

THE DIVINE LIFE

Volume I

BY
RAMDAS

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THE DIVINE LIFE

Volume I

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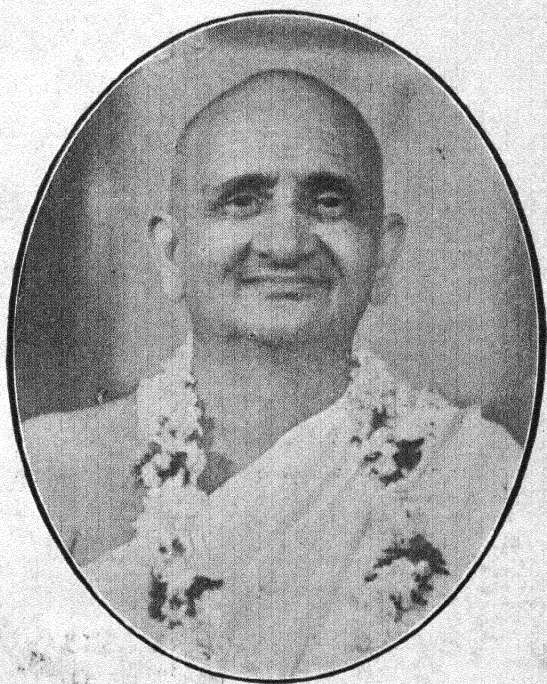
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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

We have published the present edition of this book as Volume I as we have further matter ready—articles of Swamiji that appeared later in the Vision—for Volume II. We shall be able to bring out the second volume only when facilities for procuring printing paper are made easier.

We are greatly beholden to Sri Ranchhoddas Manchharam, Proprietor, Turf Printing Works for undertaking to print this edition.

ANANDASHRAM.

Ramnagar,
Anandashram P.O.,
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LIFE AND ITS PROBLEMS

ARISE FROM THE VALE OF MISERY

Misery has fallen to the lot of man, because of his wilful forgetfulness of the supreme Truth of his being. He allows himself so much to be involved in the passing phases and affairs of life that he neglects to turn his thought to the eternal source of his existence. He struggles to find peace and contentment in the external adjustment and attainment of the things of life; but in no circumstance does he get the peace he strives for. On the other hand, he moves in an endless circle of ever-increasing cares and sorrows. In fact, he jumps from one fire into the other—from one pit into the other—from one sorrow into the other. He gropes in a self-created darkness and stumbles at every step, and his aches are many. Rest and peace are nowhere for him; this is the result of man's running away from the All-blissful centre of his being—God. Forget this centre, and you have a crop of misery. Tune your remembrance with the Lord and Master of your life, and you have endless joy. You have now strength, wisdom, courage and freedom.

O man, do not permit the cloud of oblivion, which would hide the true glory of your life, to settle upon your soul. Awake to the consciousness of the eternal Reality dwelling within you and destroy the cause of your misery. Let the great Truth reveal His splendour in you. Verily, you are the temple of God.

Life is short. Make the most of it by living in God. Everyday that passes brings you nearer to the end, when you shall have to depart from the world leaving behind everything which you hugged as your own. Life lived in the thought of God is life lived in true joy and peace.

Else it is a lengthening chain of woe that drags you ultimately to the terrifying jaws of death.

Let life be like the flower—born in full bloom and given away utterly—petals, scent and all—to the gardener who brought it into existence. The joy of the flower lies in its self-offering to its loving maker. So our life be a dedicated flower at the feet of our Divine Maker. Life thus lived alone is filled with real blessedness, peace and joy.

USE OF SUFFERING

Adversity and misfortune and the resultant sorrow and suffering are the common lot of mankind. Some notable men of philosophic turn of mind have questioned the utility of suffering in the world, and have not only denied the goodness of God but have also flung Him out of human calculations as unworthy of belief. But men of true wisdom and perfected experience, who have probed deep into the mysteries of life, acclaim with no uncertain voice the invaluable uses of adversity. Surely, if there were no suffering in the world, there could be no evolution of man towards the highest destiny of life—the knowledge of immortality. It is through sorrow alone a soul understands the real foundation and purpose of existence. Misery, pain and suffering open the portals of his life to the comprehension of the supreme value and power of life. Progress towards the subtle and spiritual realms of existence is possible only along the path of pain and suffering. The fullest grandeur and beauty of life can be revealed when it is made to pass through the fire of tribulation and sorrow.

Every new birth presupposes a period of agony. Every seed breaks up with pain and manifests the charm of its hidden foliage and fruit. The innocent and smiling babe is revealed from behind the veil preceded by the mother's pains. The glowing stream of gold runs out of the dull ore when heated in the fiery furnace. The aroma

of certain leaves and barks spreads out only when crushed and bruised. So also the life which is attended with the most painful experiences exhibits its highest glory.

Life would indeed be a stale and insipid thing if it were foreign to sorrow and pains. Because true beauty, power, peace and joy are born and nurtured in the womb of pain. The taste of sweetness is most enjoyed when it follows the taste of bitterness.

So do not depreciate the value of suffering. It is an element essential for the evolving life. Do not be afraid of suffering or attempt to run away from it. Realizing its great need and use in the upward march of the soul to the goal of its immortal consciousness, welcome all the trials and struggles of life and derive therefrom increased powers of the will so that you can make the very sufferings as stepping stones to the heights of absolute peace and bliss. For the soul who has attained to the bliss and peace of immortality, suffering and pain are no longer suffering and pain. His entire life and all its experiences are transmuted into one ceaseless flow of ineffable ecstasy. Here sorrow and pain reach their supreme triumph. Those who have achieved this victory alone know the sweet uses of long suffering. It is they who proclaim that God, the creator of the worlds, is all goodness and benevolence. They do not find fault with the conditions existing in the world, because they know that the darkest moments of life herald the dawn of a radiant light of everlasting peace and happiness.

So glorify suffering and, understanding its true purpose in your life, make the right use of it. Instead of being cowed down by it, raise yourself and aspire for the higher and nobler aims of life. Cheerfully invite suffering, keeping in view the loftiest goal of life—the great Reality that lies at the basis of your and world existence. May the sublime possibilities of life be revealed in you by the transmuting touch of suffering. Let suffering cause to flower your soul so that it might emit the perfume of

infinity, the bliss of eternity, and shine forth with that light, peace and love which is unconditioned and absolute. Blessed indeed are those that suffer.

RIDDLE OF LIFE

Suppose you are on the top of a hill and view at a distance, shooting up from the edge of a cliff, the branches of a tree. They appear to you to be suspended and growing in the air. You wonder at the sight. You question yourself as to how a tree could grow and appear in the air without a prop to stand upon. You do not stop at that. You proceed towards the strange sight with great eagerness to solve the mystery. You approach the very brink of the cliff where the branches were seen. Now you peep down and what do you behold? You find that the branches belong to a tall tree having its root far down at the base of a deep precipice. Now your wonder has ceased. You have discovered the root of the illusive appearance and everything is clear to you. Your riddle is solved. So it is with life. For you it proves to be a perplexing riddle, so long as you have not seen the source of it. The appearances delude you and you are asking yourself: "Where did I come from? Who am I? Whence is this universe?" You cudgel your brains with these questions, and strive hard with all the powers of your thought to find a solution for them. If you merely stand where you are and think and discuss within yourself however much you may, still you are far away from the solution. With zeal and earnestness you must walk the distance that takes you to the place wherefrom you can get the vision of your source.

The path to the source of your and world's being is not without. You have to go within yourself. You must go past your senses, mind and intellect; you must traverse beyond all your ideas and ideals; you must transcend all limits, conditions and tastes, and then alone will you have the fullest vision and realization of your im-

mortal root. This immortal root is also the root of all that exists—the visible and invisible worlds, and all beings and creatures in them. Now you realize that one common existence has evolved the variety of manifestations observed all around you. Your perplexity is totally extinct. The knotty problems of your life are solved once for all. You know that you are one with all lives—one with the entire universe. Infinity is your true existence. Eternal bliss is your real nature. Birth, change and death are passing and playful events in your cosmic life and spirit. Your life, in tune with the infinite God, has now reached the haven where everlasting felicity and peace dwells. In one word, you have realized your supreme Godhead.

OBJECT OF LIFE

The principal object of human life is to constantly think and meditate upon God. God is seated in the hearts of all creatures and pervades all moving and non-moving objects. By dedicating all actions to Him you have to live with all beings in mutual love and harmony. The basis of this love is eternal peace. God who is the very being of love is also the embodiment of Peace. Immortality, bliss and wisdom are His other Divine attributes. Refuge in this all-benevolent Lord grants the soul, who is stricken with sorrow born of ignorance, imperishable bliss, peace and freedom.

He who aspires to attain the highest good should surrender to the supreme Lord who is the saviour, controller and protector of the worlds. There is no true happiness for him, here or hereafter, who has forgotten Him. So long as the darkened sense of separateness distorts one's vision, one cannot be free from discontent. The distortion can never disappear without the opening of the inner sight that beholds the same Divine Principle permeating all creatures and things. So those blessed souls who look upon the universe as the very image of

God are alone perfect, wise and free. Reaching this supreme height enjoy the rarest bliss of union with God.

Do not divide Bhakti, Jnana and Karma as distinct limbs of Yoga or different Yogas. Pure Bhakti is itself fire of Jnana. The movement born of the equality of Bhakti and Jnana is itself Karma. The heart is rising in waves of Bhakti. Buddhi is enlightened with Jnana. The confluence of these two produce the blissful stream of Karma for the good of humanity. Thus the Yoga that is formed of Bhakti, Jnana and Karma is the perfect Prem-Yoga or Yoga of Love.

Prem or Love does not mean the emotional ebullitions of the heart. It is not the tears that flow down the eyes. It is not the mere glowing thoughts made manifest in words. Although it is made up of all these signs, Prem is still beyond them all. It is the very form and being of God Himself shining with the lustre of perfection in whom Bhakti, Jnana and Karma are equally embodied.

If we would that God who is infinite Love should in all His glory reveal Himself in us, His love must reflect in our thoughts, words and deeds. Prem is composed mainly of three powers, viz: power of forgiveness, power of compassion and power of endurance. Although we are subjected to hate, contumely and persecution from others, we do not harbour thoughts of ill-will or revenge towards them but think and wish well of them. Here we exercise our power of forgiveness. We take the sorrows and trials of others as our own and to bring them relief we go forward to serve them with enthusiasm and selfless spirit. We sacrifice for their sake our body, mind and riches. Here we exercise the power of compassion. We suffer to any extent in order to free others from their pains and troubles, and for gaining this end we are prepared to cheerfully renounce all our personal pleasures. Here we exercise our power of endurance.

In a life of self-denial we experience pure, independent and incomparable delight. It is now we have the realization of the fullest Prem. It is now the soul, hav-

ing achieved liberation, reveals himself in his true being as the Brahman. Now the soul remains merged in the limitless ocean of Anand in all states.

Attain to this greater than the greatest status of Purushottama. Reach this transcendent apex of human aspiration which is your birth-right. Having realized deathless Peace spread it all over the world. Be blessed!

INFINITE KNOWLEDGE, POWER AND JOY

True knowledge is the awareness of a changeless existence. True power is an emanation from this existence. And true joy is the nature of play of this power. Knowledge, power and joy being the attributes of one supreme Reality are ever eternal. To intellectually understand the wholeness and comprehensiveness of these qualities, the analogy of the sun, his rays and the resultant light, all of which resolve into one entity, holds good.

The aim of human life is clearly to realize this great Reality; to lift human nature to this transcendent vertex of the Godhead; to infuse into the intellect, will and action, the ecstasy of this immortal music. It is then that the human life attains the real triumph and victory on this earth for the enjoyment of the highest bliss and peace.

A human being is essentially and inherently an embodiment of true knowledge, power and joy. His real being is an infinite expanse of blissful existence, his powers are the waves of joy that play on the bosom of this boundless ocean of life. It is given only to a human being to experience the height of this realization.

The one aspiration of all beings is for liberation and peace. Man can intuitively feel that there does exist within him a state of perfect freedom in which no fetters can shackle him; a state in which nothing can disturb his peace; further that this state is unchanging and eternal. But the question remains; how can one enter into this everlasting kingdom which is made up of light, power

and peace—what qualifies him for such an adventure?

A self-created and very strong wall of separation shuts the individual from the view and experience of the immortal realm and this wall is the individual sense or ego. The eradication of the ego-sense only befits the individual for achievement of the loftiest perfection of the transcendent Truth. As the dam obstructs the free flow of a stream; as a clog within the flute permits not the outpouring of melodious notes; as an ill-tuned stringed instrument cannot produce charming music; as the dimmed glass does not lend itself to the reflection of light through it; so the ego, with which an individual is obsessed, is the one hindrance to the spontaneous revealment of the indwelling Divine power and joy. Remove the dam and you allow the waters of the stream with all its pristine purity to flow in a sparkling current. Empty the flute off its clogged matter and you play upon it to produce a celestial melody. Tune the instrument and you draw from it most entrancing music. Clean the glass and you permit the light to pass through it with a glorious brilliance. Similarly, eliminate the ego-sense from your life and that instant you liberate life to realize its oneness with immortal Truth, its oneness with the entire universe, its oneness with the infinite Power, its oneness with the everlasting joy.

Every man or woman wants to be great in culture, great in power and great in action; to achieve magnificent success in all undertakings; to enjoy peace and plenty — life's invaluable gifts; in short, to fill existence with an invincible spirit of supreme light, love and bliss. The secret of this life sublime lies in complete self-abnegation.

There is a story that a devotee prayed to God to take His seat in his heart. But God replied that since his ego had installed itself in his heart, and there was no room for two within, God could not fulfil the prayer. The devotee was, therefore, asked by God to eject the imposter ego from the heart so that He might come in

and take His seat. Surely, when the human heart is evacuated thoroughly of the ego and its host of desires, it is then only the great Truth, that is He who is the whole universe and beyond would manifest within it. Now the cramped consciousness of the unlightened soul is dissolved or expanded into the infinite splendour and vastness of universal and super-universal life and existence. Now it is that the man or woman who has thus reached the peak of the God-vision comes by the highest satisfaction, strength and felicity which human life can grant.

God-realization is not a fetish, is not an enslavement to any cult or doctrine, is not a by-product of the membership of any sect, creed, church or society; but it is a total setting free of the eternal Divine Principle innate in every being, so that life may be universalized and thereby be made to understand and experience its identity with the Truth of infinite knowledge, power and joy—the grandest end and aim of life.

WHERE IS TRUE HAPPINESS?

Man ransacks thousand and one ways for attaining true happiness and peace. He thinks by accumulation of wealth he could become happy. He aims at a status of authority and power believing that by obtaining it he could be happy. Then again he strives to be learned and well-versed in modern and ancient lore expecting thereby he would reap happiness. Again, he provides himself with the various objects of sense enjoyments with a view that he would derive from them the happiness he is in search of. Thus he cuts out innumerable avenues of approach to happiness. After all, even when he has gained all things which he desired and has fulfilled all his ambitions he finds that he is where he was, or even far lower than where he was, when he started on the quest.

The Divinely illumined seers of old who have plumbed the very depths of life and have completely

mastered the secrets of it tell us, with one voice, that for the pursuit of true happiness man must take his thought and vision away from the evanescent objects of external life, and going deep beyond them into the recesses of his own soul find there the immortal source of self-existent and ever-lasting peace and happiness. He who has discovered this mysterious source looks upon with wonder, not uncoupled with pity, on the world in general which is mad after possessions, riches, authority, name and fame.

Now, what is this Divine source which is by its very nature pure peace and happiness? It is a Truth which is indescribable. But then, our seers have given us some indications of its existence. The Truth is an invisible power that permeates through all the universe uniting and harmonising all things into one homogeneous whole. In the light of this great Truth, the diversity seen on the surface of universal life is realised as the variegated expression of the underlying Reality. To know that we are this Truth—this comprehensive, all inclusive and all-embracing Reality means to experience a state of bliss, peace and freedom which is simply ineffable. This way alone lies the right endeavour for eternal happiness. All the sages and saints of every age and clime have striven and are striving to awaken mankind to the consciousness of the supreme happiness which is man's real quest and goal.

Now, the question is how to obtain this happiness. We know without a resolute endeavour we cannot get any great thing in life that we aspire for. What is needed in the first place when we embark upon the adventure of finding the great blissful Truth is, we have to conserve all our physical and mental energy and concentrate it upon the attempt at realizing this great goal. Hence, the sages declare concentration and meditation will put the aspirant on this path. By a substitution of a Divine consciousness we have to transcend human limitations and weaknesses. As we go on devoting our thought to the

contemplation of our higher and Divine nature, our fettered and obsessed self is set free. When thus our ego-sense which is darkness that has enshrouded the purity and radiance of our soul is dispelled, we come into a knowledge of our true existence which is one with the universal life—the great Reality—who is immortal bliss and peace. Concentration and meditation lead to self-surrender or dissolution of the ego-sense. Man, thereafter, lives, moves and has his being in the eternal. Or, in other words, he becomes the very expression of immortal splendour and inexhaustible peace and joy. Such a life is likened to the sun that sheds his light on all alike. He will thus be a power to spread love, good-will and harmony in the world which is now veering towards the precipice of chaos and confusion.

So, when a man goes in the right direction for the attainment of true happiness which he hungers for, he will not only be himself blessed with it, but also bring about harmony and peace in the world. The first and the foremost thing, therefore, is to realize the supreme state of eternal happiness for oneself, and this will automatically conduce towards the formation of a consciousness of peace and goodwill among mankind.

Man would exclaim, 'Oh, these things are too big for us' or 'the true happiness held out is a chimera or something that exists only in the imagination of some whose minds are not in balance.' Man generally believes in the object which is right before him and yields him a touch of joy. He grabs at it without caring to understand that there is a source of a higher and real joy within himself independent of the external objects of his life. There are, however, some heroic souls who have conquered the temptation of outside allurements, and breaking through the walls of ignorance have entered into the kingdom of true happiness within themselves by realization of the supreme Truth. Such are the true Teachers of mankind, such are the true Saviours that

liberate man from the thralldom of the senses and guide him to his rightful heritage of immortal life.

GLORY OF LIFE

The charm and glory of life manifests when it is tuned with and merged in the great universal Self who pervades all forms, objects and things. The soul which is imprisoned within the toils of individualism now attains the bliss of perfect freedom. Either on the physical plane or on the spiritual, man's hunger is for freedom. True freedom means real peace and happiness. The spiritual freedom is distinctly superior to the mere physical freedom; because whilst the latter grants man merely a touch of happiness, the former yields everlasting bliss. A man spiritually liberated, though physically bound, has realized eternal happiness but not the man who is spiritually bound though physically free.

Hence spiritual freedom should be the goal of life, if a soul would aspire to enjoy eternal felicity. A soul must lose itself in the infinite Spirit. In such an absorption the soul identifies itself with that supreme Spirit. In any state, however exalted, in which the identification with the great Spirit is not attained, perfect liberation and pure everlasting joy are never possible. The absolute, the immortal, the great Reality is ever one. Any existence conceived of as secondary, equal or different from it can only be relative and hence not perfect. The wave and the ocean, the light and the sun are in their essence one and the same although to the clouded vision they appear to be different. So in the absolute essence of Reality, God, universe and the individual soul are one.

The upward flight of the soul is always towards this perfect identity with the great One who is the same through and in all. The river of life struggles through all obstacles and conditions to reach the vast and infinite ocean of existence—God. It knows no rest, no free-

dom and no peace until it mingles with the waters of immortality and delights in the vision of infinity.

CREATIVE IDEAL

Life can reveal its inherent creative power to the fullest extent only when its narrow vision is changed into a vast and all-embracing vision. The fulfilment of life's quest depends upon the search and attainment of this infinite vision. The limited range of the intellectual and physical outlook of life should give place to an all-comprehensive thought and action so that they can diffuse like the sun, the light of disinterested and blissful service. So long as life is lived for the satisfaction of the selfish and sensual pleasures, it is lived in vain, because by such a course it involves itself in a deep morass of ignorance and misery. Expansion of the consciousness or, in other words, the decentralization of the vision grants life the awareness of the eternal fountain from which it has started. When thus life is tuned with the infinite source to which it belongs, all the blessings which it is capable of conferring upon itself and others will become the spontaneous result of its movements.

So live life for the sake of the highest ideal—the ideal of self-illumination and service. Let your soul be fired with the aspiration to live, work and die for this great purpose. Man is unhappy because he toils and moils, egged on by selfish ambitions and desires. If he puts before himself an ideal of liberation and selfless service as the chief goal of life, he will enjoy peace and contentment even when losses and disappointments confront him. He will now possess the strength of endurance and patience to withstand the depressing effects of defeats and failures. Hence devote the precious time of your life for the achievement of this outstanding aim of it. Be self-giving and selfless and all the joys of this life are yours. Give and give every ray of your intelligence and every atom of your power, radiate all the

splendour of your soul, sacrifice all the petty and evanescent ambitions of your life, and by a total dedication of all your powers realize your true being which is immortal radiance and love.

Now what is the ideal you have to cherish? You will admit there is no higher ideal than the Infinite. To have the mind dwelling in the Infinite and the hands at work here to help humanity out of its misery, distress, pain and poverty, are the characteristics of one who cherishes this ideal. Mere dry philosophy without a life imbued with love, compassion and service cannot sweeten and glorify life. Merely talking of great ideals and taking pride in the knowledge of the traditional past, merely putting on a garb of sanctity, merely delivering messages in rhetoric and sonorous words are not the things that count. Life's value is often judged by the low standard which obtains with most people who think that its sole aim is for satisfying the cravings of the senses. To be of category means moral and spiritual suicide.

Therefore wake up to a new and elevated consciousness that would lead you to the realization of the most beneficent use of life. Avoid imitation. Be the light unto yourself and in your own original way manifest the magnificence and power of your enlightened life. Be highly creative and set free the infinite power that is within you. Take your stand on the supreme Truth which is your real existence and march onward in life with courage and joy. Suffer to serve; conquer your senses and defy the fear of death. Let the flame of life burn with the splendour that heals, uplifts and serves all humanity. If you attain to this lofty ideal you will have gained the inexpressible beatitude of this life—immortal light, love and peace.

SUMMIT OF LIFE

Human life stands at the apex of creation because it is greater than that of all other creatures, nay it bears a

loftier significance than the life of the very gods. The possibilities which human life is capable of achieving are unique and colossal. Principally, it is made up of three main aspects, viz: physical, mental and spiritual. If this magnificent life is lived merely in the body without the cultivation of its finer and higher aspects, it assumes a position lower even than the animal life. The mental life, when it has risen above the physical, is of a more expanded sphere, partially awakened to the subtler depths of it. But, when life transcends both the lower planes, it ascends to a state which is of the supreme Spirit in which all the narrowness and limitations of the lower aspects are dissolved into the infinite vastness of an exalted and all-embracing spiritual consciousness. In this supreme consciousness lies the root of the universal manifestation comprising the innumerable worlds of creatures and things. The nature of this infinite source is invincible power, illuminating wisdom, universal love and eternal joy. This is the basic truth towards which human life and all life in the universe is consciously or unconsciously progressing. All struggle and strife we witness around us is clearly a search for this fundamental truth, by the discovery of which alone the tumult on the physical and mental planes of life could cease.

The splendour of the Spirit seeks on the other hand to pierce through the outer veils of gross and material nature and reveal itself through human life. The world with all its present day confusion and clash of lesser ideals, narrow and self-interested actions and selfish ambitions, is seen to be inevitably striving to gain a vision and a realization in which it can find true liberation, harmony and peace.

Now the process that should lead human life towards the attainment of the highest ideal which is universal and eternal, is to cross the limitations of the body and mind, and by entering deeper into the inherent realm of the great Spirit realize the magnificent oneness of all life and existence. It must shine like the sun which em-

braces all creation and bathes it in the floods of its light. Verily, the great Spirit who is the basis of the universe pervades all things and illumines all life with His infinite power and splendour. Therefore, the true way of life and the sweetest consummation of it is to live the inner life of power, wisdom and bliss.

To live this life the body and the mind has to be completely laid at the door of the great Truth as a loving sacrifice or offering. In other words, these two aspects of life must be consecrated in their entirety for the light of the Spirit to illumine, elevate and sanctify them. Hence an utter dedication of the lower life to the higher one is held to be the means for this supreme attainment.

When this great source of life is discovered and human life is allowed to be regulated in the light of it, it becomes a very torch of unquenchable love, illumined wisdom and almighty power. Life is indeed Truth itself revealed. A human being is a concrete image of Truth. There are involved in him or her the sublime potentialities that can convert all the surrounding life, bringing it nearer to the great origin. Hence, one enlightened human being can electrify the hearts of millions and awaken them to the consciousness of their immortal, all-pervading, ever blissful nature. Man's and world's liberation from the bondage of the sense of diversity, and attainment of the resultant peace and harmony, can be possible only when they begin to live in the Spirit. Narrow and limited boundaries which have been ignorantly set up, the demarcations that divide humanity into camps of selfish aims and aspirations such as national, racial, sectarian and imperial, must be demolished by the power of true vision. The pride of power and authority and a spirit of domination, which are all the qualities of the lower life, must give place to a wider, divine and truer outlook founded upon the knowledge of the supreme Spirit who is the one great Truth that inspires all planes of existence.

The real joy born of the eternal can be obtained by every individual when he or she would, in a spirit of undaunted adventure, enter into the mysterious but all-beneficent kingdom of his soul. Therein is the power and joy of Truth. Let the body be engaged in selfless service, the mind be purified of all gross desires and turned into a limpid pool of dazzling intelligence and the soul be expanded and absorbed into the unlimited consciousness of the great Divinity dwelling within.

BLESSED QUEST OF LIFE

To make life independent, free and ever blissful is the hunger and quest of every soul. This is possible only when the mind, through ceaseless practice, is kept at its highest state of elevation and exaltation by the contemplation of an all-radiant and ever-existent Reality. The easiest way to thus spiritualize and illumine the mind is meditation upon the lives and teachings of great Divine personalities of the past and the present. What rapture of joy and stillness of peace saturate the mind when you bring into your mind the recollection of Shiva and Vishnu, Rama and Krishna, Buddha and Christ, Mohammed and Zoroaster and a host of God-realized Rishis, saints and savants of the world! The more you train your thought to dwell upon them, the purer your mind, heart and actions become. You imbibe by mere recollection and utterance of their names the fullness of the glory and perfection which they symbolize. Verily, thought makes the man. Pursuit after low and ephemeral things degrades the soul whereas, fired with a resolute purpose, to aim at the highest beatitudes of life is to fill the soul with everlasting light and joy.

To take the name of God or of His incarnations does not become a futile discipline provided that at the very sound of the Name the divine attributes of God flash on your mind. Now pure emotions rise in blissful waves from your heart, the very lustre of God reflects on your

intellect, and spontaneity and innocence are stamped on all your actions.

It must be understood at the very outset, before you start on the supreme task of shaping your life and conduct in accordance with a lofty and Divine ideal, that you should bear that ideal in your bosom and not look upon it merely as an outside object of worship. You should gradually transmute your internal being into one of immortal splendour and joy by complete absorption into the ideal. What is the ideal? It is not external form, the shape in which it is presented to the world, but it is the all-transcendent Truth which is impersonal. When we say Truth is impersonal it does not denote negation, for Truth is eternal love, light and bliss. So to realize Truth is to attain eternal love, light and bliss. Your transmuted being should thus become the revealed vehicle for the play of these Divine attributes. True freedom and peace which alone could quench the thirst of the soul lie on this path and no other. Sheer groping in the dark cannot grant you light. You must open the only door that leads you to light and freedom. You must know where you stand, how you have to proceed and what is the goal to attain. To blindly follow without understanding can lead you nowhere. If you really long for the Truth, if you really love Truth beyond all things, if you truly possess a burning desire to know and realize Truth, strive for it with a mind cleared of all doubts, misgivings and confusions, and with a determined step go to meet your supreme Lord and Master within yourself. Let there be no hesitation or lukewarmness about it. Be earnest and sincere to the core. Truth demands a complete sacrifice and dedication. No half-hearted devotion, no flickering faith, no erratic endeavour can take you to the almighty Beloved. Be steady, heroic, dauntless in this blessed quest of life.

KNOW THE SOURCE

When we recede into the depths of silence within us we arrive at the true basis of our life. We discover that from this Source all life and manifestation have come forth in their amazing variety and multiplicity. It is at this Source that we discover the eternal fountain of peace and joy. Until an individual gets the vision of this fundamental existence, he will be simply groping on the surface and therefore in the dark, in pursuit of vain and evanescent things, believing that these can yield him the true peace and happiness which his soul hungers for .

By the mere acceptance of a cult or creed a man cannot progress on the path of Truth. By merely becoming a member of a society or institution or by assuming the position of a disciple of any great and Self-realized personality, can he hope to attain to spiritual perfection? What is needed is that, by coming into close grips with the varied experiences of life and by constant touch with the inner Reality of his life, he should cut out his path so that his march towards the Truth may be steady and uninterrupted. What is principally required is the withdrawal of his mind from without to within, which means that the restless and roaming nature of the mind must be totally arrested by right thought, right contemplation and right meditation. The mind has to settle down and the uncontrolled dynamics of it must be brought under subjection. Perseverance and an unflagging endeavour are the qualities of a true aspirant or seeker of Truth. Lassitude, idleness and heedlessness are the enemies of spiritual progress. Awareness, watchfulness and effort are the true qualities of a Sadhaka.

It is true that the ego has to be subdued before Self-illumination can come. It is not an easy thing to put down the ego. A lukewarm attempt and emotional outbursts cannot wipe it out. Self-surrender is not so easy

of attainment as many would think. The individual sense is one great obstacle in the way of the mind's journey to its Source. To quell the ego-sense is to rise above the body consciousness—to dwell in an all-pervading universal consciousness. It is like transporting oneself from the realms of darkness into the kingdom of light. It is to be free from the clutches of death by realizing one's immortality. It is union of the soul with the Oversoul. It is the identity of the spark with the eternal fire. It is the infinite expansion of a narrow life and outlook into infinite existence and vision.

When the Source is known and seen, we understand the true meaning of this life. Bereft of this knowledge mankind is caught in the wilderness of discontent, hate and misery. The realization of immortal peace and freedom is at once individual and universal because the freedom of the individual makes for the freedom of the universal. Life's values therefore are not to be set by mere external rules and regulations, conditions and circumstances, but by an all-comprehensive knowledge of the great Power which lies at its inception. What one should do or should not do is not what a true spiritual life dictates. It is from what vision and from what knowledge the life is regulated that matters. So the first and foremost thing for everyone to do is to find out the immortal root of his being, and look upon the external life from the consciousness of this root. Then life will adjust itself most harmoniously with the lives of all beings and creatures in this world. Even in external clashes there will ring out the music of a subtle universal harmony. Therefore, seek the Truth within yourself, stop not until you have reached it, until you have attained to the full knowledge of it, until you have made it one permanent basis for all your life's activities. Know this Source and be free.

RELIGION AND ITS NEED

TRUE RELIGION

Religion is a matter of experience. Merely by becoming a member of a church, creed or sect, a person cannot be entitled to this experience. By reading any amount of scriptures and sacred books he cannot be granted this experience. By the observances of rites, ceremonies or worship a man cannot come by this experience. Spiritual realization is a question of individual effort and struggle. It is the purification of the heart and illumination of the intellect which alone can lift him from the human to the Divine plane.

The man of true religion, when he is on the path, is mainly concerned with his own internal struggle for liberation and peace. He offers a steady and sustained fight to the enemies within him that obstruct his passage into the realm of God. His one sole aim is to totally live in the Divine light and life. He conserves and concentrates all the powers of his understanding, heart and activities for the realization of this supreme state. Before he attains the goal, he would naturally shrink from preaching to others the great truths of spiritual experience. One cannot infuse into another the spirit of Truth unless one has the fullest knowledge and experience of it.

True religion is a religion of love, founded upon a clear knowledge and perception of the unity of all life and its varied expressions. The realization of one's immortality constitutes the spiritual goal. Love for all beings and creatures in the world is based upon this height of realization. Here love works with such an infinite vision that it breaks down all barriers of caste,

creed and colour. He beholds the eternal Beloved of his heart manifest in all beings and creatures. This love refuses to be circumscribed by any limitation; because it flows with such an irresistible force that it demolishes all boundaries.

If humanity aims at real unity and peace, every man and woman must practise this true religion and become conscious of the one true God who is the one parent of all beings and creatures in the world. To be united with God is therefore to realize unity with mankind. This is the only solution to the present-day world problem so created by the spirit of distrust, hate, dissension and war.

So let us scrape away and rub off all the accretions of superstitions, worn-out dogmas and customs, and unessential and ostentatious rituals and observances belonging to all religions, and stand together in the one essential light of God whose beneficent rays are pouring on us all alike.

OBJECT OF RELIGION

The object of religion is to raise human life and consciousness to Divine life and consciousness. It is in fact a God-possession by which every aspect of life is elevated and transformed into an absolute state of perfection. The purpose of all spiritual discipline such as prayer, worship and self-dedication is to attain to this exalted state. It must be at the very outset understood that the supreme Truth which we aspire to realize is dwelling within everyone of us. By a continuous recollection and meditation of this Truth we ought to provide favourable internal conditions so that this supreme Reality may purify the emotions of the heart and fill it with love, compassion and peace, that it may illumine the intellect with the vision of equality and an universal sense of oneness in the multitudinous revelations of nature, that it may be made to flow out spontaneously

by the balance of a purified heart and inspired intellect as selfless action that tends towards the regeneration of humanity without any distinction of race, creed, colour or nationality.

The heart which is thrilling with Divine love should expand and envelope the entire creation with all beings and creatures in it. The intellect detached and merged in the superconscious and static existence behind the manifestation should stand as an eternal witness, calm, serene and filled with radiance, supporting the workings of universal love and service for which the heart and body are made the instruments.

God, who is at once the immanent and transcendent spirit, who is the one sole Reality, is not only the silent and attributeless Brahman but also a Truth revealed as eternal light, infinite love and endless peace and bliss. A prolonged contact with this all-comprehensive Truth should enable us to be surcharged with these Divine attributes and transform the stumbling and ignorant human nature into a very expression of Divine light, love and bliss. Merely an ostentatious display of religious observances will not do; what is needed in the first place is a tremendous sincerity to rise to the very height of the Godhead to attain which is the chief aim and ambition of every aspirant or seeker after Truth. God must be made to work in us transmuting our entire life to one of spiritual splendour and peace, so that we can feel that we are utterly Divine in every atom of our being. We must live, move and have our being totally in God. The halo of a divine light should surround us, and the rays of pure and glorious love should radiate from us translating itself into action that relieves the distress, misery and discord which prevail in the life of humanity at large. Religion is not a thing for mere show. Religion signifies a real linking of the individual soul with the cosmic and ultra-cosmic Reality, ultimately to know that the individual is the embodiment of a universal Spirit whose nature is absolute existence, all-pervading

consciousness and inexhaustible joy.

Human life is indeed essentially Divine and the endeavour of a spiritual aspirant is to realize the truth of this mystic formula. In order to reach this state he must concentrate all the faculties of his heart and mind and all the powers of his senses and body for breaking down the walls of ignorance that obstruct him from attaining the vision of his true, eternal and divine nature. Life has to be totally dedicated to this lofty purpose. Lukewarm devotion and an interrupted course of discipline and a broken stream of meditation cannot enable the struggling soul to capture and possess the Truth. God-realization is not an easy-going path. A steadfast faith, unshakable determination and resolute endeavour can alone make him progress towards it and enable him to come face to face with God, within the least possible time. No sacrifice should be considered too great to attain this supreme goal. Therefore, it is truly said that heroes are alone fit to walk on this path—that men of undaunted spirit can alone enter upon this adventure. Surely, man who has turned his back upon pursuits after the ephemeral and illusive objects of the world can stand erect facing the magnificent light of lights—the eternal God—and run towards Him with a heart burning with a keen and insatiable hunger for Him whom he holds as his only Beloved, by reaching whom alone his hunger can be appeased.

God-realization does therefore mean for the aspirant to behold the Divine within and without all existences and, as a result, to extend his love and goodwill towards all beings and creatures in the world, to offer up every iota of his physical and spiritual power for the service of humanity and thus live the life of God Himself manifest in flesh and blood. Religion is therefore the practice of the highest Truth which brings about the transformation of the human into the resplendent being of the Godhead.

WHAT RELIGION WE WANT

Religion, whose function is to guide and inspire mankind towards a life of mutual understanding, help and friendliness, has strangely been the cause of racial hatreds, destructive rivalries and false attitudes of superiority.

We want a religion shorn off all its narrow particularizations, and free from dogmatic beliefs, superstitious impositions and begotting and sanctimonious ways. We want a religion which appeals to the inner spirit of every man and woman—a religion which is universal in its outlook and embraces all alike within its fold. We want a religion which brings love and joy to our heart, and light and wisdom to our head. We want a religion that knits man to man, irrespective of any apparent distinctions, into a common human community on the earth. We want a religion that teaches us to sacrifice our little joys for the service of the distressed humanity. We want a religion that would give us the sight to behold all the members of the human race as belonging to one world family. We want a religion that makes us realize that we are the immortal, all-pervading and ever-blissful Spirit, and that God, we and universe are one in the absolute Reality. We want a religion that would make us offer our homage equally to all the Teachers and Incarnations of the different creeds and sects in the world.

Religion is, in its real sense, as vast as the very heavens which grants refuge to all alike; as accessible to all as the very air that fills all space; and as equal in granting its favours to everyone as the light of the sun. You cannot confine religion within the narrow walls of a creed or society. So to be the votary of true religion means to be utterly free from all cramping limitations and to come out in the open to grip the hand of a Hindu, a Christian, a Moslem, a Parsi, a Buddhist, a Jain and a Jew with the same equal love and vision.

The keynote of a religious life is selfless service—a service born of pure love and compassion for all beings and creatures on this earth. It is only such Divinely inspired men and women who can stand forth as the champions of peace and goodwill, because they are possessed with the exalted vision of life eternal. Every human being can raise himself to this spiritual splendour and peace. He has only to break through the shell of egoism and reveal himself as he is—snap the bonds of the flesh and enter into his immortal life of the Spirit. Thus liberated he speaks out:—

“Peace and joy being your inherent possession why go **out** of yourself in pursuit of them? Being the light yourself, why do you grope in darkness longing for an outer changing ray, why deny your own everlasting radiance? Know that, you are the Soul of the very universe—the eternal light, peace and joy. Realize your light and illuminate all. Realize your peace and shower tranquillity on all. Say ‘I am the all-blissful Spirit’ and shed your joy on all. Assert your Divine nature and liberate thousands and millions from the fetters of bondage. Be God and lead others to God.

Love all and hate none. Mere talk of peace will avail you nothing. Mere talk of God and religion will not take you far. Bring out all the latent powers of your being and reveal the full magnificence of your immortal Self. Be surcharged with peace and joy and scatter them wherever you are and wherever you go. Be a blazing flame of Truth, be a beauteous blossom of love and be a soothing balm of peace. By the power of your Spirit dispel the darkness of ignorance, dissolve the clouds of discord and war and bring goodwill, peace and harmony amongst the people of the globe. This is your mission in life.

Live not for passing phantasies of life. Bid for immorality by dedicating all the forces of it to the service of God in humanity. Away with petty ambitions. Away with a low and narrow vision of life. Arise in all the

glory and majesty of your invincible Self. Be pure, selfless, patient and resigned, never allow the ego to raise its hood and drag you after it; but be full of power, grace and splendour of God, verily you are God."

This is what true religion should make of a human being, all else is vanity and vexation.

CHANGE WITHIN

Religious differences form one of the main causes that have created disunion and discord in the life of humanity. Men of true insight and vision are active and have, to an appreciable extent, succeeded in pulling down the walls that religions had set up, dividing one community from another, one race from another and one set of peoples from another. Still, attempts are being made to fortify these walls of separation by even men of great understanding and influence, out of sheer cussedness or pride. But this is not all. To add to the confusion of religions, some societies are started with the object of converting the followers of other sects and creeds in order to swell the numbers of their own.

It must be understood that the truth of a religious belief does not depend upon the number of followers it could boast of. Mere change of religion does not signify a change of heart. Mere external transformation in the mode and habiliments of life does not mean a passport to the heavenly worlds. What is required is an intense longing and hunger of the heart to probe into the mysteries of life and thereby realize the inherent glory and immortality of the human soul. Spirituality is not a thing to be made fuss about. It is a relation between soul and God. The soul's love for its Maker must be so great that it eventually finds its freedom and joy in a superconscious existence wherein it realises its oneness with the supreme Deity.

When the people are fighting for the supremacy of creeds and religions, God, the Divine principles who is

the basis of all life and manifestation, would seem to laugh at the abortive efforts of these narrow-minded and interested persons who go with the idea that by conversation to their faith alone a soul attains salvation.

India is a veritable home of religions and so India has become the battle-field on which a stiff fight amongst religions is fought. Conversion from one religion to another, brought about by questionable means, has been rife from a long time. This state of things has created a tense atmosphere which breeds ill-will and hatred between the different sections of the people. If India, or the world in general, should be really united and happy, this restless and pernicious activity must cease. Let every religionist, instead of creating rivalries, fix his gaze upon the great saviour of his faith, and understanding the universal imports of his teachings shed their invidious animosities, and cultivate love and good-will towards the followers of other faiths. There is already the dawn of an age when religious, political and economic unity and harmony will rule the world. Let wisdom, love and the spirit of service hasten the inauguration and fulfil the purpose of such an age. Let man widen his vision and behold the entire mankind as one unit born of and sustained by one supreme Master and Controller. Peace and harmony are here. Love and its consummation are here. The world unity and happiness of the entire humanity are here.

AIM OF DHARMA

Dharma means that which upholds and elevates. Hence the basic principle underlying all manifestations of life is in the real sense Dharma. This principle is what we call God or Truth. Dharma therefore signifies the knowledge of the great Truth which upholds all things. From the light of this knowledge alone can the life of a human being be harmoniously adjusted in all its

various aspects. So the aim of Dharma is to infuse into all activities of life the splendour, bliss and peace of the Divine reality.

Dharma does not mean the observances of certain rituals and ceremonials which, as we observe in the world, are leading man only towards bigotry and selfishness. The nearer an earnest aspirant approaches God the more peaceful, the more simple, the more meek he would grow by shedding the evils of exclusiveness and selfishness. The aspirant, if he is true and sincere, should undergo a gradual transformation in his heart and mind, nay, in his entire outlook upon life. His clings to perishable baubles of the world must be slackened and ultimately fall off. His mind must dwell in infinity and heart's affection must expand and embrace the whole world and its creatures. If this state of supreme liberation is not held to be the aim of Dharma, and still a man says he is a devotee of the Lord and follower of Dharma, he may be sure that he is deceiving himself. Selfishness, greed and a spirit of accumulation, glossed over by a show of religious observances, passes for Dharma. It is observed, as a man proceeds on this path of self-delusion calling it religion, he only narrows his vision and crystallizes his selfishness, and consequently becomes a prey to fear, doubt, misery and utter weakness of will and spirit. Tied down by a thousand desires, anxieties and expectations he lives a life of bondage ever ruled by the redoubtable foes—the senses.

True devotion for God which means the adoption of true Dharma is for the liberation of the individual soul from its fetters imposed by ignorance, and for attaining the consciousness of immortality and perfect union with God—who is the one supreme Creator and Controller of the whole universe.

Seek the Eternal, live in the Eternal and become the Eternal. This is the aim of true Dharma.

MAN'S SUPREME QUEST

Man's supreme quest lies in his researches into the realm of the soul, spirit and God. Deeper he dives into the abyss of Truth more wonderful grows his experience. He finds worlds are involved in worlds and, as he progresses inward, subtler are the planes of existence which he meets. As he passes through them he beholds supernatural visions of Divine forms; hears the sweetest strains of celestial music; senses the intoxicating fragrance of heavenly aroma; is dazzled by the flashes of immortal radiance; experiences an unutterable rapture of pure bliss, and at last reaching the utmost confines of the soul and the inner worlds plunges into the infinite expanse of a static silence and immutable peace wherein everything is nought, wherefrom everything emanates. Further journey ceases here because now the traveller and the destination have resolved into one as the river merges into the ocean. This transcendent experience makes the soul realize not merely an inner unity of all life and existence but also the absolute oneness of all visible and invisible worlds of manifestation.

Now he feels both his physical and psychical being, in all its aspects, is utterly Divine as also the vast phenomena of nature before him. The ecstasy and light of the Divine fill every pore of his body, and every atom of his physical frame responds to the thrills of delight originating from his immortal Spirit which is now one with the cosmic soul, the great basic ultimate Godhead who is all-inclusive and all-transcendent.

Love now blossoms in his heart like a full-blown flower. The world is the play-ground of his liberated spirit. His bliss and freedom passeth all description. Childlike innocence pervades his entire being. Divine splendour illumines his face. He rolls in ineffable ecstasy. He knows he is immortal.

WHAT IS THE REAL WANT?

God is a living reality. He is more real than the ephemeral interests and things in which man is usually involved. Man's craving for the earthly achievements shuts him out from the recognition of the immortal truth of his existence. He is so deeply caught in the pleasures which are gained through mere sense perception and touch that he becomes blind to the exalted experience of eternal bliss and peace.

Divine nectar he rejects and seeks for satisfaction in transient delights which are ever accompanied with the reaction of acute pain and sorrow.

The question that troubles every one who has turned his back to the light of God is, "Which is the way out?" When asked to turn his face to the supreme Light, he replies, "None of your devotion, God and immortality to me. Give me something which will yield pleasure to my sense and intellect. Change your strain to suit my fancy. At any rate do not talk too much of Bhakti. I find no relish for it."

So God who is the very abode of absolute peace and happiness is not wanted. The loving God of his heart speaks aloud and says "O, my child, you can have no peace and freedom until you find them in Me. By taking refuge in Me alone can you achieve the fulfilment of your burning quest of life. Your struggling river of life should mingle with the ocean of My eternal life." The message from the Divinity within is unheard and unrealized. And man thus moves ceaselessly in a whirl of cares, anxieties, fears and doubts.

So O, beloved soul, unless you link your life with the Divine author of your being, your life is in vain. The earth gave you birth as a human being so that you might attain to the knowledge of your Divine existence. Shun the lower planes and soar up to the height of immortality. By complete self-surrender permit the supreme Lord seated in your heart to reveal Himself in all His glory.

GOD—THE ONE REFUGE

No human being in this world can say that he has not the moments of acute depression, harrowing sense of loss, blankness of despair and pangs of agony, suspense and utter grief. In these crucial moments he has sought a way of escape from the painful condition to which he is subjected. He looks for some hand strong enough to lift him out of his slough of despondency. His aching heart cries for help but he receives no response from anywhere. His crest-fallen spirit sinks lower still. His so-called friends, relations and fellow-men in the world fail him. Who could then save him and grant him peace? Where is hope for him? Then like a flash the words of saints and devotees of God rush into his mind. Yes, there is one great hope, there is one great refuge, there is one great saviour—and He is God.

God is the friend of the helpless and the shelter of the weak and the suffering. He is the protector and nourisher of the world. He is the most loving parent of all beings and creatures. You do not appeal to Him in vain. The instant you turn your face to Him and long to be folded in His loving embrace, that instant He pours on you the soothing light of His infinite grace. Your heavy-laden heart is at once unloaded of its sorrow. Your mind is bathed in the nectar of peace. Your soul, like a bird set free, now sings the song of freedom and joy. You feel intuitively that you have now come under the protection of an all-powerful being. You become conscious that He is ever with you, in you, about you, watching, guiding and guarding you with the most loving vigilance and care.

Such is the experience of many a saint and devotee of the past and the present. Such is the experience of Ramdas who writes these lines. Really, there is no safer and surer refuge for a creature than the supreme Lord of the universe. Remember this Lord and feel always humble and childlike before Him. Offer yourself entirely

to Him and enjoy for ever and ever the blessings of true peace and freedom. Love Him beyond all the things and objects. Hold Him as your all in all. He is in your heart.

MAKE YOUR LIFE DIVINE

All creatures including human beings are by nature active and prolific, and the ordinary life of everyone in the world is a whirlpool of continuous movement in its physical and manifest nature. The rush of activity has so far absorbed the lives of all people on this planet, and to such an extent that the eternal values that stand at the basis of human and all existence are in the majority of cases entirely ignored. Thus you find so much strife and chaos in the world as observed at the present time. Although every endeavour is made to harmonize life and so adjust its activities as to produce peace and happiness, we find the results achieved are far from the desired end. The reason is quite clear. So long as the aspiring heart of man is caught in the toils of mere confused activity of his lower nature, so long as his vision is only for the apparent and evanescent pleasures and ambitions of life, without a deep understanding of the fundamental principle on which his life is built, he cannot hope to infuse into his activities the true spirit of the higher and abiding light and joy of the immortal.

A true life, if it should be blessed with this splendour of its immortality, must be inspired with a consciousness of its deathless and changeless nature. So to control and guide life by an internal attuning of it with the universal spirit of God is the only right way to live life. Be in touch with the supreme truth of your being and, understanding the exalted purpose and goal of life, work out your destiny on the lines of love, kindness and charity. Religion is not of mere books or talk or a thing for reflection. Religion is an intensely practical thing—a revealment of the inherent supremacy of the

soul in all the turns of human life. You may belong to any sect, creed or faith, you may call yourself by any name or denomination, you may belong to any religious society but if you do not put into practice the highest ideals set forth by your great Teachers and live up to their magnificent examples in actual life and action, your profession of religion is of no avail. Your life is a current that is started from an eternal source. Make it flow in all its pristine purity so that it may lighten the burden of the weak, relieve the distress of the suffering, elevate the hearts of the depressed and in short bring sunshine and delight in the prevailing darkness of the world. With a firm will destroy all the inimical tendencies that seek to thwart this sweet and glorious consummation, conquer every selfish craving that tries to pull you down from your upward march towards the summit of this blessedness, eradicate from the heart all disruptive forces that conspire to keep you in your lower animal nature and, ultimately rising superior to them all, realize the sublimity of your Divine Self and thus illumine your life with the light, love and bliss of God.

SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION

The composition of a human being is made up of three dynamic elements, namely, intellect, heart and will. The intellect relates to the faculty of understanding, heart to emotion and will to action. The realization of God or Truth is to dwell in the consciousness of that supreme source which infuses the spirit of movement into these three elements. Because, by the recognition of this Divine source the life of a human being, in all its aspects, attains perfect harmony and peace of the eternal. So in the struggle of the human soul for arriving at this goal he should develop the intellect, heart and will simultaneously so that he can realize the source from which these receive their movements. Any abnormality in the development of one of these faculties over

the other results in disharmony and therefore prolongation of the struggle.

In the language of the Indian mystics, these predominant faculties that form the life of an individual are called Bhakti, Jnana and Karma. Bhakti denotes the elevation of the heart towards the great Reality through purified emotion or love. Jnana is the awakening of the intellect to the consciousness of the indwelling Truth through discrimination and dissociation. Karma is action performed in a spirit of selfless and spontaneous service. These three processes must work in unison if the aspirant would attain the goal as speedily as possible.

Reason and emotion should mutually aid and control each other, and from the balance of these two must proceed action. Thus it is clear that to give undue importance to the cultivation of any one of these faculties is wrong.

Life's fulfilment lies only in the realization of the Master Power or Truth who is at the basis of the varied gross and subtle manifestations in the universe. When once the life has seen the source and end of it as one and the same, the intellect, heart and body are automatically attuned with each other in all their movements. Then the glory of life is revealed in all its magnificence because it is now filled with Divine light, ecstasy and peace. A soul who has reached this highest consummation of life lives and acts in the world as the very embodiment of the highest wisdom, universal love and blissful activity.

MYSTICISM OF THE VEDANTA

To prove that the pantheistic conception of the universe is untenable or wrong the theist assumes the position that God created the universe out of nothing. Out of nothing, nothing alone can come unless nothing is the name he gives to something which is beyond our mental and sensual perception.

If something which is indefinable and incomprehensible did exist, out of which the apparent universe has evolved, that something must be a substance, however subtle or rarified in nature, which co-existed with God — sovereign power apart from it. If co-existent both must have been there from eternity. Whilst thus eternity is the attribute of God and also the original nebulous substance from which the world was brought into being, they cannot but form one united whole, possessing as they do the same determining quality — eternity. Dualism in eternity is inconceivable. To get over the questionable assumption that something was created out of nothing, the truth has to be admitted that God brought the universe into existence from His own immortal substance. In other words, the universe is a projection or emanation from God's own being and so not different from Him. "The one has become many: the formless has assumed all forms." "The invisible has revealed Himself as the visible." The supreme mystery of God as the oriental mystics or Rishis declare is this: "The great Cause, the supreme Lord of the worlds is at once the static, all-pervading Truth and also the dynamic Spirit, active and manifest in the vast phenomena of nature."

This is the conclusion arrived at by men of the highest spiritual insight whose lives have mingled with God's own life, who behold the universe as the one image of God with whom they have realized inseparable oneness. God is then an eternal essence and from this essence alone could He have created the substance of this universe. Matter is the expression of Spirit, is the complete revelation of God in nature. Else God must be like the potter—the maker of pots, a moulder of the worlds, independent of the substance with which He created them. If so, it should be held that He alone is responsible for the diverse natures implanted in all creatures and beings of the world as they exist. And the sinner and saint are both His handiwork. The question then

arises: Why the sinner then? Why the so-called wrong tendencies in one and right in another? These questions the theist cannot solve. To say merely it was Lord's sweet will and pleasure cannot be an answer. If God stands in relation to the world only as creator, surely why did He create sin, sorrow and suffering in it? The mystic says: When you are one with God in the deeps of meditation you declare all is right with the world because God Himself is all in all in it. Where is this God with whom you seek to be united? He replies: Verily God is within yourself. He is the all-pervading immortal principle at once static and dynamic, immanent and transcendent. He is not an autocrat sitting on a throne far off in a distant heaven holding arbitrary sway over the world. Such notions of God as preached and propagated by theists have been the cause of so much atheism, materialism and agnosticism prevailing in the world.

God is the life of our lives. He is our very light and breath, nay He is the very substance of our and world being. We can perceive order and harmony in the cosmos only when God is realized at once as the pantheistic spirit and as an all-controlling power behind the visible manifestation of this universe. The cosmos is His concrete expression—His revelation in name and form. As you cannot separate the light from the sun so you cannot imagine the creator as distinct from His creation.

The question that insistently ushers itself before us is: If God is almighty and if He is only to be understood as creator of things, why did He bring into existence the evils of hate, discord and war? Man makes the sad mistake when he views God and His ways from his limited knowledge of Him and imperfect vision of His greatness and glory. He takes God as a big man with all human frailties, narrow conceptions, prejudices and sharp distinctions about so-called good and evil and virtue and sin—in brief, he credits Him with his own

arrogant sense of false superiority and wisdom.

The truth is man and all creatures and things are his own images in varied forms playing the game of the worlds. The dust we condemn is as much Divine as man is, of which he is made. Worlds are teeming with God's own life. Nothing could be apart from Him. The rapture of His life fills every atom of the universe. The vision of the mystic is not a phantasy of heated brains. It is based on the highest spiritual experience and realization. It speaks of the deepest realms of the soul. It has probed to the central root of the transcendent Truth. He cries out in an exultant voice: "All this verily is God."

The perfection of the individual life is in his attainment to this cosmic vision. True is the saying: "Man is God playing the fool." Shuffle the vesture of humanity and you stand revealed as God. This is the revelation of the all-embracing Truth. It is not founded upon the dogmatic authority of scriptural words, it is not the dim and uncertain light received from books, but it is the very splendour of God made manifest in you by your absorption into His resplendent all-inclusive spirit and being. It is a consciousness of your absolute oneness with all creation and with the supreme Lord who, by His mysterious presence within it, activates and controls it as He wills. Hence there is for you harmony, beauty and fascination in the multicoloured and multiphased panorama of the universe which is He Himself in manifestation.

If you are really seized with wonder at the grand and variegated display of the universe, you cannot but feel one with it and the infinite spirit that permeates it. The wonder-touch plunges you into the abyss of a soul-experience and dissolves your individuality into the cosmic and ultra-cosmic vision of God.

Again there is another aspect emphasized by the theist. He presumes that the world is created by God for the behoof and enjoyment of man, whilst he as such, it is to be admitted, is an infinitesimally small and insigni-

ficant creature when compared with the unimaginably vast universe, with all the millions of forms of life and countless worlds embodying it. The greatness of man lies only in the rare and illumined faculty with which God has gifted him so that he can raise himself to that supreme consciousness which grants him the unique experience of oneness with God—the indwelling controller and the external power in manifestation. In the ecstasy of this attainment the soul does exclaim: "I am one with all life that animates the worlds—the entire universe is my visible image. My love for all is based upon my knowledge of identity with every being in spirit and in form."

Jesus said: "I and my Father are one." "To see the son is to see the Father." "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you." Verily, in that heaven which is within you dwells the Almighty for whom you seek, to whom you pray, with whom you long to be united and thus earn the blessings and beatitude of true liberation and peace. In the light of this exalted experience you now behold the worlds as the very form of God Himself illustrating His marvellous and grandiose existence. Man's conceited supremacy has no place in this vision. He adores even a blade of grass as worthy of worship because he beholds the light and power of God in the tiniest to the same degree as in the mightiest. Can there be a loftier goal to achieve than to lose yourself in the rapture of this indescribable glorious vision and live and act in life in the spontaneous outflow of the Divine splendour in you—"living, moving and having your being in God?"

"Ye are the temples of God." The temple is the outer tabernacle of God who dwells within, as sacred as He, because it is sanctified, nay, deified by His presence. Even the physical worlds, since they are formed of His own essence, are He himself self-revealed. Intrinsically, every form is Divine. Even if we admit the contention that God created the world out of nothing or something,

the world could not but be all good. To behold evil in it is to attribute evil to God who made it. You would naturally ask if God is almighty, why He created evil which you find so much in the world. If somebody else created evil in spite of God, you have to confess that God cannot be almighty, for, if He were so, He would have averted it. In fact, since God is the sole generator of the universe, there could be no other power than His that has caused it. Good or evil, thinking makes it so. The dual conception is in your own mind obsessed by ignorance, it is nowhere else since everything is good—everything is God, because He is goodness itself. The only sin, if sin exists, that has polluted the heart of man is his ego-sense which has created this dual sense of good and evil.

Everywhere, in every creature and thing, it is God alone who is manifest. Everywhere it is His power alone that works. The creative, constructive and destructive forces that cause, mould and change the face of nature are entirely His because He is in all and He is all.

Heaven is here for you when you realize that God dwells in you and that you are one with Him. Be oblivious of this supreme state and you are in a self-created hell. If you accept evil as existent you cannot "justify the ways of God to man." To create a man and then put him in a state of sin and ignorance and again redeem and take him to a heavenly realm away from the present sphere of his life does no credit to an almighty, all-beneficent God. He would indeed be charged with a cruel nature if He, having made man by His own will and power, should hurl him wantonly into the throes of unmerited pains, aches of abject poverty, all kinds of physical and mental sufferings and often into the depths of degradation, helplessness and despair. The benevolent God would not have it so, else He stands self-condemned by his own creation.

So, that God Himself is the universe and all creatures in it is the truth by the knowledge of which alone

man can feel, comprehend and fully experience the absolute goodness, mercy and love of the almighty God. In fact, there is none but He in all the manifestations. All natures, characters and qualities, observed in the world of human beings, creatures and things, belong to His game—He alone having become all.

PERSON AND IDEAL

Every one of us has an ideal for which we live. The ideal is manifest to us in a person for whom we have the highest admiration. This admiration develops into an exclusive adoration which ends ultimately in a concentrated longing to realize our perfect union with him or to transform ourselves into his likeness. Here the goal is distinctly clear, that is, to become one with the adored person.

Now the person is made up of certain qualities for which we conceive the highest love and regard, and we wish that we should also possess these qualities. So to adore a person and realize him is to convert ourselves into suitable moulds into which the spirit which permeates the being of our ideal person may be poured, so that we may live, move and act in every way in the light and inspiration of that person. Here it must not be forgotten that to realize the ideal is not to slavishly imitate the mode of life lived by our ideal person, but to imbibe into our being the qualities that make up the great example we have held before us.

Now, of all the ideals, it has been decided by the sages that the immortal Truth or God is the greatest because man's one aspiration is happiness and freedom. This aspiration can attain complete fulfilment only when we reach and realize this great ideal. But to attain this ideal by an abstract process is well-nigh impossible. Even to know and believe in the existence of such an ideal without the help of a concrete and manifest example is not possible. Hence, Divine personalities

that appear on the earth, in whom these attributes are revealed, are acknowledged by their respective votaries as their spiritual Teachers.

The qualities and attributes are, as everybody can understand, impersonal in nature. Personality is only a mask through which these exalted qualities reflect, are made visible and therefore tangible to the comprehension of the aspirant. Thus, it is proved that when we adore a Divine Teacher we love the spirit or ideal which that teacher symbolizes. All the Divine Teachers of the world stand for everlasting life surcharged with the highest bliss. They radiate the light of infinite love and ever dazzle with the vision of the immortal.

Your love and worship for a person is because of the ideal he embodies. If the ideal is absent in him, he does not exert on you the charm and attraction of his personality. It is therefore the unique qualities of his nature that affect your inner being and fire your bosom with the aspiration to become like him. Hence the ideal is your aim. The form of the person is the outer shell in which it is imbedded and through which it is revealed. Verily, he is an embodiment, a vehicle, a concrete expression of the ideal. Your ambition is to saturate your being with the full light and power of the ideal, so that it may dwell in every part of your being, so that it may possess you and transmute your entire life and nature into the spirit of the ideal. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth." "The highest Spirit has to be reached by unswerving faith and devotion." Now it is, such a one has comprehended in totality the sublime depths of the Divine Person to whom he pays homage. For him all Divinely inspired and illumined souls are the very embodiments of the one Truth.

Discipleship of any great Divine Teacher without the aspiration to become a fitting vehicle for the expression of the spirit or ideal represented by him will only give rise to bigotry and fanaticism. Fights between religions have their inception in this imperfect understand-

ing of the great Teachers. Every Divine Teacher, whenever he speaks of himself as an instrument or child or incarnation of the Divine, speaks also of the supreme Godhead who is the eternal witness and who pervades equally all the visible and invisible worlds, and who is the one goal to be attained, in order to ascend to the loftiest beatitude which it is the privilege of human life to achieve.

The wrangle amongst the various religionists of the world is there because each of them presents to the world his own Divine Teacher as the only incarnation or saviour, and that all those held in veneration by others as either of a lower order or imposters. On the other hand those, following in the footsteps of any one of the Divine Teachers of the world who have allowed the infinite Spirit of God to fill and reveal in their lives, proclaim that in the fundamentals, that is, in regard to the great Spirit behind all the Divine Masters that came to save the world from ignorance and misery, they are alike the incarnations of one eternal Reality.

Until the aspirant of immortality goes beyond name and form to the height of the impersonal God that dwells within him, until he tunes his mind and life to the Divine symphony or movement thrilling through the cosmos, until he is freed from all limitations of thought, time and circumstance, until he beholds the entire universe as the veritable expression of his own infinite Self, he cannot realize and experience the comprehensive glory and the all-absorbing splendour of the greatest Truth—God.

LIFE IN THE DIVINE

PRIDE

The greatest weakness of a human being lies in his presumption and pride. By this frailty he falls a prey to every conceivable hardship, mortification and sorrow. Therefore, men of wisdom have extolled the virtue of humility. The pliant grass on the meadow, when even the most violent breezes blow over it, does not come to grief; it bends before the blast, and touching the ground raises its head again, perfectly free from any harm. Whilst the stiff and unyielding tree, subjected to a stormy wind, breaks down and is thrown on the ground; its puny resistance against the mighty power of the wind brings about its woeful plight. Similarly, the man who is puffed up with conceit like the tree courts, through ignorance, pain and misery.

Man speaks of love and goodwill in glowing terms. He holds out meekness as an essential means to the attainment of peace. But where his own peace is concerned or that of others, he flouts at his own preaching and lives contrary to the highest principles of life which his voice of intuition has set for him. Pride swallows up all the beautiful things of his nature. An uncompromising hardness and a darkening inertness seize his heart and intellect. Now comes the downfall.

Before the Almighty will, before the wisdom of the Infinite, before the sublimity of the supreme Reality, man who poses himself to be clever, good and wise is worse than dust. A blade of grass, by its silent example, teaches such a one what a true life is and should be.

Man's quest is for peace. Peace can dwell in that heart alone which is totally bereft of the poisoning in-

fluence of pride. The way of liberation from the clutches of the evil, pride, is to turn the mind within so that it can know what its real worth is. A steady gaze at the eternal truth of his being within will exorcise the demon that has possessed him.

Saints and great teachers of Truth are, and have been, condemning in emphatic and unmistakable words this monster who has wrecked and ruined many a soul in the world.

What is the direct method by which pride overthrows even the wisest men? The first thing pride does is to generate in the mind passions of the wildest kind. Life is now thrown into a whirl of confused activity bringing on the soul drunk with pride a state bordering on lunacy.

If universal love is your creed, O man, strive first to obtain the peace of the eternal. If you would have this peace, put on the purifying garment of humility. Blessed are the poor in spirit, because theirs and theirs only is the Truth.

HUMILITY

Humility is a virtue which forms the basis for a life filled with supreme peace and usefulness. The humility spoken of here is not an outcome of weakness and ignorance, but is born of strength and wisdom. The mighty power of God selects only such instruments for its great works as are gifted with meekness and simplicity.

True humility does, indeed, wield a marvellous power for good. If we even cursorily glance through the history of the world, we find that pure and humble souls have been the greatest benefactors of mankind. An humble and unassuming life yields peace and freedom to him who espouses it, whereas a life founded upon pride and self-adulation is a home of misery and bondage. Whilst the one ennobles and elevates human existence, the other vitiates and degrades it.

Joyful service, beneficial to all, is born from this

great quality of the human heart—humility. True service is possible only when the self-conscious individual loses his egoistic sense of “actorship” by merging his self-interest in the common weal and welfare of the world. Now his life-interest is identical with the interest of all. This exalted humility can be achieved by realizing the eternal fact that an omnipotent power, which is inherent in all creatures and beings, is actuating the individual life and all its actions.

Humility leads to self-surrender i. e., an attitude of submission to the will and purpose of God, who is the source of infinite power that controls all the movements in the universe. Thus humility lifts the soul from its narrow view and field of life into its real, vast and illumined sphere of existence. Life now flows out in blissful service with all the spontaneity of a water-spring from the side of a mountain.

To attain this felicitous humility, you have to be ever conscious of the Divine will and plan in all matters and events. The life thus liberated is blessed with ineffable delight and ecstasy. Verily, the soul that is humble has alone entrance into the kingdom of immortality.

COMPASSION

Compassion is the noblest virtue that adorns the heart of a human being. Real peace and contentment can reside only in that heart which feels for the sufferings of others. The heart does not stop at being merely touched by the woes of its fellow beings, but it overflows in acts of kindness and love. The heart that feels but does not express itself in selfless action is like a spring dried up at its very source.

O friend, if you would have freedom from fear and sorrow, and enjoy the supreme blessing of everlasting peace, expand freely your heart so that it might go out in waves of compassion to soothe and alleviate the distress

of the world. Whenever a kindly feeling rises in you let not selfish thoughts stifle it. If you would realize the endless bliss of immortality which alone is your real quest—although you are unaware of it—liberate the heart from its hardness by the magic touch of compassion.

Life is a short span and the pleasures you derive in it are transient and fleeting. In pursuing these shadows, you are heading towards darkness and are becoming oblivious to the exalted and ever-blissful Truth which is your real being. Through the infusion of compassion and love let your heart be illumined and purified so that you can behold yourself as all the world. A narrowed and cramped heart is the cause of misery and pain. Your liberation lies in your hands. God who dwells in you ever awaits to succour you. Seek His aid and fight with the enemies—lust, greed and wrath—by the weapons of His grace and power. Do not forget the Divine Master. He is all compassion and mercy. Feel His presence in you and everywhere about you—in all beings and creatures. Instal Him in your heart as the very embodiment of love. Compassion will then be a natural quality of your heart. The softened heart will then melt away in the sweetness of your immortal life, and all your actions will give out the veritable fragrance of kindness and love. Now your selfless life will always yield peace and joy to yourself, and offer relief and delight to all in the world.

NEED OF SELF-CONTROL

A human being is made up of two natures—one Divine and the other animal. When the animal nature is predominant and rules over all his mental and physical activities, his Divine nature becomes inexpressive and latent. True happiness and freedom for man depend upon the development and ultimate revealment of his innate, higher and spiritual nature. Without understand-

ing this, man, led blindly by his lower and self-degrading desires, falls a prey to every kind of misery, pain and bondage. Instead of conserving and concentrating the forces that work in him for self-elevation and the uplift of the world at large, he allows himself to be dominated over by the baser impulses and passions of his lower nature and reaps, as a consequence, a harvest of misfortunes, sorrows and anxieties. Such a man has really abused and wasted away a precious life granted to him.

Man's success in life can be measured only by his living a life of sacrifice and service which requires a thorough control of the mind which, when undisciplined, drags him down into the darkness of ignorance and ruin. Whereas a man who keeps his mind and senses under perfect control, and permits the inherent and latent Divine forces to express themselves in him, will be a great power that diffuses light and joy to all people who come into contact with him. If the creative principle in human nature should triumph unimpeded for producing 'the greatest good to the greatest number', a man should free himself from the clutches of selfishness and by a proper subdual of his egoistic tendencies rise to the height of his immortal existence.

Unwittingly or without understanding, he fritters away his energies in various vain pursuits. The great souls who have shed on mankind the lustre of their beneficence are men and women who have, by a continuous and un baffled course of endeavour and discipline, gained a complete mastery over themselves. Such are the true creators in the world.

What is needed for everyone to deeply consider is: what are the highest possibilities which our lives offer us in our brief sojourn in this world? If one sits by oneself and engages one's mind to think on this aspect of the problem of life, one will surely not fail to discover that much of the life so far spent has been lived in vain. The real quest has been ignored—the real purpose of life has been deliberately shelved aside—the real goal

towards which human life should evolve has been lost sight of.

Hence man's chief aspiration should be to bring under subjection all the forces of his nature and, by means of concentration, direct them towards the attainment of the right goal. Everybody knows that the mind is the seat of all trouble. When once the mind is conquered, all things become easy. To give the right turn to the mind requires an adequate control over it. Control can come only by a prolonged and systematic self-discipline. Many people who read these lines would exclaim: "Oh! the path of discipline is not meant for all, especially for those who live and mix in the world and are incapable of binding themselves to any mode of spiritual discipline." This is a wrong impression. If man would only cast a retrospective thought on the time he spent for the whole day, he would certainly see that much of the precious hours have been wantonly wasted which he could have utilized for self-control.

Man is not intended to live in subservience to the animal instincts in him. Principally, there are four qualities which a man has in common with the animals: viz. sense of fear, sleep, sexual impulse and craving for food. If man becomes a slave to these animal tendencies and does not control them he would be a man only in name. Whilst man has plenty of will-power to do a great deal of harm to himself and others, he pleads he is weak when he is asked to use his powerful will for directing him upwards towards the achievement of his higher, exalted and divine nature. In short, life is intended for self-control and the realization of the Godly being that he is.

SEVA

Life fulfils its supreme purpose when it is imbued with the spirit of service. Service is the very perfume of a true life of love and sacrifice. Labour is the natural

form of life, because life itself is activity, but when labour is inspired by love, it assumes the name of service. Service for gain, service for reward are the terms commonly employed. Here the significance of service loses its true colour and glory. Real service is work done out of pure love and compassion. Service thus rendered liberates life and fills it with the joy of the Eternal. The expression: "Do all your actions in the name of and for the sake of God" connotes that your life's activities be performed as pure offerings of love and for the fulfilment of love, because love is God and God is love.

The mother toils in the service of her child through selfless love for the sheer joy of the service. This service demands no return, is content in itself and is, therefore, ever permeated with the highest delight of life. When this very spirit of love, that actuates the mother to the careful and unstinted service of her child, enters into the entire movements and actions of life in its dealings with the life of the world, it becomes a veritable embodiment of free, universal and blissful service. Here the pains of service and sacrifice are not only bravely endured, but are also transmuted into pure emotions of joy.

O the glory of human life! How blissfully can it be converted into the Divine, if it is dedicated to the service of God in all beings and creatures of the world! One Truth, One Life, is the fact about the universe and everything in it. To tune human life to the knowledge of this Truth is the secret of the unfettered and spontaneous flow of it along the channels of Divine love and service.

SELF-SACRIFICE

Self-sacrifice is the offspring of a well regulated and well controlled mind. Verily, the joy of existence lies in a life permeated with the spirit of complete self-denial. A life which depends upon itself for its highest happiness freely flows in acts always conducive to the happi-

ness of the world at large. A narrow, self-conceited and selfish life has stranded many a man on the rocks of fear, doubt and misery.

A candle burns and spends its substance away in giving more and more light. The flower goes on giving out its sweet fragrance until it fades away and dies. The fire emits heat to the fullest capacity until its last embers turn into ashes. So a soul garbed in the robes of Divine joy gives himself away in all his varied actions through the mind and body for the weal of the world until the body drops off. Hence self-sacrifice, i. e., the elimination of the self in all that he does, far from being a painful experience, assumes the form of a spontaneous flow of delight.

Many do not know that the secret of true joy lies in self-sacrifice and not in self-seeking. The more you expand yourself, the more you diffuse your individual sense and merge in the totality of all objects and things, the nearer you approach the root of immortal and self-existent bliss.

Hence our great saints and sages have glorified the greatness of renunciation. Verily, renunciation alone leads the struggling soul into the realm of absolute peace. Wise is the saying: "self is Maya and not-self is Brahman."

FAITH

As rudder is an indispensable necessity for the safe piloting of a boat on the ocean, so faith is to life in the world. Faith can be defined as the unflinching reliance upon an invincible Truth that resides in the heart of a human being. A man without faith is a vacillating creature, vacillating between sorrow and fear, whereas he who possesses faith is the real hero who has conquered weakness and stands firm like a rock in all the storms of life. He not only faces bravely all the shocks that

come to him in life but also with an irresistible will triumphs over them.

The one predominant quality of faith is fearlessness. The almighty Power lodged within him is his main refuge. The soul that has this faith is ever sure of his ground, and lives and acts unerringly in agreement with the promptings of the great ideal which he cherishes and adores in his own heart. Such a faith is said to work wonders—wonders, appearing as such, according to the external laws that govern things.

As a certain cause produces an inevitable result, which is true of most things perceptible to the senses, so through faith as the cause certain results are produced, which though seeming strange, are perfectly natural in the inner workings of nature.

Instead of using the power of faith in trying to mould external affairs, the right use of this power is to effect a transformation of one's entire heart and life.

If there is one being on whom we can put absolute trust, or on whom we can depend at all times and in all conditions, it should be the supreme Truth. Man's fall from his Divine state is due to his lack of faith in an ultimate Reality. Sterling faith is closely associated with selfless love. The heart is the seat of love, so also the seat of Truth and Truth and love being one faith means undoubting confidence in the greatness of Truth.

Selfless love never fails. The apparent failure is not the criterion to judge the effect of love. Love starts its work from the heart or the inner life. The inception of faith is in the soul of man, fulfilling itself by a pervasion of the pure emotion of love in it and culminating in blissful and spontaneous service through all his external movements. Faith is, therefore, an essentially Divine acquisition. It takes the struggling and aspiring soul to the highest ideal, even beyond all thought and ideation, and makes his life a continuous stream of ecstasy born of an exalted vision.

SECRET OF ACTION

Action is the natural function of every human being. The birth of a man itself denotes descent and movement. So none who is born can avoid the dynamic nature of his existence. Change and evolution mark the progress of his life. Even dissolution is a stage for a higher growth and a greater birth. His internal organs, mind and intellect are ever active even though he may be still or inactive apparently. Complete cessation of all action is impossible. When you visualise a state of perfect stillness and calmness, you can simultaneously posit a state of intense activity. Hence action is the basis as well as the crown of all manifestations of life.

What is the secret that underlies the principle of action? What is the true knowledge that stands behind the dynamics of nature? Just as from one centre innumerable radii are projected in all directions, so from one fundamental source proceed the varied activities of life. To comprehend this source is to know the secret of action. This source is the supreme Godhead who is the cause of all creation.

When the entire powers of the intellect, emotion and will are concentrated on the eternal Reality, a human being attains to the highest skill in action. Action performed in this state of perfect absorption in the eternal centre of the universe is what is termed as Yogic action. Now the Yogi is said to be as good as inactive, while all the time he is busily active, every bit of action that he does then bears the stamp of the highest concentration. Then again such an action reveals all the beauty and dexterity of a master-worker—a true Karma Yogi. Exhaustion, depression and diminution are foreign to such a worker. He ever lives and acts in the consciousness of the higher Self—God. For, the turmoil of repercussion and fatigue belong to the lower self.

Besides the exalted state of the Karma Yogi when engaged in action, the work turned out by him is also

of a far-reaching and long abiding nature. He leaves a permanent mark of good upon the world. Everyone of his actions small or great has a glorious tale to tell. His life is like a flame that burns and throws its light far and wide and expends itself in so doing. It is simple, flowing and spontaneous. The splendid acts of heroism, the inspiring words of the poets, the masterpieces of the sculptor and the painter, the enthralling strains of the musician are all the productions of great geniuses when they are merged in their eternal Self.

It is doubted whether action of the most skilful type can be possible when the mind is drawn away from the touch of outward life and made to sit enthroned in the supreme Yoga. In fact, no action possessing supreme excellence can ever be possible unless the worker is in a state of Yoga. Yoga should, therefore, be the foundation for the blissful expression of life.

Yoga does not signify renunciation of action, but elevation of it to the loftiest spiritual value and significance. Take up every action that you perform in life with a mind perfectly one with your immortal essence; whether the action be of ordinary or extraordinary nature, you will then have achieved the best results bringing out of you the utmost capacity for it. When life is lived in this manner it will march on from success to success, leaving in its wake a radiant impress of unalloyed beneficence and uplifting service to the world.

WHAT IS YOGA?

Yoga is the path by traversing which the individual soul realizes its real nature of immortality, omnipresence, peace and bliss. The essential condition for the attainment of this supreme goal is the complete absence of the ego-sense. Self-control and self-discipline are the means. Yoga also signifies union with and absorption in the immortal Reality. A steady, persevering and concentrated effort and struggle alone can lead the aspirant to the

realization of the Godhead. So long as man is nankering after the pleasures of the senses, his progress on the path is slow and erratic. He must be undaunted in his endeavour and determined in his purpose. He must leave no stone unturned to subdue and eventually eradicate the impure passions of his heart and mind. A purified and enlightened Buddhi can alone entitle the Sadhaka to enter the kingdom of eternity.

Yoga is not a thing to be merely talked about, read in books and heard through others. Yoga is for practice in life. Yoga which does not soften the heart and fill it with the pure emotion of love, compassion and peace is not worth the name. Real concentration of mind and meditation of God in the chamber of his heart does bring about an enormous change in the devotee. His transformed life becomes a beacon light for others. Through thought, word and deed he pours out love and bliss upon all. If not to live such a life, what use is there for a man to speak of and wish to hear of Yoga?

Yoga is usually understood to mean the performance of some mysterious practices by which one becomes gifted with miraculous powers. And there are many who are keen upon the knowledge of this practice in order to gain these powers. A real Yogi does possess supernatural powers which he brings into play, if at all he makes use of them, for the uplift of humanity. These powers come to him in the usual course, he never works for them. If he does, the fulness of joy and ecstasy of his immortal Self and a continued flow of his heart in floods of love for all in the world would have no place in his life. Therefore the sole aim with which a devotee or a Sadhaka starts on the career of Yoga is only to attain perfect union with his God or complete liberation.

There is no mystery about Yoga. Simple union and the resultant identity with God is Yoga. Control of mind and senses through a systematic practice suited to each individual temperament and nature constitute the way. The end is everlasting joy and freedom—a vision of

Divine light and peace—a life surcharged with transcendent beauty, love and rapture.

SECRET OF THE GITA

Gita was preached by Bhagwan Sri Krishna to Arjuna at a most crucial and critical moment in Arjuna's life. His mind was confused with misgivings and heart surcharged with deep sorrow. This fact makes clear to us that we can understand the right value of Gita's message only when we are similarly situated—mentally and emotionally—as Arjuna was.

There is a time in every man's life when the problems of life and death, after-existence and God, confront him demanding his immediate and closest attention. He cannot shelve them, for they beat insistently on the portals of his mind. He knows then that everything to which he was attached and which he so long held as his own by giving it a gloss of reality, is after all slipping away from his hands: that he is caught in a world of shadows to which he has been, clinging with an insensate folly. His mind tries to go beyond itself and his heart longs for that which is beyond. But the barrier that shuts him from the vision of the Reality baffles him. Hence the confusion and deep sorrow. Sri Krishna comes to the rescue of such a soul—in the grip of a keenly painful struggle.

He enunciates a three-fold discipline by which the aspirant can break through the barrier and attain the supreme Reality, which would mean for him perfect liberation and bliss. The three-fold discipline is of Bhakti, Jnana and Karma.

Bhakti is an intense longing and love for God which enables the aspirant to keep up a constant remembrance of Him, thus purifying his emotions and elevating his thought to the consciousness of the Reality. Bhakti is the adoration of God, who dwells in his own heart and fills the universe, and surrender of all his actions to Him.

Here a fit of renunciation seizes him—a mental recoil from the unrealities of life that had so long enthralled him. Through the exercise of an awakened intellect, he now begins to discriminate the real from the unreal—the eternal from the non-eternal.

Bhakti, renunciation and discrimination turn his mind inward which now flows in a continuous stream to the glorious Truth of his being, until he merges in and identifies himself with the immortal, unchanging and all-pervading essence of his existence. This is the Divine illumination or Jnana which grants him a universal vision—a perception of God, as an indwelling spirit, permeating and filling all the manifested worlds.

Karma continues based upon an equal vision with a heart replete with love and a mind enlightened with wisdom. Karma now becomes a spontaneous outflow of Divine energy acting through him for the uplift of humanity or Lokasangraha. The aspirant, having realized the supreme Godhead, is still an instrument in His hands, doing actions in utter self-dedication i. e., God's Divine Shakti working through him for the fulfilment of His purpose. His attachment to the perishable external objects of the world is destroyed. He rises above the Dwandwas and Gunas belonging to the lower and ignorant human nature. He is now ever in union with the God in himself, and in all creatures and things around him. He beholds the entire universe as the expression of an immutable, invisible, omnipresent God. God for him is both immanent and transcendent, in whom he becomes conscious that he is entirely lost, having attained perfect freedom, peace and bliss.

This is the goal of life held out by the Gita.

GURU OR SPIRITUAL TEACHER

On the question of the necessity of a Guru there is amongst many people a good deal of speculation. Some of them assert with vehemence that a Guru is not at

all necessary for the spiritual progress of an aspirant, and that his own personal effort is sufficient; others, with equal emphasis declare, that no spiritual progress in an individual, however hard he may strive for himself, can be possible except through the grace and guidance of a Guru. Before we discuss this important subject, it is essential in the first place to understand the true significance of the term "Guru".

Guru is understood to be the awakener of the dormant spirit of the aspirant to the consciousness of the immortal Self or God. Guru is the guide and the leader. Guru is the Truth personified. Guru imparts the knowledge of the highest Truth, leading the thought of the aspirant to the comprehension of a deathless life. Guru is he whose life has mingled with God's life, who is intoxicated with the bliss of the eternal and whose heart is overflowing with compassion and love for all creatures and beings in the world. The touch, society or even a sight of such a great and illumined personality would at once bring a sense of indescribable relief to the struggling soul, and set him on the path of immortality, peace and bliss. What does the Guru say to the soul in tribulation? He exhorts: "Go within yourself and behold therein the splendour and glory of the eternal Truth. Therein resides your ultimate home of perfect release, happiness and peace. Therein find the life that never fades, that never changes but ever blesses and sanctifies. Be in tune with that Reality, if you sincerely crave for the highest consummation of life." It is thus the Guru awakens you, and thereafter you are always awake. This is the real conception of a Guru.

Now to return to our question, let us consider whether it is possible for a person to evolve physically, mentally or spiritually, without the help of a teacher. It is admitted on all hands that development on the physical and mental planes requires the aid of a proficient guide or master. This is the law of nature holding true in all cases of mental and physical revival.

and progress of mankind. To flout or deny this universal law only in matters spiritual is to deliberately ignore the lessons which his or her own experiences have held out. From the time the child is born until it departs this life, having passed through its various stages of growth to old age, it does inevitably become both the teacher and the taught. He who argues against the need of a teacher invariably assumes the role of a teacher himself. This is a paradox which he alone would be able to explain if he could.

It is an incontestable fact that a great mother, a great professor or expert or a great saint is responsible for the enlightenment of the heart, head and soul of a human being. If we, with a clever vision, study the lives of all the great men and women of the world, past or present, we cannot fail to observe that a dominant power for good at the back of them had influenced and moulded their career. Sometimes, this power may have acted in such a subtle and mysterious manner that the recipients of it could hardly have recognised it. These cases of non-recognition are happily very few. It is these that contend that a Guru or a spiritual teacher is a superfluity. Based on this averment, many ignorant people, who have neither the initiative nor the humility for the spiritual adventure, parrot-like repeat the words of the above masters. They forget that by so doing they are also blindly and unconsciously accepting these great ones as their teachers. But those who are distinctly alive to the transforming influence of a great Soul on them, which brought about a permanent change in their angle of vision from the ephemeral to the eternal values of life, boldly declare that without the healing and elevating touch of a spiritual teacher there is no hope for the deluded soul.

In the light of the above presentation of the problem, everyone who would take thought may judge for himself or herself whether a Guru is an absolute necessity or not for the progress of the soul towards God.

POWER OF SAINTS

Who is a saint? A saint is he who has attained the Eternal, lives in the Eternal and has realized the Eternal—call the great Reality by any name—the Eternal, God or Truth. Such a saint is a veritable blessing upon this earth. By his contact thousands are saved from the clutches of doubt, sorrow and death. He lives what he preaches and preaches what he lives. He exerts a wonderful influence and creates in the hearts of ignorant men a consciousness of their inherent Divinity. He awakens the sleeping soul to the awareness of their immortal and all-blissful nature. By his very presence he rids the hearts of people of their base and unbridled passions. The faithful derive the greatest benefit by communion with him.

A veil of unreality has shrouded the human soul and so he feels that he is a weak, helpless and miserable creature. His life is therefore purposeless and vain—productive of no good to himself or to the world. Such a life can recover its Divine heritage by the touch and society of a saint. A saint is a real redeemer and saviour of a fallen soul, for a saint is God Himself manifest in flesh and blood.

It is rightly said that the one condition to be fulfilled for the redemption of a soul is the necessary faith and aspiration in the devotee on the one hand, and the requisite spiritual power in the saint to redeem the disciple on the other. A heart filled with universal compassion can alone throw out its light to enliven hope and joy where there is none. Divine compassion and love of which the heart of a saint is made are simply irresistible in their effects. Depend upon it, whenever he casts his glance on anybody or anything, he pours on them always the very nectar of love and kindness. His heart ever longs to lead the entrapped souls from the prison of darkness and ignorance into a life of joy, freedom and immortality.

The greatness of a saint is simply indescribable. We can only bend and bow to him and thus earn his ever-fruitful benediction and grace.

PATH OF GOD-REALIZATION

From the experience which God has granted him, Ramdas sets down here an outline of the path which an aspirant traverses, when he has made the realization of God the sole aim of his life. On this subject, Ramdas' authority is derived from the fact that his experiences at different stages of his Sadhana bear a close resemblance in spirit with those of all the saints and sages of the world who had the vision of God.

What is necessary as the first step on the Divine path is Bhakti. Bhakti means a keen, burning desire to realize immortal peace and freedom. The Bhakta must be seized with a discontent which never ceases until the goal is reached. But how could awakening in the heart of a being come? What does shake him to his very foundation and create in him this longing for the Eternal? The answer is: **the society of a real sage is the thing.** A sight and a touch of him works on the Bhakta like a magician's charm. As the bird unconscious of its captivity remains in its cage apparently quiet and contented, but the moment it discovers that it is imprisoned within the cage, it leaves no stone unturned in its struggle for freedom; so also the soul of the awakened man flutters and trembles within him, and becomes so restless that it is drawn inevitably on the path of vigorous discipline for self-liberation. This hunger of the soul which grows in volume day after day gives rise in him to the second essential step on the path—Vairagya.

Vairagya means withdrawal of the mind from its attachments and attractions to the external objects of life. Now it is that he clearly understands that the cause of his bondage and ignorance is due to his deep

love for those whom he holds very near and dear to him. His mind, which was so long only involved in the interests, worries and fears concerning those objects or beings to whom he was bound by the ties of affection and sense of possession, now recoils. He further knows that the happiness which he enjoyed from those objects and beings is a passing chimera of illusion. Now he aspires for that peace and joy which is real and everlasting. Thus a spirit of dispassion for the world takes possession of him. At this stage, he starts with earnestness and determination the Sadhana for control of mind and will which leads him to the third step—concentration.

Concentration is a waveless and fixed state of mind. To gain this purpose, he takes up any mental practice best suited to his nature, condition and environment. Concentration is attained by striving to fix the mind on one thought at the exclusion of every other. This thought must represent or symbolise the eternal Reality dwelling within his own heart. The world that we behold—made up of five elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether, is a projection from the supreme Truth. So by concentration on any element of the world-manifestation, taking it as the very expression of the ultimate Reality, the mind through the attainment of one-pointedness is merged in the Absolute Truth. Hence for **Upasana**, for the purification and concentration of the mind, an image, a river, fire, air, light or sound, is prescribed. Among the symbols for concentration those that are largely employed are air, light and sound. Air relates to Pranayama or breath-control; light denotes worship of luminous bodies like the sun, moon etc.; sound stands for repetition of Om or any name of God. The greater importance attached to the first and the third method among them is because in these cases the Sadhaka need not depend on an external object for concentration. However, whatever path he adopts,

provided he is determined and persevering, he will arrive at the next step which is meditation.

Meditation is a purely mental discipline of thought. The concentrated thought is continuously made to dwell upon the glorious attributes of God, such as that He is eternal, omnipresent, all-powerful, all knowing, changeless, ever peaceful and blissful Truth. The meditation continued with persistency terminates in self-absorption, that is, a state of super-consciousness. Here, it must be noted that the Sadhaka conceives a craving for solitude or for a place free from the noise and bustle of the workaday world. He adopts a Satwic diet instead of hot, pungent and stale foods. The changes that are now observed in him are a substitution of gentleness for harshness, kindness for hate, calmness, an equal vision and love for attachment and egoism. Humility, sweetness and cheerfulness mark all his thoughts, words and movements. He avoids the society of the pleasure-seekers of the world, and finds solace, peace and joy in the company and service of saints and devotees of God. Now the one theme of his thought and talk is God and his glories. Simplicity and childlike nature become manifest in him. From meditation to the next step—a step which is the crowning glory of his supreme attainment—Samadhi, is short and quick. The experience he gains when he gets the full vision of God baffles description.

Samadhi or God-vision:—Attempts are still made to express something of this lofty experience. He says: "I am an illumined soul—illumined with the light of the Divine knowledge that I am the great Truth itself. My individual life has completely merged into the universal and eternal Spirit. Now I have reached the goal. I have become the very God in human form. I live and move in infinity and eternity. I have come to the end of the path—God-realization i. e. to the status of Sat-chit-anand."

BHAKTI

Bhakti means making God the supreme ideal of life. For the Bhakta there is no other thought but of Him, and no other ambition but to attain Him. His mind runs towards God through a ceaseless flow of remembrance. The Bhakta's heart is ever agitated with the waves of hope and aspiration for the vision of God. His restless nature, besides urging him to dwell constantly in the thought of God, directs his steps to the feet of saints and drives him from place to place on visit to noted shrines. As the child away from its mother is stricken with anguish and sorrow for the sight of her, so the Bhakta insistently weeps with the longing for the Darshan of God. He finds life dry and tasteless until he meets his supreme Beloved. The more he meditates and contemplates upon the great attributes of God the more he begins to feel his own littleness and unworthiness, and prays to his Beloved to elevate, enlighten and purify him, so as to make him fit to be accepted as His child and servant.

For the Bhakta, God is the very embodiment of love, compassion, forgiveness and grace. He visualises his God in the recesses of his own heart. He surrenders completely in thought, word and deed to his Beloved, and adores Him with an unflinching devotion. By a constant meditation of the Lord, the Bhakta imbibes into his own being the Divine attributes, ultimately reaching a status of perfect union and oneness with Him. Compassion, mercy and love now illumine the nature and therefore all actions of the Bhakta. He becomes the very image of God, for the impurities and weaknesses having been removed by the grace of the Lord, he stands revealed as the very sun of Truth, radiating all around him the rays of love, kindness and peace.

Now the greatest virtue that shines forth in all its splendour in the Bhakta is forgiveness. As God has forgiven him, so he forgives all in the world who wrong

or have wronged him. He ever returns good for evil, both in thought and action. He is self-sacrificing to a degree. He is ever willing to serve and toil for others, to give them solace and relief. He loves all with an equal vision, be he friend or foe, rich or poor, good or wicked, high or low, wise or ignorant. He endures peacefully ignominy and persecution, and gives himself away in every manner for the good of others. He is ever contented, ever pure and ever cheerful. He is unassuming and humble in all he does. He recognises God as all in all. He experiences God seated in his heart as causing, by His power, all movements in the world. He beholds and feels God's presence everywhere. Verily, he always lives and moves in God and is the very being of God.

ACME OF BHAKTI

Bhakti is the adoration of the supreme Lord of the universe beyond everything else in the world. This one-pointed adoration makes the devotee keep his mind ever engaged in the remembrance and contemplation of the Lord. The Divine idea seizes the mind of the devotee to such an extent that the most attractive objects of life cease to fascinate him. He talks, laughs and often weeps in his madness for the Lord. As he progresses on the path of devotion he is weaned away from the petty and transient pleasures of the senses and remains, as it were, dead to them. His one passion is to see God, know God, and be entirely merged in God.

So as a result of this devotion, in the first place, the devotee is possessed with an intense Vairagya, i. e. a steady and fixed dispassion towards the evanescent objects in the worlds. The intensity of Vairagya depends upon the intensity of his devotion to his Lord. A devotion which is weak and interrupted cannot entirely turn the mind away from the external world. Very often a devotee complains that, however strongly he may wish,

he cannot fix his thoughts in the continuous remembrance of the Lord, and that his mind is wandering towards the object of the senses. This is due to the lack of intensity in his devotion to the Lord. Devotion must, therefore, be a dedication of all the powers of the mind and heart for the exclusive meditation and love of the Lord.

Devotion as rightly divided is of two kinds—the lower and the higher. In the lower form of devotion the devotee looks for guidance and concentration from outside, and primarily attaches himself to the society of saints who have realized fully the greatness and glory of the Lord. To keep himself pure in thought, word and deed, he controls all the forces that are working in his psychical and physical being, and adjusts the conduct of his life so as to free himself from all desires of his mind. Mainly, he will have recourse to three kinds of Sadhana, viz. Satsung solitude and Satwic diet. How does the devotee now try to tune his mind in a continuous symphony with the Lord? It must be admitted that every remembrance signifies bringing into the mind the name and qualities of the person or object remembered. A prolonged remembrance means a sustained fixity of the thought on the name and attributes of the person or object. For the devotee the Lord becomes the one great object of ceaseless remembrance, which is attained by an unbroken repetition of His sweet and all-powerful Name and bringing at the same time into the mind His sublime glories and attributes.

As the devotee advances in this spiritual path, he transcends the Tamo and Rajo Gunas of nature and gets firmly seated in Satwa Guna. Satwa Guna denotes a consciousness above the animality of human nature, filled with calmness, equality, light and purity. It must be understood that this Satwic consciousness is a step to a still higher consciousness. The lower form of Bhakti leads the devotee to this most necessary step.

Now commences the higher aspect of devotion. Satwa Guna entitles the devotee to the Grace of the Lord or a saint, and through this grace he is lifted beyond all Gunas and comes, so to say, face to face with the immortal and all-blissful Atman whom he realizes as his real being and existence. This is called Jnana or Moksha. The knowledge of the Atman liberates the bound soul from the vicious cycle of births and deaths, and grants him unchanging and eternal bliss and peace. It is then the higher Bhakti which is termed Parabhakti dawns on him. This is the summit of God-realization. With Jnana as the back-ground, the devotee beholds the entire manifested universe as the supreme image of his beloved Lord. All creatures, beings and things in the universe are looked upon by him as the very forms of his Lord. He feels and sees the Lord's presence everywhere. His sense of duality has completely vanished. Oneness of life, oneness of all existence becomes now the keynote of his vision. Not only in the inner realization of the Atman that the sense of diversity has disappeared but also in the external revelations of the natural phenomena. In this supreme state the devotee enjoys unending and inexpressible bliss. There is no limit to his ecstasies born of his consciousness of unity and oneness with the Lord. He veritably rolls, swims and gambols in the infinite ocean of joy. Blessed, a million times blessed, is the devotee who reaches this highest peak of God-realization.

DIVINE THOUGHT

In order to attain to the supreme blessedness of life, namely the realization of God, we have to surcharge our thought with the idea of God. God must take possession of our mind until our mind is no longer there as such and God alone is. Until this is done the aspirant must employ every means possible to control the mind and its activities so that the thought of God alone should

rule in it. This thought must sink deep into the mind, transforming its fickle, restless and impure nature into the very Spirit of joy, purity and peace.

The world is hungering for this great ideal of happiness and peace. Ramdas' experience, when he was flitting from village to village, from town to town in the blessed land of Saints—Maharashtra—was, he observed not only the intensity or keenness of spiritual hunger amongst thousands of people there who came to see him but he also discovered that many of them, whatever the external circumstances, were drinking deep at the fountain of eternal joy. The chief condition needed for realizing this state is unceasing hunger or uninterrupted and unbroken aspiration for the immortal.

The easiest means to make the mind dwell in the idea of God is to constantly reiterate mentally or vocally the Name of God. Such a recitation of the Name should of course be accompanied by implicit faith in the efficacy of the Name and intense love for the immortal ideal which the Name represents, viz: the supreme Reality who is absolute existence, consciousness and bliss and who is seated in the hearts of us all. When thus the mind is completely absorbed in the Divine idea, a stage is reached when the mere individual or physical consciousness is transmuted into the universal and ever blissful consciousness.

This is all right. Everybody wishes to possess this hunger, this keen aspiration which will bring him or her the experience of Divinity. But the complaint is that such a state does not come even when one wishes for it. How then could this burning desire for the attainment of absolute bliss be generated? Just as an uneducated man or a poor man would evince an ardent wish to be a literate man or a rich man when he comes in association with a learned person or a wealthy person; so also when an ignorant, bound and sorrow-stricken soul comes in contact with an illumined, liberated and all-blissful person, the former by such contact is fired with

a zeal to become also like the latter. Hence the society of saints has been held as the most important factor in the spiritual evolution of the soul. The saints not only awaken the ignorant souls and create in them a thirst for Self-realization but also infuse into them by their blessings the needed spiritual strength to battle against the forces that confront the aspirant in his march towards this goal of supreme beatitude.

In order to know what are our actual facial features we have to look into the mirror; similarly, if we wish to get a glimpse of our real and immortal life we can do so only when we are in the company of saints. Saints are verily the redeemers of fallen souls. It is by their power alone the mind that runs in pursuit of transient pleasures can be made to concentrate its attention upon the eternal, changeless and blissful indwelling Reality. When thus the mind is permeated through and through with the imperishable idea of God, man attains the supreme goal of life.

God-realization does bring about not only the divinisation of the internal life of man but also of all his external life and activities. He beholds all beings and things as the illumined expressions of the one all-pervading Divinity. Satsung awakens the human soul and fills his thought with Divine light and joy and grants him the knowledge of the immortal Self, which in its turn confers upon the devotee the comprehensive knowledge of God in all His aspects.

DIVINE NAME

Divine love is attained through the realization of God as dwelling in and pervading all the manifestations, thus granting the freed soul the bliss of universal vision. The difficulty that confronts the devotee in his path to this supreme goal of life is the restless nature of his mind. A mind purified and concentrated upon the great

ideal enables the devotee to realize his oneness and union with Him, and get the vision of Him in all beings, creatures and things. God-realization is only for him who has so controlled his mind as to subdue the desires relating to the objects of the senses. Now what is the unfailing, easy and most potent practice by which the unruly mind can be brought under subjection? This is the singing of God's hallowed Name.

God is the beloved of the devotee's heart, and to attain Him is the one great passion of his life. Constant taking of His Name attunes his mind with Him who is at once the Lord of his heart and of the universe. The melodious music issuing from the sound of the Name of his eternal beloved charms and lulls the mind, and fills it with purity, peace and bliss—in other words, it dissolves the mind in the blissful nectar of God's own immortal, all-pervading and all-inclusive being. The repetition of the great Name of the Lord, destroying the impure thoughts of the mind which are the sole cause of its distraction, brings him absolute calmness and peace. Thus the Divine Name transforms man from a mere tool in the grip of the rising waves of passions into a being full of the everlasting radiance, love and joy of the Lord. Hence the power of God's Name is infinite, since it can not only free the soul from the bondage of birth and death by making him realize his deathless and ever blissful existence, but can also bring about his perfect union with God. When the devotee is experiencing the joy of his close communion with and absorption in God, he becomes liberated from the individual sense or ego. In this condition it is that the blessed devotee sees his beloved everywhere. He has now surrendered himself up in every respect to the supreme Lord and controller of the whole universe.

So God's all-powerful Name takes the aspiring soul to the highest summit of the Truth. What is required first is an absolute faith in the greatness and potency of

Name. Given this faith, which comes only by the grace of the Lord, the devotee swiftly reaches His all-merciful feet. Indeed the glory of the Name is simply inexpressible, and its power simply unsurpassable. All success be to thee, O sweet and enchanting Name !

POWER OF THE NAME

The only precious thing in this world, by the possession of which we could attain an exalted state of pure peace and joy, is the Name of the Lord. Its melodious sound, coupled with the pure consciousness of the one Reality which it signifies, frees the mind from all its passions, permitting the outflow of the eternal joy inherent in the human soul. The Divine Name is a powerful boat that takes man across the whirlpools of life to the haven of his eternal and spiritual nature. His Name transforms man from the human to the Divine. The Divine Name is the one sovereign panacea for all the physical, mental and intellectual ills that have created the sense of diversity and misery in the world. The sweet note that rings out of the Name lulls and grants repose to the troubled spirit of man.

The Divine Name represents God, who is at once the Lord and Master of the universe, as also the universe itself and everything beyond. So to be in tune with the Name is to be in tune with the infinite Truth, and thus to transmute the lower, stumbling and ignorant human nature into the glorious, self-illuminated nature. To be in communion with God through the music of His Name is to earn the very bliss of immortality.

God is a supreme Power who always works with a heart filled with infinite love and compassion. All activities in the world proceed from such a heart. But man in his ignorance misconstrues the workings of the Divine will and, instead of submitting to it, revolts and strives against it, and thus becomes miserable. Submission to

God's will and a cheerful attitude towards all circumstances of life, and to be engaged in a blissful and selfless activity, can be possible only when man is in intimate communion and oneness with Him who is love and goodness. This touch with and absorption in Him is attained only when we keep on within the mind a continuous stream of God-remembrance. The way to do it is to harmonise the mind with the melody of God's sweet and glorious Name. Verily, the Name is Brahman Himself. He who tastes the nectar of the Name experiences everlasting joy.

The Divine Name purifies the mind of its ego and desires and floods the whole being with light and joy. The heart that has captured the Name becomes God's own heart—it opens the very source of infinite Love and universal Vision. In other words, it blesses man with the supreme vision of God in the universe and beyond. The Divine Name grants man inexhaustible power of endurance and patience, causing the latent springs of spiritual strength and joy to reveal themselves in him. The glorious Name of the Lord is incomparable in its greatness, power and love, because by its grace man realizes his immortality and union with God—the Lord of the universe. By the power of the Name, man can rend the veil of ignorance, and through the light of knowledge behold God in his own heart and in the hearts of all creatures and things in the world. God is infinite love and He dwelleth in us all. We are eternally one with and different from Him. Man is the blissful child of a blissful Mother, for God is the very being of immortal joy and peace. When the heart has flowered with the fragrance of Divine joy, it ever flows out as pure love, compassion and peace. Such a love is undating the world and all its beings. The Divine Name leads you to this ocean of joy. Blessed, thrice blessed, is he who knows and experiences the immeasurable greatness of the Divine Name!

WONDROUS NAME

There is no word in the human tongue which wields such a marvellous power, that mysteriously works for absolute good, as the Name which stands for God. The Name of the Lord is the very expression of God as a mystic sound. To attune the mind to the sweet melody of the Name is to harmonise your life with the Life eternal. The music of the Name brings about the union of the individual soul with the universal Soul. When the soul loses itself in the thrills generated by the Name, it attains a state of ineffable ecstasy in which all forms and lives are seen as the manifestation of the one supreme essence of Truth. The Name expands the narrow vision of the individual into a vision of infinite value and grandeur.

The soul, who is drinking deep at the nectarine charm of the Name, rises from the lower worlds of fettered thought and action and enters into the universal kingdom of freedom and perfection. Now this transformed life reveals in all its glory the magnificence of the basic Reality of which it and the worlds are but expressions. By the power of the Name its votary distinctly perceives the inner laws and purposes which work out the external phenomenal changes in the universe.

When the Name becomes the sole mainstay and refuge of the aspirant who thirsts for the highest goal of life—God-realization—he or she marches towards the ideal not only in rapid strides but also with a heart filled with courage and cheerfulness. Indeed, blessed is the soul who possesses an unflinching faith in the greatness of the Divine Name!

It is rightly said that a king can extend his empire to the ends of the earth, nay, he can gain even the lordship of the worlds, but it is extremely hard to conquer and subdue the mind. The real and the greater hero is he or she who has controlled and mastered the mind. This mastery is possible only when the invincible Divine energy latent in the heart of the human being is awakened

and is set to work in place of the weak individual will and initiative. The Name, in reaching this ideal, proves an invaluable and irresistible means. Constant utterance of the Name arrests the restless nature of the mind and, developing a high state of concentration, conserves all the physical and mental energies for removing the veil from the indwelling Truth who is infinite power, light, peace and joy. In a word, the Name is an unfailing key that unlocks the gates of the heart permitting an outflow of immortal love, wisdom and power. Thereafter, the soul is merged in the universal effulgence of an eternal and all-blissful existence.

LOVE FOR DIVINE NAME

Faith in the power of God's Name is a rare thing. Those blessed ones who have acquired this faith have scaled the supreme height of spirituality and attained the vision of God. Tukaram, a famous saint of Maharashtra, was a great votary of the Name. He would sing and dance in ecstasy taking God's holy Names. His songs would awaken and thrill the souls of those who went to listen to him. He was in the habit of performing Kirtan in the temple of his place. Vast crowds would gather to partake of the spiritual feast he offered.

One day a friend who attended Tukaram's Kirtans came to him and requested him to perform a Kirtan which should excel the ones he previously did. Tukaram agreed. The following night was appointed for the unique performance, and the news of it spread far and wide. The night came and thousands of people rushed to the temple. The crowd this time was unusually enormous in proportion. The temple was filled with it to overflowing.

All waited expectantly for the Kirtan. Tukaram stood up with his pair of cymbals and started "Vithal, Vithal"—the Name of God worshipped as such in the great shrine of Pandharpur. The sweet Name rang

through the audience from the glorious heart of Tukaram. "Vithal, Vithal" continued to pour out from the lips of the saint like a stream of nectar. Love welled up in his heart and in ecstasy he danced, his eyes closed—absorbed in the bliss of Divine consciousness. He went on and on—the sound of "Vithal, Vithal" in his melodious voice, mingled with the music of the cymbals, issued ceaselessly from him. One hour passed, two, three and on and on the fleeting hours sped, and Tukaram continued dancing and singing "Vithal, Vithal." The night advanced unconsciously and morning was drawing near. The faint streaks of dawn cast their magic glow on the waking world. Tukaram stopped and opened his eyes. The crowd had vanished. All who assembled there the night before except one had disappeared.

There was one man sitting with sleepy eyes in front of Tukaram standing on a blanket. Tukaram's joy at the sight of the friend who sat up to the last for the Kirtan knew no bounds, and he could not resist expressing: "My friend, I am simply delighted to see that there is at least one in the vast audience collected here who has a love for the Divine Name "Vithal."

"None of your devotion and talk of love for the Name," retorted the devotee, "I am fed up with it all. The reason why I remained till now is because you are standing on my Kambal; and I cannot go without it."

"Oh", exclaimed Tukaram, "very sorry, my friend, here take it," and Tukaram moved away from the blanket. Instantly rolling up the Kambal, the friend walked away with it as quickly as his legs could carry him.

INVINCIBLE NAME

By the repetition of the Divine Name your mind is not only purged of all its impure thoughts and desires but is also lifted to the loftiest state of consciousness in which you realize your union and oneness with God. Of all the disciplines for controlling the restless mind there

is none so easy and efficacious as the taking of the Divine Name. But there is a way in the repetition of it and that is, it must be uttered with full faith and love for it; then only you will feel that the Lord's Name is very, very sweet.

The difficulty with some is that they cannot repeat the Name continuously although they desire to do so. The reason for this is that their love for the Name is not greater than their love for the perishable objects of the world. It is a psychological truth that our mind thinks most of the object which we love most, because, our concentrated love inevitably influences the mind to remember that object. So also, if our mind is fired with an intense love for the Name, this love will automatically enable us to remember the Name constantly. When this love is lukewarm and unsteady, our remembrance of the Name will correspondingly become unsteady and broken.

When the necessary intensity of love for the Name is present, our mind will dwell uninterruptedly on the Name. As an example, we find in a household that the mother loves her youngest child most; and even when the child is in its cradle beyond the sight of the mother, she will not fail to keep up a sustained remembrance of the baby. What does make the mother thus keep up a stream of remembrance of the baby? We have to admit that it is her concentrated love for the baby. Similarly, if we love God beyond everything else in the world, this love will automatically maintain in our mind a continuous flow of God-remembrance. The Name of God will start on our tongue spontaneously and will run on it continuously. Further, the sweet sound issuing from the utterance of the Name will prove to be a veritable nectar to the attentive ear. When thus the mind is inebriated, as it were, with the love of God and filled with the music of His Name, all its desires will be transmuted into Divine waves of ecstasy, and all the movements of the senses will be saturated with the same joy. In this state, vision of God will flash out through our eyes raising us to the

supreme status of universal vision. This is the ineffable, summit of Divine union and revelation.

Really blessed is the soul who keeps the Divine Name always on his lips. A saint has rightly said that the devotee who is thus blessed is really a Jivanmukta or a liberated soul. Where the Divine thought ceaselessly dwells, there the ego-sense is absent, there self-surrender is complete, there the vision of God everywhere is attained.

The power of the Divine Name is invincible. It can convert pain into joy. It can change death into immortality. Nay, it can transform our entire life into the very being and consciousness of the all-pervading and all inclusive Godhead.

SAMADARSHAN OR EQUAL VISION

The devotee, who has purified his mind through the constant remembrance of God and dedication of all his actions to him, attains the supreme knowledge of the Atman. This knowledge makes him realize his perfect identity and oneness with the all-pervading, changeless, formless and external existence of God. In this experience the devotee losing entirely his separate individual sense becomes merged in the attributeless and infinite Reality. He realizes that all the phenomenal manifestations are strung, as it were, on the one omnipresent, invisible and immortal Truth. In the supreme harmony, unity and equality of this vision, all sense of diversity and differentiation is dissolved. This vision of perfect equality lifts the devotee from the meshes of Gunas and fixes him in the unaffected, ever pure and unchanging truth of his existence, beyond the touches of pleasure and pain. Now the devotee attains the supreme bliss and peace, born of the consciousness of immortality. He is no longer the bewildered creature in the grip of the lower human nature belonging to ignorance, but is a free and liberated soul, in all the glory of his divine nature formed of the

light of knowledge.

Before the devotee rises to the height of complete realization of God's all-inclusive and all-comprehensive being, he has to transcend the Gunas and abandon his egoistic personality by the attainment of this exalted knowledge of the Atman. Verily, the devotee has to be reborn in the consciousness of God before he could put on the illumined vesture of a Divine personality.

When the devotee through intense longing and aspiration contemplates upon the eternal Beloved, seated within his own heart and the hearts of all beings and creatures, by the very force of his devotion he gets absorbed in the immutable essence of God. The devotee is the arrow and Bhagwan is the mark. The arrow strikes the mark and melts in the mark to such a degree that the arrow is completely transformed into the mark itself. So also, the devotee having complete union and oneness with God becomes God Himself.

In this vision of equality, the devotee does not behold the differences which are seen and taken to be real by the soul obsessed by ignorance. He sees the same truth alike in all beings and creatures. The distinctions of caste, creed, colour and race have no longer any significance for him. He looks upon the learned brahmin and the so-called untouchable with the same vision of equality. In short, his life will now be perfectly blessed, since he enjoys the bliss and peace of immortality based upon his experience of harmony, unity and peace in all the varied expressions of life and phenomena. This extremely purifying knowledge opens out the floodgates of the highest vision of God in the universe and beyond. It is now that he beholds the entire universe as the one variegated and dazzling image of his supreme Beloved.

SELF-SURRENDER

Samadarshan consequent upon the realization of the Atman leads to self-surrender. The liberated soul,

becoming conscious of his all-pervading, eternal and changeless existence, attains now a state of perfect union and oneness in every respect with the all-inclusive being of the Godhead. It is a state in which there is the realization not only of the Atman, but also of the active Divine principle in the dynamic nature of world manifestation. The blessed soul who has reached this supreme status is transformed into the very expression and form of universal love and service. Here the love and service are not of the lower conceptions belonging to the egoistic sense, but a spontaneous emanation from the impersonal existence of the Godhead. For him the universe is the field, and the omnipotent power that works and moves the world is his power, through which he works.

Self-surrender denotes a total eradication of the ego-sense and perfect mergence in God. It is a blending of consciousness and unconsciousness, action and inaction, and individuality and universality wherein the notions "doer" and "non-doer" are entirely absent. Actions are now done without the least trace of attachment or desire. Hence there is neither acceptance nor rejection of action.

Self-surrender may also be defined as the substitution of the Divine will for the human will. Man ordinarily acts and moves by the impulse of the individual will, and hence is involved in ignorance and becomes a prey to Dwandwas. The moment he surrenders to the will of God, his actions turn into an inspired and involuntary flow from the Divine Shakti which is the same as the Divine will. His vision, life and action now bear the eternal stamp of cosmic purpose and will.

The vision of love now illumines every pore of the liberated soul. Light and joy ever radiate through him. He beholds the whole universe within himself and himself manifest everywhere. Action, knowledge and love mingle together into an indistinguishable light of perfection.

The height to which self-surrender takes the freed soul baffles description. In short, it converts the ignorant

mortal into the deathless, ever free and all-blissful God Himself.

SELF-DEDICATION

Truth or God demands of us the highest sacrifice. It is a bid for immortality or everlasting life. Such a life can never be ours unless we dedicate ourselves entirely for the realization of it. We have before us the instances of innumerable sages and saints of the world who have attained to this immortal life by nothing short of a complete and all-round self-consecration. A close study of their lives reveals to us the one predominant fact that they have surrendered up their heart, soul and body to the supreme Power that lies at the basis of all creation. The personal clings, the false attachments, narrow ideals and individual desires have all been given up for a life of infinite vision, imbued with a consciousness of perfect freedom and peace. So it is that the devotee of God can be His only when the devotee looks upon Him as his all in all. He thereafter lives and moves in a region pre-eminently exalted, transcending the superficial crust of life. His life thus becomes a continuous round of indescribable felicity and Divine rapture.

The result of this great conversion is an inevitable feeling in the heart of the transformed being that he is reborn in a new and glorious life. His dwelling in the infinite grants him an elevation, a lightness, a freedom which are distinctly the qualities of an eternal existence. In truth he now lives a very God upon this earth.

Let us remember once more that God demands of us a supreme sacrifice. The notion of 'I' and 'mine' must be obliterated from the mind to its last touch or vestige. The struggling spirit must find complete contentment, peace and repose in the eternal and tranquil bosom of the Divine Master and Mother of the worlds. What prevents one from such an integral dedication is the attrac-

tion to the ephemeral objects of life—the ties that bind one to the mortal or passing phases of life.

A soul fired with a burning zeal and an unconquerable heroism can alone cross the boundary and enter the kingdom of eternal joy and peace. Just as an unshapen stone can be fashioned into a beautiful image worthy of adoration and worship only after it has received many a stroke of the chisel, so also a distorted and inharmonious life has to pass through many a trial, suffering and tribulation before the great change could come over it, before the life of ignorance could be transmuted into a life of immortal splendour and joy, fit to be revered and adored.

We speak of Divine Love. The possession of this Love can never be for one who has retained his individual predispositions, who is harbouring the ideals of a selfish outlook, who is wedded to the things that perish, who is caught in the toils of a confused understanding and a heart unleavened with compassion and peace. So purification of the heart and mind by charging it with the spirit of Love for all creatures and beings in the world is the first step that brings about the Divine transformation. The light of Truth can shine in the soul and flood the entire being only when knowledge dawns in the mind and love fills the heart. Dedication is thus the substitution of a lower for a higher life, of death for immortality, of bondage for liberation, of sorrow for ever-abiding peace and bliss.

CALL ON THE LORD

Call on the Lord with all the love of your heart. Concentrate all your longing in that call, and you may be sure that God will respond. Thus it was His great devotees of the past and present entitled themselves to His infinite grace. The language of love is simply irresistible. Just as the child by its lisping talks, charms and captures the heart of the mother, so the true devotee

by his frank and plaintive words of love draws towards him the almighty Beloved of his heart. The language of the devotee is the expression of his pure and aspiring heart. Heart is the Vina and devotion the fingers that play upon it to infuse a magic spell in the call for the Beloved. Hence the devotee employs sweet music for his appeals and prayers to God. He cries and weeps for God, extols and glorifies Him, talks and holds communion with Him—in a rhythmic language of love. He sings and dances when he has found his Beloved. The music of Divine symphony thrills his entire frame. Ecstasy or inexpressible joy rises in waves in his heart. Love overflows in tears through his eyes. Purity, peace and light permeate his entire being. This is the culmination of his utter devotion and self-surrender. He places his entire life, soul and body at the feet of the Beloved. How does the devotee attain to this exalted state of perfect union with the Lord of his heart? It is clear that he adopts music as the means by which he tunes his heart with the heart of the Lord. A heart that is filled with love—selfless and radiant—alone raises a human being to the feet of the Almighty. Such a love sings like the nightingale, gives out perfume like the rose, beautifies life in all its aspects, and brings the devotee in intimate touch and eternal fellowship with the Lord.

Therefore, call on the Lord with all your heart and He is sure to respond. Make Him the sole beloved of your life and He is sure to be yours. Pray to Him, sing of Him, dedicate yourself to Him, and He will grant you absolute peace and bliss—nay, He will reveal Himself in your heart and absorb you into His transcendent being, and thus make you realize that you are the very embodiment of His own cosmic peace and joy. He will then give you the vision of beholding Him everywhere, i. e. you will behold your own supreme Self manifested as the entire universe. Love is your way and love is your goal.

Call on the Lord—the Beloved. Have you found anything sweeter than His Name, more charming than the sound of His Name? If you have real love for the Lord you will reply: "Certainly, I have not." Then there is no need for anybody to tell that you should sing on His Name and be inebriated with the Divine ecstasy associated with it. You will find your life has changed into a song of eternity. Who could adequately describe in words the wonderful glory of the Beloved's Name? He who has tasted alone knows what it is like. Oh! taste it and let the Name illuminate your heart and intellect and fill you with floods of joy. Sing on His Name with all love and devotion and embrace the Beloved in the recesses of your heart. What blessedness then is yours? Can you now hold such a precious possession in comparison with all the riches of the world? Name, fame and wealth in this evanescent world are as nothing to you when your heart has once drunk the nectar of the Beloved's Name. Therefore, sing on His Name with one-pointed devotion. The Beloved awaits you: you have only to take His Name and He runs to you. How simple it is, yet how difficult with many whose love for the Beloved is not as intense as their attachment to the perishable baubles of the world!

Direct your thought within and listen to the call of your own voice and the responsive word of the Beloved will come to you, and you will discover that He is within you. Verily, the Beloved is in the heart of his devotee. Mingle your life in the ocean of His existence. Expand your heart to meet the infinity of His love. Widen your vision so that you may be bathed in His light, power and joy. Now you have become the Beloved's beloved. Now you are one with Him. Oh! the power and greatness of the call! Call on Him, sing of Him and be ever blessed!

DIVINE GRACE

The way of elevating human life from its lower plane to the higher, from a state of ignorance to one of knowledge, from the consciousness of the individual to the consciousness of the universal, in short, from the conditioned and limited to the unconditioned and infinite, is at once most easy and most difficult. It is not merely our earnest endeavours for the realization of the supreme Reality of our nature that is sufficient, but the power of the Divine grace should pour on us spontaneously in order to produce the needed Divine transformation.

The secret of the great change by which the entrapped soul of man is liberated into the all-blissful realisation of immortality—the conditions necessary for the consummation of this task—is a supreme mystery. After deeply considering this question from every possible avenue, it has been decisively arrived at that the power of will that could effect a momentous transfiguration of life into its Divine essence lies entirely with the almighty controller of all worlds, and beings and creatures and things in them. This great original Spirit with a silent and irresistible force from within the human soul, unravels its own magnificent glory, unfailing bliss and all-embracing love.

If we could, by the help of our reasoning faculties, try to build up a system of thought to understand the meaning and conditions governing it, we can say, for realizing the absolute unity of the individual soul with the infinite cosmic Spirit, it is incumbent upon the soul who aspires to be blessed with this beatific state that he ought to, on his part, possess himself with a burning aspiration for the realization of his real spiritual eminence. Given this condition, it is contended that Divine grace is sure to descend on him changing him into a being of eternal splendour and joy. The above condition is held to be a necessary criterion for the

attainment of the eternal Divine life, but still instances can be quoted wherein Divine grace worked miraculously on the least prepared souls, granting them the knowledge and joy of the Divine. Individual effort and initiative, so far as spiritual evolution is concerned, appears to be futile in the absence of the Divine grace which alone should work in the heart of man and automatically drive him on the path of spirituality. And then rising from stage to stage, he should ultimately reach the all-transcendent and supreme Reality. The devotee rightly says: "O God, I should not have remembered Thee if Thou hadst not first remembered me." So, God in His infinite mercy selects souls in the world irrespective of their fitness or otherwise for converting them into channels for the manifestation of His infinite power, light and glory granting them the knowledge of His cosmic existence. So the soul that sincerely wishes to dwell in the Divine and become one with Him should wait patiently like the proverbial bird, which longs to drink the cool brilliance of the full moon, for that psychological moment to arrive. This period of waiting can be best utilized by being in the presence of those great souls whom the grace of the Lord has converted into His very images. Here his hunger finds the food to appease it to a considerable extent, because the society of Mahatmas reveals to the soul the great purpose of his birth and existence, and raises him to the consciousness of his immortality.

INTUITION

Intuition is the working of the inner being of a man when he has tuned his life with the universal and all-transcendent existence. When intuition really works, the egoistic sense of man is completely absent and the experience of such a man is of a consciousness which is above the body-idea. To rise above the notion of the body does not mean the stock stillness of the physi-

cal members but the performance of all their actions in a state of perfect self-effacement and therefore of spontaneity.

Intuition does not work always in consonance with the views and opinions, or swayed by the criticisms and oppositions, of the world. The external form of work which the intuition takes directly flows out from the omnipotent Power that causes the birth, growth and dissolution of all phenomenal life.

If one could at all distinguish the works of intuition from those emanating from an individualistic sense, it is possible only through their results. While the former, being of a selfless nature, tend inevitably to the benefit and delight of others, the latter, being born of a personal ambition and for personal gratification, causes loss and misery to others. So intuition is the product of complete self-surrender and its work is in its inherent nature beneficial to all.

We hear of saints and sages receiving unspoken messages from the great Master of the universe as to the conduct of their lives. Their intimacy and communion with the great Guide is so perfect that they carry out works in the world without favour or prejudice, without caring for praise or blame, but only in fulfilment of their life's mission as set by the Divine Guide.

In the field of spirituality, intuition is spoken of as the "Inner Voice." When the soul has fallen under the spell of this immortal voice he realizes his ever free and blissful existence. Thereafter the individual lives and moves in the consciousness of God. In all states he now feels he is utterly liberated and inexplicably happy.

WAY TO DIVINE LOVE AND PEACE

Love is the expression of God. To realize Love is to realize God. God is all-pervading and is seated in the hearts of all beings, creatures and things. To love all is to be in tune with God, i. e., to become conscious of our

perfect oneness with every form of manifestation in the universe. The first thing necessary for a man to attain this all-absorbing and glorious love is that he should be freed from the baneful clutches of lust, greed and wrath, because these passions, taking their stand up on the separative ego-sense, throw a cloud or veil over this self-luminous, self-existent and immortal source of love within him. The eradication of the ego with its dark movements can be possible, by a continuous meditation of the indwelling Reality or God and by a process of surrender of all actions to the same Lord, who causes all activity and movement in the worlds. Action thus done in the gradual sublimation of the ego-sense expands the vision and purifies the mind, enabling it to find union with the all-blissful Truth or God.

The path of self-surrender declared in the sublime teachings of the Gita is the easiest one, and this fact is borne witness to by the galaxy of sages and saints, both of the past and the present ages. Krishna, Mohammed, Buddha and Jesus Christ—founders of the four great religions of the world—perfectly agree in that they point to this path alone as the supreme way to the attainment of God i. e., immortality and peace.

Compassion, forgiveness and peace are the conditions governing self-surrender. Love denotes a combination of these triple virtues. To surrender to God is to be God-like or to be God Himself. God is all compassion, mercy and goodness. Hence to acquire these qualities by self-purification and surrender, is to approach God and ultimately become one with Him.

The aspirant who longs to realize the blessedness of his union with God must become perfectly harmless in thought, word and deed. His heart must well up with love for all beings and creatures without regard to any distinction; and he must also possess an equal or universal vision. The aspirant should be guided not only by the noble principle of not returning evil for evil in any manner, but also by a still higher principle of re-

turning good for evil. Thus forgiveness and mercy are held forth as the great attributes, essentially to be cultivated by the earnest seeker according to the teachings of all incarnations, saints and sages of the world.

It is better for him, thinks the aspirant, to die in the practice of forgiveness rather than live through revenge, because while one elevates him to the immortal status, the other drags him further deep into the hell of ever-recurring births and deaths. Indeed a death, in whatever form it comes, when his soul rests on the bosom of the Infinite and when he has no ill-will, hate or enmity towards any living creature on the face of the earth, could be welcomed with cheerfulness and resignation. This is the cult of Christ and Buddha. Krishna and Mohammed shew by their life and teachings that the other extreme way is also possible under the same spiritual condition of the aspirant. Surrender grants him not only the knowledge that he is the immortal spirit, but also that he is in all his physical activities a mere instrument in the hands of the Almighty. In this state of liberation or self-surrender, God could use him as an instrument to destroy without hatred—for the existence of which the ego-sense is responsible—and which is now absent, the evil forces that work against the progressive march of humanity to the great purpose of God, viz., the establishment of harmony, goodwill and peace in the world.

When all the peoples are united in the spirit, through mutual love and toleration under the banner of the one supreme Lord dwelling in the hearts of them all, they attain to a power which bestows nothing but pure peace, freedom and joy. The people who stand for distinctions and divisions not only suffer untold miseries as a result of them, but also raise the instruments of God for their own destruction.

So, O ye people of the world, unite in the freedom of your immortal existence for enjoying the pure bliss through universal love, by acts of self-sacrifice, sym-

pathy, compassion and forgiveness. Do not be any longer caught by the external forms and formalities, customs and traditions and dogmas and rituals that should disappear or change with the passing of time. Persistence in these non-essentials has given rise to the present state of chaos and confusion, since they obstruct the free play of the under-current of love upon which is founded the real unity and peace of the world. Stand together as children of the same parent in the radiance of the almighty Lord of the universe who is at once immanent and transcendent, and enjoy the supreme blessings of true peace and freedom.

NATURE OF TRUE LOVE

It has often been asked whether Divine Love is realized and practised on the dual plane or on the non-dual plane. It is a mistaken belief that Love acts merely on the dual plane without an underlying realization of oneness between the lover and the beloved. In fact, the flow of Love starts in its outward expression from its basis which is infinite and impersonal Truth.

God is infinite Love. It is not that we are to love God, but we have to realize God as Love. This love is the fundamental attribute of the all-pervading Atman who is our real being and existence. The moment we have realized that we are this Truth, our vision is universalized and we feel our identity with all creatures, beings, and things of this globe. In this supreme consciousness of oneness of all life and manifestation we attain to the perfect fulfilment of Love in us and in respect of everything in the world.

The saint who has realized this impersonal love of God does envelop the whole creation with this infinite Love which alone he beholds everywhere. In truth he always dwells in the one consciousness that he is all and all-in-all. Love is really the consummation of our oneness with all creation. Love is not for merely external,

apparent and changing forms of manifestation. Love is the very nature of the Atman who is the one sole reality that is at once an immanent and transcendent infinite Spirit. Love, though it seems to be working on a plane of duality, has really its roots in the impersonal Spirit that underlies the manifestation.

When this realization of supreme Love is attained, which is based upon the knowledge of the Atman, what becomes of the deep-seated love or attachment of the aspirant for any particular relation or friend in this world? It can be said that now, this narrow and selfish love is decentralized and expanded to such an extent that it merges in the universal consciousness of the Atman, producing an illumined state of equal vision and equal love towards all living creatures of the world. The idea of mine and thine entirely vanishes in this vision.

We know in the life of Lord Buddha, when he was a prince, living in all the pomp and circumstance of his stately life in his kingdom, that he was very deeply attached to his wife and his new-born baby. But, when suddenly the call of the Divine came to him, he snapped all the bonds that tied him down to the relative objects of life, and went forth into the wide world to realize the depthless and infinite ocean of supreme Love. After attaining the impersonal summit of Divine light and love he returned to his kingdom. Now, his wife, Yashodhara, approached him and questioned him thus: "How is it that you, who loved me so intensely, renounced me for leading your present mode of life?" Buddha's characteristic reply to this question was: "I would never have loved you so deeply, had I not loved the world more." It is clear that in his case the local and individualistic love was transformed into the limitless and universal Love of the Spirit.

Unity and oneness are the true nature of Love. Where there is a sense of division, where there is the idea of 'I' and 'thine', where there is self-seeking and self-aggrandizement, there does not live true love.

Therefore, Divine Love, which is true love, is impersonal in character and all-pervading in nature. This love is God and this love is our real being and life. To realize this love is the struggle of every aspirant on the path of God-realization.

Again, a doubt is raised when two persons are engaged, say in a talk, and out of whom one is a Self-realized soul, how would he commune with the other or look at the other having the consciousness of oneness in him? Of course, it is possible, just as you look at your own reflection in the mirror. There you see distinctly two different forms: one is yourself and the other your own image. But you know that the two are really one. So also, your attitude towards all life and manifestation is that you are one with all that appears and moves in this universe. Nay, you look upon the universe itself as the very expression and embodiment of yourself, and still you work, move and do all things in the world, not for anybody's sake, but as a spontaneous play of your own dynamic nature. In this supreme state you are, in and out, in every aspect of your being, a mass of spiritual splendour and joy. You are the very form and incarnation of impersonal Love and your individual life is absorbed in the cosmic, transcendent, and all-inclusive Godhead.

DIVINE LOVE

The greatest acquisition in human life is Divine love. Divine love is the love for the Lord seated in the hearts of all beings and creatures. This love is attained by the devotee in the first place only through the realization of the Lord in his own heart. The Lord is the master of the worlds. He pervades the entire universe. He is the supreme ruler of all the planes and spheres of existence. Since He is everywhere and all, to behold Him in all beings and love them all, is the true adoration of the Lord. In this vision of love, the

apparent good and evil have no significance. This love is based upon equality and a consciousness of universality. Divine love is absolutely pure and crystalline. It does not see distinctions, and so has no likes and dislikes. It flows from the heart of the devotee, and floods the world embracing and absorbing all alike, just as the light from the sun shines equally on all. It sheds its sweetness on all to the same degree. The devotee who has realised this exalted love is spontaneously blissful in all his activities, since these are permeated through and through with love. The real joy of the eternal is conceived in the womb of Divine love. Divine love expresses itself in cheerfulness, contentment, self-sacrifice, forgiveness, compassion and peace.

This love is absent in that heart in which, in the place of the supreme Lord, ego has installed himself. The ego is the cause of soul's bondage and misery. The moment the soul realizes his supreme and divine nature by union with the Lord in his heart, he becomes the very lustrous moon emitting always soft and soothing rays of Divine love. The ego obstructs the free flow of the Divine life in the human being. So to earn the supreme blessings of this glorious love, a one-pointed devotion to and adoration of the Lord of the universe is the way, the means and also the goal.

Adoration of the Lord signifies a loving remembrance of Him at all times, and this remembrance can be most easily effected by taking constantly the Lord's Divine Name.

LOVE IS IMPERSONAL

Love is very often mistaken as only a personal quality of God possessing a partial significance. Love related to the absolute Truth is in its content perfectly impersonal. Truth is like a diamond with many facets. As such from this great Reality are born all the forces that work in nature. Vishnu who is held by his devotees

as the highest Truth, as the very embodiment of Love, has in Him co-existing the dual force of protection and destruction. Whilst He is the all-loving protector of His devotees, He is at the same time the ruthless destroyer of all those who are the enemies of His devotees.

Love is a double-faced Truth in which both the creative and destructive elements are combined. If we give deep thought to understand the psychology of Love, we cannot but arrive at the conclusion that it is the very nature of Love to build up a wall of protection on the one hand, and to simultaneously break down and demolish objects and things on the other, for providing materials out of which alone the wall could be constructed. So it must be conceded that creation and destruction are concomitant and indivisible aspects of the same primal force. Creation means destruction and destruction is synonymous with creation. In other words, nothing can be created without destruction and nothing can be destroyed without a new creation.

Many spiritually-minded souls, while studying the great scripture Gita, read into it a meaning in agreement with their own limited and one-sided ideal. They contend the Gita is purely a philosophical work relating to the fight going on in the human breast between the Satwic and Tamasic forces that work in it. The Gita is not merely a philosophical but is eminently a historical work. The Lord has definitely declared: "To protect the weak, helpless and pious people of the earth and to destroy the **demoniacal and wicked people** I am born from age to age." It is evident in one act of the Lord, He is at once the lover and protector of those who take refuge in Him and the grim destroyer of those who stand in opposition to Him and His people. Still we look upon Sri Krishna as the very incarnation of Love. Love is not a dreamy ideal in which non-violence and non-resistance alone exist, as some would argue; but it is a comprehensive Truth from which issues a power that at once upholds unity and friendliness, and

tramples to the dust all causes of discord and unrighteousness.

Even in the history of later sages of the world, this strange and mysterious working of the Lord of Love is clearly apparent. We have in the Punjab, Guru Govind Singh, the intrepid soldier-saint, who led an army for safeguarding the Sikh shrines from the devastating touch of the enemy. Then again we have in Maharashtra, Shivaji who, inspired by Samarth Ramdas under similar conditions, waged a religious war against the enemies of their faith.

Then the question arises: is there no existence in which there is harmony, equality and peace? Certainly, there is such an existence which is beyond the forces manifest in nature. God who is infinite Love is at once the static Truth and dynamic Spirit. In the static existence of God there is equality and harmony, whilst on the plane of physical nature there is eternal clash of opposite forces, starting from the central power active in the manifestation.

The world, as we now see it, can be broadly divided into two camps—one striving to bring about universal peace and friendship, and the other preparing for a tremendous struggle for destruction on a vast scale. The Universal Love, in the view of those who advocate it, refers in fact only to such of the people who subscribe to the cult of friendship and peace. Harsh and very often intolerant criticism and condemnation are hurled at the opponents of peace by the votaries of universal Love. Here Love which presumes to be only non-violent and forgiving in nature is not behind hand in raising a revolt against those who seek to create disorder in the life of humanity. The people who advocate peace would surely not have friendly communion and intercourse with the protagonists of war. Though not on the physical plane, a stiff mental warfare is actually going on between these two opponents. The ferocious animal, tiger, in brutally destroying the life of other animals,

is at the same time friendly and loving towards its young ones and its own kind. This may be equally true of the peoples in the opposing camps.

Whether by thought, word or action, we have to admit, there is a ceaseless war going on in the heart of humanity. Now what is needed on the part of a real spiritual hero is to stand up on behalf of righteousness, that is, of those who are struggling to reach the inner harmony and peace of the immortal Spirit and adjust the external life accordingly, and then fight with all the opposing influences from whatever direction they come, with a brave and unflinching heart either by thought, word or action. We are afraid of physical action, while we are not so when we try to put down the opposing force by violent thought or word. This distinction is invidious and not in keeping with the realization of the highest Truth.

Love is not a weak, halting and cowardly thing. It is ever bold, forward and heroic. No good can come by shilly-shallying with the sense of this sublime word. We admit God is Love but we are at our wit's end as to how to explain or account for the work of destruction that is going on, on a gigantic scale, in the universe about us, emanated as it is from such a God who is the sole controller of all the forces that mould and re-mould the destinies of the worlds. The truth is: God is pure **impersonal** Love, and those who take refuge in Him are saved and those who are against Him perish.

When we are preaching universal Love with the object of awakening mankind to the realization of its indwelling cosmic Spirit who is One, we must not forget we are at the same time invoking in nature a mighty and all-devouring power that would spell ruin and disaster to humanity. To set up this malevolent force and then sit quiet taking refuge in the cult of non-violence and non-resistance is sheer imprudence and cowardice. The eternal fight between the Self and non-Self—between the altruistic and selfish impulses in mankind—has an

inevitable place in the play of nature. Ours is to side with the former and wage war on the latter until the last breath leaves our body, as much on the physical plane as on the mental. If we dare to face Truth, let us do so preparing ourselves for any fate. Man is a fighter by nature's own gift. Let us then fight having God who is Love as our goal. Transcending all the weakening influences of the Gunas or modes of Prakriti, let us start a world crusade against tyranny, arrogance, pride and oppression, wherever it is found. The earth is groaning beneath the heavy and heartless tread of men drunk with the brute power and authority. A tame philosophy of flowery words and smooth phrases is not the demand of the Time Spirit; its message is a call for concerted action, charged with firmness and determination.

GOD IS LOVE

God is defined as Love. What does this word Love here signify? What is its real nature? Love is absolute and is perfectly impersonal; it is the pure and dazzling power of the Spirit that dwells in and pervades all beings and things. Love is infinite and eternal. Love is beyond the implications of name and form—still it works through them. Love is beyond the sense of duality—still it reveals in multifarious ways. It is the omnipotent power that guides and controls all things.

Love is unaffected by the touch of time and place. The so-called right and wrong are unknown in the realm of Love. It is not coloured by the conflict of opposites and the modes of Nature. Its light is of a crystal. Love is spontaneous in expression and therefore supremely blissful. Its manifestation is based upon its indivisible unity and oneness with all that exists. Love is the one truth and one power. Love is ever taintless, ever flowing and ever acting from a transcendent plane. The upward movement and the downward both belong to

Love. All opposites neutralize in the undifferentiated spirit of Love. Love is the mystic solvent of all diversity.

To realize God who is Love, you are asked to love one another; to look upon others in the same light as yourself; to feel for others as you do for yourself. Can you understand the secret of this Love if you only strive to attain it through physical or mental perfection without seeking for a greater ideal? No, this is not possible. On no lower plane can you love another as yourself. You have to transcend individuality; you have to rise higher than the body and mind and realize the universal and immutable essence of your being, and then alone can you love another as yourself—not otherwise. You must attain to that consciousness in which you experience the ecstasy of oneness with all beings and creatures in the world. You must feel at the core of your heart that you, another and all are forms of one underlying Spirit. Diversity is merely on the surface. In the splendour of Truth, you and all are one.

In the vision of oneness and sameness of the life-principle there can be no dualism and the consequent clash of opposites. This vision is of Love—a pure emanation of an almighty and impersonal Spirit. Love's nature is therefore equality and harmony founded on the knowledge of oneness of all things.

Compassion is the first quality to be developed in order to attain the bliss of impersonal Love. At the sight of suffering your heart is touched and it melts. In a mysterious way you now feel the suffering of another as your own. This feeling is not of the body or mere mind. It is the outcome of a consciousness of something that equally dwells within you and the sufferer, and which is undivided. By a strange impulse you are urged to succour him. Your act of relief, whatever shape it takes, yields you inexplicable peace and joy. Verily, the peace that you thus derive has sprung from nowhere but the outer fulfilment of your intuitive or mystic reali-

zation of inner identity with the sufferer. When impelled on by Love, you invariably take your stand on the impersonal truth of your existence.

So long as you are only seeking for perfection of Love in the relative good conceived by you as an ideal, you will be caught in the labyrinth of a never-ending quest. Understand at once that the root of Love is in your impersonal Self and to realize it, awakening the heart to the feeling of compassion and the resultant selfless action is essential. Perform life's all activities in such a manner that you can every moment be conscious of your identity with the whole creation. Do not rely on any standard, however exalted, which is merely dogmatic, ethical or mental. Soar beyond all conditioned states of thought and life, and, reaching the infinite Reality, make this great Impersonal as the one immortal standard of your entire life. This Truth or God has become all—there is none besides He.

APHORISMS

Behold! God is within you.

God is infinite Love.

He is the eternal Light and Joy that pervade the whole universe.

Rise above the thought of all mundane things.

Reach the height and glory of God's pure and effulgent presence.

Give up "I" and "mine", and you are face to face with God.

Elevate every thought, and you dwell in a blissful Divine consciousness i.e., in God.

Aspire to realize God! See Him in the beginning, in the middle, and in the end of all things and happenings.

Be humble, be pure, be simple, be innocent, and God is yours.

God, who is Love, dwells in your heart. Be conscious of this at all times. Then your thoughts are of love, your words are of love, and your acts are of love.

Let the splendour of God ever illumine your heart. Then it is all light for you, inside, outside and everywhere.

Step out of the darkness of ignorance, enter into the light of knowledge, and there stand facing God—the Light of all lights.

Let your deeds be the spontaneous works of God within you.

Brush aside pride, and permit God to work in you.

God is the only Reality; God is the only Truth. Know this and live for God alone.

Do not cling to perishable things; make the eternal God your all in all.

If you seek everlasting peace and joy, lay aside your desire for transient things; let no longing but for God fire your bosom.

Don't pursue the shadows; name, fame and glory appear and disappear, ultimately dragging you down to ruin and grief.

Be free from the allurements of lust and gold. These put out the Divine Light within you, and throw you back into darkness and misery.

Bask always in the sunshine of God's splendour and glory.

Do not lose touch of God; be ever in tune with Him.

Be calm and cheerful always.

Let your eyes look with kindness, your tongue speak with mildness, and your hands touch with softness.

To soothe the aching heart, to infuse courage into the drooping spirit, to bring a smile upon the face pale with woe, to assuage sorrow by loving words, are the works of a God-lover.

Offer your all to God, and then be His true servant. Beware of conceit and self-praise.

Remember, He within you is doing all.

Glorify Him and His Name.

Distinctions of caste, creed, colour and race are false. All are one in God.

Behold God in all, love Him in all, serve Him in all, be one with all.

The God in your heart is the God that dwells in all. Your union with Him means your union with all.

Realize that God is the doer.

Surrender your ego to Him.

Give up your individual will; make God's will your will.

Surrender gives you love, peace and joy—manifests God within you.

Resist not evil. Return good for evil. Forgive, forgive, forgive—be this the motto of your life.

God's love is forgiveness and compassion itself.

Purify your heart so that God may take His seat in you.

There is no greater virtue than humility, no vice greater than pride.

Give up show and hypocrisy.

The flower of God blossoms in you—only in the atmosphere of innocence and sincerity.

Leave the world alone; yours is to find Him and Him alone.

Be absorbed in the thought of God. Be ever immersed in God-consciousness, in a state of transcendent bliss and peace.

Be ever watchful; make God your helper, friend and mother.

The Tempter is the ego; he is the Satan of Jesus Christ, the Mara of Buddha and the Kama of Shiva.

Don't despair in failure and fall. God's grace is upon you.

Seek His aid. He is Almighty. Complete surrender He demands of you; then only will He make you His own.

Permit God to change you, mould you as He wills. He enlightens and makes you conscious of your identity with Him.

You are at once one with God and different from Him.

In Spirit all are one; in bodies there is diversity. All bodies and forms are the Spirit's manifestation. This is the Divine Unity in variety and multiplicity.

Remember God always, if you would surrender to Him.

Make the mansion of God's holiness and purity your permanent abode.

Be like the flower: give out always the perfume of love and joy.

Pray that always you may be in Him and He in you i.e., to grant you this awareness.

He is always in you and you are in Him, whether you know it or not.

Nothing is yours; everything is God's; do not forget this !

You have come from God, and you are on your way to Him. Walk the path of saints and sages. Know that the path is the goal.

Even when you are walking the path, you have reached the destination.

Realize that you are the immortal Spirit.

Cast away fear, doubt and anxiety.

Give up all plans, schemes and expectations of the future.

Every minute is pregnant with joy in communion with God.

Knowledge dawns; and you see God's presence in you and with you.

As the chickens feel secure beneath the wings of the mother-hen, so be at peace under the protecting influence of God who is your Divine Mother.

LIFE ETERNAL

DIVINE ALCHEMY

At first the deep shadows of sadness crossed and darkened my life. Palpable dimness clouded my soul. Agony and despair seized my being. For a time the world disappeared from my thoughts. I longed, hungered and wept for the great Truth—the eternal rest and peace. I struggled with the forces that offered resistance. I wailed, prayed and fought like a frantic child. Nothing would satisfy me but the fullest vision of the Truth. "If God is, where is He? I would see Him. I would do all that is humanly possible to get Him. I would even die for Him—if death alone be the ransom to attain Him." This was the one thought that burnt like a flame in my mind—a flame that grew in volume day after day until it consumed me completely.

Now the great transformation came upon me. A supernal splendour dazzled my soul. I felt I was enveloped by and lost in a halo of Divine effulgence. I was merged in unutterable bliss and peace. My old self is dead. I am now a new being—illuminated with the light of God. It is a light not of this world of shadows—it is the Light of lights—the transcendent first principle and root of all that exists—call it God or Truth. I am blessed with the grace of this almighty Truth. Now, life is filled with sweetness ineffable. Now, it flows in rhythms of joy—it sings of the glory of its own eternity. Its touch transmutes—its sight awakens—its very thought purifies and elevates. Such a life is mine—such a God is mine—the ever-abiding beloved Lord of my heart.

Now I have found a joy that never fades. I have found a Life that never dies. I have entered into an empire that knows no bounds, no decline and no decay. I live in the realm of the immortals. I commune with incarnations, prophets, saints and sages. I mingle my light and life with theirs. I sing in tune with their voice. My face is bewitched by their smiles. I dance with them in ecstasy. O supreme felicity—O supreme everlasting bliss!

This is my life. Those who wish to share with me the blessing of this immortal life—step out from the sphere of death, fear and sorrow—rise from the vale of doubt, despair and darkness—renounce the region of desire, hate, wrath and greed—possess the consuming fire in which I was transformed by the Divine alchemy of His grace. This is the way to the life immortal—God.

WHO AM "I"

I am the life of all lives, I am the power of all powers. I am greater than the greatest, smaller than the smallest—I am simply wonderful. To wonder at myself with all the highest power of my imagination is to merge into the wonderful Being and become a wonder myself.

I live in ecstasy always, I live in ecstasy always. I try to find out who is this 'I'—who is this 'I.' "Who am I?" Answer is what? Silence is the answer by which I come to know what the 'I' signifies. In the silence it is—there is no such thing as 'I' or 'you'—in silence it is.

Joy thrills and thrills every fibre of my being, every atom of my frame is dancing with joy, from every pore of my being I am oozing out nothing but pure and unalloyed joy. To die in this state is not death. It is something beyond death and life. It is the state of perennial ecstasy, everlasting bliss, eternal bliss—changeless, ever remaining the same and same. There is one song—one strain that is sung—that is heard—and that is the symphony of joy—the music of true delight,

In the abundance of overflowing joy, I speak. My words are varied expressions of joy. All that I talk begins in joy, moves in joy and ends in joy. In the stillness of my body, in the activity of all its members, in the cessation and movement of my mind and intellect there is—there is all joy—joy. My objectless laughter is the best definition of that joy. I am at all times intoxicated with a joy which I cannot describe—which I cannot describe.

DIVINE PROTECTION

When an earnest aspirant or devotee is on the path of God-realization, he meets with innumerable obstructions and difficulties, but God's mercy is so great that the adventurous soul is endowed by Him with the necessary strength and will to endure or overcome them. The mysterious manner in which the benevolent Master of the worlds guides and protects him is simply wonderful. If we examine the earlier life of intense struggle of an aspirant for self-control and attainment of the Divine, in every case, we find that the Lord did, with infinite love and kindness, watch over and protect him. In fact, the opposing or resisting forces on the path seem to be a part of God's own plan so that the aspirant by contending against them may develop the needed will-power for the subdual of the mind and its restless nature.

The moment the devotee takes refuge in God, acknowledging Him as his all in all, the moment his entire being is surrendered up to Him, the moment all his life's activities are completely dedicated to Him, the feeling or consciousness of peace, security and freedom which he attains is verily inexpressible. Then the devotee is ever free and blissful like a child under the benign care of the Divine Mother.

What is required is a fixed faith and a steady aspiration or hunger for God. Thereafter the progress or evolution towards the vision of God becomes easy, for at

every step, even when he has to conquer the worst enemies within the mind or the greatest obstacles outside, he feels that the hands of the Divine are ever holding him, infusing into him courage and enthusiasm.

Every saint, who has achieved the highest spiritual experience, lays before you that during the period of his Sadhana, God himself saved him from many a pitfall and dangerous situation in inscrutable ways. He bears witness to the fact that God is all powerful and His compassion and love for His devotees is unlimited. He tells you emphatically: put yourself in the hands of God and you are safe.

Life's fulfilment and the revealment of its glory, power and victory lie in its perfect dedication to God. Man has to rise beyond himself, transcend all the lower conceptions of his nature, subdue the false impulses of the mind and conquer the vitiating influences of the ego and thus rising superior to them all, meet his supreme Beloved in his own heart and in the hearts of all objects in the world.

The Divine assurance, "My devotee perisheth never", is a promise of the utmost significance. Really, there is none who is so full of kindness and love as our eternal Mother, none so forgiving, none so tender, none so benevolent as She. Realizing this let every one entitle himself or herself to Her Divine protection and grace, through unshakable faith and entire self-surrender. Merge yourself, therefore, in Her resplendent being, and attain to a life imbued with the consciousness of immortality, peace and bliss.

BLISS OF THE ATMAN

Every one who is in the grip of a struggle for the attainment of the eternal values of life knows that life's fulfilment and its ultimate fruition depends upon the immortal bliss and peace of the Atman. He further

knows that this unchanging Truth can be his, only when the mind is withdrawn from the external attractions of the world, only when he has conceived a revulsion of feeling towards the pleasures of the senses, only when the false cravings of his soul for the unstable and ephemeral things of life have ceased and disappeared. These are the necessary conditions for the realization of the immortal peace and joy of the Atman.

The Sages have declared: There is no higher gain in this existence than the bliss of the Atman. When you have once found it, you are utterly free from the clutches of mental turmoil and the fetters of death and misery. Suppose a man has come by a perennial spring of nectar at which he can quaff to his heart's content and thus satisfy the thirst that parches his soul, would he hanker after the unwholesome water of dirty ponds that brings disease and consequent pain and misery?

If you would really enjoy the blessings of a true and independent life, then by a concentrated and sustained effort seek the bliss of the eternal. Nothing else in this world can quench the flames of desire that rise and burn in your heart. Liberation is spoken of as the realization of the immortal Divinity dwelling within you. Be intoxicated with the joy that never changes, that ever exists. Joy, bliss and peace are your quest. Independence and freedom are your goal.

If you have understood, by ransacking the depths of your desire-ridden heart, the true purpose of your life, you will surely have discovered that nothing short of the attainment of an immortal state would completely satisfy the innate aspiration of your soul. The passing glammers of life, the gilded pleasures that you pursue, are the will-o'-the-wisps that delude the mind and throw you into the prison of ignorance and death. Therefore, seek the eternal, seek that which never dies, never changes—that which is your real spirit, the one deathless truth of your being. Do not be deceived. Wake up from the sleep of ignorance. Be aware of

your eternal Self. Tear up the veil between you and your God, and know that you and He are one. Declare with all the joy that you can command: "I am the all-pervading, indestructible, beginningless and endless Truth, whose nature is perfect peace and bliss. I am the self-existent, all-powerful Reality. I am the free, ageless, birthless, everlasting Spirit. Disease, poverty, fear and want have nothing to do with me. I am bliss—pure bliss: peace—pure peace. I am the Light of lights. I am the primeval source of all things. I am God and there is none but 'I.'" Meditate thus until you are inebriated with the thought of your Divine state, until you merge and lose yourself in the limitless ocean of your immortal existence and make this blessed human life abundantly blessed.

YOUR BELOVED EVERYWHERE

The mind which constantly contemplates upon God, imbibes into its being His immortality, love and joy. The saying: "As a man thinketh, so he becometh," is eminently true. The individuality conceived of by the mind as a stable and real existence, must, by means of meditation, merge in the universality of God's existence. It is the experience of every aspirant on the spiritual path that the more he devotes the mind to the exalted thought of God, the more he is absolved from its impurities and ignorance.

The principle is: take in brilliant and elevating ideas, and automatically the low and grovelling thoughts will be purged off. Just as the application of soap removes the dirt of the cloth turning it clean and white, or just as light dispels darkness and illumines space, so also a sustained recollection of God, destroying all the distempers of the mind, purifies and ennobles life. It is rightly said that one should not unnecessarily exert oneself for subduing the mind, but what one has to do is to dwell in the contemplation of God, and by this

method not only purify the heart but also simultaneously fill it with the light, love and joy of God.

Verily, there is no peace for man until his mind is liberated from the clutches of passion, until the wisdom of the Eternal enlightens him.

Therefore, raise your heart, mind, soul and body to the throne of the almighty Lord within you in concentrated adoration and worship. Let the harassing complexity of life be substituted by harmonious simplicity. So regulate your life as to attain to a vision which enables you to be naturally friendly towards all creatures and beings in the world. Let humility be your shield, love your weapon, and a blissful life of service the aim and mark. Don't be satisfied with anything less than the universalization of your outlook upon life. This is the Atma Darshan sung of by the sages of yore. It is a supreme state in which the notion of the body, the sense of apparent diversity and the erroneous consciousness of the ego have no place. It is the vision of the pure, resplendent spirit that pervades all beings in the universe. It is a vision of yourself as the indwelling Reality in all forms and existences. It is a vision of indescribable ecstasy born of the knowledge of one eternal substratum or Soul that fills and overflows to infinity the world phenomena.

How do you reach the summit of this transcendental Reality?—by recollection, contemplation and meditation. Give your thought entirely to God and you are bound to realize that you are God Himself. Before the glory of this attainment, all other aspirations of man are flat and childish. When you can tune your mind with the all-powerful Master of the universe and realize deathless peace, liberation and bliss, is it worth while for you to pursue the ephemeral prizes and achievements of the world, however great and glossy they might seem? What a tremendous privilege this human birth is! Human life can have the full value set on it only

when it is utilised for achieving the loftiest purpose for which it is meant.

Hence, turn your mind, day by day, towards the immortal source of your life—God. Let your life be more and more filled with Divine effulgence and love. Let your actions flow like a gentle stream singing the melodious song of Divine service. Be gifted with the sight of the sage, and behold your Beloved everywhere—aye, your Beloved everywhere.

YOU ARE THE TRUTH

True freedom and peace are things of the Spirit. They are the inherent truths of every human being. When you dwell in the Spirit, when you realize the glory of your immortal existence, then alone you enjoy the blessedness of real liberation. This state is not conditioned by external situations and circumstances. In all places, at all times, the dazzling spirit of your being ever sheds its immortal splendour. For one who has attained this supreme state, there is no adversity, no sorrow and no perplexity. He is free from the clutches of fear and doubt because he has realized himself to be the deathless and ever-blissful Spirit. His individual life, so far presumed as something apart from the rest of the universe, has now dissolved, as it were, in the immutable consciousness that pervades the vast manifestation of nature, and transcends it to infinity. The sense of duality which had so long circumscribed his vision and set limitations on him has vanished. Put him anywhere, however undesirable and unpleasant the situation may be, his freedom and peace remain untouched and unaffected. His life is a continued experience of eternal light, love and peace. A devotee illumined with the realization of this supreme Truth exclaims: "Cast me, O Lord, into the worst of hells and by the power of a single drop of the infinite ocean of joy which I possess, I can convert the very hell into heaven." Such is the

greatness and magnificence of the immortal state of bliss which is your true existence.

Your life is a ceaseless flow singing the song of eternity. Your life is the sun that ever emits the rays of immortal radiance. Your life is the very expression of exquisite beauty and grace. Your life again is a veritable flood of joy that inundates the worlds. This life covers, envelops, permeates and absorbs into itself the visible universe and the invisible essence—unchanging and unmanifest. To know this Truth, to realize this Truth, is to attain to a freedom and joy—an ecstasy and delight—which is simply inexpressible.

O friend, you are this life, this Truth, this God in totality, in all His subtler and grosser aspects—a full-blown Divinity. Your nature is pure bliss, limitless love and absolute peace. Your true being is cosmic; your real essence is universal. You are the great Truth, the supreme One than whom there is none other. Think of, meditate on and live in this Divine state and declare yourself to be the Truth imbued with infinite possibilities and powers, and through the consequent transformed vision behold the world as yourself, your own body, your very image. Know this—that to possess this vision itself is to do good to the world, to love the world, to serve the world; because this vision does not admit of anything else, since it fulfils itself in a spontaneous revealment of its glory in all ways for the beneficence of the world.

ATTUNEMENT WITH GOD

Attunement with the eternal Reality is attainment of God. The bound soul is on the one side, and the free and all-pervading Spirit is on the other. The progress of the soul towards this supreme goal can be possible only as it gradually liberates itself from a state of discord and confusion. Its restless nature must be replaced by a rapture of peace and calmness. God stands

for harmony and peace, while the soul is the very embodiment of unregulated emotion groping in darkness and delusion. Before the great purpose to be achieved by the soul could dawn upon it, it must invariably receive a Divine touch from outside. This touch comes from saints who have by prolonged communion with God transformed themselves into His very image. The aspiration which thereafter seizes the soul leads it onward with unfaltering steps and an ever-burning zeal to realize the highest glory of its existence—its divine and immortal nature.

Now the question naturally arises as to how the restless soul can harmonize itself with an eternal God of equilibrium, peace and joy. The musical instrument, if it could be of any use to the musician, should be tuned to the needed note of voice belonging to the singer. Similarly, the unstrung and unregulated chords of the soul have to be readjusted so that this human instrument may be made to synchronize with the immortal symphony of the supreme Godhead.

There is no easier method by which a soul can experience the ecstasy of the Divine than through music—a music which thrills with the sweetest of sounds, the Name of God. The melody of the Name sends such a delight through the soul and the entire physical frame that all the discord and turmoil within them immediately cease and the soul is elevated to meet and to mingle with the Divine life and bliss. Sing on the Lord's most charming Name. Sing on the infinite glories of the great Beloved until like a drop in the ocean, your life seemingly cut off from God merges in Him and tastes the bliss and peace of immortality.

There are innumerable instances of great devotees of God who employed this sovereign means for dwelling in the infinite God. When they were inebriated with the Divine music they could not sit or stand still. They danced in ecstasy like happy children. The outstanding figures of Chaitanya, Tukaram, Ramkrishna and so many

others illustrate the truth of this path of supreme devotion. To rise above the body-idea, to dissolve the ego-sense, to fill the soul with a transcendent peace and joy, to reach a state of the highest beatitude replete with the light, knowledge and delight of God, in short, to free the soul from the fetters of bondage and ignorance, you cannot find a more efficacious, more simple and more natural Sadhana than to sing the powerful Name of the Lord in the company of saints and devotees. Ever victory be to the Name of the Lord!

PEACE

Your search is for peace. Peace is an internal state of the soul acquired through the realization of the highest Truth, which is inherent in every human being. Peace relates to the eternal. The transient and the ephemeral things of the world are incapable of granting peace. If you would have peace, turn your mind to the immortal source of your life—the deathless and changeless Reality. By constant contemplation and meditation, tune your thought to this Reality, ultimately sublimate it into that Divine existence and thereby attain to a peace which knows no change.

God is peace, Truth is peace. So be the devotee of God, if you long for peace. Live and act for the sake of this peace and having possessed, it, spread its cooling radiance around, bathing all about you in its blissful floods. First, gain the God of peace for yourself. Be liberated from the clutches of a restless spirit which has thrown the soul into darkness and chaos.

Raise every thought and emotion towards the supreme seat of light, power and peace. Enter into the deepest realms of utter silence and repose of the Godhead. Associate in all manner of ways with this transcendent, all-pervading and static being of the Godhead. By entire dedication be one with Him.

Soar up with the wings of burning aspiration to the

immortal throne of peace and find there the tranquillity and calmness for which you have struggled so far. Nowhere else can you attain it, for nowhere else does it exist.

O lovers of peace, everlasting peace is your birth-right. The kingdom of peace is within you; nay, you are the very mould and expression of that immutable Truth. Seek not outside for this greatest consummation of life. Taste the nectar of peace in the recess of your being. There resides the heavenly light that lends splendour and beauty to all things.

Fill your heart with the pure emotions of love and compassion. Illumine your intellect with the light of eternal wisdom. Surcharge your actions with the spirit of spontaneous service and sacrifice. Then only the Divine peace that passeth all understanding will be yours unto eternity. You will then be the very embodiment of absolute peace. Your life will shine like the full moon in a cloudless sky. You will reach the sublimest acme of life's attainment!

LIFE ETERNAL

Life is not confined merely to the apparently animated beings and creatures of the world. Life is a dynamic principle that permeates all objects and things that occupy the limitless expanse of space. But for the power of this extremely subtle and active principle or spirit no visible worlds could exist. In fact, motion itself signifies form and manifestation. Just as movement on the still waters of a lake means innumerable forms of ripples on its surface, so the worlds and all beings and things in them are the forms of the one moving Spirit.

This life is one—the energy that animates it is one, however diverse are the ways of its revelation. The sum-total of everything that exists is the one Reality which is absolute, eternal and infinite.

One substance, one essence, is the truth about the universe. What appears as multiplicity is only the variation of the single, original principle. The so-called dead, inert, or living objects in the world are merely the expressions of the one eternal Life. The composite human being made up of body, senses, mind, intellect and soul is truly that Life in its entirety. "All this is verily Brahman",—are the words of the sages who have realized this unity and oneness of all life.

To attain the lofty experience of this Truth, there must be a complete transformation in the human being in every part of him. It is not a vision gained through a superficial change, but a very rebirth of the soul into a Divine consciousness. It is a vision imbued with the life of infinity, the bliss of immortality and a consciousness of universality and absolute freedom.

What shuts out this dazzling vision and experience from the life of a self-centred and egoistic human being is ignorance—verily, it is ignorance. A blind man can have no conception of the vastness of space around him. By groping with his hands and feet he attempts to measure the world and finds it so narrow and limited. He depends solely upon the perception of his external senses to arrive at his conclusions about the extent of life that encompasses him. Suppose, now the blind man is blessed with sight. How does he look upon the universe? The narrow conceptions of his blind state vanish, and he at once feels that he is raised to a sublime wonder-land. This is because now the light has dawned on him—a light by the aid of which he sees things as they are, in their real aspect, significance and measure. So, the profound wisdom of the Reality, dispelling ignorance, reveals to the soul of a human being, the sublimity and infinity of his own existence.

Thus immortal Life is tuned to one song—speaks of one truth—unfolds the secret of one existence—reveals the activity of one spirit—informed with the vision of one supreme light.

SHAKTI OR SPIRITUAL POWER

SECRET OF POWER AND SUCCESS

Man holds in him the seed of infinite power. This seed is the origin of heavens and earth—of the whole world and the creatures in it. When man realizes that he is born of this seed, he opens up the channel, through which flows into him the light and power of this immortal seed. His weakness is conquered and inexhaustible strength manifests instead. His ignorance is dispelled and his heart is illumined with Divine knowledge. Doubt vanishes and unshakable faith takes birth in its place. Grief and misery are annulled and true peace and joy pervade his being. Thus life becomes a dazzling meteor radiating a divine and soothing brilliance. Such a man lives and moves in the world for the good of all—ever toiling for leading mankind along the path of light and truth. He sheds the rays of love and kindness on all alike wherever he goes. He attracts and fascinates all those who come to him, by his sweetness, smile and innocence. His powers are unlimited, because his life is linked with the life infinite. Success and victory are like dogs that follow at his heels, because he is the conqueror of the hearts of men. Such are the men of the highest spiritual attainments who are the rare blessings of this earth—children of eternal splendour.

Their lives are simple, their ways are playful and their hearts are free from the tinge of egoism. They ever roll in the ocean of undying peace and joy. If there is any desire still left in them it is this: that all mankind should enjoy the nectar of absolute bliss which they have realized. Every man by the mere right of his birth as such, can attain this supremely blessed state. Let him

only recognise the immortal source of his being—let him only find his union and oneness with this source. This source is Divine—this source is the supreme God. Then strength, power, success, peace, knowledge and joy will ever be his. He will have fulfilled the mission of his life. The river will have reached the infinite ocean. The drop will have mingled with the waters of immortality.

INVINCIBLE SPIRITUAL POWER

Human life is a rare gift of God. It can be elevated, to the highest eminence by making it dwell in a supreme and all-powerful consciousness in order to produce results beneficial to itself and to the world at large. Every human life is capable of understanding and realizing the great secret origin from which it has evolved and manifested. The moment life is illumined with the knowledge of its omnipotence and immortality, it stands revealed in all its glory, armed with a subtle and invincible strength and power that counteracts evil and establishes righteousness in the world.

Dear reader, such a spiritual power is your immortal possession. You have only to become aware of it and utilize it. Pursue the supreme blessedness of peace and freedom for yourself, and also create in the world an atmosphere of goodwill and harmony. The world, as it is seen today, influenced by the lower nature, is heading towards a course of hate and destruction. At this critical juncture, it behoves every one of you to gather up the entire spiritual possibilities of your being and work out, in concentrated thought and deed, a state of things in which the grim and devastating clashes that are imminent are made impossible. The power of the Spirit is invincible. It can stem the tide of every other power that seeks to generate chaos and confusion in the world. You are a veritable store-house of Divine energy. Open the store and let the eternal splendour

that burns within you radiate its light out and dispel the deepening gloom in the world.

Man is not mere man. Man is the very image of God, with all the potentialities of that supreme Being. Man is an immortal power of light, love and peace. Declare yourself as this Truth. Make the inherent Divinity of your nature the bedrock of all your thoughts and activities in the world. The passions, incited by ambitions for material glory and fame, spelling disaster to mankind, can be quelled by the superior power of the Spirit. Wherever you be, in whatever situation you are placed, you can develop infinite power to resist and conquer the fury of a calamitous influence that at present aims at involving the world in a carnage of wanton bloodshed, woe and misery.

Do not believe that the material world is the only reality. Many might tell you that you are only a weak and erring mortal, that you are a helpless tool in the hands of degrading impulses of your lower nature. No, you are the immortal Reality itself imbued with an inexhaustible strength, material as well as spiritual. The greater of the two is the spiritual that dominates over and controls the material.

From the silent Spirit of your being, let waves of unity, love and goodness ever rise as the soothing aroma of the incense. Certainly, it is within your power to convert not only your life but the life of mankind into a heaven upon earth. Thoughts pregnant with universal beneficence, words that cheer and awaken and actions that heal and alleviate are yours.

A great black cloud is at present hanging over the world—a menacing cloud that may break into an unimaginably horrible disaster. Scatter this cloud by the exercise of the omnipotent energy inherent in you. Do not merely sit and watch, but let the great Spirit within you be active. Let it assert its suzerainty and shed on all humanity its rays of harmony and peace. May the Lord within you unite in the common feeling of brotherhood,

all the peoples of this earth and destroy the tendencies that kindle the fire of disorder and devastation amongst them.

WHAT YOU WANT IS—SHAKTI

Know that an omnipotent Power which can grant you independent happiness, strength and peace ever seeks revealment in you. Throw open the doors of your soul so that this Power may flood your being with pure ecstasy—may permeate your intellect, mind, senses and body with an inexplicable joy. Permit this Divine Power within you to entirely transform your life to one of light, wisdom and bliss. Remove the obstructions, break down the barriers, root out the impediments that prevent you from having recourse to this great source of your existence. By perfect self-control, conserve the energies of your intellect, will and body and focus them all to the one supreme task and aim viz: to realize your Divine existence and nature. Do not fritter away your powers in pursuit of the transient satisfactions and joys of mere external life. Illumine the intellect, develop the will and purify the heart and body, and you will gain immense strength for the true understanding and perfect enjoyment of an eternal life.

Man unknowingly dissipates his energies in various ways, and so concentration on the supreme purpose becomes difficult for him. The result is an unenlightened understanding, an unsteady initiative and a confused activity. So, if you would attain to real knowledge, indomitable strength and blissful action, adopt a life of strict discipline in all that you think, feel and act.

Usually, man hangs on to the outside objects for his happiness and he is a slave; but when he has found eternal joy within himself, and does not depend upon external contacts, he is truly a master. Be therefore the master. Be ever in tune with your all-pervading, immortal Atman, and by handing yourself entirely to the all-

inclusive Godhead, be a power for righteousness in His omnipotent hands.

You are born to attain the great Truth and to do great things. To lift yourself to this high state is in your making. Waste not your energies in idle hankerings, uncurbed griefs and inharmonious actions. Don't feel dejection or despair under failure and disappointment. For, every attack of anxiety or sorrow dries up in you a great deal of your power—mental and physical. Don't jump into hasty conclusions and judgments; don't be susceptible to the momentary touches of evanescent emotions; don't rush into uncalled for actions with an egoistic impulse.

This life is a rare opportunity for attaining true, real and ever-existent bliss and peace. Therefore, go within yourself in a resolute spirit of adventure and discover the immortal source of your being. Then come out with a new vision and become a great force for the uplift of humanity around you. Set fire to the camphor of your soul and convert your life into a flame of Divine effulgence, offering and sacrifice—in the end to subliminate into your eternal essence.

Be the votary of the almighty Mother of the worlds and achieve this blessedness and liberation—this power and glory—this immortality and bliss. It is Shakti that you want—a Shakti that would lead you upward, that would effect your freedom from the clutches of the mind and the body. The Mother is all mercy to those who believe in Her and give themselves over to Her. Submit to Her will and dispensations, and thereby be Her invincible hero, ever eager to obey Her unerring commands. You are not a weak, you are not a puny, you are not a faulty creature, but you are the radiant child of a resplendent Mother whose song of power and victory resounds through worlds and space. Eternal glory be ever yours, O child of the Mother !

MOTHER SHAKTI

Shakti when she works in humanity, in the absence of knowledge of Her higher and greater aspect, is pre-eminently a movement in darkness. Shakti here acts through human nature as a blind force to produce discord and confusion in the world. All the highest capabilities of Her lower nature are now exploited, without the recognition of the magnificence of Her all-comprehensive nature, for the satisfaction of greed and the lust of power. Shakti on Her lower plane, even at Her best, is but a weak, unsteady and stumbling power, although it could break out, at times, in fits of mad fury.

Whereas, Shakti, when She reveals Herself through a chosen and illumined people, is a most powerful and beneficent force—irresistible in its workings both on the spiritual and physical planes. She manifests in all Her glory to check and subdue the discordant forces of Her lower nature and establish peace, righteousness and harmony in the life of humanity.

The world, as we behold it now, is mainly controlled by peoples who have propitiated the Goddess only in Her lower aspect. Her power through them persistently aims at the utter destruction of a peaceful life on the Earth, and spreading on it instead devastation and misery, by the rule of pride, tyranny and oppression. To overcome this menacing wave that is rising in the world we have to call down into the heart of mankind the supreme Power of the world Mother—Shakti.

Therefore, stand up all those who are for righteousness and peace in the world and realize the presence of the Divine Mother in your heart, so that each one of you may be a "Spiritual dynamo" for flooding the world with the light of Her power, and may thus conquer the disruptive and dark forces that have started their baneful work.

Wake up to the consciousness of your infinite spiritual store of energy and be prepared to face the deadly

conflict with the powers of darkness. Times demand that everyone of you should utilize to the utmost your spiritual strength to repel the onrush of the grim spectre of a greed-inspired war.

This is not an occasion to remain idle, disunited and weak, or to fritter away your energy in vain wrangles and fruitless fights. Rise to the height of your Divine nature and under the guidance of Mother Shakti, who is the one sovereign power that sways over the universe, march onward as She bids to found upon the earth the Kingdom of true peace, unity and happiness.

Mother Shakti awaits to work triumphantly in Her children when they are united in millions. Give up ignorance-born quarrels over caste, creed, race and other man-made distinctions. Humanity is one. The Spirit that resides in them is one. All life is one eternal Principle—one deathless Reality. Be heroes of Divinity. Be fearless of death. Aspire for immortality in the fight for real freedom and peace on earth.

The Divine Mother is awake! O children of eternity, assemble around Her and imbibe radiance and invincible strength from Her. Raise the banner of the Divine Mother of the world, and your slogan be: "All victory to the great Mother of the universe."

DIVINE MOTHER

God, the supreme Reality, has assumed the form of the universe and all beings, creatures and things in it, by means of His infinite power. All activities are guided and controlled by this power of the Lord. This power is called the Divine Mother of the universe. She is the moving and creative principle — the great originator, nourisher and destroyer of the worlds. The Lord manifests even as the Avatar, the Saint and the Sage by the power of this Yoga Maya. So all actions and motions in beings, great as well as small, are the playful waves or ripples on the bosom of Her resplendent Being. As the

light is to the sun and fragrance to the flower, so She is to the Lord. It is by the power of the Mother that the worlds move, and all beings live and act. Verily, every form is Her form, because form itself denotes motion. Hence, whatever is revealed, expressed or manifest, subtle or gross, spirit or matter, are all aspects of Her Being.

In the human being, his soul, life and body are Herself in entirety. To know that one universal Mother has become all is to rise above the individual sense created by the ignorant soul. In the light of the Divine Mother all souls are one, all lives are one, all forms are one. She has given birth to this visible creation; so, all are Her children, although in reality the Mother and children are one.

The Divine Mother becomes the direct and immediate liberator of the bound soul, the moment he realizes Her Motherhood and understands himself as Her child. Just as to behold the light is to know the sun, so to behold the Divine Mother as all is to attain the supreme knowledge of the Lord. The true child of the Divine Mother is gifted with the vision of Her everywhere and as every object. This vision is the sign of one who has surrendered himself to the Mother and become Her child. As the waves are playing on the bosom of the ocean, so the Divine Mother, enacting the universal game, is gambolling on the infinite and perfectly motionless bosom of the Lord. The child of the Divine Mother realizes its oneness with the Mother and the Lord at once, and enjoys the bliss and freedom of the eternal. Thereafter, all its actions and movements are of the Divine Mother, so much so, that Mother and Child lose distinction in the perfect and all-comprehensive being of the Lord.

To eliminate the ego-idea, surrender to the will or Shakti of the Lord, who is the Divine Mother, is the easiest way. The moment egoism dissolves, the soul realizes not only his universal nature, which is the

Mother, but also his eternal, attributeless, self-illuminated, changeless and absolute existence.

Salutations be to this all-loving, compassionate and all-powerful Mother of the worlds.

SHIVA AND SHAKTI

Shiva and Shakti are the twin aspects of Param-shiva—the ultimate Truth. While Shiva is the static principle, Shakti is the dynamic. Shiva is the basis and support of Shakti in Her multitudinous manifestations of the universal phenomena. One is the invisible, formless, omnipresent and motionless Spirit: the other is the visible, moving, universal Power revealed in name and form. On the infinite, calm and unruffled bosom of Shiva, Shakti enacts Her play assuming the forms of countless worlds—producing in them the three-fold movements of creation, preservation and destruction.

How does the supreme and all-inclusive knowledge of God, in both His aspects, tend to the aspirant's attainment of liberation and immortal bliss?

To have the vision of Shiva is to rise above the individual consciousness which is only of the relative and phenomenal life—the cause of ignorance and misery. Surrender to Shakti is held to be the means for obtaining this supreme vision. Here, surrender denotes a state of transcendence of the body or ego-sense, reached through the recognition of the truth that all movements, changes and actions in the various expressions, both subtle and gross, of life, belong to Shakti—the Divine principle permeating and appearing as the entire cosmos, with all its beings, creatures and things.

When the soul has realized the Shiva aspect of the great Godhead by self-surrender i.e., by the dissolution of the individual sense into the universal essence of Shiva, he attains the full comprehension of the perfect being of Paramshiva, who is at once Shiva and Shakti and also beyond them. Now the soul finds utter free-

dom in the knowledge of and union with both the manifest and unmanifest existences and enjoys the bliss of immortality.

Adoration, worship, sacrifice and austerity, and the consequent visions of Divine forms are all gone through by the devotee, before he reaches the dazzling height of this supreme Godhead—Paramshiva. This is the crowning glory of human aspiration and endeavour. It is from this dizzy and inexpressible summit that the God-realized soul beholds his own Self as the self of all, and His own Form as the form of all. He beholds both the unmanifest Shiva and the manifest Shakti as indistinguishably one in the highest Reality.

It is evident that the first step for the soul is to dive deep into the depthless ocean of the still and tranquil spirit of Shiva and get absorbed in Him. Because, it is not possible for him to know the unity and oneness of all things, which are apparently diverse and conflicting, unless he realizes the basic oneness of the unchanging and unaffected Shiva.

The ideas of Shiva and Shakti are inseparable just as sun and its light, fire and its heat, and milk and its whiteness. To adore Shiva is to adore Shakti and *vice versa*. The mystery of the supreme God lies in the neutralisation and reconciliation of these two ostensibly opposite clashing eternal principles—Shiva and Shakti. This Divine riddle is beyond the scope or range of the most elevated intellectual consciousness to perceive or understand. To solve the riddle is to become the riddle itself.

MAHA SHAKTI

Maha Shakti is the infinite power emanating from the supreme Godhead. She is the root-cause of universal phenomena. The countless worlds and all creatures and things in them are Her manifestations. From Her cosmic womb have generated and evolved all the forces that

work in nature. She is the primeval and Divine Female principle of eternal existence, ever united with the Male principle—Shiva, and they are both indistinguishably one in the ultimate and all-transcendent Absolute.

So this Maha Shakti is the Mother of the worlds. All beings and creatures are Her shapes and forms. In all the inner and outer movements of life and nature, it is the Divine Mother at work. The five elements, the senses, the mind, the intellect and the superconscious spirit of all existences are Herself in entirety. All the manifold powers and forces are Her sportive energy. It is by Her power the sun, the moon and all the luminous bodies dazzle with splendour. It is by Her power the seasons roll and the vast changes occur in all the movements and activities of nature. Creation, evolution and dissolution are the characteristics of Her universal game. Thus it is clear that every being is the Divine Mother revealed through name and form. The so-called male and female personalities, as distinguished by the ignorant mind, are in reality the forms of the Divine Mother. The power working in each individual, either in the physical, mental, intellectual or spiritual plane, is Her power. The supreme unity of the Divine Mother, in the diversity and multiplicity of the world manifestation, is the great Secret of all that exists.

The almighty Mother, who is at once omniscient and omnipresent, plays Her game in Her self-revealed manifestations, ever producing the highest rapture of Anand. The symphony of immortal music rings from even the tiniest movement of Her play. Everywhere it is Her glory, Her light, Her power, Her greatness and Herself as all in all.

The universal Mother is not different from Shiva, the immutable, all-pervading and motionless principle of the Mother's manifestations. To conceive of a separation of these two eternal principles of Divine existence is as good as to imagine that the light is separate from the sun, or the whiteness from the milk.

Since the same one absolute Reality is at once moving and non-moving, active and inactive, with form and without form, seen and unseen and manifest and unmanifest, the limited intellect of a human being is baffled to cognize Him in thought, or define Him in words.

Now to realize the all-inclusive and all-comprehensive aspect of the Divine Mother by self-surrender is to attain the summit of spiritual experience, in which the soul discovers its undivided unity and identity simultaneously with Shiva and Maha Shakti. This is the perfection, consummation and the loftiest goal of life. Oh, all-puissant world-Mother, all glory and victory to Thee for ever and ever!

SAVIOURS AND SAINTS

SAINTS AND SAGES

So far as man can sweep his thought into the earliest origins of the history of mankind, he cannot fail to observe all through its course, a galaxy of souls standing out as distinctly different in nature, temperament and vision from the common run of human beings. These are the Saints and Sages, Avatars and Prophets of the world. The outlook of these unique souls upon the life of the world is discovered to be of a rare value and significance. Whilst the human beings in general are possessed only of the individualistic view of life, these renowned souls are gifted with a universal sense which clearly reflects in all their thoughts, words and actions. They also exert an unusual fascination on the world, for the people who live in the narrow view of life are attracted and dazzled by the striking personality of these great ones.

Now what is that characteristic trait in these Spiritual heroes by which they are marked out from the rest? Selflessness—born of a perfectly equalised vision and attitude towards all created beings and things—is the keynote of their life. They ever feel conscious of an immortal and all-blissful state of existence and so are totally free from the fear of death which terrorises the ordinary man. Their transcendence from the lower conception of existence to the consciousness of an eternal life is revealed in their teachings which ever harp upon the one theme of immortality, God or Truth. They hold that life is eternal and that every soul is essentially Divine, *i.e.*, by nature everlasting light, bliss and peace. Their equal vision, having demolished all the limita-

tions set by the lower mind, ever seeks union and oneness with the imperishable and omnipresent essence inherent in all the varied expressions of life. They carry with them the glow of a spiritual splendour which always radiates from their person. They preach to congregations of men the greatness of that Attainment which is the glory of their life. People crowd around them and become their followers, and love, adore and worship them. By their contact the aspiring souls, who strive to be free from the trammels of ignorance, are lifted up to their own Divine status.

At no period in the history of humanity there was a total absence of such great Teachers of eternal life. The world owes to them the heights to which it has reached in art, poetry and literature on one side, and the development of the great qualities of the heart—charity, compassion and fellowship on the other. Truly, the world would be hurled into chaos, if these men and women of vision were not born in it from time to time. Because, their invincible influence subdues the brutal instincts in man and creates an atmosphere filled with mutual love, peace and good-will. All glory and success be to them!

KRISHNA

Krishna, Thou adored Ideal of millions in India and the world, Thou, the embodiment of immortal Love. Light and Bliss—all hail, all hail to Thee! Thy enchanting beauty ravishes and intoxicates the hearts of Thy devotees. The enthralling music of Thy flute casts a never-ceasing spell on those blessed ones who lend an ear to it. Thy sport and dance awaken thrills of ecstasy in every fibre of the being who witnesses them. Splendour radiates from Thy eyes: Love smiles on Thy face: Wisdom flows from Thy lips. Thou Almighty refuge of the weak—Thou Saviour of the woe-stricken world; all glory be to Thee! Thy Song of songs—the Gita, the priceless essence of the highest truth of life, the acme

of thought, the summit of spiritual experience, nay, the great Reality itself manifest in word, saves, redeems and immortalises every soul who draws inspiration from it and meditates on Thee and offers himself or herself entirely to Thee. Thou resplendent Being—Thou God in human and universal form, may Thy infinite Light ever shine on the world: may thy infinite love ever dwell in the breast of every being: may Thy infinite Bliss and Grace ever pour on all mankind!

CHRIST

Jesus Christ is an incarnation of infinite Love. He is a beacon light in the shoals and storms of life. To be inspired by his Spirit is to transmute life into an illumined expression of God. The very thought of Christ brings peace and purity to the mind. How blessed does indeed life become when the mind ever dwells in him. The secret of realization of a great ideal is to become the ideal itself by ceaseless thought and meditation of it, so much so, that the individual becomes the very form and image of the ideal by self-absorption and self-surrender. Thereafter, life is lived in the vision and glory of the ideal.

What is the importance of the cross on which Christ was crucified? Cross is an eternal symbol of a supreme sacrifice. For the salvation of the world, stricken with ignorance, Christ laid down his precious life. A greater sacrifice could not have been made by one who came to save the world.

Visualise the heart of Christ for a moment. How sublime it is! It is pure gold ever shining with the lustre of compassion, forgiveness and peace. It is a heart that thrills in symphony with the ailing heart of mankind. The waves of love that go out of it seek to soothe, heal and purify the heart of every being.

Christ's vision—how unbounded and infinite it is! It embraces all beings and creatures, nay, it envelops

the entire Universe. It is a vision born of a consciousness of unity of all life and manifestation—it fulfils itself in universal Love.

Christ's words—how simple and direct but at the same time how sweetened with the honey of love and kindness! His words ever convey the message of love, sacrifice and good-will. "Love one another" is the keynote of his teachings. Through this love alone he taught that man can inherit the kingdom of bliss, peace and immortality.

Christ held:—Faith in God is not a fetish—is not a sign of one who belongs to a particular organisation or school of thought. The man of true faith serves his fellowmen through his love of the eternal, i. e. God, who dwells equally in his own heart and in the hearts of all beings. The humble servant of humanity is the true servant of God.

The glory of his message is revealed in these words:—"This is my command, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you."

O Christ—let thy Love-universal prevail in the world and dispel the grim clouds of strife and war that are gathering over it.

BUDDHA

The light that illumined the world over two thousand years ago still lights the world and will continue to shed its brilliance for all time to come. Gautama Buddha is this eternal mass of splendour. Buddha is the veritable embodiment of the softest feelings of the human breast viz. compassion and love. He is the sovereign power that presides over the deities of innocence, purity and peace. The arid heart flowers with wisdom and joy at the very thought of this great healer of humanity. The contemplation of divine personalities like Buddha is itself supreme holiness and beatitude.

Now what did Buddha preach? Shaken with the woes of the world, from Buddha's infinite heart came the message exhorting mankind to walk the path of harmony, goodwill and peace. Because, he discovered that the misery and pain in the world have their root in the unbridled human passions and their outward expressions in acts of cruelty, violence and destruction. Hence he enunciated a way of discipline by adopting which a person could attain perfect purity in thought, word and deed. When he was enlightened with the knowledge of his great secret, he cried out exultantly in the following words:—

I, Buddha who wept with all my brother's tears,
Whose heart was broken by a whole world's woe,
Laugh and am glad, for there is Liberty!
Ho! ye who suffer! know.

He reveals to the pessimistic nature of man that a beneficent purpose alone rules over his destiny. To recognise this fact, what he emphasises is a complete absence of the lower self and a consciousness of the inherent Divinity of the human soul. So the Truth which he holds forth before the world, far from being a negation of life and its values in the field of action, is a benevolent power which ever aims in all its movements, turns and changes in the lives of creatures at the supreme good of all. Here his words are definite:—

Before beginning, and without an end,
As space eternal and surety sure,
Is fixed a Power divine which moves to good,
Only its laws endure.

Then what is the height of attainment, the Nirvana, taught by Buddha:—

. Seeking nothing, he gains all;
Foregoing self, the Universe grows "I."

To be the true follower of anyone of the great suns of spirituality that shone on the world from age to age, an individual should conquer the material conceptions and degrading impulses of the mind, and rise to the

knowledge of his or her immortal being, thus infusing into all life's activity, the sweetness of humility, compassion, charity, kindness and love.

Wake up, O people, to the message of these Masters, and live in amity and peace, and give up greed, hate and wrath that breed dissension, war and chaos in the world!

MOHAMMED

From the sandy deserts of Arabia a heavenly light arose—the very light of God. At a time when Arabia was the hotbed of internecine wars and the people were steeped in superstition, and the wail of the poor and the helpless was rending the air, the great Prophet Mohammed came.

The Prophet bore in his hand the blazing torch of a Divine message from the Almighty—a message of peace, unity and brotherhood for all humanity. His heart melted with compassion at the miserable state of things around him. His faithful biographer writes about him in these significant words:—

“His heart ached within him at the fallen state of humanity. A burning desire to elevate degraded fellow-beings, and bring them round to the path of righteousness agitated his bosom. He would often retire to the cave of Hira and fervently pray to God, with his eyes shedding tears, for the regeneration of mankind.”

Such was the mission with which the Prophet started his magnificent career. He weaned away the ill-directed thought and aspiration of the uncontrolled and ignorant masses, and turned their vision towards the almighty Creator of the worlds. His powerful personality, inspired with the spirit of God, dominated over the Arabs and, subduing the evils of selfishness, greed and violence, established in their hearts a healing and ennobling faith in the all-merciful Lord.

Thus the great Prophet brought peace and a close-knit feeling of brotherhood amongst a discontented and divided people. Through incessant exhortations, coupled with his exalted touch and transforming influence, he softened their heart and filled it with the pure emotions of compassion, love and sympathy. He taught them the principle of prayer, by which the heart could be raised to approach the throne of God.

The Prophet resolutely stood for God, unity and peace. He laid great stress upon the all-peaceful and all-merciful nature of God, and held that surrender to His will is the path to attain everlasting life and beatitude.

The Prophet's vision is distinctly universal. He realized the entire humanity as a united whole and revealed to man the mystery of his intimate relationship with God—the Divine originator. Verily, real harmony and the resultant peace and goodwill can be possible when all mankind come to recognise the suzerainty of the Godhead and live on this blessed earth, in a spirit of friendliness and co-operation beneath the banner of His all-powerful and holy Name. God is the one supreme cause and the one compassionate Parent of all that exists. The Prophet's message, as it is inspired by God, is a message for all peoples of this planet.

ZOROASTER

Sri Krishna declares in the Gita that whenever wickedness and unrighteousness prevail in the life of humanity, then the great Cosmic Spirit who rules over the affairs of the world, manifests Himself in order to destroy evil and establish peace, goodness and harmony. If we examine the periods, when the mighty Prophets and Avatars appeared, we discover that they came at such critical times of degeneration and discord. Zoroaster, the Prophet of Persia, incarnated in that country under similar conditions.

From the precious records of Zoroaster's teachings we see, that in fundamentals, his message from the Divine is perfectly in consonance with the messages of the Prophets of other climes and ages. The mission of a Prophet or Avatar is to awaken mankind to the knowledge of God and lead it on the path of purity and righteousness. Man can live in peace with man and enjoy the blessing of true happiness only when he rises above the warring passions of his heart and finds his abode in the infinite being of God. Zoroaster reveals in his teachings wherein lie the evils in human nature that keep man down and how, by eradicating them, he can be set free to soar up and be absorbed in the self-existent Divinity.

He held faith, prayer and a maintenance of strict discipline in individual and social life are the means to attain the exalted state. Here are some teachings culled from "Zend-Avesta".

Prayer to Thee, O Ahura-Mazda, is the giver of excellence, holiness, success and high exaltation—it is the act of Virtue.

* * * *

When my eyes beheld Thee, the essence of Truth, the Creator of life, who manifests his life in his works, then I knew Thee to be primeval spirit, Thou Mazda, so high in mind as to create the world, and the father of the good mind.

* * * *

A virtuous man's soul is pure, and with the purity of the soul he can be possessed of the wisdom of the invisible world.

* * * *

Take less care of your body, and more of your soul.

* * * *

Contentment is the happiest condition of man and the most pleasing to the Creator.

* * * *

It is fruitless to expect to go to Heaven without a steadfast faith in God.

* * * *

The man who is pious and good in every respect, is blessed with mental ease and happiness in this material world, and also exalted in the invisible or spiritual world.

Thus the Prophet—Zoroaster is a Teacher imbued with Divine light and inspiration. He taught the suzerainty of God above everything else. May his compassionate Spirit enliven the heart of man and engender in it true peace and harmony, born of the union and oneness with the almighty Controller of the worlds.

NANAK

A brilliant prophet of Truth made his appearance, on the horizon of the Punjab, in the middle of the fourteenth century. This was the founder of the Sikh religion—Guru Nanak. He came to destroy the superstitious beliefs and observances that were rampant amongst the people, and establish a faith based upon the perfect equality of mankind. He directed the thought and aspiration of man towards the one God who is the Lord of the universe. His is a religion that turns men into heroes of Divinity. He teaches: Devotion, love and service as the means to attain God.

He who has fashioned the vessel of the body and
poured into it

His ambrosial gifts,

Will only be satisfied with man's love and service.

Guru Nanak lays great emphasis upon the need of a spiritual Preceptor and holds the Divine Name. *Satnam*, as the mainstay of a true aspirant. That self-surrender is the goal of all spiritual strivings. That to behold the supreme will of the Almighty, as determining all events and happenings in the world, is the condition of a selfless life, filled with purity, peace and service.

Guru Nanak's mysticism, therefore reaches the very summit of spiritual experience. It is characteristic of all true mystics that they are ever fired with an invincible spirit of optimism. God is for them a most benevolent and merciful Deity, and they have discovered Him in the chamber of their own heart. They sing of Him and meditate on Him to such a fervour and ecstasy that they lose themselves in Him and realize their perfect identity with Him. Guru Nanak is indeed a veritable sun among such mystics. Here, in these few verses, we have his whole philosophy:—

By Guru's teaching the light becomes manifest.

* * * *

Let us with reverence meditate
Upon His True and Holy Name
And also on His majesty.

* * * *

Who His commandments understands
Is from all selfness free

* * * *

All seasons are good for those who love the True
one.

* * * *

He is realized
Only through His own grace Divine.
Who boast of other ways and means
They idle prattlers are and false.

* * * *

The Precious Jewel for which man goes on pilgrim-
mage, dwelleth within the heart.

* * * *

I would through His Name mount His stairs
And reaching Him, be one with Him.

Guru Nanak's powerful influence has brought into being a sect whose home is the brave province of the Punjab. He has created in the hearts of his followers the

magnificent virtues of nobility, courage, toleration and equality.

May Guru Nanak's gentle and radiant spirit ever hover over mankind and pour on them the light of his grace, goodwill and peace.

RAMAKRISHNA—THE DIVINE CHILD

Saints who have reached the summit of God-realization are in their nature like innocent children. Sri Ramakrishna is one such example whose life exhibits the traits of a guileless, simple and egoless child. As the child trusts implicitly and takes complete refuge in its human mother, so Sri Ramakrishna, looking upon the Divine Mother as his all in all, was to Her a most confiding and loving child. In all his moments of perplexity and doubt he appealed to Her for light and guidance. He held continuous communion with the Mother. This Divine child beheld the whole universe and all beings in it as the veritable forms of the Mother. So his attitude towards everyone who came in touch with him was of a pure child. His bewitching smiles and artless ways captured the hearts of all who saw him. His talks and teachings not only possessed a distinct ring of frankness and spontaneity but were also illumined with the highest wisdom. He was simply overflowing with love for all alike. His very sight purified, elevated, nay, divinised everyone who had his Darshan. By his very touch, he could transform others into his own likeness. The spiritual power he developed is so mighty that it inundated and still inundates the whole world. He trained up quite an army of Divine children, to spread on the earth the glory of the loftiest achievement of human life—God. Verily, Divinity shines out of a human being only when he transmutes his lower nature into the Divine nature—i. e. when he is enlightened with the wisdom, love and playful activity—the attributes of great Souls, like Sri Ramakrishna. Blessed are we that, in our own

time, the world has produced a Ramakrishna whose great name this day inspires the hearts of the young and old in India and all over the world.

DATTATREYA

Guru Dattatreya is pre-eminently a towering personality, rightly included amongst the great Avatars of God. His birth took place under miraculous circumstances. When his father, Atri Muni, was away from his house, the gods—Brahma, Vishnu and Mahadeva—came to Atri's house to test the chastity of his wife Anasuya who is even to the present day held by the women of India as an ideal wife. By the power of her invincible chastity, Anasuya not only discovered the intention of the gods but also transformed them into little babes. This triple manifestation of the gods represents the incarnation of Guru Dattatreya. Although Guru Dattatreya's early life is shrouded in mystery and his birth is a matter of legend, we cannot deny the fact that such a great soul did appear in the world, as various indications of His later life and His most inspiring utterances handed down to us in Avadhuta Gita prove.

Guru Dattatreya is considered by His devotees as the greatest Avatar, since He embodies the three gods together, whilst the ten Avatars of Puranas are only of god Vishnu. The incarnation of Guru Dattatreya has also an allegorical significance attached to it. From the great Absolute—the Nirguna Brahman—the creation sprang forth, having three distinct powers controlling it, viz. the powers of creation, preservation and destruction. These three functions of Nature are represented by the gods—Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahadeva respectively. Hence Guru Dattatreya is considered to be an Avatar of absolute Truth or Brahman, in whom these three primeval Shakties are revealed.

Guru Datta is held in the highest veneration and worshipped with a whole-hearted adoration by millions.

in India, and especially in Maharashtra, Gujerat and Kathiawar. The places which He sanctified by His visit or presence are scattered over these places and shrines have been raised in His name, and thousands of His devotees go on pilgrimage to these sacred shrines for the great Guru's Darshan. Many of the famous saints of Maharashtra attained to the highest spiritual eminence through devotion and surrender to this resplendent figure. Guru Datta's absolute purity of life, in which not a taint of worldliness did enter as He was a Brahmachari of the most magnificent type, has been a supreme example for His votaries. Surely, contemplation on His life and meditation on the great Truth for which He stands should undoubtedly elevate the soul to the heights of divine knowledge, power and bliss. He is indeed a world illumining flame of spirituality.

His life has also one important feature from which everyone has to learn a great lesson. He is said to have accepted twenty-four teachers when engaged in austerities and spiritual discipline. By this He showed that an individual, who really desires to enter the path of self-control for the attainment of God, should keep his eyes wide open and keenly observe around him the outstanding and unique natural capacities manifest both in the animal and human kingdoms. Wherever he turns he can behold signs of unerring guidance from the mysterious workings of nature. Even the so-called insignificant ant, as is well-known, has to teach him a lesson. Guru Datta taught that the world we live in is a school, in which observation and experience offer us immense possibilities for self-improvement, nay that the world itself is our Guru or God.

Before concluding this brief sketch, we cannot fail to refer to the great Avadhuta Gita, attributed to Guru Datta. Every Sloka of this most inspiring book is replete with the loftiest wisdom. The mere repetition of these verses takes the mind at once to the flights of Divine ecstasy. If one earnestly longs to comprehend, in its

entirety, the grandeur and totality of the Divine existence and attain to the blessedness of an immortal life of perfect liberation and peace, one should draw light and inspiration from these ecstatic utterances.

GANDHI

To introduce the world-famous figure—Mahatma Gandhi—to the reader would be to attempt at exhibiting the sun with the help of a taper light, for the Mahatma's name and life have become household words amongst the people in every part of the globe. When dealing with the life and teachings of great saints like him, our task is not to assume the attitude of a critic, but to pay our whole-hearted homage to their spiritual greatness.

Mahatma Gandhi, in whatever spheres of life his activities have flowed, is essentially a man of God—a man whose supreme power and virtue lie in his magnificent influence in awakening humanity to the eternal verities of life, and leading it on to the height of moral and spiritual culture. It is wellknown that the Mahatma stands for the cult of non-violence which he holds forth, just as Yudhishtira in days of yore did, as the highest principle of human life.

Both East and West have recognized in him a Divine messenger of peace upon this earth which, as we see, is rent with strife, dissension and war. It is not an exaggeration to say that the impact of the Mahatma's godly life has influenced and transformed millions of souls, both young and old, of all nations and races of the world. Sri Krishna in the Gita says: "Wherever the splendour of greatness is, there am I revealed." Among the outstanding luminous souls of the day, Mahatma Gandhi is a very incarnation of Divine light and peace.

His rigid asceticism, his uncompromising adherence to the creed of Ahimsa, his one sole aim of bringing about peace and harmony amongst the warring people

of the world, are things that have placed him on a lofty pedestal for adoration as a unique and dazzling ideal for everyone to follow. The Mahatma's phenomenal fame has spread to every corner of the earth, and his mighty influence wields the hearts of a great part of mankind, yet as an egoless and innocent child, he is so simple, so unassuming and so oblivious of his exalted status. We can only pray that his thrilling message of goodwill, love and brotherhood may enter into the recesses of all human hearts in the world and dispel from it every passion and impulse that seeks to raise the dust of chaotic wars that spell disaster to and destruction of the human race.

KRISHNAMURTI

J. Krishnamurti is a figure of international fame. His charming and radiant personality has been the source of inspiration to thousands in the western countries and India. He is constantly on the move delivering the message of peace, love and equality. He hails from the Madras Province and had been acclaimed by the late Dr. Besant as the coming Messiah. Indeed, his is a pure and glorious life of perfect selflessness, and his stirring words awaken the very soul of man and set him directly on the quest of the Eternal.

He says:

I am that Life, immortal, free—
Of that Life I sing,
The source of eternity !

GURUDEV

(Sri Balakrishna Rao)

It is not an easy task to portray the lives of saints and sages who wield great spiritual powers for healing the aches of ailing humanity. Universal is their vision,

and their standard of life is beyond the cognizance of the phenomenal laws that govern the relative world. The supreme Power that inspires and illumines their lives is so wonderfully mystic that to define it, in the language of words, is extremely difficult. Still, urged by pure love and admiration, attempts are sometimes made to present to the world the course of their conduct and life. So in all humility, Ramdas, in the following short sketch, is setting forth before the reader, an outline of the life of a great soul, who is at once his physical and spiritual father. By his unbounded grace, Ramdas has attained eternal freedom and perennial ecstasy, which baffles description. All glory be to Thee—the Truth manifest in human form.

Sri Balakrishna Rao was a resident of a small town—Hosdrug, in the South Kanara District for over 45 years. This period ranged between his twentieth and sixty-fifth year—the most vital and integral part of a man's life. He was a low paid clerk in Government service. His official career was marked by his unflagging application, zeal and sincerity. His harmless, forgiving and simple nature endeared him both to his colleagues and superior officers. But the beauty and greatness of his life lay in his relations with the outside world and with the family that grew around him.

He had a noble partner in life in his wife—Lalita Bai. Both sprang from parents who were profoundly religious. This Divine couple, by their ideal life of householders, held up before the world an example as to how life in the world could be made supremely blessed and glorious. Selfless service at home and of guests that poured into their house was the keynote of their lives. A description of the channel into which Sri Balakrishna Rao's life flowed, producing the music of harmony and goodwill, may be given here.

Except for about an hour or two of recess, during the midday when Sri Balakrishna Rao would be at home, he was busy the whole day with his work in the office.

Before or after meals, in the evenings, he would not fail for a single day to sit up with his children for prayers and Bhajan for an hour. He would sing aloud, in his own way, with overflowing love and faith, the celebrated Marathi songs of Maharashtra saints, and the popular saint Tukaram was his favourite. His children would join with him in chorus whenever he sang the names of God. After supper, until he went to bed, except of course when he was attending on guests, he would be absorbed in reading religious books.

Sri Balakrishna Rao had an unparalleled sense of humour and his witticisms are even now current amongst those who had the privilege of his society. One conspicuous trait in his character was his equal vision. He never asserted the false sense of authority either of a father over his children or of a master over his household. He was so simple and tolerant that he would talk freely and even play sometimes with his children.

Sri Balakrishna Rao's popularity with all classes of people in Hosdrug was truly marvellous. He had not a single enemy. He was kind, affable and friendly towards all and everybody loved him for his frank, trusting and lovable nature. It was clearly evident in his life that his vision was not confined to his family and relations but was also extended to all beings and creatures alike. Verily, he belonged to the race of saints and sages who possessed the vision of the universal brotherhood of man.

Sri Balakrishna Rao's faith in the goodness of God was firm and unshakable. In all moments of trial and loss, common to householders, he would rely solely on God for strength, patience and peace. He was a stranger to despair or despondency, to which even men of strong will in the world sometimes fall a prey.

After a protracted illness Lalita Bai "Shuffled off her mortal coil". Soon after she passed away, Sri Balakrishna Rao left Hosdrug and went to Kasaragod to stay with his second son Ananda Rao, who was one of the leading

vakils of the place. Having lived life so far, in the best of lights, he rightly determined to devote the remaining part wholly to the remembrance and meditation of God.

Once during his visit to Udupi, famous for the celebrated Sri Krishna temple established there by the great religious reformer Madhvacharya, he was passing through the bazaar when he saw at a distance a Sanyasi seated on a raised platform surrounding a peepul tree. The Sanyasi appeared to exert on him a subtle power and he was irresistibly drawn towards him. With plantains purchased from the bazaar Sri Balakrishna Rao approached the Mahatma, and placing the fruit at his feet prostrated before him. Instantly the Mahatma initiated Sri Balakrishna Rao with the glorious Ram-Mantram—"Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram." Sri Balakrishna Rao felt that God's grace had descended on him.

Meanwhile, Ramdas, who was in Mangalore, was passing through a period of extreme mental restlessness and turmoil. He was then struggling hard to control the mind by the repetition of the name "Ram". Sri Balakrishna Rao had witnessed Ramdas' struggle. He directly came down to Mangalore and coming to Ramdas initiated him with the Divine formula. The eagerness with which he performed this gracious act showed that he had no small anxiety to liberate Ramdas from the grim internal strife and struggle in which he was passing his days. No sooner did Ramdas receive the Mantram than he felt like a bird set free from a cage. Oh, the glory of that moment! Ramdas prostrated before Sri Balakrishna Rao and looked on him as God Himself manifest before him—an embodiment of infinite compassion and mercy.

Now, in Kasaragod, Gurudev engaged himself in the constant repetition of the Divine Mantram, which the itinerant Sanyasi had given him in Udupi, with the help of a rosary. Thereafter, he was seen making strenuous efforts to wean his mind from the external entanglements and attachments of the world. Whenever Ramdas

had occasion to see him at Ananda Rao's house, on his return to the district after long periods of absence on tour to various places of India, he found Gurudev more and more detached from active co-operation with the affairs of the world. His old friends and admirers would often visit him, and he would greet them with cordial welcome and talk with them in his usual kindly and cheerful manner. As days went by, his sense of humour took a new turn in that he began to view the world as nothing short of a large mimic show, and enjoyed it all as one would a comedy enacted before him. He became a child, pure and guileless. Innocence and purity radiated from him. Ramdas had in his company the same delightful experience as he felt in the company of children.

Ramdas distinctly recollects one occasion when Gurudev discovered him, lying flat on his back on a bench in Ananda Rao's house, with his ever smiling face; Gurudev then exclaimed, his eyes filled with tears of emotion: "O child, you are blessed indeed! What a rare experience of pure bliss you are having! Infinitely blessed you are." At this Ramdas instantly sat up and with folded hands replied: "This is due to nothing but the unlimited grace and blessings you have showered on him." On hearing this he smiled and turned away. Indeed, what words can describe the magnificence of that Divine Power which Gurudev infused into Ramdas, awakening him once for all to the consciousness of the eternal Reality who is the great cause of all that is, was and ever will be. By the will and power of this supreme Truth, Ramdas has been able to sow the seed of this wondrous Mantram in the hearts of thousands and thousands of men, women and children, throughout the length and breadth of India.

By the will of the Almighty, a small Ashram had been built for Ramdas in a solitary spot beneath a hill, about a mile away from the town of Kasaragod. At the inauguration of this Ashram, many friends from far and

near attended. Gurudev was at that time too weak to walk long distances. Yet out of the goodness of his heart he made for the Ashram, with much difficulty, and thus blessed the occasion with his blissful presence.

It was seen that, during the last period of Gurudev's life, he was totally liberated from all attachments towards his kith and kin, except a deep concern for Ramdas when he was far away from him in Northern India, Himalayas and Kashmir. Once the powerful pull that he exerted brought Ramdas to Kasaragod, half way from his second tour towards Kashmir. From Jhansi he had to travel at a stretch down to Kasaragod—a distance of over 1,500 miles. At this time, due to decrepitude and the consequent failing of physical powers, Gurudev was bedridden. The sight of Ramdas gave him intense delight and he expressed it by his bright and radiant smiles and loving touches. This meeting was significant of the ultimate eradication of the last vestige of his attachment to the external objects of life. Now it appeared that the river had reached and mingled with the ocean and had at last found perfect rest and peace.

For about three years, before he chose to cast off the physical form, he had been mostly above body-consciousness. The ills and pains of the body no longer affected him. He was then enjoying absolute calm and peace. His desire to see, commune and talk with anybody in the world, however dear he or she might have been to him in his earlier life, had completely vanished. It was during this period that he lost a son and a daughter in the course of twelve months. He heard the news with entire unconcern as if nothing had happened. He had attained the supreme state of desireless tranquillity and bliss of the Eternal.

He gave up the body, and the world is indeed poorer for the departure of a great spiritual force that spent itself in healing the pains and sorrows of humanity. Ramdas mentally laying his head at the hallowed feet of his Divine liberator, brings to a close this brief sketch.

UNITY OF MANKIND

IS UNIVERSAL LOVE AN ILLUSION?

Universal love being the direct outcome of a spiritual realization, the question has to be discussed from the standpoint of spirituality. Now the highest spiritual attainment is to unite and become one with the cosmic spirit or God. This God, since He is the sole originator of the universe, is the parent of all creatures and beings in the world. He is not a communal, creedal or national God. All His children on this earth, to whatever denomination or country they belong, are in His eyes equally entitled to His love. Where does this God dwell? He pervades the entire universe and is at the same time seated in the full glory of His perfection in the hearts of all creatures in the world. With these preliminary remarks let us come to the question which forms the title of this essay.

If we understand God in the above sense how could we contend that to attain Him is not to realize His infinite love—love that sheds its light on all beings alike, irrespective of creed, race or country? If to strive to realize this supreme love is to pursue an illusion; if universal love is an utopian chimera, then it can well be said, to believe in the existence of God itself is a hallucination of a distempered and diseased mind.

“Look within and know thyself”, is the message of the Rishis, resounding in our ears through time immemorial. What do you gain by drawing your vision inward—when you have found the immortal Self within you? The identity with the immortal Truth grants you the knowledge that you are not a mere body, garbed in the various trappings of your own making, such as of a

particular community, colour and nationality, but that you are the omnipresent Truth which transcends all limitations born of name and form—that you are the universal Truth, pervading throughout and manifest as the universe.

The Rishis taught how you could transform the narrow consciousness of the Jiva into the infinite consciousness of the Godhead. They exhort: remove the veil of ignorance and that moment you realize that you are Brahman. Now ignorance cannot be dispelled except by the illuminating flash of Divine knowledge, or the knowledge of your own eternal Self. Unless you universalize your vision, unless you expand your heart to mingle with the infinite love of God, you cannot realize the great Reality.

Love of one's country, loyalty to one's race, identity with one's community, or attachment to one's family are all alike the offspring of ignorance. In all these you are imprisoned in a cage of a smaller or bigger dimension—still you are in a cage.

To fling life into the infinite expanse of Divine existence is the work of heroes, and happily, in the present age, the mother earth can be proud of innumerable heroic sons who boldly declare that the whole world is their home and all beings in it their brethren.

The outbreaks of war are there in the world only because of the ignorant, weak, proud and selfish people who prefer to remain in their own narrow cages, and who lack the adventurous spirit for taking the leap into the immortalizing sea of Divine life. They are timid, shrinking and therefore hold that universal love is an illusion. They can as well shuffle off the mask of religiosity and give up asserting that they believe in the Divine governance of the universe. Let them know that every one of us on this earth has a right of entry into the Kingdom of cosmic consciousness—God—and of realizing our eternal kinship with all fellow-beings in the world. Real freedom, or what the Hindus designate

as Moksha, is not conditioned by boundaries or limitations. It connotes equal vision and love towards all. Immortality and bliss are his who has attained to this beatific state.

To argue, because the world is shaken from time to time with wars, earthquakes and pestilences, that we should hold the ideal of universal love, which in fact is of the greatest need under these dire conditions, as illusory, is to say that the human heart should ever remain circumscribed to a confined field of vision and be debarred from the supreme blessedness of infinite expansion. The heart thus obsessed can but breed the evils of prejudice, hate and intolerance. O friend, be optimistic. Optimism leads you Godward, whilst pessimism pushes you down into the morass of scepticism, despair and woe.

Exercise the greatest privilege of your life viz: to rise beyond all mind-made distinctions—the narrow walls of separation that keep you apart from each other, dazzled as you are by the alluring glamour of such slogans as patriotism, communalism, Swaraj and nationalism. The idols raised in the name of these ideals have been the cause of the devastating wars and the disruptive spirit of communism, exploitation and irreligion prevailing in the world. The remedy to purge the world of these manifold diseases could only be the practice of infinite Love, based on the recognition of humanity as one family of God.

If you really, with a heart sincere to the core, wish to attain perfect freedom and happiness, and not fall into the clutches of pride, exclusiveness and misery, walk on the path of universal love and service, and thus bless your life with the vision of immortality.

UNIVERSAL RELIGION

Divine consciousness is the most precious heritage of the human race. Ever since the ancient sages of the

world first attained to it, may be many thousands of years ago in the present cycle of world existence, we have been witnessing an increasing galaxy of saints or men of Divine wisdom shining in the firmament of Time. Each new age and decade has added to these spiritual luminaries. Incarnations, Prophets and Teachers have appeared from time to time in different parts of the globe, surely greater in number in the East than in the West, with the sole mission of awakening mankind to the consciousness of the immortal Reality or God.

It is indeed a delightful task even to flash a thought across the long vista of human history for a vision of man's highest spiritual achievements. The glorious work accomplished by the great men and women, who were inspired with lofty ideals and divine experiences, stands out bold and clear. Their colossal personalities, towering high above all things, still serve as beacon lights to many a ship-wrecked soul who is caught in the whirl-pools of life.

The dawn of an exalted consciousness was first revealed to mankind in the Upanishads. In them the illumined Rishis of India have sung in ecstatic fervour of the sublimity of an eternal and all-inclusive Reality. The fascinating strain of these songs of immortality was handed down to the succeeding generations by the earnest aspirants who drank in their divine symphony. Then came Krishna, Buddha, Shankaracharya and Mahavira to spread the splendour of this Divine lore to all the people of the world. Similarly, Socrates and Plato in Greece, Marcus Aurelius in Rome, Moses in Israel, Christ in Palestine, Mohammed in Arabia, Zoroaster in Persia, Confucius and Lao Tzu in China, appeared as the most outstanding figures for the spiritual regeneration of the race of their time. Then followed an era of widespread spiritual illumination that flooded almost every part of the world. Principal among the great souls, who brought down the light and peace of God to the heart of man, are: Guru Nanak and Rama Tirtha

of the Punjab; Tulsidas, Kabir and Mira Bai of the United Provinces; Chaitanya, Ramprasad, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda of Bengal; Jnaneshwar, Ekanath, Tukaram and Namdev of Maharashtra; Ramanuja and Madhwa of South India. In other countries, Spinoza of Spain, Mirza Ali Mahommed, Baha-U-Llah and Abdul Baha of Persia; Tolstoy and Blavatsky of Russia; Carlyle, Ruskin, Wordsworth and Edward Carpenter of England; Schopenhauer, Hiene and Goethe of Germany; Washington, Emerson, James Allen and Walt Whitman of America. Now coming to our own times, mention may be made of a few spiritual heroes who have achieved world-wide renown. In India: Gandhi, Ramana, Aurobindo, Rabindranath, Krishnamurti and Vaswani. In Britain: Hamblin. In France: Romain Rolland and Paul Richard. In Russia: Nicholas Roerich. In America: Sunderland, Mirza Ahmad and Kettner. It is incontestable that a great many more names may be included in the rosary of Divine personalities enumerated above.

However incomplete this brief survey is, it serves our purpose to show that, from time immemorial, a sustained light of Divine revelation, throughout the history of mankind, has not only been wonderfully maintained but it has also produced an ever-increasing number of God-men.

In spite of the intermittent wars, which spelt the destruction of the human life on a vast scale, and erratic outbursts of hate, resulting in acts of wanton spilling of human blood, incited by narrow patriotism and insane fanaticism, the influence shed on mankind by the spiritual heroes of the world has had its supreme value and triumph. They held, one and all, that there is real and everlasting glory in self-suffering and even death, when life stands dedicated at the altar of God and humanity. Millions have derived incalculable solace and peace from the spiritual influence, which these great souls exerted on them, through their healing touch and elevating teachings. Even from a superficial study of the

essential nature of the messages they delivered to the world, one cannot fail to perceive that they preached, in one voice, as it were, that the supreme goal of human life and all life is to attain to that Cosmic consciousness, by which the entire world and all its creatures are realized as united and one in a universal and super-universal, eternal Godhead: that the real essence of life in all creatures is Divine and the sum total of the manifested worlds and its beings is one, undivided, all-pervading and deathless Spirit whose attributes are absolute peace and bliss.

Therefore, let everyone of us arise and understand the immortal nature of our existence and thus, giving up hate, ill-will and pride, mingle freely with all peoples in the world in terms of perfect friendliness, brotherliness and divine fellowship. Let us realize that universal religion is the true religion—vision of Divinity in all beings is the true vision—freedom and peace of immortality are the true freedom and peace.

CLASH OF CREEDS

The existence of numerous religions, cults and creeds in the world has given rise to a great deal of strife and confusion in it. Each faith or creed holds forth to humanity that its founder is the only true Divine Teacher, and that through him alone a soul can attain liberation or salvation. Again, each votary of his particular creed, with a zeal bordering on fanaticism for his faith, decries and condemns the other creeds as false. If one could only be unbiassed and open-minded, and then try to understand the lofty principles upon which the teachings of the great founders of all religions are based, one would clearly perceive that all these great Teachers have striven and are striving to lead humanity to the highest goal of life—God. The saying "There is none so blind as he who would not see" is eminently true with many who are busy in waging war with other faiths than

their own. Their one endeavour is to raise the pedestal for their ideal on the unstable ground of uncharitable criticism, levelled at the Teachers of other faiths. The outstanding spiritual Heroes who brought light to the world are: Krishna, Christ, Buddha, Mohammed, Zoroaster and others.

Life is intended for attainment and not for fruitless bickerings and strife. Life is more important than creeds and cults. Life elevated, purified and divinised does alone count. This can be done only when life is lived in the spirit in which it was lived by the great Masters.

It must not be forgotten that the supreme purpose of life is to convert it into one of blissful, loving and spontaneous service. Theological discussions and unregulated and harmful controversies have been wasting away the precious hours of many a noble life, which would otherwise have greatly contributed to the harmony and peace of the world. Indeed service is the keynote of life, and the Masters were and are the very embodiments of service. Instead of frittering away their energies in fighting with other creeds, the sowers of discontent could utilise the same powers, in their chosen way, for their own spiritual evolution and for the service of ailing humanity.

As it is, there is enough hatred and illwill in the world owing to various temporal reasons; added to this, there is also distrust and rivalry set up between different religions in the spiritual field. God who is the Lord of the universe stands for unity and peace. This Lord is the same for all the religions and peoples of the world. Now, what to say of those who seek to create dissension and disruption amongst people in the name of such a God? They are not only barring their own progress towards the great ideal but also retarding the evolution of others.

Man is naturally an egoistic animal. Depending upon his partial spiritual experience, he dares to question the utility of other faiths than the one which he follows.

Truth can be comprehensively known only through the perfection of experience. This perfection is the converging point of all the different lines of faiths existing in the world, and from this point all faiths are seen to culminate at the same end and goal. In the present state of religious differences, which are made worse by persistent efforts to augment them, a keen sense of understanding and a spirit of comradeship among the followers is the urgent need.

May the spirit of God awaken the hearts of men to the consciousness of unity and brotherhood, founded upon an attitude of equality towards all religions, and upon a common faith in the one supreme Master, who is the divine parent of the universe, taking that all the great Teachers, Sages and Saints that the world has produced are alike His representatives on earth.

ASSERT YOUR DIVINITY

Do not shut your eyes to the great transition period through which we are all passing. Time Spirit is once more putting forth all its energy to bring about a revolutionary change in the affairs of mankind and the world. Preparatory to this momentous event, we are having a state of acute and ever deepening unrest amongst all the peoples of the earth. Two aspects of the one eternal Power are approaching each other for a grim conflict. The one aspect of the Force stands for righteousness, harmony and peace, and the other aspect seeks predominance for creating disorder, disruption and chaos in the world. The question is which side a man or a woman should take. While the one elevates, ennobles and immortalises life, the other degrades, vitiates and annihilates it. So it is clear which should be the right course for an individual to adopt.

With your heart, soul and body aspire for the eternal values of life, by dedication of it to the cause of Truth, Equality and Peace. Suffering and death in the

cause of righteousness is the crown of glory and blessedness. But a life of ease, pride, cruelty and greed born of unrighteousness means fear, misery and utter destruction of its spiritual well-being.

Asuric Shakti can be overcome by Daivi Shakti. Materialism can be conquered by spirituality. So let everyone rouse himself to the consciousness of the invincible Divine power lodged within him. Let him stand, as the very soldiers of God, armed with His Daivi Shakti to stem the tide of materialism that aims at spreading distress, devastation and ruthless war in the world.

Arise, the moment is coming, the supreme test of your courage, strength and sacrifice is at hand. Offer the combined energy of your entire being, to boldly face and triumph over the subversive and disintegrating forces that are working towards a world war. The song of heroes and martyrs has ever been of victory—even through death. Be, therefore, united in the one Purpose, with full faith in God, and save the world from tyranny, dissension and wanton bloodshed of the poor, helpless and suppressed humanity. Assert your Divinity.

EAST AND WEST SHALL MEET

A prophet of a narrow vision had declared: "The East and West shall never meet." But the trend of the present world upheaval gives the lie direct to this presumptuous assertion. The hunger for a stable basis of peace has so seized the heart of mankind that its very helplessness urges it to seek refuge in the eternal life principle, by the knowledge and acceptance of which alone real and lasting peace, unity and harmony can be established on this earth. World brotherhood or International Federation is discovered to be possible, after many vain experiments and trials in various other ways, only through spiritual regeneration, i.e., through the awareness of an immortal link of the Spirit that knits

together the interests, welfare and goodwill of all peoples on this globe.

The wise men of East and West have alike raised the banner of the Spirit. Ours is not to divide the significance of the great Truth into compartments of religions, creeds and cults. A united faith and a feeling of loving co-operation with all peoples, beneath the radiance of this Truth, will not only subjugate the rising clouds of materialism that threaten to envelop the world, but also help the Spirit to triumphantly bring all nations of East and West to meet on the common ground of true brotherhood, equality and peace.

Racial, national, religious, intellectual and mammonistic pride has had its day. The death-knell to imperialism, privilege and superiority is ringing all the world over. Conservatism and bigotry on the one hand, and the artificial tinsel of a so-called civilization, which denies the realm and power of an infinite Divinity that dwells in all beings, on the other, are both crumbling to their very foundations. The giant force of the great Reality is asserting its invincible puissance and is demolishing all the narrow boundaries, set up by the ignorant man in this vast expanse of one universal Life.

O mighty Spirit, by whatever way thou deemest fit, bring about a transformation in the life of humanity, which is now weltering in acute discontent and misery, arising from selfishness, crime, exploitation and ambition for material power and glory! May Thy hand of peace rest on all mankind to quell the tumultuous passions that rage in its breast !

UNITY OF MANKIND

We are inheritors of immortality. Our life at the source is universal and so free from all limitations. It is not conditioned by the apparent diversity. It is ever free, infinite and eternal. It is always glowing with the light of supreme knowledge, power and joy. We are the

revelations of this exalted Life that informs, inspires and vitalizes all existences. Being the shapes and forms made up of the same five elements, we are physiologically one. Intellectually and emotionally we are gifted with the same potentialities and are, therefore, psychologically identical with the omnipresent, cosmic mind. As the fundamental principle of the great Truth, in which there is no duality, which is the support and basis of these outer manifestations—a still, silent and immutable Spirit beyond the implications of name, form and movement—we are absolutely one without a second.

The Indian philosophy explains in emphatic certitude that ignorance is the only cause of disharmony prevailing in the life of mankind—ignorance of the true nature of Truth underlying the visible expressions of it. So knowledge is rightly held to be the means for dispelling the illusions of the fettered life. When the individual realizes the eternal, infinite and unconditioned qualities of his being, the chains of creation fall from his soul. The mantle of obscurity and ignorance slips down and he stands revealed in his illumined vesture of knowledge, power and joy. The ego-self of a dim and cramped consciousness is sublimated, into the infinite splendour of the Divine Self, liberated into an all-comprehensive consciousness. The individual is verily an embodiment of a cosmic and ultra-cosmic Reality. This Reality is indivisible—supreme oneness is its one attribute; hence there is nothing besides It.

Therefore, viewed from the awareness of this transcendent Truth, wars, exploitations, racial animosities, religious wrangles, social inequalities, the tyrannies of wealth, authority and selfish power are clearly seen as the maladict offspring of sheer ignorance. We dwell on the same earth, breathe the same air, nourish ourselves with the same produce of nature, are imbued with vitality derived from the same central source of all power. Truly, a subtle link of intimate kinship in all the outer aspects of life and a deep-rooted consciousness of unity in the

inner realities of it are the whole truth about the riddle of the individual and cosmic revelation

When you are raised to this exalted and all-inclusive consciousness you cannot but exclaim:—

“The entire earth itself is my father or mother country and all beings on the face of it are my brothers and sisters. The great Spirit that lives and moves in me is also animating and activating all beings and creatures in the world. For me the racial, national and sectarian distinctions have no significance. I belong to the world. I feel for all. I love all and I cheerfully sacrifice my time, energy and thought for the service of all. Knowledge of my Divine essence and origin has set me free. I am not a member of any church, creed, cult or religion. My God is as much the light, power and joy of my soul as He is of everyone in the world—be he a Christian or a Hindu, a Jew or a Gentile, Muslim or Buddhist. The pure red blood that flows in my veins is of the same colour, power and sacredness as that which courses through the bodies, white or black, western or eastern, northern or southern, of the peoples of this globe. The walls of national boundaries have no existence in my eternal, all-pervading life. The irresistible inundations of my universal vision envelop all the world. The evil tendencies: hate, greed, lust, and wrath are foreign to my resplendent being, thrilling as it does with compassion and goodwill for all beings of the human race. My very hands stretch forth, elongate and widen infinitely to close around and clasp the entire humanity in one ecstatic embrace of love. Love is the light and glory of my soul which is one with the Soul of the universe. This is my unassailable status in the cosmic phenomena”.

“I look upon the spirit of international jealousy and competition, the insensate ambition for material power and glory that has now seized the hearts of warring peoples on this earth, as a demoniac exaltation from the degenerate human nature. I know that this spirit can be suppressed, crushed and destroyed by the

omnipotent power of universal love, which is the pristine quality of my supreme Divine nature. I join with all my being the outstanding spiritual luminaries of the day in their arduous and selfless endeavours for awakening mankind to a consciousness of unity and friendship. I have realized that I am not a citizen of any one country; I am the child of the Divine Parent of all beings and creatures and, therefore, I am a citizen of the world."

PEACE MOVEMENT

The present state of the world offers a wonderful study. The race for earthly power and dominion is assuming a terrible feature. Hate, distrust and fear on the one side, scepticism, greed and thoughtlessness on the other, combine to hurl nations into the vortex of war. The hearts of men and women of the highest vision are ringing with inexpressible anguish at the sight of the havoc which war leaves in its wake. Their heroic struggle to cool down the raging fever of the war-mad peoples is a sight for gods. The air resounds with their clarion voice, proclaiming insistently the message of goodwill and peace for mankind. What a contrast!—the heart that bleeds for the sufferings of humanity and the heart that causes such sufferings. Both are ostensibly human, but they are really not. Whilst the one is superhuman, the other is inhuman. One is Divine, the other is demoniac. The same heart can either be the one or the other. It can pour out the purest emotions of love, compassion and forgiveness. It can also give vent to the turbulent waves of hate, fury and vengeance. The world may be divided into two camps—those who possess a heart of the first calibre and those who possess a heart of the second. Naturally, the stronger of the two prevails.

So, it is absolutely necessary that those of us who take our stand upon the eternal principle of invincible Love should join hands. We ought to wax powerful by working for the transformation of as many hearts as lie

within our purview for an ordered and consolidated resistance against the inrush of war. The normal tendencies of the human heart from its infancy are mild, merciful and loving in character. Our task is to appeal to this part of human nature which is in fact higher than human—it is Divine. Educate the heart to the knowledge of its Divinity. Awaken it to the consciousness of its infinite possibilities for good.

Let the divine instincts subdue the undivine aberrations that distort life and make it ugly. Let us join the ranks of those great souls who are putting forth all their intellectual and spiritual energy to thwart the darkening and degenerating influences that seek to possess and sway human hearts. Let us stand up, as soldiers of God, to spread the soothing power of peace and goodwill in the world. Let us move fearlessly with all, but in every contact transmit the overpowering thought of peace and friendliness. Let us encourage every such individual or society by the free offering of our powers, be they of wealth, thought or body. Merely to sit still aghast and wail over the wanton massacre of human lives in the name of imperialism, communism or some other equally reprehensible cause is not the thing to do. We are the embodiments of the greatest Power that rules the world. Let us be aware of this and give up faint-heartedness and inaction. If at once we cannot reveal all the powers of our soul, as we work on for the cause of universal peace and fellowship, we will be enabled in time to bring out the full brilliance of the light within us. Let us be the votaries of peace which is God—peace for ourselves and peace for humanity.

There are many souls gifted with the spiritual vision, who are striving to establish the sovereignty of peace on the earth. There are some among them prominently in the forefront who are inspired by splendid organizing and creative powers. These outstanding figures are making themselves felt by their world-wide activities. May the Almighty bring them all victory in their selfless

labours of love and service, and make the world better and more secure to live in.

WAY FOR WORLD-PEACE

A real and enduring world-peace can be brought within the range of possibility only when nations meet for attaining such a goal with minds freed from the vitiating influence of diplomacy, subterfuge and intrigue. Selfishness, strengthened by the ambition for power and dominion, can never be conducive to the formation of a feeling of world-fellowship and international peace. Leagues, conferences and pacts have been held and made with the object of arriving at a friendly understanding between the different nations of the earth. But, as we behold, they have woefully failed to create an atmosphere suitable for the establishment of peace and goodwill amongst them. It is also seen that the purpose of these conferences and treaties, intended for welding together different peoples of the world into a common consciousness of brotherhood, is at its very inception based upon the cult of mutual fear and distrust. The representatives, who congregate for preventing international rupture and war, although intellectually highly equipped, do not possess that broad vision which alone can entitle them to bear the welfare of the entire humanity at heart. Frank and open discussions, over the obstacles that arise, for a sustained feeling of comradeship and friendship should mark the proceedings of such conferences, if the ostensible aim for which they are held should be fulfilled.

It is not merely men of intellect, who are to put their heads together to forge out a programme of world-peace, but we want men of wisdom to take part in such deliberations. The responsibility of bringing out men of true insight and illumination rests with the vast populace that inhabit the various countries of the world. They must understand that they had so far entrusted

their destiny into the hands of men who are in every way unfit to work for their common weal and protection. The fault is not with such leaders but with the masses who picked them out and put them on a pedestal, where they do not shine as they should. The world has been in this respect disillusioned more than once, and it would be really the height of folly to continue, even in the future, in its blind allegiance to such ill-prepared masters at the head of affairs. So, principally, the people at large have to awaken themselves to the need of the present, in the light of the experience of the past.

Every nation seeks security and protection, but the realization of this aspiration, it ought to understand, lies in its acceptance of the same ideal for the other nations of the earth. So, the common factor that could enable them to live in peace and friendliness is a joint sense of security and peace. In other words, each individual nation must realize that what it feels for its own elevation and happiness must be true also of the other nations. Here a consciousness of intimate mutual kinship amongst all nations of the world is the desideratum. Imbibing the full significance of the memorable words of Christ: "Love thy neighbour as thyself", every nation in the world must raise among themselves men of the widest intellectual grasp and the widest sympathies of the heart, and hold them up as true representatives of their interest and welfare. Such illumined souls can be brought together to solve every difficult problem that confronts the international adjustment of affairs. Peace can come only from men of peace. A war mentality is born of men whose minds are fired with the spirit of war.

In all parts of the world there are men of high spiritual attainments who are in every manner endowed with the adequate qualifications to come forward as the messengers of peace. But their coming out from their seclusion or limited spheres of activity, for taking

up the huge task of creating amity and friendship amongst the warring nations of the world, depends upon the need felt by the populace for such men, and upon a definite call for their invaluable intercession and help. Let a widespread and intense desire to free the world from the clutches of greed, hate and war, surcharge the heart of mankind, and the Almighty Power who is at once immanent and transcendent will not fail to reveal Himself and work out a programme of universal peace and harmony, through the outstanding spiritual Masters of the world. The problem of peace can be practically solved only by these Masters who are instilled with the invincible power of the Divine. United action on their part can alone subdue the dogs of war that are being, from time to time, let loose upon the ill-starred humanity. Confusion of thought and distortion of understanding have been the ruin of mankind. Experience—bitter experience—has taught the peoples of all countries that no military leader, no dictator, no political hero can be trusted with the lives of millions of his fellowmen. Verily, the world should look to God-men to contribute their omnipotent soul-power towards the establishment of universal peace and fellowship, and thus avert the impending disasters of wholesale human slaughter and starvation caused by the political and economic greed of war-drunk militant nations.

TEACHERS AND THEIR MESSAGE.

All great Teachers of the world, of every clime and of every age, have been preaching about the vision of universal love and brotherhood. They point out with one voice that man's escape from misery, suffering and failure lies in his elevation to this exalted spiritual consciousness. Superstitions, creeds, dogmas and false traditions have so deeply gathered round the pure teachings of the great Souls that a drastic work to scrub off these excrescences has been found necessary from time to

time. The outstanding spiritual Masters of the day, standing upon their own intuitional experiences which are one with the realizations of the past sages, are busily engaged on all sides to enlighten the world with the true wisdom that leads simultaneously towards individual liberation on the one hand, and world beneficence on the other.

The world is seen to be rapidly evolving and, as a result of shuffling and reshuffling the values of life, is standing at the parting of ways, fixing its gaze upon the dawn of a new renaissance and civilization. Man has been floundering, from stage to stage, in search of a permanent basis for controlling and adjusting human life, so that he can reap the blessings of peace, harmony and happiness. On the physical plane, every possible attempt has been made to attain to this supreme purpose of existence. The outcome has been a woeful failure, but every such setback and defeat has only urged the determined seeker to break through the crystallized forms, created by ignorance, that hitherto spelt dissension and disaster in the otherwise homogeneous life of humanity.

The men of vision and wisdom hold out the highest spiritual truths and those of the past mostly appeared far in the advance of the times. The message of the Spirit could not pierce the hearts of mankind as a whole. No doubt they cast a widespread influence upon a large part of humanity but the impression they left behind did not produce an integral conversion of life on a mass scale.

The truth and glory of the spiritual life, imbued with an universal consciousness, can touch the heart when it is prepared to receive the impact from the fullness of experience. Verily, perfection of experience is the realization of the Truth. In the present age, humanity as a whole, after a continuous course of experimentation in various other ways, has arrived at such a psychological climax that it cannot but understand and accept the right interpretation and significance of

the messages couched in the eternal words of the Masters. We behold great leaders of thought and action are baffled with the problems of the day and whatever solution they forge out does not tend to the establishment of the great ideal of harmony and peace. On the other hand, guided by these prophets of materialism, humanity has been dragged into a deeper morass of selfishness, strife and warfare. But all this is for good. Mankind can divert its aspiring mind, from the ephemeral to the eternal, only when it has drunk the cup of misery to the dregs by its dwelling too long upon things that pass away and of the moment.

Now then, what is the message of the world Teachers? From the highest peak of their universal consciousness they declare: "Oh man, if you want your burning zeal and thirsting aspiration for peace fulfilled for yourself and others in the world, adjust your conduct of life in accordance with the dictates of the cosmic Spirit which dwells within you. Expand your vision so that it can embrace all your fellow-beings and link them to yourself by the bonds of love, sympathy and goodwill. You may not have known so far that your deliverance can be effected only by attaining to this blessed vision: but now the very atmosphere around you, far and near, is thrilling with the fervour of a message that rings the note of universal religion and brotherhood, Rise above all narrow creeds, communal leanings and national ambitions, and fling your life into the infinity of God's own existence, and work up your destiny for the achievement of the loftiest beatitude of life, viz., immortal peace, love, power and wisdom."

WORLD FELLOWSHIP

The eternal Divine Principle which is the cause of the world-manifestation is at once an immanent and transcendent Reality. So to realize this great Truth we have to go within ourselves. Since the Truth is all-per-

vading, it forms an immortal and indissoluble link that unites all beings and creatures in the world. This is an all-inclusive and all-comprehensive Reality. Inherently we are universal and perfect in nature. When man awakens to the consciousness of this perfection of his existence, he feels through the inner spiritual experience that he is one with all beings and things in the universe—nay, that the entire revelation of nature, in its various aspects and multifarious activities, is the expression of his own infinite and eternal being. Utter freedom, bliss, power and peace are only for him or her who has attained to this supreme beatific vision.

In this vision, the ephemeral values of life disappear and man, shuffling off his local, limited and imperfect nature, stands revealed as a veritable embodiment of Divine effulgence, power and glory. Now, universal love is his creed, universal vision his religion.

The momentous changes we are now witnessing in the affairs of humanity are the signs of a transitional period, veering it towards the acceptance of an universal consciousness and brotherhood. Chaos and confusion give place to order and harmony. A long night ends in a resplendent day. The wail of misery and pain is succeeded by joy and exultation. War, strife and bloodshed, washing away the dirt of selfish human nature, pave the way to unity, harmony and peace. A superficial view of affairs, as they prevail at present, seems to offer ample food for the pessimist who is ever busy singing the one refrain of despair and despondency, but the seer, who sees things afar and whose inward vision reveals to him the glory of a future filled with goodwill, harmony and joy, is carrying his heartening message to the perplexed humanity. The question would be asked whether the optimistic view of the seer is at all possible or practicable of consummation. The Divine principle, embedded in the very life of the universe, stands for unity and harmony, and this infinite power in its spontaneous out-growth strives to bring about order out of

chaos. So, the note of despair and disbelief has no place in a world which is rapidly evolving towards a supreme state of world union and world fellowship.

If with a wide sweep of vision we care to observe the great changes that are happening in the world, we have to admit that the Almighty Power has been deeply engaged in breaking down the walls of ignorance that have so long kept apart man from man, community from community, religion from religion and nation from nation. The light has now dawned on humanity, a light which is arousing it to the knowledge of the common and eternal bond that unites it into one life and one unit. Let every one of us put his shoulders to this giant wheel of evolution and hasten the coming of the magnificent kingdom of cosmic vision, harmony and peace.

ARISE, YE YOUTH!

The world is thrilling with the expectations of a new consciousness, a new renaissance. The very air is surcharged with the messages of brotherhood, harmony and unity of mankind. The accumulated wisdom of ages is flowing out through vehicles inspired with the spirit of this great ideal. The narrow conceptions, the denominational shibboleths and vague slogans, that hitherto lured peoples astray from the path of peace, goodwill and fellowship, are being rejected. Experience, all the world over, has opened the eyes of man to the infinite possibilities of human life and purpose. We are now rising on the crest of a gigantic wave, imbued with the invincible power of the almighty Truth. Inter-communication on the physical plane having been, through discoveries of science; facilitated with amazing results, annihilating distance, has brought all peoples of the earth within the folds of a common feeling of near kinship and intimate co-operation. The days for thinking on problems affecting humanity on terms of narrow, individual, communal, or even national lines have passed.

The dawn heralding a universal consciousness, subtly and irresistibly breaking through the lesser ideals that had hitherto influenced the affairs of the world, is facing us on all sides. The glorious sun of the spirit of harmony, whose rays had ages ago shed their healing and elevating brilliance, is again dispelling the darkness of ignorance in the heart of mankind. This sun, it is admitted on all hands, arose in the East. Although, with the passage of time, this sun of eternal wisdom had been, for shorter or longer intervals, hidden behind dark clouds, we are now beholding that the clouds are being scattered by the benevolent hand of Providence, as we already feel the warmth, light and glow of this eternally radiant orb.

On whom does the task of carrying the banner of brotherhood and peace, so that the messages of the wise may be fulfilled, devolve? Who should come forward to work out the Divine Plan in bringing about a blessed change in the destiny of mankind? Who are the real custodians of peace and harmony in the years to come? Who should gird up their loins in a united endeavour for the regeneration of the world? By whose sacrifice and adventurous spirit can the present great awakening be led towards its exalted consummation? Yes, this magnificent task rests on the youth of the world.

O! young men and women, turn ye from the ways of apathy and irresponsibility, turn ye from the path of false ambitions and vain pursuits, and marshal yourselves as the very soldiers, and take your proper place in the great world-affecting movement that has been started. Hasten ye to strain your every nerve, utilize every iota of your energy, to offer every minute of your life—nay, to dedicate your very existence to the service of the great Cause that demands your concentrated attention and whole-hearted co-operation. Youth is the hope of the world. Arise, O ye blooming flowers of humanity, and shed your beauty and fragrance all around. Light your lamps, O friends, and march onward

leading mankind to the goal of true blessedness, peace and happiness.

WORLD PROBLEM

The world is in the throes of a great change. In recent times, we have been observing that the affairs of mankind are undergoing almost kaleidoscopic transformations, with the accumulated effect that a great and a most far-reaching change is seen in the horizon of the near future. Civilization, through the help of the wonderfully rapid progress of science, has reached its zenith — only creating in the world a spirit of restlessness, strife and acute anguish. Man's vision is inevitably diverting from the ephemeral interests of life towards its eternal values. Men of awakened consciousness—awakened to the supreme purpose and glory of life — are coming forward to lead the future.

It is evident that men of gigantic and highly cultured intellect have failed to find a solution to the world problem which faces them to-day. Every kind of available means, within the range of physical and intellectual spheres, has been explored to work out a programme of peace and goodwill in the world.

But the conditions of things have run and taken a shape which does not admit of a solution even by the aid of the highest workings of the intellect. The hunger of mankind for rest and peace has now assumed such tremendous proportions that nothing short of a cataclysmic and electric application of a remedy is essential. The real peace and harmony are at last discovered to be not attainable by the adjustment of affairs merely on the surface, and that a new world and a new age of peace, amity and goodwill are things of the Spirit—are the offspring of a spiritual experience—are the outcome of a knowledge of man's existence as an immortal spirit and life. Man has been so far groping on the surface and in the dark and, hence, he has come

by nothing but misery, dissension, pain and illwill.

What are now the eternal values of life by the proper understanding of which the problem of a world in agony can be solved? The first and the foremost thing which the world has to recognise is the supreme unity of all life that exists in it. The apparent diversity perceived in the lower and phenomenal aspects of its existence, has at its basis the supreme unity of a deathless, indwelling Reality. Man's real mission in the world is to attain the knowledge of this Truth and live in the light of it. Indeed, true harmony is born of the everlasting Truth. This great Truth, which permeates, upholds and keeps together the innumerable worlds in the infinite bosom of the universe, is a Fact — a Fact realized in complete fulfilment and perfection by many a great soul of the past and the present. They have raised and are still raising their united voice calling upon humanity to understand, realize and actualise the beauty and glory of this supreme mystery.

A wave of scepticism, doubt and despair is passing over the world and a spirit of Godlessness has seized a vast majority of mankind. This is as it should be, and the condition is pre-eminently necessary and desirable. From scepticism to faith — from doubt to certainty — from despair to hope and realization is a short step. From the tumultuous churning of life alone comes the nectar of peace and true happiness. Through struggle, tribulation and turmoil alone can man understand and experience the magnificence of Life eternal. The end of the darkest night is the revealment of a bright and glorious day. So the great dawn for world unity and peace is ahead. The world is shaking off its belief in things of passing moment and awakening to the consciousness of eternity. The voice of Sages is heard and their work has started. The thirst of man has found the ambrosia to quench it. The power of God is asserting, breaking up the encrustations of a deep laid ignorance. The world is awake and is safe in the hands of men of

the highest eminence who are inspired with the spirit of God. God has come down to live and talk with men. The hunger will cease, the thirst will be appeased, harmony and peace will settle upon the troubled earth. The God of peace does triumph!

AWAKENED HUMANITY

We behold that the world is responding to the call of the Spirit within. Whilst on the one hand the world is preparing for another war, there is a mighty spiritual power developing on the other to counteract it. The message of the Spirit both from East and West bears the same tone and significance. Whatever the result of the conflict, from a mere temporal point of view, the real outcome would be the consolidation of the human race into one family of God.

In the world renaissance all the artificial and selfish divisions existing amongst mankind will disappear. It is true of humanity as a whole, as it is of individuals, that an era of acute turmoil and suffering is a necessary stage of preparation. We are facing the present period of travail and agony for the birth of a new humanity—spiritually vitalised and free. Pinching poverty of millions, due to economic and war conditions, has been deeply effecting the people of all countries on this earth. This widespread distress that has seized the world, far from being undesirable, has been accelerating the spiritual evolution of the human race. We observe a rapid progress towards a spiritual federation of the world, based upon the eternal values of life. Through suffering and pain man comes to understand the real mysteries of life. Pride and lust of power can be dethroned from their false pedestal and made to kiss the dust only when a spirit of discontent and revolt captures the soul of man.

Men and women of high spiritual culture and vision are sending out their inspired thoughts in order

to awaken peoples to the everlasting verities of life. East and West have both their men and women of illumination who with a united voice are ringing forth the magnificent glory of the immortal Reality that dwells in every member of the human race.

When thus the entire atmosphere is saturated and thrilling with the great Ideal that stands for harmony and peace, it behoves every one of us to receive the touch and thus reveal the inherent light of our immortal Self. Let us banish from our hearts fear, doubt and sorrow and plunge into the infinite ocean of Divine existence and realize that the entire mankind is the one manifested body of that existence. Let the narrow ideals of life, that have so long cramped our understanding, poisoned the springs of our emotion and imbued our actions with selfishness, be abandoned. Let our vision transcend all limitations and embrace all beings equally in the clasp of universal love.

Verily, life is filled with the fragrance of light, love and joy when it is freed from the hold of pride and selfishness. The upward flight of the soul towards the fulfilment of its great mission becomes possible only when it is gifted with the wings of self-sacrifice and service. Such a life alone can contribute towards world harmony and peace. Mere talk or words do not count. Life lived in the light of the Ideal can alone possess the sterling virtues that make for joy and peace.

Men inspired with the spirit of God—our Rishis and saints of the past and present, and a host of equally enlightened souls in all parts of the world—have worked and are working for bringing about unity, goodwill and peace amongst the peoples of the earth. The force they have set up is so powerful that, having triumphed from age to age, it is coming upon us at the present day with a tremendous impetus to entirely subdue the world. The victory of the Spirit is writ large on the screen of the present age. Awake to it and be the inheritors of the everlasting grace and blessings of the supreme Truth.

POWER OF PEACE-THOUGHT

The quest of everyone in the world is peace. Strife and unrest have become the order of the day. Every religion preaches that God is peace and He dwells within us. We know that merely on the physical and mental planes there is no peace. Then peace must belong to something which is deep down in our nature. This something is the immortal source of our life which is one with God—call it Soul, Spirit or Truth. He who knowingly strives for peace seeks it in this inner realm of his being. To discover it means to reveal it in his physical and mental existence. What shut him from this source of peace are the impurities of his mind. Lust, greed and wrath have thrown a mantle of darkness over the radiant Spirit of peace within. Before the light and power of the Truth can become manifest in man, the mind must be freed from the dross of violent passions and proud ambitions. This can be done only through concentration, meditation and self-surrender. The mind will then be ever bathing in tranquillity, and the physical movements will automatically, be attuned to the inner Spirit of peace.

When peace reigns in the mind the thought arising from it shall possess infinite potency. Such a thought can work through time and space without being affected by their limitations. It can awaken the heart of every human being, nay, of every creature, to the consciousness of peace. Just as the turmoil of the heart is transmitted to another by a subtle and inner process, so also, the peace of one individual can mysteriously influence and transform the most troubled heart of another. There are and there were great men of peace, and we know all those, who came to see them and hear their message were delivered of their mental obsessions and became settled in peace.

The world, as we find it at present, is full of discord and is eagerly aspiring for peace and harmony. To beat

peace with all a person must in the first place realize the Spirit of peace within himself. Peace denotes a feeling of unity and oneness with all people on this earth. This unity or oneness can be possible only through the recognition of the immortal Spirit that permeates the hearts of all beings.

The preliminary step towards the attainment of universal peace, through the realization of the supreme Spirit or God, is to cultivate goodwill and friendliness towards all people alike. Here we have to transcend our petty and narrow ideals of life, destroy the sense of our aloofness from the rest of humanity and work and toil for the common weal and uplift of our fellow men, without any distinction of race, nationality, colour and creed.

The foregoing exposition gives a fairly comprehensive definition of the term peace-thought. Peace-thought is not a thought conditioned by narrow personal aims, or born of individualism, but it is a wide and all-embracing consciousness. It envelops in its sweep all creatures and beings of the world. Such a thought, arising as it does from the omnipotent Spirit, is pregnant with infinite power to work for the regeneration of mankind and establish the rule of peace on this aching earth.

The power to wound and kill and the power to heal and save are both in man. It is the thought that makes him do the one or the other. The thought imbued with hate and violence produces the first result and a thought imbued with love and peace serves to bring about the second. Thought can contaminate or purify according to its nature.

We now know, if we create within us a peace-thought, what it is capable of achieving. It can not only, as far as the individual is concerned, merge him in supreme peace but can also create a like thought in another and grant him the same experience.

If thus this powerful thought of peace passes like a current from mind to mind and spreads throughout the

world, it can generate a most potent world consciousness of peace. By this consciousness the war mentality that prevails amongst only a minor part of humanity can be subdued, if not transmuted. This is no doubt a colossal achievement. But nothing short of this could dispel the ominous clouds of war that are now hanging over us all. Real and lasting harmony and peace can become a possibility when mankind realizes the close affinity and fellowship of its members from the standpoint of the universal Spirit.

World union and harmony have been held, by those who either deny the all-powerful Spirit dwelling in each one of us, or do not believe in its wonderful powers, to be an impossibility. If we turn to account the powers of the Spiritual realm there is nothing impossible for us to attain. We can then avert the greatest wars, calamities and catastrophies that befall humanity. What is needed is that we should, in the first place, believe in such a realm of power and light, and then earnestly seek for it and lastly, having entered it, use all its forces for bringing down peace and goodwill on the earth.

Working merely on the mental and physical surface for creating a peace-consciousness is not sufficient. The peace-thought must start from the silence of the Spirit and act with an irresistible power to encompass all who come within its purview and thereby fill the very atmosphere with the thrills of peace.

There are all over the world great Yogis, Rishis, saints and Self-illuminated men who, without physically coming to the front for helping the aspiring humanity to evolve towards universal fellowship, are still, on the thought plane, silently using their spiritual powers to bring about this great consummation. But for them the world would be a pandemonium wherein men would behave worse than the beasts of the jungle—tearing up and destroying each other wholesale. This demoniac nature in man is greatly kept down by the

spiritual power wielded by these powerful spiritual Masters. The messages of peace and goodwill have come down to us through a long line of saints, sages and teachers from time immemorial. Let us all, who long for peace in the world, join our hearts in the prayer that their voices may shake us up to the awareness of the untold possibilities that lie hidden within us for forming a consciousness of peace and harmony in the world.

GENERAL

CLARION VOICE OF THE GITA

The Bhagavadgita is a veritable mosaic of eternal wisdom. It has not left unsolved a single problem pertaining to the conduct of human life, both in its spiritual and physical spheres. For the highest truths of philosophy and also for a perfect light on the practical side of life, one has to go to this great work. The message of the entire Gita is to reveal the harmony and identity of soul with God and of God with Nature.

It must be within the experience of every student of the Gita that the majority of the commentators on this great scripture have drawn out such truths from it as would coincide with their own views and predilections, and have presented them to the world as the whole secret of this many-sided and all-comprehensive mine of wisdom. Some read into the Gita an emphatic call to renounce all action in the world as the ultimate goal. Some others argue that the Gita holds devotion to a personal God as the essential creed of it. Some would have it that the Gita urges the soul to plunge into action, making that alone the sole criterion and the one necessary condition of human existence. Again some others, taking the Mahabharata war including the Gita as only an allegorical exposition of the eternal truths, interpret the teachings from their viewpoint as embodying an uncompromising cult of Ahimsa. Each one of these expounders of the Gita is right from the angle of vision by which he has struggled to understand the scripture. But the whole truth enshrined in its eighteen chapters is all that they have said put together and much more besides. For an

all-round authoritative, conclusive and comprehensive treatise on the Gita, among the commentaries of the present day, one has to turn to the illuminating and inspiring volumes of "The Essays on the Gita" by Sri Aurobindo.

To understand life and realize its glory integrally, one has to study the Gita in all its phases and from all standpoints. To have a partial view of a particular aspect of it alone, and to hold forth that as the whole truth, has been the cause of imperfection in spiritual experience.

The purpose of the Gita is to proclaim that human life is essentially Divine—spiritually, mentally and physically. Its one aim is to prove that spirit and matter are one and the same. Activity in the world, whatever form it might take, as circumstances and conditions demand, is not a thing to be shunned or renounced. What is needed is to Divinise life, through the attainment of freedom from the individual sense by the mergence of it into God who is at once the soul, the universe and the all-transcendent and all-inclusive Truth.

The soul whose life is thus liberated, the Gita says, is utterly Divine in all his movements—significant as well as insignificant. Now action for him is but a natural and spontaneous flow of Divine energy acting through him. As God's supreme will determines, this energy works through him equally to create, to preserve and to destroy. Since this illumined personality intuitively bases his actions on the vision of the universal Reality and performs them in a state entirely bereft of the individual sense, they do not affect him for good or evil. So long as the soul misses this acme of attainment, he flounders in the morass of conflicting dualities—good and evil, virtue and sin, Ahimsa and Himsa and pleasure and pain.

The Divine Shakti works in the universe both for constructive and destructive purposes. Only when the

Supreme power acts in man, through his lower nature; it is vitiated with greed, lust and selfishness. In this state, in whatever manner he acts, his works are tainted. For personal aggrandisement, such as for wealth, power and glory, he would launch into any kind of action irrespective of its nature as Ahimsa or Himsa. Whereas the same Shakti when She acts in a man, freed entirely from every egoistic impulse or ambition, does so for the uplift and protection of the oppressed and innocent humanity. Here Shakti may work through the purified medium or vehicle both creatively or destructively. Creation and destruction are concomitant movements. We can never separate them. Every new creation has at its basis the destruction of the old. This is the law of Nature universally applicable. We cannot palliate, shirk or ignore this law of God controlling all the activities of Nature, including those of human beings. It is ever there, facing us at every turn. The saving grace for man, in the field of action, lies only in his acting as an instrument of the Divine — in a state of utter freedom from the touch and recoil of action. Here, what is essential is complete dedication of all life's actions to the will and power of the Almighty, dwelling in the hearts of all beings, creatures and things. Else, if we move only in the vicious circle of harassing Dwandwas — good and evil — and attempt to cling to one of them for attainment of true freedom and peace, we can never reach the goal. Doubts and fears will ever rise in the mind of such a man, and he will become a scared creature, always a prey to impatience, suspicion and despair. Therefore, the command of Sri Krishna is: Rise beyond the dualities, rise beyond the Dharmas of the Gunas, i.e. rise beyond all conditioned states of existence, conceived of and set up as standards by the fettered mind and intellect, and be one with Me—the all-transcendent Reality — and then act in life as my instrument, as my Vibhuti, Myself revealed in and as your form and body. This is the deliverance that I

offer you—this is the supreme blessedness in which grant you the bliss of immortality.

Spontaneity of life, born of an egoless purity and innocence, and a consciousness of immortal freedom, and a condition of perfect Divine ecstasy and peace, is the one supreme note and refrain of the Voice that rings through the Gita.

UNTOUCHABILITY

Untouchability is not a political or merely a social problem; but it is an intensely human problem. It directly touches the relation between man and man. Of all the creatures in the world, a human being is rightly considered to be the highest in the scale of creation. He alone can realize the greatest ideal of life, viz., mutual love and toleration founded upon self-sacrifice and self-suffering. He alone can raise himself to the vision of equality, by which he can love all mankind alike, through the acceptance of one God as the Divine Parent of His world of children. If we view the question of untouchability in this light, we see that to observe it, in any form, is a direct affront to God Himself, and a crime and sin against humanity.

All the sages and saints of the past and the present have deliberately broken this pernicious custom, and have shown to the world its inhuman character. Equal opportunities are alike the birthright of all the children of God. To deny this to anybody, merely on the score of his or her birth in a particular caste or creed, is to deny the supreme privilege and greatness of "the noblest work of God"—man.

God is the friend of the helpless and the down-trodden, and so the so-called untouchables have found in Him their sole liberator. God, in His inscrutable ways, is working up their cause in the world. When Indians, as a whole, come to recognise in this despised class their own brethren, this mighty land of spirit-

uality will surely develop a power that would shed peace on the world and infuse into it a spirit of universal harmony and goodwill.

THINK WELL AND THINK DEEP

It is the belief with many in this world that they can dispense with God and still live in it contented and happy. They think that the mere pleasures of the senses are all-in-all and by their attainment they can satisfy all the cravings of the soul. Hence they mainly live on the surface of life and run after superficialities; but, after all, are they really happy? Are they able to get real peace? This is a question that every one of them should ask himself and decide. Sometimes the feverish rush for things, transient and impermanent, dulls the intellect and one loses the capacity to enter into the deeper problems of life. Calm and collected moments he has none. His life can be likened to that of a butterfly that flits from flower to flower for honey. He allows his mind to dwell on things of passing moment. He links his life's activity with the ephemeral interests and struggles all the day. In short, he fritters away all his mental and physical energies in a round of never-ending ebb and flow of pains and pleasures. The saying goes, there is no rose but has a thorn. Go to pluck the rose and you cannot avoid the prick of the thorn. The flower fades away, but the wound of the thorn still lingers and smarts. Such are the results of a life given to sensation and excitement—an unsteady flame that flickers for a time and disappears in the end, leaving behind no trace of anything of a permanent value. Name, fame, wealth, status and glory are the prizes held up as ideals of attainment by him who lives on the surface. He gives importance of the first magnitude to these unsubstantial things. The strangeness of it all is that he looks upon himself as a very wise and great man. He exhorts others to become like

him by following his example. He mocks at those who are striving to obtain the true joys of an eternal life. Saints and devotees of God are for him objects for ridicule. Self-discipline and a harmoniously regulated life are for him charlatanism and hypocrisy. Purity of heart, nobility of character and generosity of nature are virtues at which he derides.

Now then, O carping critic of a saintly and illumined life, can you just for a moment reflect upon the varied experiences through which you have hitherto passed? After all your material acquisitions, have you known of a single hour of perfect contentment and peace, except the hectic and flash-and-go type of sensational and exhilarating moments, always followed by states of mental atrophy and depression? Is this all that you bargained for during the life that you have lived out? If you fling a stone at another out of a sense of inferiority and contempt, you should possess yourself some great thing which is a tangible, abiding and of really good value; but you have no such thing to show.

On the other hand, go to a saint who is ever in communion with God and question him whether he possesses anything which never fades and dies, and as to what was his actual experience of it. He will tell you that his devotion and the consequent union with God has not only sanctified his life but has also filled it with the nectar of immortality, bliss and peace. He will further tell you that the unnatural and reactionary distempers of his soul have vanished. A spirit of calmness and self-contained joy permeates his entire being. The gusts of passion—hate, anger and despair—have ceased their play within his heart wherein now the God of peace reigns. The impatient and mad rush after evanescent and fleeting joys of the world have no more any significance for him. He does not toil and moil from morn to eve like a bullock at the plough for the appeasement of his sensual hankerings. He has realized

his immortal state. So death cannot terrify him. Being fixed in the independent bliss of an immortal existence, adversities, calamities, losses and failures do not upset him. He is thoroughly self-dependent, brave, ever cheerful, liberal, tolerant, humble and ever willing to serve and help. This is all due to his union in thought, word, and deed with the supreme originator of himself and the worlds. To deny these blessings of life and to cry down those exalted souls who are enjoying the sweetness of it, is a deliberate move towards a low life where misery, pain and sorrow abound. Turn your thought to the ever-blissful, all-powerful Divinity, residing in all His glory within yourself.

WAR?

The supreme Divine principle at the root of the universal manifestation is one. From this eternal Source have sprung all creatures, beings and things. Again from this Source alone have emanated the varied forces that produce kaleidoscopic changes in the phenomena of nature. The creative and destructive forces alike issue from this great Origin. In fact, they are the two aspects of the same power—seen from different angles. When we view nature and its workings from the vision of the underlying basic Reality, our conceptions of good and evil dwindle out. It is now that we behold the universe in all its colours, forms, transmutations, even amidst the clash and conflict of opposing forces, as utterly Divine. Because all these have come forth from one Eternal principle, being the revealment of one immortal essence.

The question which is now looming prominently before us is: why should there be war in the world—war that ruthlessly brings about the destruction of human life on an extensive scale, involving the wanton slaughter of also the innocent and non-combatant peoples? Again, why should earthquakes, floods, famines and pestilences devastate the earth from time

to time? The perplexed mind of man further asks: why God, who is held to be the very spirit of compassion, love and mercy should permit such catastrophies to convulse humanity? We strenuously cudgel our brains to probe into the mysterious workings of God for a solution. But we are baffled and feel helpless, for however deeply we might think on these problems, the mind has no explanations to offer. It confesses its inability to throw light upon them inasmuch as it finds that its range and grasp are but narrow and limited. Even the very idea it forms of compassion and love seems to be too hazy, volatile and undecisive. So any attempt to solve this supreme question of questions intellectually leads us nowhere. Very often in such a case where does the struggle of the mind end? It not only abandons the riddle as beyond its power to solve, but thereafter dwells in a stupefied consciousness of uncertainty, doubt and despair.

Man is no doubt a thinker, but this thinking faculty is his weakness as much as it is his strength. Thought is capable of presenting us with only one aspect of the infinite Truth. In order to possess a comprehensive knowledge of the Truth we have to transcend thought. The right use we can make of the rare gift of reason is to rise above it.

Now what does the sage, who having transcended the intellect and attained to the wisdom of the eternal, say? He declares: I have discovered the great Cause—the very fountain-head—from which all the visible nature and the powers active in it issue forth. Reaching this Truth, I look on the world manifestation as it stands, without favour or prejudice. I clearly witness in all the transformations taking place before me, in the vast play of nature, the finger of one supreme Being—in the so-called good as well as the evil forces that cause the momentous revolutions in the destinies of the worlds and its beings. My optimistic vision, which beholds Divinity manifest everywhere, is never

marred by even the greatest calamities and disasters that befall the earth and its creatures. God is manipulating the world for a rapidly progressive evolution, towards a higher order of things by means of cataclysmic upheavals in the affairs of men.

Let us face things in the world as they are. Creation and destruction are twin forces that work concomitantly for the control and adjustment of the universe. The world is by nature the play of these opposing forces. You cannot imagine a particular mode of movement alone to prevail at all times. Since every move runs along a circle, there is no such thing as an absolutely straight course in the dynamics of progression. The opposites meet and extremes coalesce. The world of nature is there before us as the combined expression of these conflicting forces which are ever engaged in a hand to hand tussle for overcoming each other. So we have to take the world as it is. It cannot be otherwise than what its innate tendencies and qualities could make it. Stand apart in the stillness and silence of your undying and unchanging Spirit, and play the part which the Divine power active in you and the world has appointed for you. The power in the manifestation and the unaffected immutable Spirit behind it are one in the all-inclusive and all-transcendent Truth. Know this and be free from the bondage of death, fear and sorrow.

To revert to our question: what are we to make of war? In what manner could it prove to be of spiritual value and make for the regeneration of humanity? It is to be admitted that war opens out avenues for the expression of the noblest virtues and traits inherent in the human being. The highest types of the developed human life are the outcome of the crucial and fiery ordeals through which it is made to pass. Under these conditions alone we observe that the intellect and the heart are pitched to the summit of their evolution.

The lustrous glory of the day is there because of its juxtaposition with the gloomy darkness of the night.

The death-dealing din of battle has produced heroes of supernatural valour. The agony of war has given birth to rare angelic souls who wore their lives out, ministering to the disabled, wounded and sick. The levelling hammer of war has brought down proud and insolent authority to the dust. The cries and wails of war have softened the flinty hearts of millions who were steeped in selfish pleasures, purchased from exploited wealth. The universal impact of war has broadened the vision of mankind and awakened in them a spirit of sympathy and love that radiates towards all beings on the globe.

It is war that produced the Gita—a scripture that leads the entrapped soul to the realm of immortality, freedom and peace. It is the cult of hate and murder that brought out in all its unique glory the Divine compassion and mercy of Christ on the cross. In the battle-fields of Arabia rose the Prophet Mohammad. An age of exploitation, cruelty and hypocrisy ushered into the world the great Buddha. Rama shone out as the glorious saviour when he achieved triumph in the conflict with the deadly forces of the demon Ravana. Prahlad, the ideal devotee, was a radiant child sprung from the wrath and ferocity of his tyrant father. From the mire of undeserved tribulation, destitution and suffering came forth the fairest flower of truth—Harischandra. Such instances can be multiplied.

Verily, "out of evil cometh good"—nay evil itself is good, when we perceive that in its womb is nurtured the seed of good. Evil and good have no distinctive marks that distinguish them. It is our labelling them according to the dictates of a narrow vision or individualistic outlook which is the cause of all mischief. Evil is no evil when it is a precursor of good. In fact the so-called evil of every kind that affects human beings is God-ordained, as it is a necessary factor for the soul's march towards its ultimate destiny. Evil can never be counted as evil the moment we discover its right place and use as a vitalizing element of life.

Hence, war, earthquakes, pestilences, floods and such visitations on the earth have their supreme value and significance. They are really Divine acts of mercy, love and compassion. God's law always works for progress, and progress involves construction as well as destruction in the physical nature. Death is not the end of things. Death can be spoken only of the body. The soul is eternal, undying and indestructible. Every death wrung out by the fire of a lofty ideal liberates the soul into the knowledge of its immortality—a kingdom of absolute peace and bliss.

The absolute is alone good. It is a good above all mental standards, and this good or God is at the inception, along the evolution and in the ultimate absorption of all visible objects and things. He is the one Power that creates and destroys—be it men or other creatures, be it on a smaller or a vaster scale. Man can be at peace with God and the world only when he looks upon all things and events as ever bearing the stamp of supreme goodness. The soul's ultimate state of beatitude, freedom and bliss is in this comprehensive knowledge of God and nature and its workings.

COSMIC MYSTERY

The infinite power that controls the destinies of the universe and the countless worlds and creatures in it is a deep mystery. This great secret has baffled the intellect of the keenest thinker and eluded the cognisance of the greatest scientist. The laws that govern the universe do not seem to synchronise with even the most intelligent human conceptions of justice, law and order. To the bewildered man of the pragmatic mind, the workings of the universe appear to be arbitrary and chaotic. This is so because the practical man evaluates the changes and movements in the world-phenomena from his intensely individualistic and therefore circumscribed vision. Whenever a sudden change is observed

in the workings of nature, affecting humanity, his first and only concern is to test how it touches him individually as a human unit. If he finds that the occurrence upsets the order of humanity, as conceived by him, he is disturbed and, more often than not, utterly confused. He questions, "Why is this and wherefore?" and comes to deny or doubt the existence of a guiding divine principle underlying all life and manifestation. He thinks that the universe is only a nightmare of wild and lunatic forces that clash and interclash without plan or purpose. He arrives at this conclusion, because he is groping only on the surface for solving the riddle of the universe. He does not probe deeper into the realm of the Spirit, for he would not believe in such a realm. This is so far as the rational man is concerned.

Now what does the man of intuition and inspiration, whose experience of the ultimate Reality that lies beneath the surface of things is as solid and actual as—nay more solid and more real than—the experience of the man of intellect, declare? He definitely says that the universe is ever controlled by an invincible, inscrutable and omnipresent Divine power which is immortal, all wise and all blissful. To these sages the entire universe stands revealed as an open book. They behold it as nothing but an ordered and harmonious cosmos. They see before their universalised vision the unfoldment of grandiose, cosmic phenomena, evolved or projected forth from one eternal essence of Truth. As the single seed sprouts and grows into a variegated tree, so from the one immutable, infinite and original source has come forth the countless worlds and its creatures that make up the universe.

These sages, illumined with wisdom, proclaim that the worlds are God Himself in manifestation and the entire aspect of it His Lila or play. Creation, preservation and destruction constitute the movement of this play.

If the rationalist or the scientist, who relies solely on the conclusions of his intellectual and sense perception or on his observation and research, would only, with as much zeal and concentration as he employs in his quest for the secrets of mere external nature, attempt to dive into the depths of his being and discover the root power from which his intellect, sense and all movements of the physical nature derive their animation and energy, he could unfailingly solve the riddle that perplexes him.

What is the condition for this great vision and great attainment? A consciousness of unity with all life and all objects about us, far and near, is the condition. The separative vision of the soul must sublimate into the cosmic and all-pervading Spirit. The cramped understanding must expand and embrace infinity. The individual should be transformed into the universal.

At present we are face to face with the havoc brought about by the repeated and destructive shocks of earthquakes in Bihar, Orissa, Nepal and other surrounding provinces of Northern India. Difficult indeed for the rationalist to reconcile these workings of God with His attributes of love, mercy and peace. Still, the mystic sage maintains that it is all God's work and all for good. The path of salvation, i.e. the realization of freedom lies through suffering and tribulation. The sufferer is blessed, and he who is touched by the woes of the sufferer and thus sacrifices his energy and wealth for his relief is also blessed. For, suffering and sacrifice softens the heart of man, and frees it from pride, passion and ignorance, the essential thing needed for his liberation from the thralldom of the individual sense and its fetters.

In the absolute sense, God's acts pertaining to creation, preservation and destruction do not come under the classification of good and evil, yet in so far as His dispensations tend to revive the deadened human soul and awaken it to the consciousness of his inherent

Divinity, God is indeed a most loving, benevolent and gracious parent of us all.

Therefore, the suffering that calls for and receives Divine assistance, and the sacrifice born of a compassionate heart, revealing in acts of succour, relief and service, gloriously mingle, and realize the supreme unity in the infinity of Divine love and peace.

INDIA—THE HEALER

We observe that the world is passing through a period of acute unrest and anguish. Unequal distribution of wealth, ruthless exploitation of weaker peoples, the problem of unemployment and the resultant poverty and want, on the one hand, and short-sighted policies, insensate ambition for material power and glory, unbending pride coupled with lust and greed on the other, have brought untold misery in the world. The dread of war is thrilling the mentality of people everywhere, as though the world is again placed on the summit of a volcano. Men of narrow and selfish vision are put at the helm of affairs and are called upon to determine the destiny of nations. Under these conditions a mighty spiritual force, gifted with a universal vision, can alone save the situation. Such a spiritual power can rise up in no other land, on the face of the earth, than in India which is the home of wisdom and spirituality.

We hear already resounding in the air the wail of helpless and starving millions for relief and liberation. Another war would spell the destruction once again of the tender and growing life of evolving humanity—a catastrophe which would be averted by every means available both in the moral and physical planes of human life. Whatever remedy is employed, real good can ensue only when such appliance is based upon the highest spiritual experiences of man.

The voice of the Sages and Avatars of the world must speak forth from the lips of an awakened India.

India alone can pour the soothing showers of love and goodwill on the troubled earth and found upon it the kingdom of true harmony and peace.

INDIA AND RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

India is a land of wisdom, because it is the land of sages and saints. These sages, having plumbed the depths of human experience, and transcending even the highest flights of the intellect, have attained the loftiest vision of life, viz. the great and imperishable Reality. The cultural values, in the varied fields of human activity, have been determined and worked by these sages from the summit of this spiritual experience. They propound that the variegated nature and all creatures and lives teeming in it have their beauty, colour and glory only when viewed from the underlying truth of their existence which is one and eternal. They taught that the mere surface view of nature creates for man the illusions of fear, sorrow and death, and so he is asked to pierce through the apparent veil of the phenomenal life and manifestation, and reaching the depths to mingle with the supreme Light which lies at their basis. To behold the world and the universe outwards from this vision of the source, is to solve the great problem of life and death, is to know and realize a state of immortality. In the Upanishads, in the Gita and in the teachings of all the great Teachers and Mystics of all religions in the world, we see that this immortal Reality, which is the supreme goal of human life and endeavour, is held forth as the highest attainment. The great Masters, who illumined and are still illumining the world, are indeed the veritable suns of perfect spiritual experience and realization.

The world, as it is seen, has been rent with strife, dissension, war and exploitation, because this supreme Power who is the master and controller of the world is

either forgotten or denied by a vast majority of mankind.

Our sages enunciated a principle of life and conduct based upon the central aim of attaining liberation and immortality. It is evident that where this aim is lost sight of, there man flounders on the surface, and adjusts and readjusts his ways and conduct arriving at no satisfactory results. If life is allowed to express itself, compatible with the inspiration handed down from the ancient Rishis and the Teachers of the world, it will be fully informed with a creative genius for producing works of enduring value and surpassing beauty and excellence in the fields of art, sculpture, poetry, heroism, literature and industry. They hold that imitation is the subversion of genius. Real beauty of expression of life-principle is in originality. Originality has its root in the inspiration from the eternal Truth of the individual existence.

So for the harmonious working of human life, in all its varied departments of activities, the first and foremost discovery for man should be the source of his being and world existence. And this source is God. The mechanical and soulless life of humanity has given birth to ugly developments such as colossal engines for the destruction of life, and mechanical contrivances for the purpose of exploitation. Thus selfishness and greed have created chaos and disorder, and the beauty and glory of human life have been marred and distorted.

The world at present has assumed a fierce face, exhibiting all the low passions that make for war, tyranny, oppression and the resultant misery. The situation appears to be quite grave and serious. But, if the world is awakened by the master-voice of God to the consciousness of its unity and harmony, founded upon the knowledge of the great immortal Soul dwelling in its heart, it is bound to shake off the arch-enemies—lust, greed and wrath—that have taken possession of

it. The real peace and goodwill amongst humanity lies in this way and in no other.

Now, even on the question of accepting God as the one God of all religions and peoples of the world, there is division created by the so-called followers of the great founders of the different religions of the world. Here a clash is set up in the minds of the followers with regard to the personalities representing the different faiths. Let us not blind ourselves to the fact that the great God or Reality manifest in these great personalities is the same one immortal Truth who inspired them with the mission of uniting mankind under the banner of one Divine Parent of the universe. This Divine Parent, as the master and controller of the world, and in His intimate relations with all beings and creatures of the world, is infinite love, power, compassion, mercy and goodness. The great Teachers, one and all without exception, are the very embodiments of these Divine virtues or attributes. What they teach is that every human being has within him, inherent or latent, a Divinity formed of these very exalted virtues. What they insist upon is, by proper discipline of thought and action, to reveal this glorious Truth within them and thus shed the light of it to express itself in all the activities of life for the cultural, moral and spiritual advancement of the world. Instead of imbibing the essence of the Master's teachings, man, holding up the personality of the Master as an outside ideal only to be adored and worshipped from a distance, creates an exclusive and segregated creed. Instead of bearing within his heart the adored ideal, so that he can absorb it into his being and thereby adjust his life and conduct in the spirit and light in which it was lived by his great Master, he identifies himself with a small group of his leanings and belief and, setting up a wall of separation, raises a spirit of strife and discord with the rest of humanity. Truth is both personal and impersonal. Truth is personal in so far as it works in the movements

of individual life and the world nature, but it is also impersonal as the eternal basis or foundation of this pure and spontaneous overflow of life and manifestation. Personal is lived in the eternal now, in actual expression and action—ever based upon the impersonal.

To know or attain God through Christ means to become Christ himself in his pure and glorious life—to possess his heart of infinite love for all mankind; to hold Krishna as the supreme ideal is to become Krishna himself in his infinite vision, power, greatness and humility; to accept Mohammed as the prophet is to become Mohammed himself in his heart of peace, compassion and mercy; to look upon Buddha as the master is to become Buddha himself in his enlightenment, in his pure and untainted love for all and in his absolute purity; so it is with all the other spiritual personalities, held in adoration and worship by their respective followers. If religion is understood in this sense, religious strife that is rife in the world will disappear, and all the creeds, cults and races will stand together beneath the flag of one God of the world, and work up their common destiny along the lines of mutual love, service and co-operation, and thus bring peace, harmony and happiness in the world.

The outstanding feature in the lives of great Teachers and Sages, and the insistent voice of inspiration from the past and present of India is renunciation and self-sacrifice. When humanity has discovered that the soul of all creatures and things are one in God, then selfishness and greed will vanish, like darkness at the rising of the sun. The unity now realized will be stable and permanent. Any experiment of equality founded upon mere superficial adjustments is doomed to failure. Treaties, conferences, leagues and mechanical constitutions are such futile attempts. In short, it is God and Godmen alone who can lead mankind to the goal of real unity, peace, harmony and goodwill in this world.

VIRTUE OF CONFLICT

It is said that every turn of activity in nature has its use. Even the most condemnatory attitude of thought and action of man seems to fit into a proper place in the economy of nature contributing to the evolution of harmony in the world. This conclusion is arrived at by the optimistic philosophers who possess a comprehensive wisdom gained through a deep insight into the mysteries of life. For, a robust optimism is the outcome of the perception of good in all the so-called unpleasant and undesirable conditions and events in the world.

The challenging clash of beliefs, opinions and faiths has seized the spirit of the times. In all the departments of life and in all the spheres of human activity, we are confronted with the rising clouds of the dust of controversy. We are here concerned with that particular field in which religious beliefs are waging war against each other. Great quantities of ink and paper are freely brought into play in the work of mutual recrimination and criticism.

Some religious believers, who profess to be the followers of a great and illumined Personality, are busily engaged in flinging, in season and out of season, shafts of scorn and carping criticism at the equally accredited and revered Leaders of the other faiths. However uncompromising on the surface the gesture of these militant religionists may appear to be, if we cast our thought right through to the hidden good, we cannot fail to observe that the controversial spirit tends to make the world better than what it is.

In fact, the role of a critic is more intimately related to his own merciless self-examination than to the correction or edification of his opponents. It is like an electric torch having the bulb and the lens at both ends. Whilst, ablaze with light, he seeks through the one end of the torch to scrutinise the object in front of it, the

other end of the torch throws at the same moment a rush, perhaps, of a more furious light on the scrutiniser himself.

The extension of the gaze of a person too long on outside things inevitably offers an incentive to the withdrawal of it in order to behold himself as he is. The great Teachers, in all ages and in all climes, have taught mankind to turn its vision inward to the glory of the Truth—the immortal root of its being. The swing of the pendulum is always from one extremity to the other. So it is with the mind. Till the inner vision is gained a man will ever be engaged in the task of condemning and finding fault with everyone in the world who does not see eye to eye with his own predilections, beliefs and opinions. This nature in man is more clearly evident when he deals with his own religious faith and compares it with that of another.

The Christian says that Christ is the only right ideal and that Christ alone is the way to salvation. The Buddhist exhorts that unless a man accepts Buddha as his spiritual liberator there can be no Nirvana for man. The Mohammedan would have it that Mohammed is the only prophet who came to the world to lead mankind to God. Again a Hindu would proclaim that the devotee of his ideal God—Rama, Krishna or Shiva—can alone transcend Maya and attain immortality, peace and freedom. So also the case with the followers of other faiths.

Religious controversies are sifting matters by a process of elimination. All the dross is thus brought out to the surface allowing the essence of truth to settle down to the bottom in its pristine purity. By standing apart from the clutches of this wrangle, one could clearly perceive that, in the essentials, all religious Teachers agree and put before the world the same highest principle or truth of existence—God.

Two sticks when rubbed against each other produce fire and the resulting fire burns them up, and the ashes of both mingle together into an indistinguishable mass.

So also the narrow religious ideals, now in mutual clash and conflict, stand as they do merely upon non-essentials and distorted interpretations, will by mutual friction nullify each other, thus revealing to the heart of man the one true light of the absolute Reality which can be reached only when the struggling human soul transcends its own self-imposed limitations of creeds and religions.

Let us not forget that the culmination of all spiritual endeavour lies in the attainment of the Divine life, by turning the thought, word and deed of the individual to the eternal and cosmic music of God's own existence, both as manifest and unmanifest, personal and impersonal—the supreme Godhead of all religions, nations and peoples on the earth.

BASIS OF TRUE LIFE AND ACTION

The aim of life is to realize Truth, i.e., to attain perfect freedom and happiness. Truth is ever free, and its nature is pure bliss and peace. Truth is God. He is the eternal Spirit, changeless and infinite, and the universe is His revelation in which His supreme power or will is ever at work in all movements, changes and activities. To realize Truth is to become conscious of our oneness with the Omnipresent, eternal Spirit, and then perform all actions in complete submission to His Shakti or will.

Ignorance, having made us identify ourselves with one particular form of His manifestation, i.e., our body, has involved us into actions egoistic and selfish. Actions thus done, from the narrow view of the individual as against that of the universal, have been the cause of bondage, since they act and react on us whirling us in an endless cycle of births and deaths. Right knowledge alone can destroy ignorance, liberate us from the bondage of action and set the soul free. Knowledge eliminates the ego, and the individual consciousness is transformed into the universal consciousness. All our actions will now be done in the freedom of the Spirit from the

universal standpoint, and therefore for the welfare of humanity at large. Selfishness, greed and lust have then no place in our life; death has no longer any terror for us; and bondage of future births is once for all snapped to pieces. This supreme liberation, which is the goal of life, means the realization of God or our immortality.

The object of this essay is to place before the reader as to how this goal is reached by following the path of action.

"What is right action? What is wrong action? On these questions even the sages are perplexed" says Sri Krishna. Gita stands unrivalled in the world's religious literature in that it propounds the right standard of action for the seeker after liberation as also for the liberated.

How are we then to act here in order that we might attain to a knowledge which would destroy our ignorance and enable us to realize our free immortal nature? Nishkama Karma, i. e., actions done without expectation of any reward, prompted by pure love and compassion towards all beings, tends to purify our vision and diminish the ego-sense. Here, no injury is inflicted or sought to be inflicted on anybody, violently or non-violently, be he friend or foe. For, any action, performed for the satisfaction of the ego, binds the actor to his action, whilst, any work done for the spiritual elevation of the doer in a spirit of Nishkama purifies and awakens the mind to a knowledge of the real peace and joy of his immortal being, thus breaking the fetters of Karma. So the aim of action should never be for the material glory, power or riches, be it in regard to the individual or the nation, but for the attainment of real peace and freedom.

Right action, as it springs from the fountain of love and compassion in our heart, leads us to the understanding of our unity with all beings and creatures in the world. Love is a great leveller, because it grants us equal vision and the consciousness of our all-pervading immortal nature. Love is a positive virtue. It seeks

not its good at the expense of others. Love is ever, brave, tolerant, forgiving and self-sacrificing. Love is always patient, and never grumbles or blames anybody. It is gentle and ever willing to suffer for the good of others. Love makes for knowledge and freedom, harmony and peace.

Wrong action has its roots in the ego-sense, i. e., in the sense of our separation from our fellow-beings and the world. It is prompted by hate and greed — cause of all quarrels and wars. Hate is destructive in its nature. It inflicts pain and misery on others for its own advancement. It is cowardly and shortlived. Hate is harsh, unforgiving, impatient, and envious. Hate makes for ignorance and bondage, discord and chaos.

In the light of the above observations let us review the present situation in India in particular and the world in general. The so-called national consciousness is nothing but a magnified ego, and so action done for its sake is based upon the augmented greed and hate of the nation. Any action which aims at the mere material glory and power of one nation, as against or in competition with the other nations, is not the right way.

India's fallen condition is India's own making. Her internal differences and dissensions are the sole causes of her weakness and misery. Her ignorance is at the root of all her evils. To throw the blame for it upon any foreign power or nation and fight with it violently or non-violently is perfectly improper. The way of Karma is inexorable. What we sowed in the past we are reaping in the present. The apparently external foe is only an instrument in the hands of our own Karma. He is not to blame. To look upon him as our enemy and seek by any action to pull him down, violently or non-violently, is to forge fresh fetters of evil Karma which in its turn will bear bitter fruit for us in the future. The remedy lies in doing such actions in a manner as would go towards our self-purification,

so that we may be ultimately freed from the meshes of Karma. Love, friendliness and forgiveness towards the so-called enemy, and a serious attempt to shed the unnatural differences and quarrels amongst ourselves is the way. Five-fold is the cause for these differences and quarrels.

The tyranny of caste.

The cupidity and greed of our tradesmen.

Ignorance of true religion.

Extortion by our own people from the poor.

Ruinous social customs and ceremonies.

What is true of the individual is true of the nation. As the salvation of the individual depends upon his internal purity and external friendliness towards all beings, so also the national salvation depends upon the national purity and unity, and its feelings of goodwill and love for all other nations of the world.

Our course is straight and clear. Let us purify ourselves by cultivating forgiveness, compassion and love, and do all actions in a spirit of perfect Nishkama for the realization of our eternal harmony, unity and peace. The suffering that is now on us be utilised in awakening in us a spirit of fearlessness and selfless service, so that our composite life may engender world unity and world peace. Let us give up greed, selfishness and lust for material enjoyments by eradicating the seed of discontent within, and stop all actions entered upon or about to be entered upon to fight out an imaginary foe without us.

If we free our minds from distrust and hate against the foreign powers, and love them in spite of their tyranny and exploitation, God, the supreme dispenser of all things, can either change their heart, or can make us instruments for their destruction—the fitness for which solely rests upon our purity and unity. Now, the action is done not from the lower plane of the ego, prompted by greed or hate, but on the universal basis of righteousness and truth. When we are called upon

thus to fight in the utter freedom of the soul, the action, however terrible, cannot bind us. Our goal is freedom and peace, and not the perishable kingdoms of the earth. While the Indians are united in the oneness of the Spirit by realizing internal unity and harmony, and stand upon the rock of righteousness, if then, any foe, external or internal, seeks to disturb their peace, it is theirs to fight violently or non-violently for the establishment of world peace and harmony, and for the destruction of evil and the evil-doers. The Divine Shakti ever awaits to be set free in a united people. So if time demands it, awake and stand united in the glory and supremacy of your immortal existence and then, for the sake of and in the name of universal peace, boldly raise the standard of revolt against all that is low, narrow, selfish and tyrannous in the world. In a righteous war of this kind, against the evil forces of the world, let all the willing nations be openly invited to join. Let us destroy the demon of pride and injustice, jealousy and hatred that hold sway over the heart of nations. The movement be for world peace and equality.

Any action marked by passion and greed can never be for the uplift of others. It is possible we may deceive ourselves into thinking that we have launched into action, with the purest of motives, i.e., for the good of all, while the basest passions may still be subtly actuating all our deeds. The political goal of independence is a western coined expression. It stands for selfishness and isolation. The goal should be absolute freedom founded upon universal love and equality, and the standard for action should be nothing short of the universal Truth.

GLOSSARY

Ahimsa	..	Non-violence
Anand	..	Divine bliss
Asuric Shakti	..	Demoniac power
Atman	..	Self
Avataras	..	Incarnations of God
Bhagwan	..	God
Bhajan	..	Devotional practice
Bhakta	..	Devotee
Bhakti	..	Devotion
Brahma	..	Creator (first of the trinity)
Brahmachari	..	First of the spiritual orders or he who observes the vow of continence
Brahman	..	Impersonal God
Buddhi	..	Intellect
Daivi-Shakti	..	Divine power
Darshan	..	Visit or vision
Dharma	..	Righteous law of nature
Dwandwas	..	Pairs of opposites, such as pleasure or pain, etc.
Guna	..	Mode or quality of nature
Gurudev	..	Spiritual teacher
Jiva	..	Individual soul
Jivanmukta	..	Embodied liberated soul
Kambal	..	Woollen blanket
Jnana	..	Divine knowledge
Karma	..	Action
Karma Yogi	..	Divine worker
Kirtan	..	Devotional music
Lila	..	Play
Lokasangraha	..	Unity of mankind
Mahashakti	..	Almighty power
Mahatmas	..	Great souls

Mantram	..	Incantation
Maya	..	Illusive power of God
Moksha	..	Liberation
Nirguna-Brahman		Impersonal God
Nirvana	..	Liberation
Nishkama	..	Free from desire
Parabhakti	..	Supreme devotion
Paramshiva	..	Supreme Godhead
Prakriti	..	Nature
Pranayama	..	Breath control
Prem	..	Love
Purushottama	..	Supreme Godhead
Rishis	..	Sages
Sadhaka	..	Seeker after Truth
Sadhana	..	Spiritual discipline
Samadhi	..	Saint's tomb or spiritual trance
Sanyasi	..	Religious mendicant
Satchitanand	..	Absolute existence, knowledge and bliss
Sat-nam	..	Eternal Name
Sat-sung	..	Association with saints
Satwa-Guna	..	Quality of harmony
Satwic	..	Relating to the quality of harmony
Shakti	..	God's Power
Shiva	..	Destroyer (third of the trinity)
Sloka	..	Verse
Swaraj	..	Independent rule
Tamo and Rajo Gunas	..	Dark and passionate qualities
Upasana	..	Devotional practice
Vairagya	..	Dispassion
Vibhuti	..	A manifestation of Divine Power
Vina	..	A stringed instrument of music
Vishnu	..	Protector (second of the trinity)
Yoga	..	Union with God
Yoga Maya	..	Illusive power of the Divine Mother
Yogi	..	God-united soul

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