awe and amazement that one could have had so many repeated encounters and remain to relate them.

So, in one way or another, the result of my experiences has been a growing conviction that God is, imminent and inscrutable. Perhaps this should be an all-sufficient purpose, the acquisition of some sense of awareness. However, one grows into feeling a vastly embracing urge for more support to the understanding. Likened to a chain-reaction, wherein an initial reaction provides a progressive series of further reactions each dependent upon the preceding one, so reflection on the events and the resulting conviction has led through the speculations of diverse thinkers and their philosophies, through the inspired words of world teachers, in effort to secure a comprehensive expression of purpose, arriving finally at the goal of my philosophic quest, Vedanta.

Not for gold or worldly position would I have missed the enjoyment I had from Plato, Pythagoras, Plotinus, Seneca, Epictetus, Aurelius, Spinoza, Kant and others, but far surpassing them in soul-satisfaction has been my introduction to Vedanta, the fundamental principle of its philosophy being: "In reality there exists, and there can exist, nothing but *Brahman, Brahman* is everything."

Horace Greeley it is said, remarked, "There is no doctrine of Christianity but what has been anticipated in the Vedas."

Sir William Jones, Judge of the Supreme Court of Judicature at Fort Williams, Bengal, distinguished orientalist, linguist and author, has said: "It is impossible to read the Vedas, or the many fine compositions in illustration of them without believing that Pythagoras and Plato derived their sublime theories from the same fountain as the sages of India."

Arthur Schopenhauer has said: "From every sentence deep, original and sublime thoughts arise, and the whole is

pervaded by a high, holy and earnest spirit. In the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Veda. It has been the solace of my life, it will be the solace of my death."

Professor Max Müller, in his Hibbert Lectures, Oxford: "No one can read the Veda and its commentaries without feeling a richer and wiser man. The Veda is the most sublime of all philosophies and the most comforting of all religions."

The words of approbation uttered by these distinguished men were encountered subsequent to my first introduction to Vedanta so were not an influence attracting me toward it. There may be found laudatory expressions similar to these by many other distinguished men of today.

Quite apart from the sentiments adduced above, I have found a substantial support in the view-points of Vedanta for answers to the disturbing questions provoked by my reflections, such support which satisfies both a logical imperative and the emotional urge in an harmonious whole.

In the pursuit of Truth, in the opening of authentic presentation of the subject matter of Vedanta, I pay my humblest respects to Swami Paramananda; first and foremost to his example, which radiates something which called very deeply to all who experienced his presence; next, to the charm and appeal in his spoken words and finally, to his inspirational writings, both in poetry and prose. His *Bhagavad-Gita* was illuminated by commentary made in person and as such is a preferred and treasured little volume. The little *Book of Daily Thoughts and Prayers* is a source of infinite comfort to myself and to many friends who, for various reasons, have not yet arrived at the point where they are able to pursue a more intensified study of Vedanta.

For the earnest seeker for clear light on troublous questions within the category of things dwelt upon herein, one can rec-

ommend: *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna,* the *Bhagavad Gita,* and *Atmabodha;* translations, introductions and commentary by Swami Nikhilananda. These translations are especially valuable because of their introductions. A perusal of these should afford a good, general authentic presentation of Vedanta classics with an intimate treatment of the life of one of its most illustrious saints, who may be regarded as being one of our own times.

More voluminous, but of absorbing interest are the series of lectures contained in *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda,* the foremost disciple of the great nineteenth century saint whose Gospel has already been referred to. The dynamic utterances of this son of India are soul-stirring and were the sensation of the closing years of the last century.

If one's appetite has been whetted for more food by now, one can profitably become familiar with the more difficult themes of other non-dualist classics. *Vivekachudamini* of Sankara (or Sankaracharya as he is more familiarly called) translated by Swami Madhavananda, with commentary; and the *Ashtavakra Samhita* translated by Swami Nityaswarupananda, with commentary.

The material open for the student is encyclopedic in scope, the aspects presented are manifold, therefore in order that a beginner be not confused, it is suggested that he confine himself to applying to the works given, in substantially the order named. Today I feel that if I were to be limited to the use of only one of all the books I treasure, I should want that one to be the little *Book of Daily Thoughts and Prayers.*

In a little volume entitled *Three Lectures on the Vedanta Philosophy* which he delivered at Oxford University, Professor Max Müller summed up as his understanding of the object of Vedanta:

"To show that we have nothing to conquer but ourselves;

> that we have everything within ourselves; that nothing is required but to shut our eyes and hearts against the illusions of the world, in order to find ourselves richer than heaven and earth."

Of course, shutting out illusion is a major requirement in Vedantic effort, but one must not infer from the professor's words that it is easy of accomplishment; by gradual steps and systematic effort Vedanta shows wherein it may be accomplished.

The rigidly monistic works of Sankara apparently would leave one with the feeling that there is no place in his conception for any form of devotion; this is not strictly true for, on occasion, he was known to have written several devotional hymns, possibly for the use of his followers. Some authorities have quoted him as encouraging devotion very definitely, for without it there is always a prevalent tendency towards being shunted away from the goal of reliation, being absorbed in philosophic speculation instead. Devotion is defined in Vedanta as single-pointed, all-consuming desire for the realization of Truth, a great emotional urge is one of the essentials. Ramakrishna's life demonstrated the effectiveness of the way of devotion and was his emphatic legacy to his disciples. The Christian and Jew must infer the pointing toward devotion in the same sense when they consider the Mosaic utterance repeated by Jesus—to "love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart and with all thy soul, with all thy mind and with all thy might."

Ramakrishna also took pains to point out to his disciples the necessity for their cultivating devotion in the sense that Sankara is reported to have done, but added that in addition to defeating the effort toward becoming one-pointed in their devotion, very few there were in all times who could realize their aspiration on an exclusively philosophic path.

My inference is that Jesus apprehended the same thing; when one of his humble followers approached him with the request,, "Lord, teach us to pray. . . ." Knowing their limitations, he said, "When you pray, say 'Our Father which art in heaven. . . .' " That is to say that the form of their devotions was to take the personal aspect, as it was more easily followed.

The questions propounded and alluded to in the prefatory paragraphs have ceased to command the importance which they formerly possessed for me after some acquaintance with Vedanta, as I began to understand how the answers are contained within oneself.

The important thing, from my present point of view, which resulted from the events, is that they were the stimulus to aspire for an expanded consciousness. As aspiration commenced slowly to gain momentum, I felt certain in my own mind that the course lay along an alert, sensitized, intellectual line, which I later found in Vedanta described as the path of wisdom or *jnana*. Probably an extended attachment for philosophy could have influenced that presumption. My expectations were very much along this line when first I found the Ananda Ashrama. It seems I was looking for an expanded consciousness and hoped to find it in an expanded intellectuality. At any rate, I was surprised to find that after a few visits there, my picture was being transformed, not without some internal resistance, but very subtly nevertheless—and definitely. The transformation I attribute to the example of being I read expressed in the character and personality of Swami Paramananda. Many had been impressed by the Christlike qualities manifest in him and found an identity of message with that of Jesus in his *Path of Devotion*. Through him I was made unconsciously aware that what I was really seeking was the Path or Way of Devotion.

THE TRAGEDY OF HAMLET

BY Esther Orlander

"There are more things in heaven or earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

With these words Hamlet quite innocently reveals that he is not entirely a stranger to that mysterious other-world, glimpses into which had filled his friend Horatio with such awesome fear. Hemmed in, though he is, by the walls of this earthly "prison," in which he finds nothing but "confines, wards and dungeons," he can, nevertheless, scent the air of that larger, freer world where man may walk unhampered by those conditioning limitations which here he finds so irksome. Hamlet is not for a moment overwhelmed by the appearance of the ghost of his dead father. He is not frightened; he is not even surprised; for, somehow, he has come by an understanding that enables him to peer through the bars of the prison-house of physical existence and know that beyond it, and yet somehow permeating it, is another kind of existence, in which not only his dead father but he himself, in the very present moment, walks untouched and untouchable, and so, when the affrighted Horatio pleads with him to be wary of the ghost lest he harm him, Hamlet scoffs at his fears. His life he does not value,

"And for my soul, what can it do to that
Being a thing immortal as itself?"

Hamlet was, in short, on the way to being what we usually imply when we use the term "mystic." He was awakened to some measure of awareness of the paradoxical fact that that which seems to him so undeniably real, this "too too solid flesh," this world of time and dimensions in which we fret out an existence inexplicably compounded of good and evil, has only just so much reality as our minds give to it;

> "For" (he assures Rosencranz) "there is nothing
> either good, or bad
> but thinking makes it so."

Whereas that impalpable, unreal thing we call "spirit" is, in the very truth of all things, their only reality.

Hamlet was not a complete stranger to this world of the "real" but, like any newcomer in a strange land, he was not acclimated, he was not at all familiar with the environs. Hence he could not walk there with assurance, he could not keep his bearings with that confidence which familiar knowledge alone can give. And herein, as I see it, lies the tragedy of Hamlet's character. Although he did not realize it, he was living in two worlds at once and was not at home in either. He was a sleep-walker in that shadow-land where man is, at one and the same time, falling asleep to the world of the senses and waking up to the world of the spirit. It might well be called the tragedy of the cross-roads. And, in this sense, Hamlet's tragedy is man's universal tragedy; for there comes a time in every man's spiritual evolution, as now it had come in Hamlet's, when, although he had outgrown the ordinary world of ordinary men, the world in which "things" alone are real and in which "action" alone is the proper business of man, he still has not found himself in his miserable self-recriminations, how many a man does not see his very self?

Hamlet's keenest awareness about himself was this fact: that he was not at home in the world of his fellow men. He felt lost and unhappy in it; but as I have intimated, he had not become sufficiently aware of himself in the world of spirit to understand or correctly to evaluate the cause of his unhappiness. His mind was confused. The old, familiar standard of values, while it no longer seemed capable of compelling his actions, still dominated his conscience. A

new light was indeed dawning in his soul; a new lone-star was rising for him; but, alas, the immediate effect was conflict, miserable conflict. Torn between the old and the new, he was utterly incapable of discriminating between fault and virtue within himself. In his wretched bewilderment, he could only cry:

"The time is out of joint:—O cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set it right!"

But Hamlet was not born "out of his time," it only seemed that way to him. No man is ever born "out of his time." And Hamlet's tragedy was not a tragedy in any final sense. In the evolution of the real Hamlet it was simply a major crisis. And Hamlet was profiting by the experiences of this miserable life so much more than he could know. The shift in his view-point was taking place little by little, as it does for all men. Little by little "real" values were displacing those which had seemed so worthy but which, somehow, no longer were his. Like a child, blinded by light and rubbing his eyes in order to see, Hamlet seems to catches flashes now and then of his true goal. In Horatio, for instance, he recognizes that ideal of inward stability and poise which is the inevitable possession of the man whose life is lived on the plane of the spirit. To him he says, from the depth of his heart:

"For thou hast been
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing!
A man that Fortune's buffets and rewards
Hast ta'en with equal thanks: and bless'd are those
Whose blood and judgment are so commingled
That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger
To sound what stop she please. Give me that man
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart
As I do thee."

It was this inward balance and stability that Hamlet lacked, but, lacking, yearned for with all his soul.

Poor Hamlet, who could never make up his mind to act! There are two kinds of self-assurance that a man may acquire. One is the ideal of this world: namely, the assurance of the forthright man of action, the assurance of the man who lives solely in this objective world of so-called facts and their interrelationships. Such a man sees a task to be done, and straightway does it without quibble or question, untroubled by any metaphysical contingencies that might, perchance, put the ultimate validity of his act in doubt. Such a man, we know, Hamlet was not. Such assurance, he had not. Hamlet's mind seethed with questions and doubts. As he himself put it:

> "The native hue of (my) resolution is sicklied o'er
> with the pale cast of thought."

The other type of assurance is quite a different thing. It is that assurance which Hamlet recognized in Horatio, without having any idea how to achieve it. It is the calm, unruffled assurance of the man who is not primarily concerned with either action or inaction; the assurance which has its springs in the sure knowledge that whether he acts or does not act, man is equally expressing the Great Will of which his little will is but the instrument. The man who has acquired this knowledge is quite undisturbed by either "the buffets or rewards" of Fortune, knowing, as he does, that all events in a man's life, be they good or bad to his limited human view, synchronize perfectly in the cosmic picture.

Hamlet's mind has caught the vision of that goal, desirable beyond all other goals: the state of inward peace. But the path to this goal he had still to discover; that path which, as every spiritual aspirant finds sooner or later, is the path

of realization. That Hamlet was actually taking steps along this path, Shakespeare makes quite evident to the discerning reader. Speaking of Polonius, for whose death he had been so unfortunately responsible, Hamlet says:

"For this same lord
I do repent: but Heaven hath pleased it so,
To punish me with this, and this with me,
That I must be their scourge and minister."

Thus speaks one who is "realizing" that all is one and that one is spirit: thus speaks one who is catching the implications of that basic truth. Again, in his so often quoted words to Horatio, Hamlet gives witness to his growth toward the spiritual viewpoint:

"Our indiscretions sometimes serve us well,
When our deep plots fail us: and that should teach
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will."

To be sure, Hamlet says these words as if he were repeating a lesson learned by rote. So do we all who, like Hamlet, find our way to truth via the path of the intellect. First we recognize a truth with our minds, then comes the task of realizing it and all its infinite implications with our whole being.

Hamlet was, I say, of that temperament which must make the intellectual approach to the world of the spirit. The unreality of those most obvious realities, time and space, had been clearly apprehended by his mind. As has been pointed out many a time, for the purpose of analogy, all circles are contained and comprehended in the point from which they are generated, their center. The center, though it contains, thus, all dimensions, has no dimension: it is a spiritual reality. Similarly it may be said that all the ocean is contained in some ultimate, inconceivable drop, or all space in some final atom. It was this perception of the ul-

timately spiritual nature of the universe that Hamlet was expressing when he exclaimed:

> "O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell, and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have had bad dreams."

Bad dreams! Alas, "there's the rub!" It was the fear of bad dreams that marked the limits of Hamlet's spiritual progress in this life. It was the fear of bad dreams that was, in this sense, his ruination. He was convinced, truly enough, that all phenomena, both of the here and the hereafter, have but the substantiality of a dream. But he had not yet identified That which forever dreams within the dream, the Great Dreamer, and lacking that vision, what could give any meaning to his conviction? His little ego was but a dream-ego: that was plain to him. But what to do with it?

Poor Hamlet! Poor Hamlet! With nothing but a dream to believe in; with nothing more than that to give him a faith either to live by or to die by, there he must hang, caught on the horns of his insolvable dilemma, crying to the unanswered heavens until kind death cuts him down and gives him respite:

> "To be or not to be,—that is the question."

As you think, you travel; and as you love, you attract. You are today where your thoughts have brought you; you will be tomorrow where your thoughts take you. You cannot escape the result of your thoughts, but you can endure and learn, can accept and be glad.

Whatever your present environment may be, you will fall, remain, or rise with your thoughts, your wisdom, your ideal. You will become as small as your controlling desire; as great as your dominant aspiration. —*James Allen.*

THE SAYINGS OF LAOTZU

As rendered by Leo Tolstoy

(Months ago a copy of the following stanzas was put into the hand of the editor of the "Message of the East." An explanatory statement accompanied it and ran as follows: "These stanzas of Laotzu's Teachings, as rendered into English by Leo Tolstoy are copied from a now defunct magazine known as "The Open Road," published in London, England, away back in 1910. The September, October and November numbers supplied the 64 stanzas as rendered herein."

It has not been possible for the editor to check on these stanzas at the English source. She has, however, ascertained through the Los Angeles Public Library and elsewhere, that among the English translations of Tolstoy's works, there is nothing listed in the way of a translation of the Tao-teh king.)

1

There is an incomparable being which existed before heaven and earth:
Silent, transcendent.
It alone persists and does not change.
I do not know its name.
In order to denote it I call it TAO.

2

Nothing which can be named is the source of everything.
That which is nameless is the source of everything.
Only he who is free from passions can understand this source.

3

As soon as TAO began to manifest itself in existence it received a name.

4

TAO is hidden and has no name.
But TAO is mighty in action and achievement.

5

TAO is the refuge of all beings: the treasure of the virtuous and the salvation of the wicked.

6

All the things of the world spring from existence: existence springs from non-existence.

7

The sage gives himself up, and by doing this attains everything, because he looks upon nothing as his own.

8

When beings have developed fully, every one of them returns to his source.
To return to one's source means to be at peace.
To be at peace means to fulfil one's destiny.
To fulfil one's destiny means to be eternal.

9

The soft defeats the hard: the weak defeats the strong.

10

The most yielding conquers the hardest.

11

Not many in the world grasp a teaching without words and the good of non-action.

12

Thirteen spokes come together round the nave of the wheel. On the emptiness between depends the use of the chariot.
Clay is shaped to make a vessel: the use of the vessel depends on its hollowness.
When a house is made, windows and doors are cut in the wall. On these holes depends the use of the house.
Thus should the sage be: he himself should be nothing. Only then is he necessary to all things and people.

13

Without going outside the door or looking through the window it is possible to see the way of heaven.

14

The more you go about, the less you know.
Therefore a saint does not go about, yet he knows: he does not see, yet he gives names; does not act, yet fulfils.
He who applies himself to a doctrine gets bigger every day.
He who applies himself to the TAO grows less every day.
He goes on growing less and less until he attains non-action.
He does not act, yet he becomes master of the world (godlike).

15

A saint has not a stubborn heart; his heart conforms with the hearts of the people.
The good he treats well; the unkind he also treats well.
The honest man he treats honorably, and the dishonest man he also treats honorably.

16

A saint lives in the world afraid of corrupting his heart.

17

The higher virtue is like water.
Water is good because it does all beings good and does not quarrel with them.

18

The worth of the soul is in eternal calm.

19

The sage struggles with no one and therefore no one is angry with him.

20

The sage does good and attaches no importance to it.

21

Only he who is kind overcomes.
He overcomes and is not proud.
He overcomes and does not triumph.
He overcomes and does not exalt himself.
He overcomes and cannot do otherwise.
He overcomes and commits no violence.
In overcoming one must know when to stop.
He who knows when to stop avoids danger thereby.

22

He who is in the light of TAO seems to be in darkness.
He who has gone far in the knowledge of TAO seems to be behind the ignorant.
He who is on the height of TAO seems to be lower than everybody else.
He who has the highest virtue seems to have no virtue.
He who is great in purity seems to be in impurity.
He who is great in mind seems to be incapable.
He who is firm in virtue seems to be wavering.
He who is simple and truthful seems to be worthy of contempt and shame.

23

Begin what is difficult through what is easy; begin the great by means of the small.
What is hardest in the world is begun through what is easiest: what is greatest in the world is begun by means of the little.
A saint never does what is outwardly great and hence can achieve what he thinks great.
A huge tree springs from a shoot as thin as a hair;
A nine-story tower rises from a handful of earth;
A long journey of a thousand versts begins with one step.

24

A saint is unwilling to desire, hence does not value highly things difficult to acquire.

25

He who finds many things easy will find many things difficult.

Therefore a saint finds everything difficult, and for this reason there is nothing difficult to him in all his life.

26

As soon as the great TAO is forsaken philanthropy and justice make their appearance.

As soon as intelligent foresight appears great hypocrisy appears.

27

True virtue does not profess to be virtue, therefore it is virtue.

Virtue that is not true professes to be blameless virtue, therefore it is not virtue.

True virtue is not active and does not require activity.

Virtue that is not true is active, it requires activity.

28

If TAO is lost, virtue is left; if virtue is lost, philanthropy is left; if philanthropy is lost, justice is left; if justice is lost, propriety is left.

Propriety is only the semblance of truth and the source of disturbance.

29

When the higher savants learn about TAO they diligently fulfil it.

When the mediocre savants learn about TAO they alternately follow it and lose it.

When the lesser savants learn about TAO they laugh

at it. If they did not laugh at it, it would not deserve the name of TAO.

30

He who possesses much will lose much.
He who knows how to be contented will not meet with shame.
He who can stand still is out of danger and can live long.

31

To enter life means to enter death.
He who by means of true enlightenment returns to his own light loses nothing in the destruction of his body.
This means to clothe oneself in eternity.

32

To be able to care for little things is a proof of enlightenment.
To be gentle is a proof of strength.

33

To know that one does not know is what is highest.
Not to know that one does not know is disease.

34

Kind words can redeem: good deeds can do still more.

35

It is easy to hold what is quiet; it is easy to check what has not yet appeared; it is easy to break what is tender; it is easy to scatter what is fine.
Act while action is still easy,
Pacify before any revolt occurs.

36

To cover up one's exits,
To shut one's door,
To blunt one's sharpness,
To scatter one's abundance,

To veil one's brilliancy,
To make oneself like dust —
In this lies unity.

37

Man enters life soft and feeble. He dies stiff and hard.
All creatures, plants and trees enter life soft and tender, and die dry and hard.
Stiffness and strength are the fellow-travellers of death.

38

To teach in words is unnecessary. One need only be free from passions.

39

There is nothing in the world softer and weaker than water, and there is nothing that excels water in its destructive action upon what is hard and strong.
The weak overcomes the strong; the soft overcomes the hard.
There is no one who does not know it, but no one acts on it.

40

There is no greater crime than to recognize lust as being permitted.

41

There is no greater misfortune than ignorance of how to be contented.

42

There is no greater vice than the wish to acquire.

43

If the palaces are very grand. the fields are neglected and the large corn bins are empty.

44

Do not eulogize the sages and there will be no disputes amongst the people.

45

Do not set value on what is difficult to acquire; then the people will not steal.
Do not exhibit objects which excite lust: then the people will be calm.

46

A state is ruled by justice; cunning is necessary to secure arms; by non-action one becomes master of the skies.
Why is this so?
Because the more prohibitions and restrictions there are in a state the more impoverished the people become.
The greater the number of sharp weapons a people possesses the more unrest there is in the country.
The more cunning a people, the greater is the number of terrible deeds committed.
The more proclamations are made public the more thieves and robbers there are.
Therefore a saint says: I refrain from action and the people perfects itself.
I follow tranquility and the people becomes more just of its own accord.
I refrain from action and the people becomes rich by its own efforts.
I have no desires and the people returns to simplicity of its own accord.

47

He who stands on tiptoe cannot stand steady;
He who spreads his legs apart does not move onward.
He who places himself in the light does not shine.
He who approves himself does not distinguish himself.
He who praises himself considers himself to be unworthy.

48

He who knows others is clever.
He who knows himself is enlightened.

49

He who subdues others is strong.
He who subdues himself is powerful.

50

He who knows how to be contented is rich.

51

Retain wisdom and cast away intellectuality, and the well-being of the people will increase a hundredfold.

52

Only he is quite calm who has no desires.

53

The desire for fame is a base desire; when one has acquired fame one is anxious not to lose it, and when one has lost it one is anxious to acquire it.

54

If you do not believe in yourself no one else will believe in you.

55

However pleasant it is to be a king or to drive a coach and four, it is better to perfect oneself in TAO, sitting in one spot.

56

Respond to animosity by kindness.

57

He who is rich, respected and proud, is laying up misfortunes for himself.

58

Rivers and seas command rivulets and streams, because they lower themselves before them. That is how they command them,

In the same way a saint must lower himself before the people in order to command them.

59

He who can guide is not militant.
He who can overcome is not malignant.
He who can wrestle does not quarrel.
He who can use people profitably subjects himself to them.
This proves ability to avail oneself of the people's powers.
The highest wisdom lies in this. This means union with heaven.

60

If a man is not afraid of what is really terrible, what is most terrible comes to him.

61

Let no one look upon his dwelling as too cramped or upon his life as too limited.

62

He who does not trouble about his life is wiser than he who values life.

63

He who understands, knows little: He who knows much does not understand.

64

Truthful words are unpleasant: pleasant words are not truthful.

Never lose an opportunity of seeing anything beautiful. Welcome it in every fair face, every fair sky, every fair flower, and thank Him for it who is the fountain of all loveliness, and drink it simply and earnestly with your eyes: it is a charmed draught, a cup of blessing.—*Charles Kingsley.*

FROM A DISCIPLE'S NOTE-BOOK

(*Continued from Spring Issue*)

Swami Paramananda has said in his *Way of Peace and Blessedness*: "Always hold your position in life with dignity and selflessness. Know that you are a channel through which the Ideal is manifesting. Strive always to represent the Ideal in your life."

This sense of instrumentality was innate with the Swami; it colored every word, even every gesture and infilled him with what for lack of a better definition I must call pride of spirit which is the very antithesis of spiritual pride. For whereas the latter has its source in an inflated ego, swollen through its sense of assumed spiritual superiority, the latter is born out of a profound humility in which the personality seeks but to glorify the eternal Spirit within and protect it from all that might sully its brightness in man or make unclean its habitation. It imbued the Swami with that dignity and selflessness to which he has referred and which surrounded him like an aura.

Thus, one day, in response to a suggestion that he should ask a favor of some influential personage, he replied: "*I am not a beggar*: I am a mendicant!"

The Swami spoke as a *Sannyasin* or spiritual renouncer, and his words will have meaning only for those who are familiar with the Sannyasin ideal.

For centuries, the roads of India have been golden rivers, so to speak, for over them for endless miles have flowed the yellow-clad *Sadhus* or *Sannyasins*—wandering monks and holy men bent upon one great quest: the final emancipation of the soul. By tradition not tarrying more than three days in any one place lest they form attachments which would bind them away from God, they go from village to village,

as did St. Francis of Assisi in Italy, owning nothing, asking nothing, but giving constantly of the vision that is theirs, by the marks of their vocation, sometimes by their very being, conveying a sense of man's inborn divinity and ultimate destiny. In this way they have helped to keep alive, throughout the length and breadth of India, an instinct for eternal values, which has survived the shock of famine, flood, war, invasion and even modern material civilization. To this very day, India's homage, reverence, adoration are given not to the rich and powerful, the potentates and Maharajas of the realm. Out of the depth of her poverty, in the midst of hunger and all earthly misery, she bows her head in surrender to the Divine alone and to those who come in the name of the Divine. From earliest times she has recognized them as the defenseless children of the Kingdom and has given them shelter in her vast and complicated social system, so that no anxiety over food and lodging, and no obstruction of human law will hold them back from keeping their tryst with Deity.

The disciple recalls an incident connected with John Masefield, Poet-laureate of England, illustrating the need for such protection. She met him at the close of an outdoor performance of the *Light of Asia,* a dramatization of the life of Lord Buddha, as portrayed in Sir Edwin Arnold's immortal poem, and spoke with him concerning the renunciation scene, gripping in its poignancy, when Prince Siddartha, consumed by his longing for Truth and his pity for man, leaves wife, child, father, palaces—everything, in order to pursue his mighty quest. Still under the spell of the scene and moved by its tremendous import, she was shocked to hear Mr. Masefield remark: "If he had lived today they would have put him in jail." At the moment, being somewhat on the defensive for India, she took this for a crass criticism

of the Buddha, but in later years, looking back, she realized that on the contrary, it was a somewhat cynical observation concerning the modern way of doing things here in the Occident, and its conceivable result.

In this same *Light of Asia* there is another scene symbolic of spiritual India as a whole. It deals with the return of Siddartha to his native city of Kapilavastu after his attainment of Nirvana at Buddha Gaya. He had wandered forth from his home a prince, he now returns as a great Buddha, an Awakened One, a conqueror. The king, his father, who goes out to meet him, sees in him, however, only a beggar who is defaming his lineage.

" 'Ends it in this,' he exclaims, 'that great Siddartha steals into his realm wrapped in a clout, sandalled, craving food of low-horns, he whose life was like a God's. . . . Son, why is this?'

" 'My Father,' came reply, 'it is the custom of my race.'

" 'Thy race,' answered the king, 'counted a hundred thrones from Maha Sammat, but no deed like this.'

" 'Not of a mortal line,' the Master said, 'I spake, but of descent invisible, the Buddhas who have been and who shall be. Of these am I, and what they did, I do.' "

In the same spirit an Indian *Sannyasin* would speak of his own line of descent from the *Sannyasins* of old, the great men of renunciation from whom he has inherited his traditions and even his power. For even as the Roman Catholic Church holds to the belief in Apostolic Succession, by which the divine power flows from the priest to the neophyte he is investing, so India holds to the idea of *Guru* power which is passed from *Guru* to disciple through the centuries. Be that as it may, the conviction has built up in the Motherland the tremendous *Sannyasin* ideal, which binds the men of the yellow robe into an invisible brotherhood, and forms the very fabric of India's spiritual culture.

True, among the thousands and thousands of these brethren there are today, as there were yesterday, vagabonds, scamps, counterfeit saints who live off the savings of the poor and ride India's back like the Old Man of the Sea; yet among the fictitious seekers after God, there are, here and there, those who shine with an inward glory, and India has wisely held that the weight of beggary is a small price to pay for the presence in her midst of even one man of genuine realization. Gladly she pours into the proffered bowl of the wandering mendicants her little handfuls of parched rice. They may go to feed the unworthy, but equally they may give sustenance to a Chaitanya or a Buddha. Her offering is to the Ideal; the Lord will take care of the result.

In modern times many of the *Sannyasin* rules have had to be set aside. Indian holy men for the sake of their fellow beings have crossed the black water—which they were never supposed to do. They have dwelt among people of other races, have not only *not* moved on in three days, but have dwelt in one place for many moons, often living the life of a householder. Swami Paramananda once said, in relation to this: "First one renounces, then sometimes one has to renounce one's renunciation." Of course he referred to the outer giving up, not to the real renunciation of the little self with its attendant evils.

One day he was describing to those around him his first arrival in New York City. He pictured himself standing at the rail of the great steamer, very young, very inexperienced, with no possessions in the world but those contained in a small tin trunk. As the tall buildings of Manhattan came into view and he realized that soon he would be among people who knew nothing of *Sannyasins,* he was filled with gladness, "I was," he said, "happy that now I would have no yellow robe to depend on. From now on, men would know me only by that which I carried in my heart!"

The true *Sannyasin* has a universal consciousness; none the less there often burns within him a great love for his Mother India. Almost he identifies her with the Infinite Mother, and certainly every thought of her is interwoven with his whole religious experience. Thus while the great Swami Vivekananda often lashed out at his countrymen with scorn for their inertia, superstitions, fears and jealousies, and made unfavorable comparisons with persons of the Western world, he did so only because his eyes ever beheld Immortal India, alive with spirit and potent with God, and he longed that every Hindu should reflect that image in his soul.

The disciple once heard a story of the great Swamiji which revealed his pride in the land of his birth and also in his own ancestry. It was told to her by one who had come across the account in a California "Truth Centre".

The Swamiji, it seems, while on one of his visits to the west coast, had been taunted by some arrogant citizen in relation to his forebears. "Why, your forefathers," this person had remarked rather contemptuously, "were only shepherds!"

With a magnificent gesture, the Swami flung his shawl over his shoulder. "My ancestors?" he replied; "My ancestors were kings!"

Perhaps he was thinking of the ancient shepherd kings on the banks of the Indus, or it may be, of a "descent invisible," as did the Buddha, from India's royal line of *Sannyasins,* and was as ready as the Blessed One to proclaim: "Of these am I, and what they did, I do!"

Swami Paramananda constantly poured the Indian wine into Western vessels. In other words, he diffused Hindu spiritual culture into the very atmosphere which surrounded him. He could not help doing so since he was compounded

of its elements. But one of those very elements was universality—a sense of oneness that took no account of a person's color, creed, race or sex. This universality was not just a theory with the Swami, it was ingrained. He was more than tolerant: he loved his fellow beings, he felt related to them and was incapable of a blanket condemnation of any group or people. To him each person was primarily a child of God and all the distinctions of name and form came after, not before, that one basic fact. He always seemed at home wherever the Divine Mother placed him, but while, owing to his remarkable adaptibility, his associates felt that they were capturing him, it was he who gently and inevitably captured them, winning them away from narrow and constricted concepts into a vaster world.

The whole process was to him a game, a *leela,* and every experience was a new and delightful aspect of the game. Yet never was he lost in it and never did he forget the back-drop of eternity against which it was played. There was no calculation, no strain in his attitude. He was indeed the Infinite Mother's child, swinging in the cradle of the world, now up, now down, but without fear because of his trust in the Mother.

Never was there a more hospitable heart. He was always happiest when he was cooking Indian dishes for a large banquet, serving his guests personally, pouring himself out in one way or another for the "good of many and the happiness of many". He used to tell the members of his community how instinctive this spirit was with him. For when he was still but a small boy he used to go around the village and invite his mother's friends in goodly number over to his home for dinner. Thinking that the invitation bore the stamp of parental authority, they would accept; but the poor mother knew nothing of it and with difficulty concealed her con-

sternation when the unexpected guests began to arrive, even while her little son exulted.

Not infrequently distinguished visitors from India and elsewhere came to the Centre at Queensberry Street, and it was the Swami's delight to entertain them. These occasions flow together in the disciple's memory and she sees them as a sort of blend with here and there a face emerging for a moment or an incident which stands out more clearly than the rest. But there was one guest never to be forgotten nor confused with any other person or event, a world-honored guest—Rabindranath Tagore.

The disciple sees again the meeting of those two great souls, the Poet and the Swami. Even at the time, she thought: "This is a rare event—to witness the coming together of two such beautiful human beings. Actually the first meeting had occurred the day before, following a lecture by Dr. Tagore in Cambridge. The disciple had not been present at that initial encounter, but she was told that as the Swami approached, the Poet's face lighted up and he exclaimed: "Labonia! Labonia!", recognizing the Swami instantly by his resemblance to his sister of that name whose husband had been intimately associated with the Tagore school at

There was no chance then for conversation as people were pressing in from all sides, but a warm invitation was extended, and accepted, for tea at the Centre the following afternoon. There was excitement in the Swami's household when the news was brought home, and the next day, much loving preparation. A fruit offering was arranged with infinite care, in true Hindu fashion. Oranges and tangerines were opened up to resemble many-petalled flowers; Indian sweemeats from the Swami's own hand were daintily clustered on attractive dishes, along with other dainties—all done as in an Indian home where a great personage is to be honored.

When the hour arrived to motor over for the Poet, the Swami, still absorbed in these activities, delegated the disciple to act as chauffeur and as his representative. Overwhelmed with the privilege, she set forth, leaving behind her a Centre all agog with expectancy. She brought back with her a passenger who seemed quite the reverse. In fact she sensed in him an utter weariness, a weariness that went very deep, causing an harassed condition not native to his spirit. Abstracted, aloof, he gave the impression of one seeking inward escape from an outer condition which had grown unbearable. America, of course! Beloved of its own, but not always gentle, we must admit, with distinguished strangers, no matter how venerable. He was like one from a loftier sphere suddenly thrust down into the midst of what must seem to him a most uncivil civilization. The contrast had been too violent between the environment he had left behind, full of peace and high inspiration, and that in which he now found himself, even in cultured Boston. One felt that he wanted to be finished with it all as quickly as possible and go home. He was sorry, he said, he could stay only for a moment at the Centre; he must hurry on to keep an appointment with Mrs. Jack Gardner at her "Italian Palace". He doubted if there would be time for a cup of tea.

The Swami's ideas were different, however, and as he led his guest past the chapel, fragrant with incense, into the simple, spacious living-room of the Centre, the cloud which obscured the Poet's heart started to lift. One could feel it lifting. He stood in the curve of the bay window, talking to the Swami, and that contrast of glorified youth and glorified age cannot soon be forgotten: Tagore, clad in flowing white, with his noble head, white hair and beard, his tall, straight figure, calm, luminous eyes and majestic bearing,

could have symbolized the wisdom of the ages, while the Swami, standing at ease in his brown robe, tender, smiling, radiantly youthful, suggested eternal springtide. Both were characterized by an extraordinary fineness, an ethereal quality which shone out from them and made them seem almost transparent.

The Poet was still sad, however, and for the moment almost fretful. He admitted to the Swami his fatigue. He said that he had been unable to accustom himself to the ways of the United States. The trains, the hotels, the people he met, all had seemed alien to him. "It is strange," the Swami replied thoughtfully, "I have never experienced that feeling. When I first came to the West I was rather shy, but very soon I found my point of contact, and now I am at home here and the people are like my own people. I find the human heart the same everywhere."

There is a Sanskrit word called *Dharma*. It is really untranslatable, but it implies, among other things, an innate destiny determining one's whole life and character, something that one is born to fulfil. Thus it was the Swami's *dharma* to live in the New World with the consciousness of one world, and God and nature not only equipped him for his task, but brought him to the Occident when he was very young and pliable. The Poet's *dharma* placed him in India, in a kingdom of beauty all his own, and thus provided him with the shelter needful for the right accomplishment of his great mission. His heart was a universal heart, as all men know, but constitutionally he was not equipped, as was Swami, to stand the impact of a purely material civilization, especially after years of another type of existence.

Dhan Gopal Mukerji, the author, once told the disciple a revealing anecdote concerning Tagore and his quality of understanding. It was on the occasion of his first visit to

San Francisco. Mukerji, who was then just a student at the university, went immediately to call on his great compatriot in order to pay his respects and offer his services. No sooner had he reached Tagore's room, however, than a photographer of the press was announced and admitted. There followed an endless process of picture-taking, during which the Poet patiently complied with every demand, now putting on his glasses, now taking them off, holding them in the right hand, then in the left, turning this way and turning that, till his tormenter, with a final shot, departed. Upon his exit, Mukerji burst forth like a frustrated volcano. "Why do you endure such things?" he exclaimed. "It's an outrage! The idea of that man coming here and using up your time and strength like that. You should have ordered him out!" Tagore smiled and answered quietly: "Why should I do that? It was his way of expressing himself."

This original mood, submerged beneath the waves of an American lecture tour, now began to rise to the surface once more, as the Swami wooed his guest to a happier state of consciousness. At the Poet's own suggestion, it was arranged that the disciple drive him to the "Italian Palace", wait for him there, and then bring him back to the Centre for a more leisurely tea party. It was a bitter cold afternoon, but the disciple did not have time to feel even a shiver before the visit with Mrs. Jack Gardner was finished and she was back with the Poet at No. 1 Queensberry Street. This time he was in no hurry to depart. All the gloom fell away from him and his own gracious, serene self emerged in full glory while he and the Swami spoke of matters dear to their hearts.

As these words are written, pictures come in mind, vivid and colorful: Tagore seated at the end of the long table, the Swami leaning over him, their heads close together, as they

thumbed through the Swami's translation of the Upanishads. Pointing to the title, "Isha Upanishad" Tagore exclaimed: "That is *my* Upanishad!", meaning that it was the one he loved best. Sometimes the talk was in English, again in Bengali, but back to English once more as the Swami led his guest to a big chair before the blazing fire, while the household brought on the tea, the tangerines and the Hindu dainties.

The shadows grew long and longer; darkness fell, and still the Poet lingered beside the fire. The final moment came, however, and he rose to go, but as the Swami helped him on with his coat, he made a discovery: the Poet had no gloves. He admitted that he did not own a single pair to protect his hands against the biting cold. "You simply must not go out without gloves!" insisted the Swami. "I have a fine, warm pair that I have never worn, and if you can wait two or three minutes I can get them for you. I am sure they will fit and you will make me happy if you will accept them." He went up to his room and quickly returned with the gloves in question. At the Swami's command, Tagore seated himself, like an obedient child, putting his elbows, one at a time, on the table while the Swami carefully and lovingly pulled the gloves on over his slender hands.

As the Poet was about to step forth into the darkness, the Swami said: "We are a very humble household, striving in our own small way to serve the Ideal, but before you leave us will you give us your blessing." The Poet turned and raising his hand, chanted a Sanskrit benediction. Then the door closed behind him and he was gone, like a pilgrim-prophet from more sacred days.

A year or two later, Dr. Tagore again visited Boston, this time accompanied by a large party of his countrymen, including his son and some other members of his family.

He telephoned the Swami at once on his arrival and later came with his companions to a Hindu luncheon which the Swami prepared in their honor. During the course of the meal he said that he expected to return to Boston alone in a few months and wondered if the Swami would permit him to reside at the Centre while he was there. Turning to the disciple he asked smilingly: "How would you feel about having a poet in the house?" She replied that the house was attuned to poetry, so the more poets the better. His plans changed, however, and Boston did not see him again, nor did the disciple, although the Swami had further contact with him in India.

Now those two rare and beautiful beings have gone home to the real Motherland, the Motherland of the soul, and not in India or in America or anywhere in the world can they be found any more save in the minds and hearts of those who love them and were once blessed by the poetry of their presence.

TO BE CONTINUED

Thou hast made me known to friends whom I knew not. Thous hast given me seats in homes not my own. Thou hast brought the distant near and made a brother of the stranger.

I am uneasy at heart when I have to leave my accustomed shelter; I forget that there abides the old in the new, and that there also Thou abidest.

When one knows thee, then alien there is none, then no door is shut. Oh, grant me my prayer that I may never lose the bliss of the touch of the One in the play of the many.

—*Rabindranath Tagore.*

THE GRACE OF DIVINE MOTHER

By Sri Aurobindo

(From his booklet, "The Mother," published by T. Patro for the Arya Publishing House, 63 College Street, Calcutta, Bengal, India. Also for sale at the Ananda Ashrama, La Crescenta, California.)

To walk through life armoured against all fear, peril and disaster, only two things are needed, two that go always together—the Grace of the Divine Mother and, on your side, an inner state made up of faith, sincerity and surrender. Let your faith be pure, candid and perfect. An egoistic faith in the mental and vital being tainted by ambition, pride, vanity, mental arrogance, vital self-will, personal demand, desire for the petty satisfactions of the lower nature is a low and smoke-obscured flame that cannot burn upwards to heaven.

Regard your life as given you only for the divine work and to help in the divine manifestation. Desire nothing but the purity, force, light, wideness, calm, *ananda* of the divine consciousness and its insistence to transform and perfect your mind, life and body. Ask for nothing but the divine, spiritual and supramental Truth, its realization on earth and in you and in all who are called and chosen and the conditions needed for its creation and its victory over all opposing forces.

The more complete your faith, sincerity and surrender, the more will grace and protection be with you. And when the grace and protection of the Divine Mother are with you, what is there that can touch you or whom need you fear? A little of it even will carry you through all difficulties, obstacles and dangers; surrounded by its full presence you can go securely on your way because it is Hers, careless of all menace, unaffected by any hostility however powerful, whether from this world or from worlds invisible. Its touch can turn difficulties into opportunities, failure into success and weakness into unfaltering strength.

A DIVINE INCARNATION

By Sri Ramakrishna

God is indeed Infinite. But He is omnipotent. He may so ordain that His Divinity as Love may be manifest in the flesh and be among us as God incarnate. Divine Incarnation is a fact.

Why should God incarnate Himself in human form? To make manifest to man the perfection of Divinity. Through these manifestations man can talk with God and see His play. In the Incarnation, God fully enjoys, as it were, His own transcendent sweetness.

In the saints, God manifests Himself only in part, like honey in a flower. You suck the flower and get a little honey. In the Incarnation, it is all "honey," — all sweetness and all blessedness.

The Avataras (Divine Incarnations) are born with Divine powers and Divine qualities. They can go into and stay in any state of Realization from the highest to the lowest. In a king's palace a stranger can go only to the outer quarters, but the king's own child, the prince of the house, is free to go to every corner.

The Avatara is always one and the same. Plunging into the ocean of life, He rises up in one place and is known as Krishna, diving again and rising elsewhere, He is known as Christ.

On the tree of Sat-chit-ananda (Existence-knowledge-bliss) grow innumerable fruits such as Rama, Krishna, Christ and others: one or two of them come down now and then to this world, and they work wonderful changes in society.

When Bhagavan Sri Ramachandra came to this world, only twelve sages recognized Him as an Incarnation of God. So, when God descends to this world, there are few who recognize His Divine nature.

REPORT

VEDANTA CENTRE, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

The summer has passed very swiftly, as if in the twinkling of an eye, leaving behind memories of warm days rich in experience. At the Vedanta Centre a lull in activities prevailed, as the resident Community made its home at the Retreat in Cohasset. Sunday Services and Tuesday Classes, however, remained unaltered, welcoming the faithful who never failed to come in spite of periods of extreme heat. At times the attendance was small due to the absence of most of the regular members. Again, it included visitors and friends of Vedanta passing through the city. Frequently distinguished travelers from India and abroad came for a brief pause and were welcomed.

ANANDA ASHRAMA, COHASSET

In its entire history the Ashrama on the South Shore has never been as active as this summer. The early part was taken up by construction and general improvement of the place, which extended almost to the end of the season. A number of changes, such as removal of two mammoth trees against the house, building of a cedar arbor, and extensive flower and vegetable gardens added much to the natural beauty of the place. Chief among all improvements was the building of the new Shrine in June. It was dedicated with special Services in the early morning on June 21st and was shown to the members and friends throughout the day. In the afternoon a second Service was held in the Nature's Sanctuary in remembrance of Swami Paramananda's liberation. Afterwards, the dinner was served to a group of nearly fifty under the tall pines.

July 4th marked the sacred event of the passing of Swami Vivekananda. According to the established tradition at the

Ashrama, a three-hour period of silence was observed which began and ended with Services. On this occasion, a group of nearly forty shared in the day's program, which included a dinner.

Every Saturday the Ashrama has welcomed a goodly-sized group who came for physical and spiritual recreation. Always Service was held in the Nature's Sanctuary and dinner served out of doors. During the week as well, friends were there to share in the daily devotions and noon-day hourly silence and reading. Throughout July and August the Upper House was continuously occupied. Some came from different parts of the continent, combining their vacation with study and meditation.

Everyone has greatly enjoyed having meals in the open, consisting of garden vegetables. Much credit should go to Brother John, who could have easily won a prize at fairs with some of his garden produce. It has not only supplied the need of the immediate Community but has been shared with many of the Centre's friends.

The Eighteenth Anniversary of the Ashrama, held on August 16th, was a day of festivities at the little Retreat. It was celebrated in the usual manner with Services. After the dinner, two of the guests, Mr. Raphael Boruchoff and Mr. William A. Corey, spoke spontaneously, paying tribute to the Ashrama in its mission of peace. The Centre's youngest resident member from India, thirteen-year old Lena Bhatt, presented a series of sacred dances before the Altar of the big living room of the Lower House. Quite a large group of friends was present, who lingered late into the evening.

Usually Labor Day's activities bring the season's schedule to an end. This year the Ashrama remained open through September, holding Services every Saturday. The natural beauty and atmosphere of peace of the Ashrama are a magnet

that draws its votaries ever to its door. It was with a feeling of nostalgia that the season's Services were brought to a close on September 28th. During October whenever the weather is favorable, trips will be planned so that the autumn beauty of the countryside may be enjoyed by everyone.

Srimati Gayatri Devi left for Ananda Ashrama, California, on September 30th to exchange places with Sister Daya, who will be in charge of the Centre's activities during Gayatri Devi's absence.

ANANDA ASHRAMA, LA CRESCENTA, CALIFORNIA

Summer at Ananda Ashrama, in spite of unusual heat, passed all too quickly. Its inception on Saturday, June 21st, was marked as always by the observance of the day of the passing of the Ashrama's blessed founder, Swami Paramananda. Both morning and afternoon there was vigil in the Temple by the Ashrama members, with a group meditation in the evening, also in the Temple. The following day, Sunday, was given over to the public observance. Guest speakers at both Services paid deep and sincere tribute to the Swami and his work and to the wonderful influence of love and tolerance flowing from him because of his pure instrumentality for the Divine Power which stood back of him. Dr. Harold Dryselius, distinguished Los Angeles Psychologist, pictured admirably and clearly the Swami's rare spiritual qualities, as he has sensed them in the atmosphere of the Ashrama and in the Swami's written words. Preceding him, Dr. Bhagat Singh Thind, well known writer and lecturer, spoke of his personal contact with the Swami and gave a fine exposition of the ideals of spiritual India and the need for them in the world of today.

There was in addition, a special musical offering to the Swami, not only by artists who gave of their talents, but because it was the day chosen for the dedication of a beau-

tiful new, electrically controlled organ, the famous Wurlitzer, toward the attainment of which the Ashrama and its friends have worked and saved for many moons. Mrs. Thilo Becker, violin virtuoso and well-known teacher, and Miss Alta Grimes, brilliant young cellist, created a wonderful atmosphere by their playing, while the Ashrama singers gave voice to the sentiment in all hearts.

A short organ recital preceded the afternoon Service, with the Swami's old friend, Dr. Arthur Richardson, as organist. Under his hands the mellow tone and power of the instrument were brought out in full, giving almost the illusion of a genuine pipe organ. As the music swelled forth and spread out over the Ashrama, it seemed to bring a very special benediction. Later, when called upon by Sister Daya, the Doctor spoke feelingly of his long-standing friendship with the Swami and his appreciation of the ideals for which he stood.

Last, but in no wise least, Mr. Nicholas Beliaeff whose friendship for the Swami dates back almost to his very first days in this country, spoke from his heart of his relationship with the Swami and read a letter written him years ago by a New York member of the Vedanta Society, urging him to make the acquaintance of this new and holy young teacher, Swami Paramananda, who had started a new Centre in the city of Boston. Again there were songs by the Ashrama singers, including Mr. Beliaeff, whose clear tenor voice is heard practically every Sunday afternoon. There were fragrant flower offerings upon the altar, and there were many friends gathered in remembrance of the pure being who by his dedicated life lighted a flame that cannot go out.

July 4th, America's day of freedom, and forever associated in the mind of the modern Vedantist with the final liberation of Swami Vivekananda, or Great Swamiji, was set aside at

the Ananda Ashrama, as is customary, for a time of silence, meditation and prayer. Friends were urged to participate and for the period between two and five-thirty in the afternoon a sacred hush lay over the Retreat, as the minds of all were directed steadily toward the diviner issues of existence. A short Service in the Temple, conducted by Sister Daya, opened the silence which terminated with the regular evening Service in the Shrine.

The following Sunday all Services were dedicated to Great Swamiji, whose potent spirit seemed to vibrate in the heart of the one who spoke and in the hearts of those who listened, as well as throughout the Temple.

The new organ which plays a vital part in all such events has itself been the cause of several special occasions. On the night of June 13th, a piano recital was given at the Ashrama Community House, by Mrs. Lucille Oliver, an outstanding artist whose musicianship and fine technique have been acclaimed both in this country and abroad. The program was admirably balanced and was heard with rapt interest by the many who were present. All receipts were dedicated to the Ashrama organ fund, for there is still a deficit which has to be met. The concert itself was due to the great generosity of Mrs. Oliver and to the untiring efforts of Mrs. John Gurrieri, who shouldered the entire responsibility and, in conjunction with other devoted friends, not only made all the arrangements but furnished and served most delectable refreshments at the close of the evening.

On July 29th an organ recital was held in the Temple, likewise for the benefit of the organ fund. This time Mr. Eugene Alders, staff organist for the Birkwell-Richardson Company from whom the organ was purchased, sat at the keys, and delighted the very large audience of several hundred seated outside under the moon in the Temple patio both

with his program and his playing. Equally were they enthusiastic over a very beautiful and authentic performance of a South Indian Temple dance, by Indira Devi, who though Russian by birth is thoroughly Indian in spirit. Prior to the dance, which was given in the temple portico, Indira Devi demonstrated the *mudras* or symbolic gestures and hand positions which characterize all Indian sacred images and all Indian religious dancing. She evoked a profound response from the audience who recognized in her the sincerity, deep feeling, skill and simplicity which mark a great artist, their only complaint being that there was but one dance. In response therefore, to popular demand, a third benefit concert was arranged for the night of August 26th, with Mr. Leland McEwen, another staff artist of the Birkwell-Richardson Company, as the musician of the evening. Indira Devi this time presented a series of Indian dances, interspersed with the music, but as the weather had turned suddenly cold, the audience sat inside the Temple and the dances were given on the Temple platform. The music, the dancing, the setting all lent their magic and drew as before a large and appreciative audience.

Labor Day, September 1st, was (as is the Ashrama custom) dedicated to silence and contemplation. It followed the pattern of July 4th and though the day was exceedingly warm the friends who joined in the observance spoke again and again of the pervading peace and of the inspiration they had received.

Before closing this report, we must mention Sunday, August 24th, when Mrs. Rebecca Grimes, organist, her daughter Alta, cellist, and her daughter Emma, violinist, playing in trio, contributed music of the highest quality to the afternoon Service in the Temple. Our thanks go out to them.

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