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THE RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD

THE
RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD

VOLUME II

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INSTITUTE OF CULTURE
CALCUTTA
1938

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NOTE ON THE PRONUNCIATION OF TRANSLITERATED WORDS IN SANSKRIT AND OTHER INDIAN LANGUAGES

a stands for अ, and sounds like *o* in *come*.
ā ,, ,, आ ,, ,, ,, *a* in *far*.
i ,, ,, इ ,, ,, ,, *i* in *kin*.
ī ,, ,, ई ,, ,, ,, *ee* in *feel*.
u ,, ,, उ ,, ,, ,, *u* in *full*.
ū ,, ,, ऊ ,, ,, ,, *oo* in *cool*.
ṛi ,, ,, ऋ may be pronounced like *ri*.
e ,, ,, ए and sounds like *e* in *bed*, only longer.
o ,, ,, ओ ,, ,, ,, *o* in *note*.
' (apostrophe) stands for *s* (elided *a*).
ch stands for च and sounds like *ch* in *church*.
ṅ ,, ,, ङ (guttural), and may be pronounced like *n*.
ñ ,, ,, ञ (palatal), is like French *gn*, and may be pronounced like *n*.
ṇ ,, ,, ण (lingual), and may be pronounced like *n*.
ṭ and ḍ stand for ट and ड and are hard like *t* and *d* in English.
t ,, d ,, ,, त and द and are soft as in French.
ḷ stands for ळ (Tamil ள) and sounds like *l* in *all*.
v ,, ,, व and sounds like *w*.
ś ,, ,, श (palatal sibilant) and sounds like *sh*.
sh ,, ,, ष (lingual sibilant) and may be pronounced as in English.

Such of the remaining consonants as appear in the transliterations sound as in English.

kh (ख), gh (घ), chh (छ), jh (झ), ṭh (ठ), ḍh (ढ), th (थ), dh (ध), ph (फ), bh (भ) are the simple sounds *plus* an aspiration.

ṁ stands for ं (*anusvāra*) and sounds like *ng*.
ḥ ,, ,, ः (*visarga*).

Diacritical marks have not generally been used in the names of persons and institutions belonging to recent times as well as in well-known geographical names.

The following examples are taken from the book itself:—

Veda, *aham, panthā, sannyāsa; idam, ishṭam, jīva, Īśa; upasampadā, mukti, rūpa, sūtra; Ṛig-Veda, ṛishi, netra, Kena; moksha, Om; yo'rjuna, so'ham; archanā, chitta; liṅga,* Śaṅkarāchārya; *jñāna, pañchajanāḥ;* Kṛishṇa, *taṇhā; viśishṭā-dvaita,* Dhṛitarāshṭra; *Muṇḍaka;* Sītā, *Taittirīya,* Devī, Dānavas; Āṇḍāḷ; *vidyā, Vārāhī;* Śiva, Śaraṇadeva; *Shaḍ-saṁvāda, viśesha; saṁsāra, Īśāvāsyamidaṁ sarvam; śāntih, duḥkha,* Sāṁkhya, *khaḍga;* Dīrghatama, *Digha Nikāya; ichhā-śakti, Chhāndogya; Jhāyā, Majjhima Nikāya; Adhishṭhātrī, Kaṭha;* Viruḍhaka; Maithilī, *Atharva-Veda; ādhāra, adhyāya; phala, phaṇī; bhakti, abhāva.*

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Ramakrishna and Vivekananda



Swami Vivekananda
At the Parliament of Religions at Chicago (1893)

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND THE RELIGION OF MAN

SWAMI ADYANANDA

Sometime Representative of the Ramakrishna Mission in South and East Africa

Through the great achievements of science, the world has become a small place today. Nations with different traditions, histories, ideals and standards have become next-door neighbours, and naturally thinking people are asking whether there can be a universal religion. I think there can be. But religion, to be universal, must not be uniform or standardized. It should be a comprehensive one, which will incorporate within itself the best ideals of the different peoples. In the midst of its diversities there should be a harmonizing unity. Such a religion I designate as ' the religion of man.' Teachings and experiences of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda lead us to its conception and I shall point out to you some of its salient features. Let us try to trace the origin of religion and see its psychological basis.

If we go into the history of religion, we find that it started when man had begun to ponder deeply over the mysteries of human existence. After serious thinking some philosophers have observed that ' the origin of the world, i.e. its primary creative impulse, is war, conflict and confusion.' One of the Greek philosophers has said that war is the mother of all human existence. Others have held that the world was moving in gradual evolution to higher and higher stages. While still others have opined that the world is only a cycle of mechanical forces and its final destiny is self-destruction and human life has no ultimate goal. Then in the midst of this grim picture of despair, has come forth the voice of man, I mean, the voice from the deepest layer of the human soul, seeking a more fundamental solution of his existence. To meet this demand of the human soul, we find that there have appeared in the world's history great spiritual personages whose messages have taught us to find a solution of the problem of

human existence through ' life and living ' rather than through mere intellectual speculation. It is, to be very brief, the message of the spiritualization of life. We may make an intellectual effort to solve the problem of existence, we may develop science through our knowledge of the objective world, but unless and until we see that the fundamental solution of life's problems comes only through 'spiritualization', these problems will ever remain unsolved. What is the meaning of spiritualization? It means the inward march to experience the Divine Reality. This inwardness of the religious man makes his ideals and outlook in life different from those of the man without religion.

It is not possible for me within such a short time to tell you how religious consciousness of man has grown from its primitive stage till it found its consummation in the union of the human soul with the Divine, but I shall point out to you some of the fundamental differences between the religious and the irreligious. The ideal of the one says, ' The world is for me:' but the ideal of the other says, ' Man lives best when he lives for humanity and considers it a privilege to give himself but by bit for his brothers' (Applause). The irreligious monster-man says, ' An eye for an eye ; a tooth for a tooth:' but the man of religion says, ' It is the most heroic feature of a man's life to pardon those who have put him on the cross and thus obey the Divine law of sacrifice and renunciation.'

How are we to develop the spirit of sacrifice and renunciation in practical life? Well, we can do it when we see the deeper ultimate purpose behind all our activities and read their spiritual meaning. Work has no meaning unless it teaches us balance and gradually leads us inward and helps us to develop introspection. Man is not a biological product alone ; he has innate spiritual greatness. But that is somehow lost and he is a slave of circumstances. *Religion in its universal significance teaches man to regain his lost freedom and Divine Heritage.*

These are the general principles of all religions. A man may belong to any church, denomination or creed, but if his attitude towards life is one of expansion and if his consciousness marches upward, then he belongs to the religion of man.

Differences of doctrines and dogmas, temples and churches, books and rituals, have only secondary importance to a man whose soul is hungry for spiritual food.

It has been said that religions have been disintegrating forces in human society, and looking at religion from the angle of its effect on human history, many people have lost faith in all religions and are strongly in favour of banishing religion and God from this world. These anti-religious people point out to us the negative results of religion. One can understand the viewpoint of such people. When religion is entirely identified with theological dogmas and meaningless rituals, it certainly narrows down the human mind and instead of helping man towards higher spiritual evolution, it becomes the cause of disintegration and hatred.

Here we find the great contribution which Sri Ramakrishna, the modern prophet of religious synthesis, has made. He has made a bold declaration to the world. By realizing himself the truths of different religions he has challenged those narrow, dogmatic ideas which the sectarian ministers of all religions have preached and which have created dissensions amongst the followers of different faiths.

Apparently there are so many contradictions in the different religions, philosophies and rituals of the world. This is the viewpoint of the orthodox and fanatical people. They say other religions than their own contain only half-truths. In the medieval age, there were fights in the name of religion and all diabolical acts were perpetrated. Now the modern man, with the widening of his vision, admits that there may be half-truths in other religions, but holds that his religion is the only true religion, because it holds the monopoly of all divine revelations. But are not these dogmatic assertions foolish? Sri Ramakrishna experienced in his life that all religions ultimately lead to the same goal. What is the meaning of synthesis of religions? Is it a mere pious dream or is it a mere philosophical speculation? Religion, finally, is response of the human personality to one fundamental, infinite, spiritual reality. Man, in search of that truth, has visualized and experienced it variously at different times. So, those who

say that their religion is the only true revelation of the infinite truth, are limiting the limitless and only expressing the narrowness of their outlook. They cannot see that there may be different snapshots of the same reality at different times. When we realize the fundamentality of religion, we can understand the meaning of synthesis. When a person has really understood Sri Ramakrishna he will neither claim that his religion is the only true religion nor curse or damn others' religions. Sri Ramakrishna was a unique personality with full divine manifestation. I wish this Parliament of Religions, organized in memory of that great personality, will impress this truth of the synthesis of all religions on every person who has attended its sessions. In this critical time of the world's history, we need it for so many reasons. May Sri Ramakrishna illumine our mortal vision and lead us from darkness to light!

VIVEKANANDA AND SOCIAL SERVICE

ADVOCATE SANTOSH KUMAR BASU, M.A., B.L.
Ex-Mayor, Corporation of Calcutta

I consider it a great honour and privilege to be called upon to take part in the deliberations of this great and august assembly. From far and near great scholars, thinkers and seekers after truth have come to our beloved city and gathered under the shadow of this Parliament of Religions, the shadow of a mighty tree with its diverse branches, all drawing their sap from one common nature, all trying to inculcate and illustrate the one Divine Truth, all drawing their sustenance embedded in the gems of one common spirituality. It is only fit and proper that in the programme of this Parliament, a place should have been found for the great and all-absorbing subject of " Social Service," and with whose name should that subject be linked up, but with the name of Swami Vivekananda, to whom service of the poor became a burning faith, and who had identified the cause of humanity with the worship of the Divine Being? Those of you who have studied the life and

speeches of Swami Vivekananda are aware that after the Paramahamsa had departed from this life, Swami Vivekananda, in the course of the great and mighty tour that he undertook throughout the length and breadth of Hindustan, came down and reached the shores of the Indian Ocean at Cape Comorin and took his seat near the limitless sea. It was on that holy of holy spots that the great inspiration dawned upon him. When he looked upon the plains and across the mighty waters, the great pain and remorse and agony of the miserable millions of India suddenly dawned upon his soul. He had come into direct personal contact with the down-trodden masses of his own country and he had seen the misery, the poverty which was one long, long story of their lives from birth to death. He had come into direct personal touch with the millions of his countrymen who did not know what was meant by two meals a day. He had intimately known the ignorance, the misery and all the untold sufferings which were the ordinary lot of his countrymen. And the idealist and the dreamer and the mystic had turned to be a practical sociologist, and the fiery partriot in him had given place to a cogent and clear thinker on the poverty of India. It was there at Kanyā-Kumārī that the mission, which he undertook of his own accord in later years, suddenly dawned upon him, —that he would go to the West and find out the ways and means of improving the lot of his countrymen. And it was there that he conceived the great idea of rearing a great Brotherhood or Order of social service which would undertake the relieving of the miseries of his countrymen. His letters written from America reveal his burning desire to serve his countrymen. His was a mighty call and it was he who has left this great heritage, this great gift, the Gospel of Service, to his countrymen in all walks of public life. Consider our political situation now, and you will find that the great gift, the great heritage left by Swami Vivekananda has been utilized by our Indian National Congress in the adoption of its constructive programme. It was Swami Vivekananda who chalked out his mighty scheme of social service for all workers in the public cause, and it was he who inspired the idea of social service which is now a living faith with the Congress. It was he who declared, " Let each of us pray day

and night for the down-trodden millions in India who are held fast by poverty, priest-craft and tyranny,—pray day and night for them, I care to preach religion to them more than to the high and the rich. I am no metaphysician, no philosopher, nay, no saint. But I am poor, I love the poor. I see what they call the poor of this country,[1] and how many there are who feel for them! What an immense difference in India! Who feels there for the two hundred millions of men and women sunken in poverty and ignorance? Where is the way out? Who feels for them? They cannot find light or education. Who will bring light to them—who will travel from door to door bringing education to them? Let these people be your God—think of them, work for them, pray for them incessantly—the Lord will show you the way." Mark these words. And again: "Him I call a *mahātman* whose heart bleeds for the poor, otherwise he is a *durātman*."[2]

Therefore, ladies and gentlemen, I say, the Swami's great ideal of social service has influenced our political life, ideals and methods to a very great extent. As I have stated, the constructive programme of the Indian National Congress, which fills a large place in the public life of India today, is a direct gift from Swami Vivekananda. Here again the ideal of the late Desabandhu Chittaranjan Das is seen. You may remember that Desabandhu chalked out the constructive programme for the Corporation of Calcutta. And in that programme what were the items taking the foremost place?—medical relief for the poor, free primary education for the poor, improving the housing conditions of the poor, improving the material conditions of the poor, so far as it lay in the power of the Corporation and so on. Out of eight or nine items in the programme, as many as six or seven were directed to the amelioration of the sufferings of the people. I am here only to remind you that the great Vivekananda was not merely a preacher, was not only a great spiritual thinker, but that his work has coloured our whole being. Take the Ramakrishna Mission which he has left behind him. What is the work its missionaries are doing? Whenever and wherever there is an earthquake, or

[1] The United States of America.
[2] Swami Vivekananda, *Complete Works*, Vol. V (Epistles I), p. 45.

outbreak of famine, or any other calamity, they rush to the succour of the poor, they rush to the relief of humanity irrespective of caste, creed or colour. They are at the door of the afflicted, carrying the message of hope and peace. I had occasion three years ago to come into direct official touch with them in connection with the Bihar Earthquake Relief. The Mayor's Fund of Calcutta took interest in the Ramakrishna Mission as an effective organization for rendering prompt methodical relief to the deserving in the afflicted areas. The Mission was already in the field of work and its workers were operating throughout the affected area. A sum of Rs. 60,000 from the Mayor's Fund was contributed, which enabled the Mission to meet more than half the total expenditure. The result was immediate and most satisfactory. The Mission undertook the burden most cheerfully and conducted relief in the different centres of Bihar. Not a word of complaint was addressed to us from any quarter. That —the Gospel of active service—I say, is the great heritage left by the Swami and it is but proper that this afternoon we are paying our humble homage to the memory of Swami Vivekananda, the greatest disciple of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa.

RAMAKRISHNA'S GOSPEL OF HARMONY

PROF. BATUK NATH BHATTACHARYA
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The celebration of the birth-centenary of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa all over the world is a unique event in history. There is perhaps no other man of religion of recorded memory within a century of whose advent races and countries widely different so enthusiastically joined to honour his name and to reverently study his life and message. The way to Dakshineswar, the hallowed seat of his sainthood, is like the Road to Rome and is worn with the footsteps of pilgrims that come from the ends of the Earth.

'Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet' and yet today Jesus of Nazareth sways a third of the population of the globe. The highest

idea in spiritual harmony that bids fair to be an international cult is the gift of India which stands perhaps lowest in the scale of nationhood. How to explain this paradox? No doubt science has contracted both time and space and made the world a much smaller place than it ever before was. No doubt also an age of journalism has perfected the arts of publicity. But publicity like the microphone only multiplies echoes. It does not generate the original fact. And the fact of supreme moment is the advent of Sri Ramakrishna in the damp low-lying fever-stricken plains of Bengal, in an obscure hamlet, in a family that lacked high social status, the distinction of learning and the advantages of wealth, and this at a time when the rest of the world was forging breathlessly ahead in the technical and liberal arts, in scientific knowledge, in commerce and conquest.

For, indeed, in Europe and America the glory of the 19th century lay in the progress of science, in mechanical inventions, in social and political reorganization, in colonial expansion and industrial prosperity. The genius of the West moved mainly on the practical and the intellectual plane. Impact with reason and science shook the old bases of faith. The church and particularly the Romish had to fight hard to maintain its hold and for self-defence had often to make compromises with science and liberalism and even to borrow the weapons of its adversaries.

And the religious movements that occurred had also an immediate purpose of utility—setting the household of Christian faith in order, disciplining and knitting together the clergy to fight the usurpations of the state upon their rights and privileges, reviving the fervour of the ancient churches or repairing the social machinery and correcting patent evils and abuses. People were swayed by the religion of thought and criticism more than they cared for that of faith and revelation. From the oppressive weight of activism and secularism escape was sought by some of the finest spirits in championing a restored paganism—Hellenic or Germanic medieval, in exotic cults, in withdrawal from society or in determined negation of science and reason. People looked back regretfully to " the days when spiritual faith and hope and love were the air which young souls breathed, days when a man

would go to the seers to inquire of God and when God himself seemed to be not far from every one of us." (Dowden). The malady of the age was freedom and pessimism.

Few indeed, says Benedetto Croce,—and even these few but little heeded and with small results—were the poets, thinkers, seers, apostles who introduce light and warmth into the war which in all times and under all conditions, is perpetually fought in the minds and hearts of men, and which has perpetual need of this aid, this guidance. Nor could the gap be filled by physicists, naturalists, sociologists who at this time were indeed not wanting but who from their very nature are of use to technique but not to what is above or at the basis of every technique.

The mood of religious despair finds poignant expression in the poetry of cultured thought as in M. Arnold's lines:

> The Sea of Faith
> Was once, too, at the full and round earth's shore
> Lay like the holds of a bright girdle furl'd,
> But now I only hear
> Its melancholy long withdrawing roar
> Retreating to the breath
> Of the night wind down the vast edges drear
> And naked shingles of the world.
>
> The world, which seems
> To lie below us like a land of dreams
> So various, so beautiful, so new,
> Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
> Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain.

In the words of Croce, " the religious and ethical impulse was weakened, the capacity for inventing and transforming the requisite concepts was diminished, the inner life of the conscience was mortified, that life in which alone suffering and sorrow and anguish can be gathered into purifying travail and converted into consoling and revivifying forces."

The law of compensation thus works inexorably and inner illumination and the glamour of the world's goods have rarely

gone together. Perhaps it is a Divine dispensation that the Beatitudes should not merely cheer and uphold but also spring out of the lowly and the meek, the down-trodden and the poor in spirit. And it was reserved for India destitute materially and cast down politically to hold aloft the torch of faith by an unbroken succession of souls that hungered and thirsted for God—Devendranath, Dayananda, Keshub Chandra, Vishuddhananda, Bijoy Krishna and Paramahamsa Ramakrishna—who revivified the spiritual heritage of India that goes back beyond the Buddha to the very fathers of the race, the seers of the Vedas.

The life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna have a two-fold significance, as affecting the land of his birth and the world at large. But in both these aspects he shines forth by his Gospel of harmony. As an Indian saint he stands for the synthesis of the ideas and principles of his predecessors. World-history is viewed comprehensively by some modern thinkers as a continuous economic struggle between the haves and the have-nots, as a ceaseless class-war against the vested interests, force, numbers and fight being the decisive factors. Swami Vivekananda gave a nobler aspect to the strife when he said, " It is the privilege of every aristocracy to dig its own grave."[1] In the religious sphere at any rate, self-denial and sacrifice have been the motives of liberalization rather than compulsion. And the *ethos* of every race has produced timely personalities that by noble suffering and all-embracing love turned exclusive cults and expensive rituals into simpler forms available to larger and yet larger sections of the people. The religion of the New Testament replacing sacrifices by faith and penitence, and stern law by free grace has been cited as an instance. India also has witnessed the same process of broadening and popularization of religion and its observances. The emphasis in Vedic religion is on *Śrauta-karma*, i.e. on sacrifices expensive, elaborate, various and on a social structure of the privileged three *varnas*. Buddhism and Jainism were early manifestations of a natural reaction. The cults of the Smṛitis and

[1] " It is good and appropriate that every caste of high birth and privileged nobility should make it its principal duty to raise its own funeral pyre with its own hands."—Swami Vivekananda's *Complete Works*, " Modern India."

Purāṇas which were followed were the outcome of the forces of conservation and adaptation. But the antique social order was largely modified and changed by the absorption of the aborigines and non-Aryan tribes under genealogical fictions and legends. New gods and new forms of worship were evolved while preserving an appearance of continuity with the past. The last supreme effort to revive and strengthen the Vedic religion and social order was made by Kumārila and Śankara—the two granite pillars of Hindu faith. But the growing menace of foreign invasion and the varied aspirations of a vast mixed population before long turned their projects into a mere cry of the heart and an unrealized dream. Our social history since the first millennium is a record of the rise of successive religious teachers—chiefly Śaivite and Vaishṇavite—who by their powerful ministry have helped to bring the essentials of faith and spiritual endeavour to the hearts and lives of the masses and thus to fulfil the ultimate destiny of Hinduism which is the leavening of the entire population of India. These devout God-intoxicated souls under the urge of a generous love of their own kind dedicated themselves to the noble work of spreading the light and joy of true spirituality over the widest commonalty. Vallabhāchārya declared *pushṭi* or grace to be the way of salvation. Śrī Chaitanya held devotion to the Lord Kṛishṇa to be the purifier of every kind of sin and uncleanness, and in his overflowing love for man disregarded the distinctions of caste and with open arms embraced men of other faiths. And Śrī Rāmānuja proclaimed that *prapatti* (*śaraṇāgati*) i.e. self-surrender to the Lord as the sole refuge is the privilege of all, high and low, regenerate and unregenerate alike. Rāmānanda held initiation as the mighty lever which raised even the untouchables and the degraded to an equal footing with Brahmins. Ṅāmadeva, the devotee of Viṭṭhṭhaladeva, of Pandharpura upheld pure theism. In one of his *bhajans* he sang:

"The pitcher is filled and the water brought to bathe the god. There were forty-two hundreds of thousands of animals in it. There was Viṭhṭhala already in them, whom shall I bathe?"

Tukārām was an outspoken opponent of 'Brahminolatry.' He says in one of his utterances: " He who calls himself a Brahmin

and goes on in his usual way should not be spoken to and is a buffoon."

It is an irony of fate that every saint and reformer ends by founding a new sect and the spirit of intolerance which he seeks to kill is quickened into new life by the jealous adherence to his own doctrines. And so India had need of a prophet to trumpet forth the basic truth of all religions and the spirit of largest tolerence as essential to peace on earth and goodwill among men. It was destined for Sri Ramakrishna to glimpse this great need of India which was also the need of the world. He came to fulfil and not to destroy. Learning did not unfold her ample page to his eyes and science and philosophy were to him as a sealed book. In undated antiquity the Vedic seers had looked into the heart of Reality and bodied forth their inspired experiences in the Upanishads. To the Paramahamsa as their true scion came the vision of the highest Unity through the traditional unwritten wisdom that passes current among Indian monks and *sādhus* —an unsunned, unsuspected treasure which the seekers of knowledge have not yet explored or appraised. Golden aphorisms, gems of apologues that dart light into the mystery of human nature, rules of behaviour and forms of greeting and benediction that make the whole world kin—these are the secret of their power over men. The essence of sacred books permeates their talks, the conclusions of philosophy are imbedded in their familiar maxims together with the truths of mystic experience. Of this rich stream Sri Ramakrishna had drunk deep and hence the enthralling quality of his own discourses aptly called the *Kathāmṛita*—the Elixir of sayings.

But still greater is the value and significance of his teachings to humanity. For the acceptance of this message the world had been prepared by history, sociology and comparative ethics and religion. All these have joined to discount racial pride and arrogance and to prove the sameness of human nature irrespective of age, clime and race. Every spin of the globe brings us to a clearer perception of the truth that our differences are superficial but our likeness is essential. Comparison and analysis reveal the basic oneness of the race. The mists are rolling away and we see

before us under the white light of Truth the limbs and organs, powers and faculties of this marvellous handiwork of the Creator —the ends of whose being reach out to the plant, the bird, the ape, the brute and the angel, who is a pilgrim between birth and death, who is rooted to his small plot of land and forgets himself in the moment and again in thought wanders through eternity and to the limits of space, who is of the earth, earthly and again of heaven, heavenly, who is weaker than a worm, minuter than a grain of sand and yet by his Reason and Knowledge comprehends the whole Universe and looks into the very thoughts and purposes of the All-wise and All-powerful Maker.

The sacred books of all ages in the East and in the West have sought to keep man conscious of this truth. The aim of civilization is to achieve unity in the midst of diversity. For by nature men are like the unnumbered grains of sand on the sea-shore, each discrete and separate from the rest. Each follows his own whims and impulses, seeks his own safety and interest. Social institutions tend to remove this isolation of man from man. The family, the clan, the tribe, the community, the nation—each step in this series points to a larger association. Parties and schools of thought, religion and state all promote the work of unification. The most potent of these instruments of unification, however, is religion which rises above racial prejudices and communal narrowness and tends to gather all into a brotherhood by stimulating enthusiasm for some sublime ideal.

But when we speak of religion and its function, by the peculiar cast of our minds, we think of the several historic religions and the parts they have played in the evolution of the races of men. And we picture to ourselves rivalry and conflict among the faiths like the struggle for existence in the animal creation. And the same law seems to rule the spiritual world as the sphere of war and politics and commerce—only conversion and compulsion instead of conquest and annexation. Such at any rate is the outlook of the two great proselytizing religions of the present day —Mohammedanism and Christianity. Each cherishes the dream of being one day the Church Catholic, of claiming the allegiance of all mankind and guiding and moulding their spiritual interests and

aspirations. But the religions of a still older date—Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Buddhism and Confucianism are without this aggressive energy and no longer strain after this world-vision. Nevertheless each claims to be the one true path leading to the highest spiritual well-being. And thus the hubbub grows—the discord of slogans and the clash of dogmas and in the midst of it, the still sad music of True Religion grows faint. And distracted by the rank foliage mankind misses the balm that heals the sores of the spirit and the fruit that gives life. To a world sick of this strife of faiths Sri Ramakrishna brought his Gospel of Harmony—a reiteration of the ancient Hindu wisdom—that the paths men follow are numberless but their goal, the ultimate principle in which they end and merge is the same even as the rivers of the earth discharge themselves in the boundless ocean. Herein he was truly the son of the Great Mother that he worshipped. No mother even delights in the fights of her children. And the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna if laid to heart in the right spirit will yet knit into a brotherhood men of diverse sects and religions, however formidable the barriers that sever them now. The message of the Paramahamsa is the message of India—India which in her palmy days had dispensed to the countries of Asia not merely food for the body but also out of the overflowing joy and light in her soul the living bread for the spirit. She sent her sons across her borders not in armed legions but as ochre-clad missionaries of faith to preach to the peoples the sanctity of all life, the mystery of being and the supreme value of love, peace and goodness.

Civilization has been variously defined by Western thinkers. Progress, organization, liberty, social amelioration, a high status for womankind, diffusion of knowledge, science and technical skill —all these singly or together are taken to be its essential marks. But as Emerson says: "These arts add a comfort and smoothness to house and street life ; but a purer morality, which kindles genius, civilizes civilization, casts backward all that we hold sacred into the profane as the flame of oil throws a shadow when shined upon by the flame of the Bude-light." In India this higher morality has ever meant an intimate realization of the oneness of

all being and sensibility to the reactions of pain and pleasure in all forms of life. The saints and seers of all races according to the degree of inner illumination have had glimpses of these truths. They felt for all sentient creatures and thrilled with their fears and pains and joys. But in India these truths are systematized into a living cult. History traces veterinary hospitals and asylums to Buddhistic times as also the abhorrence of animal slaughter which is carried to an extreme by Jainism. The pious Hindu before he plucks leaves and flowers for the worship of his deity begs leave and pardon of the tree and creeper. And the householder when he performs oblations to the fathers does not omit to pray "May the world from Brahmā to the blade of grass be satisfied." All this is the outcome of the intense and pervasive God-consciousness which the Upanishads in a thousand ways inculcate:—

> "The one God hidden in all beings, pervading all, the indwelling spirit of all creatures, swaying all action, lodged in all forms of life, the sole witnessing mind that has no attributes."
>
> "The one dwells in Heaven inert like a Tree. By that Person all this is filled. There is nothing other than Him and no one minuter or greater."

The rule of conduct that such a faith yields was pointed in the ancient verse of the *Yajur-Veda*:

> "May all beings see me with the eye of a friend.
> May I see all creatures with the eye of a friend."

Is Sri Ramakrishna an *Avatāra*? To believers and unbelievers alike it is a silly question. To the former it admits of no doubt. To the modern mind it is hardly worth serious attention. The Hindu not lost to the traditional mentality of his race feels no surprise to learn that the Lord hath once again manifested Himself in His living temple. To him the history of his own land, nay of the whole world, is spanned by the shinning figures in whom Boundless Grace has chosen to reveal Himself from age to age to mitigate the woes and to redeem the souls of His creatures. And the series will continue till the last sinner is saved and the last

worm attains divinity. To him the world-drama is a progressive revelation and countless are the incarnations of God.

To a layman likely to be befogged by the subtleties of the schoolmen, the strongest proof of the Incarnation is the living miracle that the Man was. For

> What is the course of life
> Of mortal men on the earth?
> Most men eddy about
> Here and there—eat and drink,
> Chatter and love and hate,
> Gather and squander, are raised
> Aloft and hurl'd in the dust,
> Striving blindly, achieving
> Nothing ; and then they die,
> Perish—and no one asks
> Who or what they have been
> More than he asks what waves
> In the moonlit solitudes mild
> Of the boundless Ocean, have swell'd,
> Foam'd for a moment, and gone.

A searching self-analyst like Marcus Aurelius may well ask:

Whose soul do I properly possess? A child's or a youth's? A woman's? Or a tyrant's? Some brute or some wild beast's?

And the muddy vesture of decay may well make him exclaim:

How base and putrid every common matter is! Water and dust and, from the mixture of these, bones, and all that loathsome stuff that our bodies do consist of ; so subject to be infected and corrupted.

What a contrast to this life of the multitude was the beatific trance in which the Paramahamsa passed his days on earth! Though in the flesh, he with his every breath hungered and thirsted for God and never had a doubt of the reality of his Divine Mother Whom he worshipped with such passionate adoration, any more than he had of his own existence. Like the flame of the candle that in still air steadily rises skyward, like the magnetic needle that unfailingly turns towards the Pole, his soul ever pointed

Heavenward. Rank and power, love and wealth after which the world runs mad lost all relish for him and were replaced by poignant yearnings, visions, raptures and exaltations that had their source in the unapparent Reality. No wonder the voice of scepticism was silenced, and unbelief shamed in his presence. His teachings harmonized while upholding the two imperishable ideals of life—the domestic and the ascetic—which have their roots deep down in human nature. A householder to outward view he was yet the prince of ascetics—*Yatirāja*—at heart. And it is no mere coincidence that his blessed name that is on the lips of millions today joins the two divine persons who vitally influence life and character in Hinduism more than any other of the numerous gods that make up the Hindu pantheon—Rāma the ideal son, brother, husband and father, and Kṛishṇa who has been described by Swami Vivekananda as "the great illustration of non-attachment."

In dwelling thus devoutly on the life and message of Sri Ramakrishna we turn our back on the grim realities of modern life and the two spectres that are waiting to fly at each other's throat for mastery of the world—Nationalism and Communism. The former whether wearing the face of Naziism, Fascism or Imperialism values life according to the colour of the skin and looks upon alien races opposed to its interests and aspirations as so many flies to be ruthlessly crushed under the wheel of its own progress, thus illustrating the German poet Grillparzer's parabolic formula: Humanity through nationality turns to bestiality. The latter, though it may bring about the ascension of those social strata that have hitherto been submerged and passive in public life, seeks as the means thereto to recast and refashion human nature itself by overthrowing all old institutions and weaning man from all the sentiments, beliefs and convictions that have led him to his present condition. Amidst ' the alarms and excursions,' jostling and trampling and crushing, bloodshed and lust of power that the collision of these secular ideals means, the celebration of the birth-centenary of Sri Ramakrishna may seem an incongruity, an anachronism. And yet the heart of humanity turns wistfully to it. For we have not yet reached that evil day when the pieties and sanctities that have chastened and disciplined and consoled the

race hitherto will lose their value and appeal, when both Heaven and Home will be meaningless words, when the highest self-realization for the individual will be soulless service of the state and every state a deadly, irresistible, fighting machine, and mankind prey on itself like monsters of the deep. But till that day comes when the dictates of the economic man will be the supreme law and the soul turn into a fiction and abstraction, and all that lies before and after and beyond the fevered dream of the senses will be blotted out of human consciousness, let us, for the sake of what joy, relief and consolation we can get, hearken to the chimes of the bells that ring from the opposite banks of the sacred Bhāgirathī, mingle with the murmur of its ripples and proclaim to a world hushed and bathed in the light of the rising sun the eternal verities—Purity, Goodness and Faith.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S TEACHINGS

SARAT CHANDRA BOSE, BARRISTER-AT-LAW
Calcutta

I have been asked to say a few words on the "Teachings of Sri Ramakrishna." It is a subject on which I do not feel competent enough to speak. I shall, however, endeavour to place before you what I consider to be the most significant of all his teachings. His teachings and sayings have been printed in book-form. They have also been translated into different languages spoken by the different civilized nations of the world and are more or less available to all of us.

This great teacher was Bengal's contribution to the world in the last century. Everybody knows that a century back he was born among us and half a century back he left us. We and the rest of the world came under the influence of his teachings during his earthly pilgrimage and even more so, after he had completed his journey.

The Swami Vivekananda interpreted the teachings of his Master from various standpoints. The great Max Müller also

interpreted him. And only the other day, the greatest scholar of our times, Dr. Brajendra Nath Seal, interpreted him in his address as President of this historic gathering.

To all these interpretations it is difficult to add anything new.

To my mind, Sri Ramakrishna's mode of approach to different systems of worship inculcated in the different religions of the world is his special contribution to the history of the progress of religions in the present age.

Raja Rammohan was undoubtedly the first among our scholars to make a comparative study of the different systems of religion. He is rightly called the "father of the Science of Religion." In the study of this particular branch of knowledge Rammohan wanted to find out the common factors of the different religions. In the comparative study of Rammohan, one can find the successive stages of the growth and degeneration of each particular religion. He adopted the process of elimination of the lower stages of each religion. Therefore, it was no wonder to hear from him the words, "Hence falsehood is common to all religions without distinction."

Now let us turn to the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. He approached the different systems of religion not as a scholar like Rammohan but as a devotee. His objective was to realize God in and through the peculiar methods of worship in different religions. He made strenuous attempts to achieve this end. And he *did realize* God through each and every religion he practised. He practised Hinduism of different types as also Islam and Christianity. He passed through all the stages of each religion. He did not eliminate a single stage and he came to the conclusion: "Every religion is true." His teachings should not be confounded with the teaching that "There is truth in every religion"—which was probably the opinion of Brahmananda Keshab Chandra Sen.

If Rammohan taught us the *science* of religion, Sri Ramakrishna taught us the *art* of God-realization in and through the multifarious practices of each religion. This, in my humble opinion, is the distinction between the teachings of the two great

teachers of religion that Bengal gave birth to in the first and in the last quarter of the XIXth century.

Sri Ramakrishna's teachings did not disturb a single religion of the world. Unlike other great teachers of religion he did not create a new religion of his own. He left no new religion as his legacy unto us. He did not ask anybody to change his religion with a view to realizing God. He did not consider it necessary for him to do so. His method was entirely different, wonderfully original. His teachings prove that each religion gives ample scope and opportunity to realize God. That was the distinctive peculiarity of his teachings. Towards the end of his sojourn in this world Swami Premananda, one of his disciples, heard him pray, " Mother, do not let me become famous by leading those who believe in beliefs! Do not expound beliefs through my voice."

If we trace the history of the development of Sri Ramakrishna's mind, we find that, at the very beginning, the influence of that great woman of East Bengal, called Bhairavī Brāhmaṇī, acted like a miracle on the young devotee Ramakrishna. About this great woman, the Swami Vivekananda said, "She was not only learned but was the embodiment of learning. She was learning itself in human form." "And hers was the first help he (Sri Ramakrishna) received." We find that this Bhairavī taught Sri Ramakrishna the practices of no less than sixty-four different Tantras and along with it the realization of different " *Rasas* " of Bengal Vaishṇavism of the Chaitanya cult. Śākta and Vaishṇava are the two great sectarian religions of Bengal. In theory and practice, in fact, on many points they contradict each other. But Sri Ramakrishna had easy access to his goal even through these two entirely different systems of religion. The Bhairavī Brāhmaṇī certainly helped him to perform what seemed to be an impossible task. I am afraid the Sri Ramakrishna literature has not done sufficient justice to this great Bhairavī of East Bengal.

The votaries of different religions have had many battles against one another, not always to their credit, and at times to their shame. We learn from the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna that the followers of one religion have no reason whatever to fight

against the followers of another religion for the sake of realizing God. It is a teaching of tremendous significance in modern Bengal and in modern India. May I hope and pray that the significance of this teaching of one who embraced within him the whole multiplicity of men and the whole multiplicity of Gods will be realized more and more in the days to come?

THE SPIRIT OF VIVEKANANDA

B. C. CHATTERJEE, BARRISTER-AT-LAW
Calcutta

I esteem it a very great privilege to be asked to say a few words at this historic gathering on the subject appointed for me by Prof. Sarkar.[1] So far as it is given to a layman to understand that subject, it strikes me that one would best bring out the spirit of Vivekananda by styling him Vivekananda the Conqueror. I venture to say, the word 'conqueror' reveals the essence, the spirit, the very self of the man. He was born to conquer—need I add the trite reminder?—not territories, but men's souls. The more one tries to estimate him, the more one realizes that he was in the direct line of affiliation to Him Whose invincibility wrung the cry from the heart of the Roman Emperor, "Thou conquerest still, Oh pale Galilean!" and also to Him Who enunciated the immortal law of human nature in the words that come ringing in our ears across the night of time, "Hatred is not killed by hatred, hatred is killed by love." Buddhism conquered the soul of Asia, Christianity that of Europe. What did our Conqueror of modern times achieve? In my humble estimation Vivekananda set out to conquer the souls of men like you and me whose minds are wedded to the methods and the outlook of modern science, and he succeeded in doing it. This very gathering is proof enough of what I am saying. He conceived the great idea that Hinduism, the Hindu faith as reinterpreted for him by his *Guru*, was not to be a cloistered and fugitive thing, but was to assert its existence in the face of science, that it was to prove itself real with the

[1] See p. 148, footnote.

full gaze and scrutiny of science playing on its countenance. It would be a most fascinating study to follow him in his wanderings over India, Europe and America, preaching and teaching and convincing, and helping everywhere to heal the schism of those days between faith and fact. I would venture to make one statement for your consideration. If you studied the matter a little closely, you would realize that the modern trend of thought in the domain of philosophy and no less of science, which would enthrone Intuition over the dismantled body of Reason owes its genesis to the seed of truth that was brought by Ramakrishna into life, and cast by Vivekananda over the face of the earth. We know the historical fact that it sprouted into exultant life from the hour of its sowing, and may I say that this Parliament of religions is a promising fruit on the vigorous sapling of world-thought into which it has already grown.

And what was the faith he went out to inculcate? Not any imperialistic doctrine about the exclusive superiority of Hinduism to other systems of religion, but the ancient faith of India, rescued from the debris of the Dark Ages by Paramhamsa Deva, which promulgated the equal superiority of all religions, which held out the message to man that each system of religion, if conformed to by its adherent with the sincerity of his soul, opens the gateway to immortality, to the vision of the one Reality. And Vivekananda was able to convince his hearers over the three continents that he was not merely preaching some pious doctrine, but was giving out to them a fundamental truth capable of verification by every man, were he but seriously-minded about it, in the laboratory of his own soul. And none doubted the witness of himself and of his *Guru* on the point. I say, ladies and gentlemen, the spirit of Vivekananda holds the future of our race. Because of him—with his personality inextricably identified with that of his *Guru*—we have the vision growing clearer before us with the passing of each day of that shining table-land whereon the Hindu, the Buddhist, the Christian, the Moslem and the Zoroastrian shall kneel down together to worship the sun of identical truth. Is it not a vision that brings a greater zest to life, gives man a fresher will to live?

And just see how this Conqueror inevitably burst the shackles that had bound the Hindu of his days hand and foot. As men and women listened to him and were convinced by him, they necessarily became converted to his new evangel. And so for the first time in our history we began to have Hindus *by faith,* an impossible conception to the Hindu of pre-Vivekananda days. You know how the word 'Hindu' was limited throughout our long history to one born a Hindu. But this hero of Hindusthan broke through that limitation with the ease and naturalness of one opening a flower, and his fellowmen knew that limitation no more when Vivekananda returned home with Nivedita and others who had become Hindus by faith. And let us also realize how that insensate pride of birth which had made the Brahman caste into a close corporation, and led its members to propound preposterous doctrines about their being the sole repositories of the Vedas and Vedānta, disappeared like mists before sunrise with the advent of Vivekananda. He, the elect of his Master, was non-Brahman, and as he went over the wide world preaching and promulgating his Master's philosophy and faith, he silenced the Brahman monopolist of God-knowledge for ever. The latter found his tongue cleaving to the roof of his mouth, for even he could not deny authority to one who had been elected to his mission by none other than the Saint of Dakhshineswar. With Vivekananda we have the inauguration of a new order of Brahmans in India, based on desert, instead of on descent. And he slew with his own hand the monster he had labelled 'Kitchen Hinduism'—the perverted religiosity that had made the Hindu identify his faith with the question of who cooked his food, where it was cooked, what was cooked, and who served it. He, the Hindu of Hindus, was eating food cooked by non-Hindus and served by non-Hindus in alien lands, and of a kind the very thought of which would turn the champions of orthodoxy sick. The whole superstructure of nonsensicality practised in the name of religion collapsed and disappeared after that. And the condemnation of "crossing the sea" ceased to be heard after he had crossed over. Modern India was emerging into visibility as a luminous emanation from his personality.

I beg permission to point out one or two other aspects of the renewal wrought by Vivekananda in our life. The women of India, barring the isolated few in the Brahmo Samaj, got their first real chance of coming out of darkness into light when Nivedita stepped into their midst. By precept and example, illumined by her idealism, she inducted the women of India into the freedom which was theirs by birth-right, and also their heritage from the ancient civilization of their motherland. And let us keep our remembrance ever fresh of the outshining achievement of our hero in modern India—his identification of *Karma-Yoga* with service of fellow man. The Ramakrishna Mission which is the visible embodiment of that identification has already saved India from the philistinism of orthodoxy, and put her on the road, on the pilgrimage, to the realization of her self, of all that she was and yet shall be—the recovery by her in the first place of her vision of the soul, and the revelation of it by her in the next place to humanity as a whole. This, as far as I can grasp it, is the mission of quest and conquest that has been handed to his followers by Vivekananda, the conqueror.

SYNTHESIS OF RELIGIONS IN RAMAKRISHNA

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It is almost a truism to say that, when two or more individuals meet for the first time they primarily fix on the differences that separate them. That there is an identity binding them together is brought out later by repeated or continuous contact. But even in such circumstances more often than not the deepest unity that lies hidden in the differences is not revealed from the first, and people in general rest content only with a somewhat unconscious approach towards it. In our ordinary dealings, however, it is not of immediate importance whether we probe into the fundamental unity, or we concentrate on its outward indications, that is, the surface resemblances, for similarity of some sort alone is capable of providing a basis for association. This is as much true of the

individuals at a developed stage of social life as of the primitive men who were not as a matter of fact born to a pre-existing social life. So the initial opposition induced by differences can be and is in point of fact sought to be overcome by a process of assimilation through recognition of resemblances. All these can well be summed up from the sociological point of view under the concept of the " Consciousness of Kind." Originally of course, the sense of kinship was all vague, and we cannot definitely say that it was anything more than the awareness of something common in the modes of life, in the matter of food and drink, the quest after them and so on. But this much is certain that the sense of a kindred nature, even in its nascent form, was the foundation upon which the most rudimentary form of social life which was mainly a physical aggregation was based.

Out of this beginning, small as it may seem, human association has worked wonders, and it is for the historians and the anthropologists to say how vast and variegated is the field covered by its past acquisitions, and for the scientific sociologists to indicate how complex and subtle is the machinery of society as it stands today in every country. We can, however, envisage this much that in the social evolution the primal inchoate awareness of kinship has been increasingly deepened, and is still in the process of being quickened. But it is far from true to say that, in our social life, however perfect, we have grasped the unity in its fundamental aspect; for, social life consists in acting in conformity with the laws and customs which are binding upon all and as such functions on the presupposition of a unity as the ground, and, what is more, so far as the workings in society are concerned, this unity in its ultimate nature is always in the background. It will, on the contrary, necessitate a laborious search by way of a distinct study of the relevant empirical facts and their implications to bring it before us. But the difficulty is that we cannot in that way end up better than by erecting an ideal. And this clearly shows that the humanity in its working through social organization is still running after an ideal which *ipso facto* appears as a will-o'-the-wisp. All this, however, matters little in so far as the work-a-day life of the individual is concerned inasmuch as he is more interested

in the established forms of conduct than any theory about it. Yet there is no gainsaying the fact that in his activities, he unwittingly subscribes to the position that, but for a fundamental unity or identity which in the guise of a surface-resemblance attracted the primitive men to form into groups and is still inviting the social beings to reach out to it through empirical codifications, no social structure worth the name, and, for that matter, no flowering forth of individuality or personality would have been possible.

If we leave our consideration of social groups, the ground upon which they are based and the ideal that draws individuals to unity, and turn to the conditions in which the world exists at the present time, a problem will forthwith force itself on our attention, and we shall be surprised by the similarity of the relations that exist between the modern nations and those which existed between the primitive individuals. That is to say, the different nations of the world are very much in the state of strife the pre-social men found themselves in previous to any association. We may allow for the fact that it was originally a natural calamity or calamities that thrust the primitive men together, or for the contention that the original urge towards association was all economic. But in either case, an awareness of identity, however hazy, was the presupposition ; otherwise we shall be at a loss to understand why the primitive human beings preferred association among themselves to any possible alliance with the lower animals. In a way, the primitives were at an advantage, because they were still children of nature with apprehension and immediacy as the chief instrument of their naive approach to one another. So what is immensely difficult for modern men to achieve was all very easy for our remote ancestors. Nowadays each country or rather each nation, with its geographical limitations, its resources, a culture and an ideal, moral, political or otherwise, has developed an individuality which is much more real than that of any of the individuals who were the first to tread this earth of ours. It is then no wonder that the contact between the nations has been marked by a keen contest and fierce competition.

It is almost a commonplace of history that it was greed for wealth that brought the Westerners to the forums of the Eastern

countries, and we can safely say that as in the ancient times as well as in the middle ages the cultural ideas of the Orient travelled westward on the shoulders of invaders, soldiers and traders who for their part reciprocated on behalf of their countries by unloading some of their own into those they traversed, so on the threshold of modern age, the contact between the nations was effected for the most part by traders and travellers and for that reason it was far from being close and complete.

The advent of science opened up a new vista before mankind ; scientific inventions have gone a long way to save our physical labour as well as to reduce to the minimum the distance that separates one country from another: the easy modes of transit by land, sea and air are bringing them into an increasingly closer contact than ever. None can now miss the fact that the contact is taking place in a multitude of ways. There is undoubtedly a good deal of difference between the meeting of the primitive men and that of the modern nations, for in the case of the latter, the physical contact happens only through some individuals. It is none the less effective inasmuch as the individuals concerned are as a matter of fact taken as representatives of their countrymen, and it is here that there is a grave danger. As it is not possible in our ordinary life to eliminate altogether the personal elements from our perspective, the predispositions and prejudices, characteristic of an individual's nationality will creep in and colour his whole point of view, and will consequently tend to make the differences given at first view more pronounced than ever before.

So it is no exaggeration to say that the nations of the world have come to find themselves in very much the same conditions as confronted the primitive men previous to the first association. The problem that faces us all is: how to build a confederation out of the jarring units. The problem by itself provides a theme that demands separate treatment. The least that we can say on the point is this—that it is up to the nations to emerge out of the welter of confusion into which they have fallen in a manner that will be in keeping with their cultural heritage ; they must not proceed like their remotest progenitors, for they will thereby give the lie to all that is best in their much-vaunted civilization. We

shall do well in this connection to note some of the ways in which humanity as a unity is working and preparing the way for the much-needed unification.

Internationalism is the most obvious sign of that working. But it may be pointed out that all talk of internationalism is a meaningless fuss and that the sooner we give it up all the better for the world at large. Indeed in many countries cosmopolitans and pacifists are viewed as visionaries and treated as traitors. We are however not to go far afield to collect data to show that things all over the world have come to such a pass that in spite of ourselves a form of internationalism is already on us, and that a nation in modern times can ill afford to be wholly indifferent to the happenings in another. But the interrelation has so far been manifest more at the level of trade and commerce than at any others. Moreover, this interrelation, falling far short of internationalism proper, has given an occasion to the interested nations to get involved in internecine wars. And the political feuds that are raging all over Europe and in a remote corner of Asia are in reality the working of the insatiable desire for possession and power.

Of recent years much has been heard of collective security. But it appears to be more or less a catchword. In fact all this is worse than useless, for the modern mind is not yet equipped to accept it in its proper connotation. So it is idle to talk of collective security unless and until the world is cured of the "collective insanity" which is on it. In peace time it is very easy to wax eloquent over it under the bracing climate of Geneva. But recently the Abyssinian crisis has proved to the hilt that all tall talk of collective security is a bunkum, and the league of nations a fiasco, politicians have recourse to treaties and regional pacts which are for all practical purposes alliances which can be broken at a moment's notice or without any notice whatsoever. Alignment of policies is at present the watchword. But there is a wide gulf between alignment and unification, nay, alignment is worse than mere difference, for it is verily enforced by antagonism and is calculated to encounter opposition. In the political sphere—this is the only sphere that counts with the

public—the maxim that is universally valid is "might is right" and hence the superiority of a nation is sought to be measured by the quality and quantity of arms and ammunitions. And it is this alone that answers why the nations are now in a race for rearmament. A clash seems to be inevitable ; perhaps it has already begun. There is, however, no need for alarm to those who can look deep into the affairs of the world ; for, opposition or strife is one of the ways in which Nature has been working out her plan. So the present-day bickerings the world over are only a forecast of the calamity that is coming down upon us. It is only in pitch darkness that we realize the value of light, we can best know the bliss of peace when enveloped by gun-fire. Machine-guns, bombers, poison gas and all that have been invented under the silent prompting of nature, so that through their action we may effectively think out the means of living in happiness and peace on earth. Another Armageddon is getting ready, and the time is not distant when the arrogant dictators would be driven to the utmost limit of their resources, physical vigour and mental energy because of their wrangling and destructive warfare, and it is then and then only that the militarists would come to know of their malady and piteously cry for a remedy. But when will they find it? Who are they that will rush to their aid?

But the whole suggestion may be rediculed and discarded as a pious wish of the weak. Indeed no wonder that it should be regarded so, for it is very hard to penetrate into the force that is driving the militarist nations one against another or some against all the rest.

The contact of the races has so far been considered only at the physical level. There has, however, been another kind of contact, namely, the contact of cultures—primarily that of the scientific cultures of the West and the spiritual culture of the East, especially of India, and this is more or less consequent upon the first. But the redeeming feature of the situation is that some intellectuals scattered all over the world are collaborating in the magnificent work of bringing to light the common elements binding the differences of the seemingly antagonistic cultures and are thereby paving the way for the better state of things to which

the idealists aspire. There have consequently sprung up many comparative studies in the field of intellectual research. Of all these the most important is comparative religion for it is only through religious aspirations and spiritual experiences that the highest attainment of a race is revealed, and, for that matter, it is in the religious lores and spiritual literatures that the most precious wealth of a nation is preserved. Naturally we can expect much in the way of mutual understanding and fellowship from comparative studies of the existing religions. But here too the danger of opposition and antipathy is very great, for everyone will be eager to extol the religion he professes and try to establish the superiority of his own over all the rest by a comparison. So after a study of the religions, a Christian may see more clearly than before why he is a Christian, a Hindu may find the reason why he should reject all other schisms and a Mussulman may glory in the unity of his Godhead and universal brotherhood, which may be regarded as an implication of the superiority of his religion, at the expense of any other religion. All this, however, is due to the play of prejudice ; even eminent philosophers in spite of their extraordinary intellectual penetration are found to suffer from such infirmity. Comparative studies, however, are not on that account all useless. Though in many cases they end in reiterating the differences of the religions which are in point of fact the starting ground, yet they gather together a mass of materials a proper manipulation of which might yield a far better result. But every one is not fit for this arduous task that requires a really generous mind and a cosmopolitan outlook. There are undoubtedly at least some who in their studies have succeeded in picking out the pithy utterances of the religious leaders who had come and gone, and in getting at the core of the mystic experiences that are enshrined in the religious lores of the different peoples, and have also pointed out that the difference that we meet with in the religions is mainly due to the difference in circumstances, environments, technique of presentation and expression. This is indeed a synthesis of a sort which is attained through the instrumentality of intellect. It will presumably afford ample satisfaction to the individual concerned, and is calculated to induce a conciliatory attitude in many others. But it can hardly eliminate the risk of

its being assailed by an analysis that would run counter to its trend. Not only this, the procedure seems to make much of the common elements, so much so as to ignore the features of the religions as distinctive discipline. Sifting out a selfsame doctrinal content out of the religions will, of course, serve to allay a good deal the suspicion and superciliousness that are consuming their votaries. But with that alone one cannot put up a fight against the forces that are working in opposition to religion and on that score to the religions. So even admitting that religion as such is an institution which humanity cannot dispense with, one may not find anything in the documentary evidence to bind him down to the position that each of the existing religions has fulfilled the purpose that is manifested in man's religious aspirations, or that each has a promise of the fulfilment in virtue of the potency of the symbols that have hitherto been put into practice and of the technique the value of which has already been assessed by long tried out experiments. What is all a matter of life in its deeper aspect and is to be mastered through practice can in no way be wholly amenable to a rigid interpretation of reason.

Hence synthesis proper is to be sought only in one's spiritual experience. But the difficulty is here still greater despite the fact that it will take one deeper towards the root of the matter. When one reaches in one's way the peak position in spiritual experience, one will not presumably perceive from one's height the differences left behind. Besides, one may be too much absorbed in the ecstasy of one's experience to refer back to any other religious ideal except one's own. Or if anybody at all take care to view other religions, all that he may allow will be a concession to those who profess them, in the sense that all the practices resorted to and all the names and attributes that are formulated to conceptually grasp the being and nature of the supreme Reality which as the ground and goal gives meaning to religion, are, after all, different approaches to the fulfilment of the ideal and the form of his chosen Godhead under which he himself has realized the truth of his religion. And this can be read as a sort of subsumption. But, truly speaking, there may be little recognition of the autonomy of each of the other religions in respect of its ideal and

practice or practices, except in the superficial differences in the elements of languages they respectively indulge in for expression.

It may, however, be contended that spiritual experience may be attained by following strictly a particular discipline, the height of the attainment may nevertheless be a meeting place of many paths.

This is perhaps true and in a way it should be so from the nature of the case. But this is not equivalent to saying that the meeting of many paths is itself a content of the experience of the *sādhaka* at the suggested height. An imaginative analysis of the position to which mystics soar up may afford us an alternative to what is insisted on. If one is already in mystic ecstasy through which alone, as we are told, the ultimate union with God or Reality is achieved, one being identical with it in the final realization, would naturally be raised to a sphere of supreme bliss, so that there should hardly be any need for distinguishing between the different paths the genuine mystics have hitherto traversed, for there is presumably nothing to be distinguished and none to distinguish inasmuch as the mystics attained that only after they had taken their feet off the path they had trodden and their hands off crutches they leaned on. *A fortiori* the sphere of supreme bliss is a sphere all apart and any *a priori* deduction of a path that led or may lead on to it is no more possible than that of a pen from Hegel's Absolute.

In the teachings and life of the sage of Dakshineswar, however, we come on a unique thing which is scarcely to be found in the annals of the world. There is no denying that we have on record the life-history of many mystics who after their ascent descended to bestow upon mankind their blessings. But in Ramakrishna we find a good deal more. He not only began from the bottom rung of a ladder of a religious discipline and reached the highest and came down to men to tell them of his experiences through symbols and parables that embody imagery and imaginative flight that could bring all glory to a poet of the rank of Rabindranath ; he took upon himself the hazardous task of experimenting with the ideal and practices of the chief religions of the world, namely, Islam, Christianity and also of some cults of the

Hindu religion, under the guidance of *gurus* representing the different paths.

It is, of course, quite natural to regard all this as an idle curiosity. But we shall not do well to forget that Ramakrishna had already reached that stage when he could realize the truth of the saying of Śrī Kṛishṇa: *Yaṁ labdhvā chāparaṁ lābham manyante nādhikaṁ tataḥ*. And perhaps we are not in a position to realize the tremendous sacrifice he had to make in order to try the experiments ; he was in possession of the highest bliss a man can ever aspire to and he in fact came out of it for a time and descended to a lower level or even to the lowest of religious discipline, namely, the worship through symbols with its necessary accompaniments. All these he did perhaps because of the fact that he envisaged in advance an era of civilization which is yet to be ushered in, and in all probability in view of that sought to remove the major impediments that stand in its way. But such an interpretation of Ramakrishna's motive may not commend itself to many. Anyway, none can miss the fact that it was his love for humanity that urged him to undergo such nerve-racking trials. The quickness with which the plenitude of the fulfilment in his experience of the respective ideals of the religions adopted for experimentation, was attained, showed beyond a shred of doubt that his was a colossal spiritual capacity.

One should not be quick in one's attempt to construe Ramakrishna's experiences and teachings regarding the religions as a sort of comparative religion. We have beforehand tried to indicate that comparative religion is at its best only an attempt through intellect to understand the structural affinity between their ground and goal. But that cannot in any way generate the experience upon which they are based, or to which they lead. From the point of view of an attempted intellectual synthesis, whether this or that religion with its peculiar technique can lead to the realization of the cherished ideal is still an open question which can hardly be answered by an intellectual. Ramakrishna, however, not only spotted the pearl, but also dived deep and emerged with the priced possession. There was evidently no theorizing, but an actual act—a spiritual experience somewhat like

a sea the depth of which we can know only by going into it, and which as such is a pointer to others who are striving along the path, that is to say, Ramakrishna showed, by his experiments and by making many others experience, that the forms under which God is sought to be reached in the religions are capable of being realized through *sādhanā*, and that they are no fabrications, dreams or hallucinations that are susceptible of any psycho-therapeutic interpretation, for that realization brings a fundamental change over the whole structure of the physico-vital mental being of the individual concerned and fills him with a sense of consecration that culminates in the long run in an acme of ecstasy.

Nowadays there is manifestly a tendency to make much of the word ' synthesis.' It is in fact found on everybody's lips. But oftentimes there is a confusion between synthesis proper and eclecticism. If a temple is erected in the name of Ramakrishna, for instance, and is constructed in such a way as to hold within its structure the fundamental features of mosque, church, synagogue, and so forth, one may naturally go away with the idea that synthesis is not anything more than putting some things together which are apparently taken to antagonize one another. But if we pause and ponder a while, we may gain insight into something deeper. We are very apt to take very lightly Ramakrishna's parable of the tank with its different ghats, and we may not hesitate to complain that it does not in fact afford a revelation save and except what is nothing more than a truism, namely, that the different religions are different paths to God. We should not, however, forget that a truth is found to be a truism only after its discovery. As a rule we fix on our wisdom and do not so much take into consideration the conditions that combine to put us wise. It is therefore quite natural on our part to concentrate on one half of the entire truth the parable is contrived to convey. It is undoubtedly true that the difference of the religions is not in any way minimized. It is, on the contrary, emphasized by the very fact of synthesis, for were there no opposition any conciliation would be out of the question. The point that we should take note of is this that the difference need not necessarily clash, and that the opposition that is met with in

the case of the religions is more a matter of abstraction than of fact. Ramakrishna pointed out that the cause for any conflict between the religions proceeds purely from imagination and that if we view the thing in its true perspective, all contention will cease. He sums up all that he has to say regarding synthesis of religions in a pithy sentence: "All the religions are different paths to God"; the ghats, though different lead to the same Ganges and the water drawn through them is the same in spite of the difference of the vessels in which it is contained and in spite of the various names by which it is called. So also in regard to the religions, though they differ in conceptions, ideas, ideals and their methods of procedure, this their difference should not be construed as a case of antagonism. Truly speaking, all opposition is an offshoot of imperialism which in its turn proceeds from an artificiality, namely, the claim of a particular religion to be the world religion.

To use Ramakrishna's phraseology, plants can grow out of paddy, but never out of rice. The doctrinal content of a religion by itself will lead nowhere, and we may find that the religious teachers of the world are at one in so far as the conception of the Deity is concerned. But it will not do to ignore the difference in the methods proposed wherewith to work it out in practice. That difference is verily the fact which is to be reckoned within our consideration of the religions. And if there is to be a synthesis, it will be by annulling opposition and that only in the light of the ultimate goal—union with God, which is attainable by the various religious disciplines. We are asked to recognize both unity and difference at once, unity of end, but difference of approaches.

There is, however, another aspect of the situation that is very beautifully brought out by Ramakrishna. He has shown that in our quest after truth, all that matters is the urge and aspiration of our inner being, and not so much any creeds or tenets. All the paraphernalia of a religious discipline will prove futile but for what is in reality the vitalizing force in *sādhanā*. The practices will prove abortive in default of a dash to achieve the end. When we are all eager to reach the destination, we need not worry

much about the means of transport, for it is all a question of suitability, the majority of men walk on foot, but only a few can stand a flight by air. The world situation would have been simplified a good deal, if the teeming millions were of like mind and like temperament. But the fact points to the contrary. Differences in nature are found to count much in many spheres of life, and it is no wonder that in religious life too individual temperament and topographical conditions are turned to account. So one particular religion cannot be regarded as absolute. On the contrary, the religions have been the landmarks of civilization, and the religion of a race points to the level of culture it has attained. So to attribute to one particular religion all civilizing value is to indulge in egotism and arrogance. Ramakrishna by his master experience demonstrated all these in a far more effective way than anyone else.

It may however be contended that we are making the most of Ramakrishna and his message, and may be told that the saying, 'Truth is One' and all that is as ancient as the hills. It is indeed a commonplace of culture that the Vedic sages sang of the One in the words, "*Ekaṁ sad viprā bahudhā vadanti,*" i.e. "Truth is one, sages call it by various names." Of course, in the world where there is a race after novelty in almost every sphere the presentation of this point of view will have its natural effect and one may find to one's relief that all that Ramakrishna revealed is a truth the world already possessed and that the best that can be got out of him is only a reinforcement to religion and for that matter to the religions. It is perhaps fairly correct to say that to the Vedic sages the problem, if there was a problem at all, was not regarding any possible reconciliation of some contending religions and on that account several religious disciplines. Most probably nomenclature was a source of some trouble. It is quite easy to understand that the expressions of the unity of the highest spiritual experience, by different individuals in different ways—symbols, similes and metaphors—will contain the impress of their respective personalities. So all that the Vedic sages emphasized was the unity of their experience of the Supreme against the difference in the modes and mediums of expression.

We should not, however, forget that Ramakrishna with the help of his *guru* Totapuri attained to the state of beatitude at which he realized the absolute unity and comprehensiveness of being—a stage of spiritual perfection which is presumably the highest. But as we have already pointed out, the synthesis of all possible points of view is involved in such experience as an implication and that is sufficient for the individual concerned. The present-day world finds itself in far more complex condition than those in which the Vedic sages found the valley of the Indus. In modern times three or more developed religions and the corresponding cultures came to clash with one another. Besides, there was much wrangling over the cults even within the same religious fold. Hence Ramakrishna's message had to be worked out in following in detail the prominent arduous religious disciplines and in experiencing in his being their fulfilment. He in fact did not lack anything that could possibly induce him to suffer so much. I must say even at the cost of repetition that it was only for the sake of humanity that he suffered a " sea of anguish." He took up one discipline after another and the manner in which he realized the cherished ideals of the religions showed that a cosmic plan was being revealed through him, for his whole life has been unfolded as an open justification of the best that has hitherto been attained by mankind, that is to say, in these days of hectic excitement and heresy his life stands out not only as an inspiring example to the aspirants but also and to a larger extent as an argument with infinitely greater force than all those devised by human speculation can command, for the spirituality of the universe as well as for the truth of spiritual experiences. He not only realized in his own being, but also imparted his realization direct to his disciples, and we are fortunate that some of those who lived, moved and had their being with him are still with us. If we have still any doubt as to this illustrious personality, we have just the chance of removing it by getting into touch with them. Anyway, if we take into consideration the full facts of Ramakrishna's life and the experiments he made, we shall have reason enough to say that he came not only to put the old wine into a new bottle but more truly to show that the old bottles are all

filled to the brim and that whether to take this or that bottle is all a matter of choice and that the elixir contained therein is equally serene and when drunk whatever the bottle equally affords peace. So the statement that Ramakrishna is simply a reiteration of the age-old truth, smacks, I should say, of an anachronism.

The whole matter may, however, be viewed from another angle. It may be asked: granted that a synthesis is effected what does it avail? Without going deep into the matter, we may say that the query itself proceeds out of a prejudice. In this day, politics is evidently the major interests of the educated and the politicians their real leaders, political integrity and independence is the main consideration in the matter of a nation's prestige. So it is no wonder that the words of Ramakrishna—belonging as he does to an unfortunate nation politically as well as economically—may fail at the moment to impress the collective mind of the East as well as of the West which is at the present time too much overwhelmed either by the sweetness or the hideousness of the song of the machine-gun to lend ear to one who speaks from a sphere that is very near to man's heart. It is indeed true that the leaders all over the world are too preoccupied to pay heed to one who came to save mankind. His divine mission will none the less work its way however much we may try to whittle it down, for Truth is eternal and it must prevail.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AS THE PROPHET OF THE CHURCH INVISIBLE

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I hope my audience will bear with me if I begin with an account of my first awakening to the reality of the Church Invisible as I stepped inside a visible Church on a ceremonial occasion. It is the Ethical Church at Bayswater in London to which I was introduced by an English friend, who is at the moment out in Spain for repatriation of the British refugees in that

unhappy land. It was the 3rd of July, 1927, when the Church was celebrating the thirty-fifth anniversary of its foundation with a special memorial service, followed by the unveiling of a painted window dedicated to the memory of Elizabeth Fry, the Norfolk philanthropist of English Prisons Reform fame. What made a tremendous impression on my mind—and my memory still loves to linger on that first impression—is the unexpected sight of the full-sized statue of Jesus Christ installed on one side of the pulpit and that of Lord Buddha on the other. This came as an agreeable surprise upon me, and that for reasons which I need not recount here. Anyway I kept for some time straining my eyes in order to make sure that, in the dim religious light of that sanctuary, I had not fallen an easy victim to a fond delusion. On being reassured that my eyes had not played me false, I realized in a moment of inspiration, as it were, that the scene, which I had at first taken to be one too good to be true, may quite conceivably, in that context at least, be one too good *not* to be true. Indeed, the whole atmosphere of the place, along with its entire appurtenance, both realistic and symbolic, impressed upon me, with a peculiar persuasiveness, the truth that there can be no ' peace on earth and goodwill towards men ' until we shall have discerned in all visible Churches the progressive revelation of the Church Invisible as the sponsor of that human unity or solidarity which veritably is, here and now, and not merely something ever more about to be. What with the rich symbolism of Walter Crane's painting of " The Torch-bearers " in adaptation of the two well-known lines of Charles Kingsley:

> " Still the race of hero-spirits
> Pass the torch from hand to hand;"

what with the inscription, on the upper part of the large pulpit, of Wordsworth's famous line:

> " Thanks to the human heart by which we live ;"

and what with the marble altar, in the centre, bearing the inscription on its four sides:

> " An altar to the Ideal: The True: The Beautiful:
> The Good ";—

there had been created just that spiritual *milieu* which furnished the best commentary upon the text of a world-wide ethical fellowship of the human race. From this pulpit of the Ethical Church, sanctified by the visible representation of two of the noblest samples of humanity—of Jesus the Christ and Gautama the Buddha—I had the inestimable privilege of addressing the congregation at a Sunday morning service in January, 1928 on this very theme of ' The Church Invisible.' As I observed in the concluding portion of that address, and as I do believe even now, it is this conception of the Church Invisible that alone can guarantee the realization of the cult of Internationalism, the path to which lies not along the road of nationalism or insular existence. We are often reminded that the civilization of today is national in its roots, but international in outlook—very much like the tree that has its roots struck deep down into the soil, while its branches spread out far and wide into the sky above. But mischief, alas, always lies about the root! Nor is the root a faithful index of the thing in question. " By their fruits ye shall know," and not by their *roots*. When all is said and done, we have got to remember that a Parliament of Man or a Federation of Cultures must remain only an idle dream of the Futurist, until and unless the making of the international mind is an accomplished fact; and this can only come about under the perpetual inspiration and watchful care of a Church Invisible. On no other condition can the East and the West meet to their reciprocal advantage in the thought-exchange of the world. In the geographical dispensation of the League of Nations the East may be a negligible partner, but not so, as we venture to think, in the federation of Cultures, the realm of Spiritual Values. According to the economics of spiritual life of the world, there can be no senseless duplication of functions. It is, because, and so far, East is East and West is West, that the twain can, and must meet, as they have evidently done in their common allegiance to this prophet of the Church Invisible, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa.

In literalness of fact Ramakrishna was the visible embodiment of the Church Invisible,—translating into actuality through his

life-long thought and conduct, the ideal enlivening it. His famous dictum—" as many minds, so many pathways to God "—has proved, as it is destined to prove for all times to come, the very *Magna Charta* of religious catholicism, emancipating us from religious bigotry and intolerance. The outward simplicity of the oft-quoted dictum belies its profundity in respect of its spiritual value. It clearly enshrines, on the one hand, a belief in the infinite and unique worth of the Individual in matters pertaining to the Spirit; and, on the other, it proves to demonstration that all revelation of God, which is the basic fact of Religion, is *ad modum recipientis,* proportionate to the receptive capacity of the worshipper. As an apostle of the Church Invisible he has given the redemptive warning that religion, in the name of loyalty to a visible church, borders on irreligion; that patriotism, local or communal, is not enough ; and that the apotheosis of one's religion or church is the last idolatry of the devout soul. Against the incidence of a despotic absolutism of a particular creed or church, what Ramakrishna appealed to is the spirit of Absolutism itself which is pledged to Justice, in the name of whole, to each according to its special place and proper rank. Herein the saint of Dakshineswar strongly reminds one of the preacher of Galilee who drew men away from the worship of false gods with the perpetual reminder: " My kingdom is not of this world." But this is no mere negative prescript landing us in sheer emptiness. That negative direction has for its positive counterpart the life-giving message: " I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." That is why Harnack once said that " Christ could think of no higher task than to point men to Himself." But institutional Christianity has missed that point altogether inasmuch as we find Dean Inge protesting against "aberrations of institutionalism" and Dr. L. P. Jacks tracing the " lost radiance of Christianity " to that " institutional selfishness," which is the sworn of our spiritual life. May not this warning be lost upon those that profess to follow in the footsteps of the Paramahamsa! Time and again his followers have been reminded by his renowned disciple, Vivekananda that the Master came to the world not to add one more sect or cult to the already existing sect-and-cult-ridden

world of ours, but to rally the scattered forces of Religion in the name of the Most High, the Nameless and the Ineffable.

To the distracted world of today the saintly Ramakrishna has one gospel to preach—the gospel, namely, of redemption from the tyranny of traditions and institutions, of castes and creeds, of ceremonials and shibboleths, the tyranny, in short, of all exclusive cults of worship that have rent asunder, in the name of religion, sects, communities and races of the world from one another. When Religion, the only Power on earth that makes for unity, cohesion and brotherliness among the people, is switched off into questionable channels of religious exclusiveness and intolerance, it behoves one to exclaim, as Whitehead has done in his *Lowell Lectures* that " religion is the last refuge of human savagery." A severe indictment of religion, indeed, and an incontrovertible one as well! But I would endorse the verdict with the qualification that the singular use of Religion be replaced by the plural. Religions have been tried and found wanting but Religion still goes strong. Religion is, confessedly, of tribal origin; but it is, in the end, what we make of it—a synonym for world-loyalty. Comparative Religion or the Soviet abolition of Religion will be a sad cure of this " savagery " of religions. As one of its devoted students remarked at a meeting of Fellowship of Faiths in the Holborn Church, the study of Comparative Religion has left me only comparatively religious. For, the search after the lowest common multiple of the religions ends in the reduction of Religion to its lowest terms and dilution of it to the vanishing point of religious indifferentism. Religion, today, stands on an inclined plane. It is difficult to follow the upward path and rehabilitate Religion, divested of that " institutional selfishness " which entails this savagery. But it is so easy to follow the downward track into the pitfall of nihilism. This summary treatment of Religion is being eagerly sought in certain enlightened quarters. It is only the other day that our young hopefuls met at the Calcutta University Institute and pronounced the verdict that religiosity of the Indian mind has hitherto obstructed India's progress, and as such it is to be given a month's notice as being an undesirable tenant in the University area.

Probably it will be said that one swallow does not make the summer; but the appearance of the swallow on the horizon certainly indicates which way the wind blows!

The constructive problem that stares us in the face today—this Parliament of Religions in particular—is the evolution of a new scale of values, a new method of valuation. The worth of a religion is not to be measured by the counting of heads which often leads, as we have known to our cost, to the breaking of heads. " There can be," said Cardinal Newman, " no common measure of agreement, when there is no common measure of minds." The *raison d'être* of this Parliament is to devise that greatest common measure of agreement on which alone depends the salvation of the human race. When, however, a devotee like Ramakrishna is sent out to the world for the salvage of our religious beliefs it is a clear indication that God does not despair of man. What is most appropriate, therefore, to the needs of the occasion is the prayer of Browning the poet-philosopher:

" Make no more giants, God, but elevate the race at once."

RAMAKRISHNA IN CONTINENTAL EUROPE

JEAN HERBERT

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As we know, Vivekananda himself brought the message of Ramakrishna to Europe, and especially to France. He even took the trouble to learn the French language to be able to speak at a Parliament of Religions in Paris. And Dr. Boshi Sen[1] recently discovered an autograph letter which the Swami wrote in French.

Sister Nivedita wrote several books in English which obtained a wide circulation and helped to introduce the teaching in Anglo-Saxon countries.

Many of the most distinguished indologists in Europe, Sylvain Levi in France, Max Müller in England, etc. showed great interest and wrote and spoke on the teaching.

[1] An admirer of the Swami. See page 12.—ED.

But the teachings of Ramakrishna as expounded by Vivekananda, did not spread at that time outside a very small circle in Continental Europe.

It was Romain Rolland, my great fellow countryman, one of the most generous hearts which the West has known, who really started to spread the message of the saint of Dakshineswar.

The volumes which Romain Rolland devoted to Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda met with tremendous success and were translated into many languages.

I was privileged to see and read the many enthusiastic letters which Romain Rolland received from all parts of the world after he had published those books.

The interest created is evidenced by the fact that a great demand has now been created for the actual teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. Extensive translations are now being made and published in French, German, Greek, Swedish, etc.

An indication of the interest aroused may be gathered from the fact that the French translation alone has been reviewed at great length throughout Europe, from Portugal to Poland and from Belgium to Greece.

The universality of the appeal may be seen from the fact that the author[1] of the French translation has received enthusiastic encouragements from famous Protestant clergymen, from Roman Catholic monasteries, from important Jewish rabbis, from Theosophical Societies, Masonic Lodges, Buddhist Societies, Societies for psychic research, and principals of University faculties.

We have felt the need of publishing cheap translations of a part of the lectures of Vivekananda whose appeal is largely to the educated people, and the sayings of Sri Ramakrishna, with no Indian scientific-looking words, which could cater to the wants of peasants, workmen, mountaineers, etc. And I have only just heard that the agent for distribution in France, who could only with difficulty be prevailed upon to accept 100 copies a few months

[1] The speaker himself.—ED.

ago, now wants a first consignment of 1,000 copies of every book that comes out.

The Ramakrishna Mission has made the great sacrifice of sparing one of its most distinguished monks for England, and another who has been working in Continental Europe for three years, commanding respect and admiration from everybody. And his success has been such that I have come here with a message to the Mission that we need more of their men.[1]

RAMAKRISHNA AND THE ONLY ROAD TO PEACE

PRESIDENT LIM BOON KENG
Amoy University, Amoy, Fukien, China

I

The world as we see it with all the available means at our disposal is simply a vast arena of conflict and strife, with the inexorable law of evolution prevailing everywhere. Throughout nature there is an endless struggle evidently towards some definite end. Hence from the earliest times of human existence, some sort of religion has exercised great influence upon the conduct of individuals and society. The aim of every religion is to create faith in some spiritual power, the recognition of which enables human beings to restrain themselves, and to live in a righteous way, so that the greatest good may be the result.

Of course it was inevitable that savages should have very crude ideas of natural forces, and should attribute their activities to the action of spirits. With the progress of civilization, the priests and tribal leaders elaborated the dogmas of their religion, and created the rites and ceremonies for the worship of these invisible beings. On this account, religion has been the almost indispensable bond that has been the means of enabling large communities to live together peacefully. Since the masses have been taught to believe in the mysterious power of the spirits in

[1] A monk of the Mission was deputed for Vedānta work in France, a few weeks after the Parliament.—ED.

helping to shape the Destiny of mankind, so the main object of nearly every religion is to enable the human individual to get the greatest happiness.

II

Unfortunately, however, the priests and leaders of every religious sect have been more or less at loggerheads with one another for one reason or another. The causes of such misunderstanding have been very numerous, but as a rule, they have little reference to the fundamental aim of the religions concerned. Thus for example, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and the Chinese cult of Humanism, often misnamed Confucianism, all aim to urge man to be good, and to attain happiness through the practice of virtue. All these religions do emphasize the supremacy of the Divine Law of the Supreme Deity, or God, sincere belief in whose authority, is the best means of enabling man to live righteously. The moral maxims of every one of these religions are almost identical, as they have been formulated in the course of ages as the result of social experience. However each one of these religions has inherited vast traditions with all sorts of legendary accounts of antiquity, and of priestly dogmas.

The Jews could not be persuaded to depart from the traditional teaching of their Patriarchs and Prophets. The Christians of all sects have their own doctrines concerning the Incarnation of God in a human being, through whose crucifixion, salvation from the curse of the Almighty is to be obtained. The Mussulmans, on the contrary, will abide only by the revelations of their Prophet Mohammed, whose objection to the Trinitarian doctrine led to the emphasis on the oneness of God throughout the Koran. The Humanitarian cult of China since the days of Confucius, has strenuously advocated a sincere agnosticism towards the mystery of the spiritual world. In this world, the study of nature—it stresses—will reveal the determinism of cause and effect. Love must be the potent force to bind human society. It must be nurtured at home through the practice of Filial piety. The golden rule of Reciprocity can only be put into practice, when all men will be sincere.

In modern times, the spread of Science, and the marvellous achievements of scientific experts in all departments of research into the arena of nature, have enabled man to harness the forces of nature to facilitate the means of existence. The majority of the intelligentsia among scientists in all countries are probably agnostics, if not materialists or atheists. This fact must be frankly acknowledged. Scientists always recognize that they must tolerate the views of religious preachers, if peace is to be maintained. Until education has provided the means of teaching science adequately to the whole community, it is surely hopeless to expect that the general public in all countries can be expected to accept the interpretations of modern scientists with regard to the facts of nature. These modern views may be quite incompatible with the doctrines of the different religions, and unless the intelligentsia with a good knowledge of modern science, will tolerate the superstitions of the different sects existing now in every land, conflict and strife must be inevitable. The danger is that the believers in religious creeds may rise in opposition to the exposition of scientific views concerning the phenomena of life.

III

As the aim of every religion is to teach man to love his neighbour and the whole of the human race, it is quite indispensable that the preachers of all religions should inculcate true love as the basis of international goodwill. Unless the leaders of each community have a clear understanding of the foundations and aims of the important religions, they will tend to uphold only the doctrines in which they have been taught, and will be more or less antagonistic against the teaching of other sects. Differences of opinions must lead to conflicts, which may result in serious consequences. If each national group will stand for the religions of the country, to which they belong, in the long run, hatred and antagonism must arise to drive the opposing communities to war. The love of one's country is almost instinctive in the human race. That it is quite necessary to fight in defence of one's country is only a phase of Chauvinism. The Chinese people, who love Peace above themselves, will go to any length to prevent the eruption

of war. However, there is a limit with regard to every phenomenon. It is a human habit to magnify the mysterious forces that operate with due conspicuous features, that cannot escape the observation of everybody. The scientist can easily understand that there is a universal law of nature, by which everything in human society can be interpreted and explained. The evolution of the human race can account for all the differences in culture, religion and customs as well as for the various anthropological and ethnological characters, which so markedly distinguish one race from another. In the interest of civilization and world peace, the leaders of each nation should understand that it has always been a real menace to humanity to inculcate ideas of race superiority among the masses of any particular nation, for the result has always been the establishment of a mental attitude that is so irritable that it can be easily incited in the interests of Chauvinism. As a matter of fact, it is part of the primitive instinct of the race to entertain fear of every living thing in the environment. The duty of all religious leaders must be to inculcate the love of peace and to show the practical means of living up to this noble ideal.

Unfortunately in recent years, in some countries, undue advantage has been taken of this human susceptibility to train young people in defence of their country by inspiring them with fear and suspicion if not even hatred of other nations. That the government of any country should have control of education is a sound principle. However, the national leaders must not for selfish purposes, prejudice the mind of the youths in favour of any sect or political party. Educational institutions should have perfect liberty to teach science, philosophy and arts in such a manner as to reveal the value of Truth, and to inspire all with a faith in the excellence of Beauty and Goodness.

IV

The greatest hope of mankind is that the different religions will in the future utilize all the means at their disposal to impress upon the youths of all lands the fact that humanity, in reality, constitutes one family so that in course of time a real federation of all nations may be formed, with the sincere object of

establishing an intellectual bond that will result in a new world society with readiness to carry out the noble ideals, which all the great religions have been preaching for centuries. Then there will be some hope that the plans of Disarmament, which have been fostered by many politicians and statesmen, may be sincerely carried out. But until all the religious propagandists have put into practice what they have so loudly proclaimed, it is useless to hope that the general public can be expected to put altruism into practice.

V

In order that a successful league of nations may be formed to unite all races and nations in the work of establishing Love and Peace throughout the world, the following means of promoting goodwill must be emphasized and sincerely adopted in the every-day life of every community:

(*a*) Perfect tolerance of all religious, scientific and political opinions ;

(*b*) Sincerity in the search and exposition of Truth and Beauty ;

(*c*) Benevolence towards all men irrespective of race, class or creed ;

(*d*) Righteousness as the basis of conduct ;

(*e*) Recognition of the interdependence of nations ;

(*f*) Appreciation of the fact that Progress implies the need of change, which may even cause a revolution.

It is therefore very essential that there should be opportunities for members of all nations to meet in order to do the work in co-operation for the advancement of civilization. At the beginning, it is important to select such subjects as will cause the least friction. Therefore such subjects as aesthetics, music, science and athletics are least likely to arouse racial or religious prejudices that may result in serious conflicts. When the delegates of all the nations are accustomed to work in co-operation, mutual understanding will naturally result, and friendship is inevitable. When

so much has been done, it will be possible for the League to attempt the more serious investigations for the mitigation of social and political evils, which have been the main causes of human misery and suffering.

It may be taken for granted that when goodwill and friendship prevail among the leaders of all the nations, there will be no real difficulty in tackling the economic problems of capital and labour which must be solved if society is to be relieved of poverty and all its horrible consequences. The fact that slums exist even in the richest Christian countries, is an undeniable proof that the people have only paid lip service to the teaching of Jesus.

VI

The prevention of War is today the most important international question, which statesmen and religious teachers must try to understand. Without a thorough comprehension of the psychological background prevailing in each country, the members of any League for the prevention of War, will not be able to accomplish much. We have had too much protestation of the Love of Peace and Justice. What is urgently needed is that all nations will make Righteousness the basis of their ethical laws and will have the determination always to make no profit that will cause suffering to others.

The League of Nations should seriously undertake this work, with the co-operation of societies such as the Rotary International and other philanthropic associations, which are now to be found in every country.

VII

The aim of the Sri Ramakrishna cult is a very noble one to establish inter-racial amity, religious toleration—harmony of faiths, international co-operation through the teaching of Sri Ramakrishna that " Every faith is a path to God."

The Centenary Parliament of Religions will surely help to create better understanding between the different religious bodies

throughout the world. Let us sincerely hope that at this first Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Parliament will emerge that spiritual force, which will enable all the leaders of different religions to make the utmost sacrifices for the enlightenment of all nations so that they will henceforth value Truth above everything else, and thus be able to practise faithfully what they believe to be the good doctrines of their religious masters.

VIII

It must be of interest to the religious leaders of all nations that the Sri Ramakrishna religion is very similar to the ancient Chinese Religion of Humanism, which has been misnamed Confucianism by Christian missionaries. Confucius over two thousand five hundred years ago, refused to admit that he contributed anything to this great Religion and he emphasized that he was only a transmitter of the Gospel of Humanism. Today Generalissimo Chiang Kai Shek of the Chinese Republic has started the New Life Movement, with a strenuous endeavour to put into practice the Tridemistic doctrines of the late Dr. Sun Yat Sen, who inculcates the urgent need of reviving the national culture on the principles of the national Religion of Humanism or Ju Tao.

IX

In the light of modern science through the marvellous revelations of Evolution as a cosmic force, this ancient Chinese religion will be acceptable to the intelligentsia of all countries. In essence it consists of three Fundamental Principles:—

1. Observe, study and obey the Law of Nature by the fullest investigation of all things ;

2. Extend love from the family to society, the country and all nations by the practice of Filial piety at home as the nucleus.

3. Make benevolence and righteousness the means of uniting all races and nations in one common fraternity to work for the good and happiness and peace of the whole world.

As regards the mysteries of the spiritual world, Confucius confessed his inability to talk on matters which he could not

examine in detail and he was perhaps the first Agnostic who advised his disciples not to be ashamed of admitting their lack of knowledge when asked about things of which they knew nothing. The Revival of this ancient Religion is the best evidence of the Reawakening of the oldest nation, which has preserved its civilization for over four thousand years. For centuries, China has always shown toleration of all religions. Today besides the native cults of Humanism and Taoism, the religions introduced from abroad such as Buddhism, Christianity and Islam have millions of adherents who work peacefully all over the country.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND RELIGIOUS SYMBOLISM

DR. GUALTHERUS H. MEES, M.A. (CANTAB.), LL.D. (LEYDEN)

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It is one of the supreme achievements of Sri Ramakrishna that he opened the eyes of the 19th and 20th century world to the deep significance of religious symbolism and that he demonstrated that symbols are not mere empty forms, but partake of divine life in all its fullness. Symbols, and in particular religious symbols, are not mere objective pictures, but are highly subjective, in that they form the most sacred and intimate part of our being. In them we live and move and have our being, and in truth they hold more reality—if I may use this expression—than we do ourselves in our surface consciousness.

When a new religion is born, that is, when a renewed impulse comes from the depths of the soul to the surface of mind, the divinity of form, the life in form and the significance of this life are again realized. And as a result, a revolution takes place in the mental and social life of the people.

When a religion is getting old and stale its forms lose their significance. They seem to have lost their life. Gods become mere images. Rituals become mere mechanical usage. Not only is the meaning lost, but the soul seems to have become dissociated and flown away. The life of the symbol has again

retired to the deepest recesses of mind, and becomes so secret that it is not even known to exist, and the form of the symbol has become commonplace.

When Sri Ramakrishna came on the religious stage in India, religion had become very much like that. The Mother Kālī had become a mere image to the greater part of the people, a form which was mechanically served or for the most a life that was not understood. The same as regards other deities. But the great Saint of Dakshineswar could not be satisfied with mere lip-worship, with mere play with formula and ritual. His soul thirsted for realization. Was the Mother Kālī a reality, was She God indeed? Or was She a mere form-relic of the past without significance? Years passed in a most intensive striving for realization. The depth of desire for truth, the depths of suffering because of the lack of knowledge, we can hardly understand. Sri Ramakrishna was like a drowning man, to whom a breath of air is the one and only necessity. He was one of the few true *bhaktas*. Nārada says that true *bhakti* is the feeling of the deepest misery when God is temporarily lost. Ramakrishna had really known God from the very beginning, for if this had not been the case, he would not have been able to experience this infinitely deep suffering and longing for realization.

Everybody who is searching for something, knows what he is searching for, otherwise he would not search. Similarly every religious seeker really knows God, otherwise he would not trouble to seek God. But he desires to bring God near. From the distance of the objective he wants to bring Him to the nearness of the subjective. From the depths of the unconscious he wants to bring Him to the surface of the conscious. The door between the infinitely great world of the Unconscious and the little world of the conscious requires to be opened, so that at any time life may pass to and fro. When I use the word Unconscious I mean it in the sense of the latest school of psychology. It is everything which is not conscious in us at the moment and which is yet our psychological heritage. It is not quite correct to say it includes the superconscious as well as the subconscious, unless we remember that the superconscious may be conscious as well as unconscious.

Few people as yet realize the supreme significance of symbolism in their life. They do not realize that even the words we speak are symbols for inner states. Language is a process of symbolism. Certain simple symbols are easy to learn. That the word "hunger" for instance is a name or sound-symbol for an empty and craving state of the stomach, everybody will understand. But the symbols for spiritual hunger and spiritual appeasement are very difficult to understand. Man became what he is through language which enabled him to talk about his varied experiences with his fellows. But a great deal of misunderstanding in history and at the present day has arisen through language. I do not mean through ignorance of the various languages of the nations, but through lack of contact by means of the underlying and universal language of the collective symbols.

It is clear that there are symbols connected with all our senses. There are sound symbols, visual symbols, olfactory symbols, gustatory symbols and touch symbols. Our "feelings" are rendered in the language of touch or taste. It is interesting that symbols are always connected with the senses. Even things that are far above the senses and beyond contact with the senses are expressed and symbolized by sense symbols, simply because there is no alternative. We think in symbols, we act in symbols, we live in symbols, we learn in symbols.

If we don't realize this, we are not really living. If we don't see that form cannot be seen apart from its indwelling and presiding life, we are not really *living*. We are then like dead beings in a dead universe.

We are told that all sound symbols, nay all life, evolved out of the primeval sound, the *Praṇava*. The supreme symbol is *Om*, the most sacred and secret word. To most people the Word is really secret, because it is too sacred to be understood and realized by them.

It is said that this supreme symbol was known to many peoples. The Egyptians held that the secret name of Ra, the Sun-god, was Ammon. Later it became a commonplace as Ammon-Ra, just as the sacred word of the Hindus is now on

the lips of many without being understood. In Syria the word 'Amen' was used. At first it was uttered at the beginning and at the end of prayers. Christians still use it and put it at the end of a prayer, where it is thought to mean: "So be it." Surely it means something like "so be it!" in the deepest sense of supreme creative energy. In the Gospels and in other scriptures we read that "in the beginning was the Word!"

Of the infinite number of sound and other symbols that evolved out of the Word some have been found to be universal, others to be the possession of a particular race or nation, or of the adherents of a particular religion, others again are known only to the inhabitants of a particular district or to the members of a particular clan or family. And others are symbols of individual people, and are of meaning only to them.

The latest schools of psychology, especially that of C. G. Jung, are deeply interested in symbology. They realize that man's life cannot be seen apart from symbols.

In his *Psychology of the Unconscious* Jung has dealt with the symbolism of ancient religions and of the mythology of many races, in connection with the life of ordinary people of the present day. For there is a deeply significant relation between the two. It is now recognized that dreams form the mythology of the individual as much as mythology represents the dream life of a race. Both in mythology and religion and in dreams of individuals there appear the same universal symbols. They are called *archetypes*. These universal symbols have the same meaning to people of different periods of history, to people in various religions and living in various parts of the world. They come out of the deepest layers of the "Collective Unconscious."

The "Collective Unconscious" is the great psychic storehouse of humanity. All human experience is laid down in it, from the very beginning of the human race. It is our heritage, and much of it is at our command. Our individual unconscious lives and moves in this collective unconscious, just like our conscious self lives and moves in conscious contact with others in society.

In the Collective Unconscious there is no East or West.

When we go into the inner life of man and penetrate those more superficial layers of his consciousness conditioned by the colour of his skin, the climate and soil of his country and the customs of his ancestors, we come to a psychic field which is neither particularly Eastern nor Western. We can even say more. It often happens, as we all know, that Easterners feel deeply attracted to Western life and Westerners to Eastern life. Also it is not at all a rare occurrence, for instance in the religious field, that an Easterner has religious dreams of a typical Western nature, or that a Westerner in a dream unexpectedly experiences the life behind, for instance, the form of an Eastern deity.

One of the archetypes is " the wise man in the heart." He represents a store of wisdom, and we may perhaps say, our inmost and deepest self. He is known in dreams and visions to people of all races and all religions. His form will, as a rule, be in accordance with the tradition of the dreamer or seer, though by no means in every case.

It appears that it is this wise man who sends messages to our conscious self in the form of dreams, daydreams and visions. These messages are contained in the language of symbols. Our unconscious knows this language very well, but to our conscious personality it is very much of a secret language.

Because we do not know much of the language of the Unconscious we understand little or nothing of these dream messages. The messages consist of combinations of symbols in such a way that they form a little story. Sometimes the story is meant as an eye-opener when we are about to make some mistake. As such they contain a warning. Sometimes they give a hint as to future action or are anticipatory. Sometimes they point to a mistake made long ago as the root of a present problem or trouble. Sometimes they contain only an impersonal parable of universal interest.

We must only try to understand the language of symbolism. I feel tempted to relate a dream of the last mentioned type, dreamt by a person I know very well. It was the first of a series of dreams, dreamt by a young man. I shall relate it in the first person.

" I dreamt that I was in an ancient gloomy castle, a vast medieval building with a number of dark passages, rooms and halls, and secret pitfalls and staircases. I was with a companion. There was hardly any furniture in it. Everything was very old and very vast, it was like a labyrinth. I did not feel at all at home. I was afraid, and for some reason my conscience was not clear. The same applied to my companion. I knew that the Lord of the castle was a friend, but of what avail was that in that dark and terrible place? I was afraid, and wanted to get away. Then suddenly I heard someone coming—something approaching. We both got into a panic and fled, each in an opposite direction. I fled into a dark passage and fell through a trap-door. Then I came through a short passage into a vast cage. It was infinitely large, and completely dark. Wire netting was all round. I was doomed to pass an infinity in that cage. My sorrow was intense, my suffering was indescribable. In the depth of my woe I uttered from time to time a wailing cry. It was terrible in its utter forlornness, loneliness and darkness. There seemed to be no way out, no hope. Once there was a faint light, and I saw the Lord of the castle looking at me from behind the bars. Then the darkness and terror engulfed me again. I uttered my cry, which I can still hear vibrating in my inner ear.

" Something in me said that this infinity had to last thirty years.

" Then this part of the dream suddenly finished and a new chapter, as it were, began. Again I am in a castle. But it is not the same ' I ', and it is not the same castle. The castle is not gloomy and dark and empty. It is full of light, and full of people, moving about on their business. It is full of furniture, everything is neat and up-to-date. The only point of similarity with the first castle is that it is also very big. Again I have at first a companion, but later I am alone.

" This time I have not at all a bad conscience. If in the first castle I did not know what to do and was full of fear, now on the other hand I am there with a purpose, and I am full of confidence that I shall achieve. I am there in that place because I have heard that in the underground depths of the castle is shut up a

miserable man. This man is supposed to utter from time to time a wailing cry. I have taken upon me to help him, and to liberate him from his prison. (There is not the slightest self-identification with that man—he is now a complete stranger.) For this purpose I go round in the castle, I enquire of many people how I can find the prisoner, I visit libraries and look into books, and study maps of the castle, in order to find out where he is and how I can get to him. And gradually I get deeper and deeper down in the castle where everything is getting more and more like that in the first part of the dream. But I am not at all afraid. At last I hear the wailing cry of the prisoner in the distance and it touches me strangely and deeply. Then finally, I stand before the heavily bolted door of the great prison, and am about to liberate him. Then the dream stops."

This dream contains a great number of significant hints. I shall mention only a few. The castle is the world. In the first part it is ancient and gloomy. The human personality makes mistakes and lives in ignorance, there is no purpose, no initiative, no discipline. It lives passively and passionately. It represents one aspect and part of our past—ages of ignorance and selfhood are, as it were, condensed in this symbolic picture of the lonely man in the dark and terrible castle. The world is terrible to him who lives in darkness. The world is a labyrinth! Where is light? Where is the way out of prison?

Yet even in the deepest depths of materiality there is one note of hope, however slight. Once the Lord of the castle was seen dimly behind the bars. But the dark night of matter is resumed. It lasts an infinity. The soul groans in darkness.

But the saviour lives. He goes out into the world to help another. He does not go out to help himself, he has the definite purpose to help *another*. By helping another he eventually liberates himself. I think this may be one of the most significant hints of the dream.

At first we have companions, in ignorance as well as in knowledge, in sin as well as in virtue. Later when we begin to do matters in right earnest we have to face life alone. Our

knowledge begins to be specialized, certain things nobody can understand. Nobody can help us to choose in the greater problems of our course but the divine voice in our heart, giving purpose and direction to our life. It takes away our primitive fear of the world, our fear of life, and inspires us with supreme confidence.

In dreams of this kind we are in touch with phychological and spiritual realities. People who have such dreams—and they are not a few—affirm that they present a world with certain happenings which in a way is more real than the world of everyday life. In fact that well-known everyday world is much more dream-like.

The messages which come to us from that inner world are sometimes of such a nature that we could not possibly invent them. The Unconscious is a wonderful creator and has great dramatizing capacities.

In this Unconscious live a great many psychological factors. So many parts of our personality are in it, sometimes requiring to be readjusted, or sometimes seriously at war with one another. In that case we speak about a " complex."

All the happenings in our dreams tell us something about our unknown inner life. All the persons that appear are part personalities of ourselves or of collective humanity. If we dream for instance of our mother, the dream has in 9 out of 10 cases nothing to do with our own mother, but the person of the mother is the symbol of the mother aspect in us or of the Universe in man. To unevolved people appear only ordinary part-personalities, to people that are striving to attain God or Self-realization, higher personalities appear, in either dream or vision. These personalities then come out of deeper layers of the Unconscious. They are universal.

Such universal symbols or archetypes let us consider for a moment. One category consists of symbols like for instance a crown, a triangle, an abyss, a ray of light, a door or gate. Whether they appear to a European, an Asiatic, an African or an American, they contain the same meanings, and hold the same messages whether in dream or mythology. Another category consists of personalities: gods and demons. Former schools of

psychology used to regard the gods and the devils of religion as phantasmagoria, the latest school takes them very seriously. There are many thinkers today who realize that the deities as well as the devils are psychological realities. They live and move and have their being within us. The deities preside in our superconscious, the devils in our subconscious. Both have to be realized to exist by the spiritual seeker. It may be dangerous to ignore the demons. I like to narrate a dream of the same person mentioned before. This dream was a terrible experience, which shook him to the very depths of his being and made a lasting impression upon him.

The person in question dreamt that he was in a room with a friend who was lying down helpless on the ground. First a glorious-looking young man came in, radiating light and love. In spirit the dreamer bowed down before him, realizing his supreme spiritual significance. This man occupied himself mostly with the helpless friend. Then by another door entered another man, who did not come up to the group, but kept somewhat in the background. The dreamer went to him and said: "Now we are all together here, and alone in the world, let us be friends," and he tried to shake hands with the fourth person. But this one turned his back to the dreamer. The dreamer, however, insisted, and tried to grasp his hand again. Then suddenly this fourth man managed to clasp the *left* hand of the dreamer looking at him with a triumphant and sardonic smile, not letting go the hand at all, and the dreamer suddenly knew with great terror: It is the devil! And he tried to save himself by rushing back to waking consciousness. For days after he lived in terror, for the dream had been of a startling reality, and he still saw those evil eyes, and the pointed nose, and felt the claw-like grasp. He had never thought of the possibility of 'the devil' really existing in some way or other, and had regarded him only as some medieval phantasm.

Years after he spoke about this dream to Jung, the great psychiater. Jung confirmed the conclusion he had arrived at himself by that time. All through the period of his spiritual striving and unfoldment he had systematically refused to see evil,

to recognize the dark side in nature and in his own self. He had imagined everything to be good, Nature to be pure. In short, he had idealized everything, all the time, however, nurturing the dark forces in his unconscious. The message from within was that he must recognize the existence of those dark forces, in order to be able to overcome them. They are like a hidden disease. If we do not take the proper medicine against it, it may seriously impair our health and eventually destroy our body.

In those four persons we have a complete picture of the main forces in human psychology. The dreamer himself is the conscious personality, the active person. The helpless friend is his unconscious self, which is passive. The state of lying down is only a symbol of passivity. The glorious spiritual man is a symbol of what we might call the higher self of humanity, and the fourth man of the lower self, or collective devil.

In our unconscious live forces and personalities which are intimately our own, and others which are collective, that is to say, common to all humanity.

The person who had had this dream, had seen his *personal* shadow or personal devil several times in previous dreams, and always recognized it as such. Once it took the shape of his own double, trying to tempt him to stop meditation practices and enjoy the world, another time it took the shape of a great hairy ape. He always knew it was part of his *own* nature, he was slightly afraid, but watched it full of interest. This time, however, it was something outside his personal nature. It was something not belonging to him that was making an attack on his personality. And he was mortally afraid in a spiritual sense. The experience and vision of Sri Ramakrishna when he saw this " devil " pass out of him, is well known. He called it the *Pāpa-purusha.*

In connection with this there is another interesting universal symbol. It is the symbolism of right and left. Among all peoples, in all religions the right hand symbolizes the conscious, the light, the spiritually or morally right. The left hand symbolizes the unconscious, the dark, the sinister. The gods and helpful psychological powers have been associated in all ages with the right hand.

The word " right " does not for nothing indicate a moral right. In the English language the association between " left " and " wrong " or " dark " does not exist. In Latin, Italian and other languages, however, it is different. " Left " is " sinistro," which means both left and sinister or gloomy. In India also the right hand takes precedence over the left, the right hand is meant for pure purposes, the left for impure ones.

If we read books of Eastern psychology, we are struck by the number of gods and demons that are mentioned. Most interesting is for instance the *Tibetan Book of the Dead,* so ably edited by Dr. Evans-Wentz. The pleasant and wrathful deities represent different mental states. Modern psychology takes those psychological entities very seriously. In some abnormal cases it happens that a human personality becomes subverted, his conscious becomes unconscious, and a part of his unconscious takes conscious control. In the East one would say: Such a man has become possessed by a devil. In the West he is nowadays not exorcised by a priest, but dealt with by the psycho-analyst.

Our so-called " enlightened age," which has now luckily come to an end because scientists have begun to realize they hardly know anything yet, had neglected and ignored all these powers in our unconscious. When no explanation can be found it is always easiest to deny things. This ostrich policy in science is now dying out.

The deities of the superconscious, as well as the devils of the subconscious are collective symbols, built up by many generations of God-worshippers and devil-fearers. Great persons, teachers and prophets became such living symbols in the Collective Unconscious. They are of course not a product of the human mind, they have life and soul of their own. They are unseen personalities moving in the collective unconscious world, and appearing to the conscious personality in messages from the Unseen—in dreams and visions.

The Divine Mother appears to persons all over the world, and has appeared in all ages. Her form and special attributes may vary according to the religion and the period in which the

beholder lives, yet She is the same divine power in the soul of all people and in the heart of humanity.

The same applies to the other great Deities. In the dreams and visions which grant us a glimpse into the deepest layers of our being, where form ceases to be, lie the great realities in symbolic form, realities " more real " than the fleeting show of " real life." The deeper we dig into the soul, the more universal, the more real the substance which we find. All details of the individual lives, the little fames, glories, vanities and beauties, will all pass away but the great Deities in the very bottom of the soul will not pass away, for they are eternal. Civilizations may come up and go down, ages may pass, and everything on the face of the earth may be changed, yet man will always again worship the Mother Goddess, he will always again bow to the Divine Teacher in the deepest recess of his heart. To the Deities in the soul of man, because they are great realities, will eventually always be the victory, though the screen of night is sure to hide the light from time to time. The dark forces in the unconscious—death, ignorance and *adharma*—will masquerade each time in the history of the world as well as in the history of the individual, in a different form, but the light at the centre of the universe, that is, in man's heart, will always be one and the same, bound to pierce its blessing rays from time to time through the gloom. In the words of the *Gītā*: " Whenever *adharma* prevails and *Dharma* declines, then I manifest myself in a human form to re-establish *Dharma* and to destroy evil." Sages like Sri Ramakrishna come on the crest of the divine wave, which is bound to come from time to time, welling up out of the depths of the soul of mankind.

The importance of the lesser deities and of the demons that appear to our inner vision must not be overrated. The great mystics as well as the students of psychology warn against this. We must not be swept off our feet by them, but realize that *we* as individual souls with the grace of God are masters of our fate and of our ultimate goal. In the course of time nothing can hinder our progress without our will. If we strive towards the very highest we must aim to be free, both of the entities of our

subconscious and of the beings in the superconscious. The latter may seem strange. At the end of the third book of Patanjali we read that response to the overtures of divine shapes which appear to us in meditation, is a sure means of preventing us from attaining the highest spiritual goal.

The great Tibetan *yogi* Milarepa said: "The visions of the forms of the Deities upon which one meditateth are merely the signs attending perseverance in meditation. They have no intrinsic worth in themselves." The *Demchog Tantra* gives the same idea: "*Devatās* are but symbols representing the various things which occur on the Path, such as the helpful impulses and the stages attained by their means." Both quotations (taken from Dr. Evans-Wentz's *Milarepa*) could almost have been taken from a recent text-book of psychology. It is also the message of the Buddha that Truth and Liberation lie beyond the Deities. All who have studied the life of Sri Ramakrishna, know, that in order to attain the highest realization, he had to overcome even the Mother Herself. He had to go beyond Her, he had to go deeper, and it took him a tremendous struggle before he could manage to do it.

And yet he could never have become what he was if he had not been fully and unreservedly given unto Her. Also this is part of his message, worthy of notice to a world in which there are so many that imagine they can arrive at Truth directly, without the aid of divinity, without the help of spiritual symbolism.

Thus we have seen that on the one hand the Gods are symbols of great realities of spirit. The Gods are more real than we are, because they stand above race and history. Relatively and comparatively speaking we are mere dreams, continually moving and changing. Our destiny, our real life lies in the deities and *gurus* in our inmost being. For they are eternal in as far as humanity is eternal.

But it is difficult to take the symbol for the supreme reality, if possible at all. "That" is beyond symbols. Silence seems to be the fittest symbol for it. In this connection it is interesting that the highest (or one but highest) picture in the series of

mystical Tarot cards is "the World." As if the universe were the fittest symbol for Reality, for the Self.

The gods are the primeval words, the fundamental moving powers of our psychology. They are the great secrets of the universe. In ancient Egypt it was believed that if one knew the secret names of the gods, one became all-wise and all-powerful. Thus indeed it is. It is man's task to learn the secrets which are, strangely enough, more manifest and more real than himself! A great Persian mystic once said: "God is manifest, and if we do not see Him, we are blind!"

Every form in the universe is a symbol, since it is the expression of some indwelling life. It has a message for us if we care to listen. Every happening in life is symbolic, every incident contains a message to us, a message from the wise man in the Unconscious, a message from the Mother, a message from God. Those who have the eyes to see, know that they can learn from even the most insignificant-looking events. To us many things seem trivial and insignificant. To the great ones like Sri Ramakrishna they are pregnant with meaning. They know the secret language of the universe. Therefore they tell us to watch continually and listen with an open heart—to be always "at it."

Of course there is symbolism in all the states of consciousness. Dream symbolism is in a way very remarkable because sometimes symbols appear which are entirely new to us. They startle us with their newness. They come to us out of the collective unconscious. We suddenly realize that there is beyond our little personal world a great world of unknown realities.

Sri Ramakrishna demonstrated that all religions are fundamentally one. They are as so many roads leading to the same—one—goal. They may err in some minor points of theology or in some of their methods of achievement, but in their *basis* they are one. Psychology has come to the same conclusion, in the first place not by way of personal realization, but by comparative studies and by the ordinary methods of science. The study of the collective unconscious proves the unity of religious experience beyond any doubt. The same laws apply to the mind and the

heart of the European or the Asiatic, and what is more, the same laws apply to his soul. Deep down in the soul there is no East or West, there is only humanity. Deep down in the soul the quarrels of the religions as to their supremacy cease. There is only Truth.

This does not mean of course that there ought to be only one religion. The various religions of the world supply various psychological needs. We cannot require all people to believe the same things and to act in the same manner, as little as we can want them to eat the same things and to wear the same dress. Unity is a blessing, uniformity may be a curse.

Another of the great achievements of Sri Ramakrishna is that he was a herald of the unity of spirit and matter. The last century was the close of a period of dualism. Materialism and spiritualism fought for supremacy. It was difficult to be at one and the same time a materialist and a believer in spirit. Sri Ramakrishna realized that spirit and matter are one. It is even wrong to mention two names, two words! Matter is the expression of spirit, is a symbol of spirit, nay, more, *is* spirit.

We are living now in a period in which science is once again dealing with religious experiences without cutting them up into pieces. Now psychological science is no more engaged in spiritual vivisection, but serving its purpose by explanation and solution of psychological knots.

60 years before modern science in its latest achievements in the persons of physicists like Eddington and Jeans, and psychologists like Jung and Maeder signed the peace treaty between religion and science, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa proclaimed to the world their essential unity.

Sometimes it is enlightening to study the root of symbols, to find the origin of the meaning of words. For instance the word *matter*. What does it mean? It means *materia,* the Latin word for matter, derived from *mater,* mother. Matter is the mother. Matter-energy is a symbol of the Mother Goddess.

In ancient Christianity the Holy Ghost was synonymous with the Mother. The Holy Ghost or spirit was the divine creative

energy as embodied in matter. Its symbol was a dove. It was something like Śakti. And instead of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost there was often mentioned the Father, the Mother and the Son, not unlike Śaivism.

Science seems to have given up the causalistic view of the universe. By giving up determinism it has opened the door to the indeterminism of spiritual phenomena. By doing this, science has entered on a new era. The period of materialism is finished, at least as a philosophy.

I found in a recent scientific book about the Universe, I think of Jeans, that when we get to the root of matter, we can only find . . . . mind! If this is really true, it means that the doctrines of the ancient Hindu and Buddhist sages which posit mind as the creator of the Universe, are well confirmed.

In any case more than fifty years before science began to confirm such views tentatively, Ramakrishna realized these truths in his own being and gave them to the world. He is a great prophet who ushered in the new age some time before the doctrines and the structures of the age of duality began to give way and break down.

Ramakrishna himself is a symbol—a symbol of such richness and depth that he has to be realized to be understood. No man can bring him to us. He himself only can make us know him.

May his words go home to the hearts of the men and women of today, may his example be followed, may his love inspire, may his realizations cause realization, and may his message go all over the world, for the good of many! So be it.

RAMAKRISHNA

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In order to see a country, to know the hearts of its inhabitants, and finally to learn to appreciate things in their true perspective, the best method is to travel,—the tranquil pilgrimage along the

roads taking advantage of the hospitality of those who live at the side of the route.

I tried to follow this principle all through my life, asking for alms from some persons and instruction from all who possessed spiritual wealth and offered to share it with others. It is in this way that I met Ramakrishna Paramahamsa.

On a beautiful summer day in Switzerland I walked with a light heart full of joy towards the little house of Romain Rolland who received me for two days. An Indian too was going to the house like me. We entered it together and when Rolland appeared I had much to hear but nothing to say. The Indian was Mr. B. K. Mukherjee, and he spoke of Ramakrishna, Rolland knew him by name, but I think it was on that day that he formed the resolution of writing the book which he wrote and which he had to write on Ramakrishna,—he is the living experience, the life itself of religious unity. It is the affirmation, not in the complexity of doctrines but in the simplicity of heart, of this glorious unity of which the various human religions are but so many reflections.

A hundred years ago the Swan of Dakshineswar took to its wings. But today his words seem to me to be more necessary than ever. I am not speaking here of India, I am thinking of Europe, my sick and unhappy motherland—this Europe rent asunder by battles which reveal its spiritual poverty.

In Europe religion has been everywhere relegated to a position of secondary importance: tolerance is born of the diminution of spiritual values. Fanaticism has disappeared from the domain of religion and invaded that of politics and sociology. It is as dangerous today to be excommunicated politically in dictatorial countries as it was formerly in the Spain of Inquisition to be excommunicated from religion. Everywhere in Europe hatred divides those who do not adhere to the same creed or to the same social ideal.

Now that the Ramakrishna Mission is expanding in the West it may be hoped that the winged words of the Master, adapted to the form of present times, should import tolerance and love into this chaos of political religions. Now his influence would

manifest itself on the two faces of the orient and the occident, and illuminate our whole world with that light which we pray for so much today.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA AND UNIVERSAL RELIGION

SWAMI NIRVEDANANDA

Ramakrishna Mission

With my heartiest greetings of love and goodwill and my respectful obeisance to you all who have assembled here on this sacred, solemn and historic occasion, let me address you very briefly on Sri Ramakrishna and Universal Religion.

One need hardly say anything by way of introducing Sri Ramakrishna to you. You know very well how India, from one end to the other, is being stirred up to revive her ancient cultural ideals by the momentous influence of the inspiring life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. And you also know that this benign influence has travelled far beyond the borders of this land.

In spite of the fact that to the vast mass of humanity residing outside this land India means little more than a tiny outline on the world's atlas, in spite of the fact that to some of the foreigners India still appears to be only a land of dark savages who have yet to be reclaimed, taught to stand and walk like human beings, it is significant to notice that during the last twelve months some of the towering intellectuals of the modern world together with hundreds of seekers of truth and peace have rallied enthusiastically round the Birth-Centenary of a poor, barely literate Brahmin priest of the 19th century belonging to an out-of-the-way village of India.

Obviously, there must be something in Sri Ramakrishna that has its appeal for all men of all countries. In and through the language of his life must have been expressed some universal, soul-stirring ideas and ideals that pierce through the hard crust of creed and colour obsessions and reach the very core of the heart of humanity. The late lamented French savant, Dr. Sylvain Levi, was perfectly right when he said, " As Ramakrishna's life and

mind were for all men and all countries, his name too is a common property of mankind."

Of course, opinions may differ with regard to the exact position of Sri Ramakrishna in the hierarchy of the world's saints and seers. Some may regard him as a great mystic, some as a saviour of humanity, some even as an Incarnation of God. Whatever be the merits of each of these different readings, it is clear that Sri Ramakrishna with his brilliant life of spiritual realization is recognized by all as one of the galaxy of perfected souls illumining the path of spiritual evolution of the human race. There is very little doubt about the fact that breaking through the gathering clouds of scepticism and sectarianism Sri Ramakrishna has burst forth like a fresh and very big luminary on the spiritual firmament of the world. Now instead of trying to determine the exact position and magnitude of this luminary, let us make use of its light in reading the import of the spiritual lessons handed down to us by the great spiritual masters of old.

Humanity, for sustaining its religious beliefs, requires now, more urgently than at any other time, a fresh, clear and convincing demonstration of the spiritual verities of life and existence. And this is precisely what Sri Ramakrishna's intensely spiritual life has presented to the world at the present critical moment of its religious history.

We all know how human civilization at the present moment is passing through a precarious phase of transition. The old order of things is changing very fast. Ancient ideas and ideals are crumbling into dust. The traditional authority of prophets, scriptures and churches is being challenged and almost cornered every day by incontrovertible findings of science and heretical verdicts of untrammelled reason. Indeed, religion today has to face and pass through the ordeal of critical enquiry, else it will have to hide its existence in the archives of the archaeological museum. There is no other alternative. People are now apt to believe that scientific investigations will succeed in unravelling all the mysteries of nature, and philosophical speculations will be able to interpret these findings and ascertain the plan, purpose and reality behind creation. Hence, they look upon religion as a

useless product of the dark days of human ignorance. In it they find nothing but bundles of irrational dogmas and meaningless rituals that are concerned more with imaginary and hypothetical worlds than the real and throbbing world before us. Naturally, they are not in a mood to accommodate such religion in their society except, of course, as an interesting relic of the barbarous past.

Surely, there is quite a large number of people who still claim to have some sort of faith in religion. But, unfortunately, most of these fundamentalists have very little insight into the fundamentals of religion. We seem to care more for the externals than for the essentials of religion. A little routine-work, some study and a good deal of tall talks compose what most of us call religion. And we are divided into numerous groups, each under a specific church with a strictly circumscribed faith. And each group claims to have the monopoly of the right form of religion. Thus losing sight of the deeper, broader, universal basic elements of religion, and becoming narrow, exclusive and sectarian in its outlook, the theistic section of humanity is divided hopelessly into numerous hostile camps.

Thus so far as religion is concerned, human civilization is about to be torn to pieces by the forces of scepticism on the one side and sectarianism on the other. Like religion, every other element of the social structure is being shocked terribly by the tremendous and reckless battering of free-thinking upon tradition. The traditional codes of morality also are in immediate danger of being swept absolutely out of existence. People appear to be seized by a craze for something novel, something daring,—no matter how preposterous or shocking that may be. There is, for instance, an insistent demand from certain quarters that unfettered sexual freedom should be made the rule of human life. There are some, who are trying seriously to see if mankind may go without clothes. In the political and economic fields there is hardly any room for God, morality or philanthropy. Fight, competition and exploitation carried on in the name of divergent conflicting group-interests are reducing the entire world into a permanent war-zone. Thus equating the entire experience of the past to zero,

we are making everything about us in every compartment of our social life shaky, confused and chaotic. Who knows if we are not rushing at a frantic speed by a downward curve of evolution? Who knows if the beast-in-man released from traditional bonds of religion and morality has not suddenly jumped out to enjoy a holiday?

This, in short, is the world in which Sri Ramakrishna has appeared as the exact antithesis of all that we see about us. He gave values to those very things that the modern world is trying to ignore and set aside. And this is precisely why, though he had neither wealth nor academic distinction, nor power and prestige in the temporal sense, he grew up to a stature that is becoming visible from the farthest corner of the earth.

Religion was the breath of his life, morality his backbone. In his perspective, realization of God appeared to be the worthiest object of human life; purity and devotion, love and humility, selflessness and service appeared to be the real wealth of man far superior in value to anything that the external world could give. And he developed all these to a unique degree of perfection. Through both his body and mind he has left a brilliant record of God-intoxication, spotless purity and surging love for humanity.

With a mind broad as the sky, deep as the ocean and pure as a crystal he plumbed the depths of spiritual truths, and demonstrated one by one by his intuitive experience the truths behind the entire wisdom of the past taught by the world's ancient seers and prophets. He realized God as the nameless, formless, transcendental Absolute. The primary underlying substratum sustaining the universe instead of being merely a construction of philosophical speculation, mathematical abstraction or poetic imagination was with him a hard, tangible, living fact of direct experience. Then he realized that the entire diversity of appearances that we call nature was nothing but a manifestation of the same Impersonal God. Thus before his spiritual vision did unfold the majestic and magnificent oneness of the universe towards which all sciences and all philosophies are surely and steadily converging—oneness, that alone can furnish the concepts of equality and fraternity with a rationale and provide the world with a firm basis

for the much-needed edifice of universal brotherhood. Then again, he realized through a multitude of spiritual visions that the same Impersonal God does appear as Personal God with various names and various forms before the immaculate minds of earnest devotees.

Then, standing on the bed-rock of his rich and varied experience, he declared with all the emphasis that he could command that all creeds, Hindu, Islamic, Christian or of any other denomination, based on monism, qualified monism or dualism, are so many distinct paths leading alike to the same goal, namely the realization of God, the Final Cause of the universe, who is one and the same in spite of innumerable varieties of spiritual visions.

This truth was declared by the Vedic seers in the pre-historic era of human civilization when they chanted "*Ekaṁ sad viprā bahudhā vadanti,*" "Truth is one, sages call it by various names." Since then, the spiritual heart of the Hindus has been tuned to religious catholicism. And whenever the mass-mind swayed by blind impulses tended to be narrow and exclusive, mighty spiritual seers have appeared in this land to reiterate the message of universalism in religion. And Sri Ramakrishna, the latest of this brilliant group, has become conspicuous by preaching the same truth of Universal Religion not only to the different sects of the Hindus but also to all the religious communities of the world.

Undoubtedly time is now ripe for realizing this message of Universal Religion. By the wonderful achievements of science the world has already been compressed into a small and compact mass. Secular knowledge augmented by contributions pouring in from different quarters of the globe has already stepped out of esoteric seclusion. It is high time that spiritual knowledge also should be immediately delivered out of all ruts of communal and sectarian exclusiveness.

Modern knowledge has made it perfectly clear that unity in diversity is the very keynote of nature's music. Sri Ramakrishna observed the operation of this law even in the realm of religion. In spite of the varieties of skulls and complexions, the same human heart is beating with the same rhythm all over the world. And

for the growth, expansion and illumination of the human heart, Sri Ramakrishna observed the same set of essentials in the basic structure of every form of religion. Just as the same group of essential ingredients is assimilated through innumerable varieties of physical food, just as the same thoughts and sentiments are expressed through hundreds of languages and dialects, so the same group of spiritual truths is served to humanity through numerous sets of symbologies. Beneath the superficial crusts of dogmas, mythologies and rituals, Sri Ramakrishna observed the same kernel of spiritual truth. Surely, devotion and purity, love and humility, selflessness and service, search for God and resignation to the Divine Will are things valued equally by all pious souls, no matter to what particular churches they may happen to belong.

Indeed, Sri Ramakrishna's life inspires us to hush all notes of discord by emphasizing this central unity and making room for all the varieties of creeds that add to the beauty, richness, strength and grandeur of the House of Religion. His life inspires us to remain strictly loyal to our individual churches and yet embrace the followers of all other creeds as fellow-pilgrims on the path of Blessedness. It inspires us to integrate in this way all the religious forces of the world and direct the same to deliver human civilization from the catastrophic consequence of its present confusion of cultural ideals.

Indeed, the more will humanity realize the import of Sri Ramakrishna's contributions, the more clearly will it see that with his life has opened a new chapter of our religious history. His life appears to be a symbolic suggestion of a new era when all sect-bound thoughts will be released, all narrowness and bigotry will disappear, when religion will be comprehended in terms of universal humanity and all the varying notes issuing out of the different creeds of the world will combine to form a magnificent and undreamt-of Harmony of Religions. May God grant us the necessary strength, vision and urge for expediting the advent of the glorious era of Universal Religion, Universal Brotherhood, Universal Love, Harmony and Peace!

SRI RAMAKRISHNA, THE MESSIAH OF SPIRITUAL DEMOCRACY

SWAMI PARAMANANDA

Vedanta Centre, Boston, U. S. A.

MY SPIRITUAL KINSMEN

This seems to me the most appropriate way to address you who have come from the far corners of the globe to pay homage to the spirit of one who was the very embodiment of unity and universality. I specially made the long journey from America not only to attend this convention but to bring a message of love and goodwill from the American people for the success of this Parliament of Religions.

In 1893 a similar convention was held in Chicago in connection with the great World's Fair. The souls, who conceived the idea of bringing together under one roof, all the existing religions of the world, were inspired by a mighty Force.

The presence of Swami Vivekananda was an epoch-making event, not only for India, but for the whole world. It was not through accident that Swami Vivekananda stood before that august assembly and proclaimed: "It is a sin to call a man a sinner!" How such a statement must have startled a Western audience, accustomed to think that all men are conceived in sin and born in iniquity! Here was the voice of ancient India expressing through the mouth-piece of Swami Vivekananda that the soul is ever pure, immutable and divine.

The significant achievement of the 1893 Parliament did not lie in the fact that any one religion overrules the others, rather, it demonstrated vividly that all the peoples of the earth form one great human family and that all the various expressions of religion contain holy and masterful truths, so its natural result was the quickening of the thinking minds of the world to greater and more daring freedom of thought and expression.

During the last thirty-one years, it has been my destiny to live and work in the United States of America. I have travelled

extensively throughout the length and breadth of that vast country, lecturing in all the important cities, and have visited European countries several times for the purpose of spreading the cause of Vedānta following the custom inaugurated by the illustrious Swami Vivekananda.

During this long period of service, I have had ample opportunity to observe the influence of the last Parliament of Religions. Many organizations have sprung up in the name of unity, universality and brotherhood. A sincere endeavour has been made to abolish dogmatic narrowness, religious bigotry and other forms of racial misunderstanding. All this may be directly traced to the influence of the last Parliament of Religions held in the great metropolis of Chicago.

At this point, I want to say to my countrymen that if Swami Vivekananda's great victory on that occasion and during the subsequent years of his work in America had consisted in proselytizing and making converts to his own faith, his whole mission would have been a failure and the immortal teaching of his Master, Sri Ramakrishna, would have been defeated. On the contrary, his courage, his clarity of vision and his sincere, steadfast devotion to his Ideal, set a new standard in the realm of religious thought. He pointed out clearly that a missionary and a messenger of God may be a true brother to mankind wherever he is led and that the distinctions of caste, creed and nationality are but fictitious barriers, easily overcome by the idealist.

Swami Vivekananda's greatest service, to his Motherland and to the world at large, is that he unfurled the white flag of peace over the Western Hemisphere when he gave it the significant text: "Truth is one, always one, men call it by various names."

There is no accident in the cosmic universe. The convening of the Parliament of Religions in Chicago was not through chance and the convening of this present conference is also a matter of destiny. The Spirit of Sri Ramakrishna, the inspiration behind this whole conception, broods over this great and unique assembly and will guide it to a successful issue.

In order to gain a comprehensive view of the direct influence

of Sri Ramakrishna upon our modern life, it is necessary to understand existing conditions, social, religious and ethical both in the East and in the West at the time of his birth. During the latter part of the nineteenth century, the whole occidental thought-world, especially in the continent of North America, was going through a peculiar transition. The unprecedented advancement of Science, the ingenuity and inventive genius of man which released unimaginable power and resources for material advancement, brought about a natural reaction in the minds of the people, especially in regard to traditional religious faiths and dogmatic beliefs. Rationalistic thought gained ground every day and it became more and more difficult to accept and tolerate the existing tenets of religion.

At this period, there was a violent clash between the old and the new without the possibility of reconciliation. Science was regarded as the enemy of religion. Old-fashioned religion could no longer be accepted by men of rational instinct and scientific trend of mind. In the midst of this upheaval, the innate hunger of the people gave rise to new phases of spiritual expression designated as "new cults" such as Christian Science, Divine Science, Metaphysical Healing, New Thought, Spiritualism, Theosophy, etc.

A natural culmination of all this spiritual unrest was the convening of the Parliament of Religions in Chicago. It was not an accident that Swami Vivekananda, the great disciple and voice of Sri Ramakrishna, came there to represent India and her ancient culture.

Sri Ramakrishna's greatest contribution to the modern world of religious thought was to bring into it a note of definiteness. Our present age of multiple theories and intellectual speculation had set the hearts of men adrift in regard to God and the ultimate realities. Here we find Sri Ramakrishna rising like a star of hope in the midst of chaos and confusion. His equipment and self-expression did not lie in erudition and intellectual cleverness but in direct vision and perception. When we approach him, he does not try to confuse our mind with theological doctrines and metaphysical implications, instead he gives us this unique and

convincing statement, " Yes, I have seen God and known Him, and furthermore, I can help you to see and know Him."

It was this definiteness of the Master that captivated his disciple, Swami Vivekananda, who had explored restlessly and tirelessly, and in so doing, had acquainted himself with all the contemporary teachers of Sri Ramakrishna's time. Nowhere did he find any positiveness until his good fortune led him to the illumined Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa.

The Master was an untiring explorer in the realm of spirit. His mind was peculiarly bent upon practical demonstration in regard to what is ordinarily termed " the Unseen." He never wanted to accept anything without definite proof. In this respect, his mind is comparable to the minds of the scientists, and his apparent lack of learning was an asset rather than a handicap, because it was entirely uncoloured and unbiassed. No hazard was too great, no self-sacrifice too difficult for him. He gave himself wholly and completely for the purpose of discovering the end of all religions and by so doing made himself a channel through which the infinite power flowed with unalloyed clarity. As a result of his exploration in spiritual realms, he brought back the definite revelation that each religion, sincerely lived and practised, leads to the same goal of *Sat-Chit-Ānanda,* Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute.

I like to call Sri Ramakrishna the Messiah of Spiritual Democracy. An orthodox Hindu coming to the Saint found in him all the marks of his chosen *Avatāra* (incarnation). A follower of Mohammed saw in him all the characteristics of his prophet; while a Christian recognized the very Spirit of the living Christ.

He demonstrated by his life and example that there is nothing but Unity, that all men are the product of the same Substance whether it be called Brahmā, Vishṇu, Śiva, Kālī, Allah, Jehovah, Father in Heaven, or in the terms of the monists, the Absolute, the One, the Eternal Brahman. Names make no difference for they cannot alter the immensity and allness of that one Supreme Reality. That is why this cosmopolitan convention, held at the conclusion of the hundredth anniversary celebration of Sri

Ramakrishna's advent into this world is the most fitting homage we can lay at the feet of him who was a true unifier of mankind.

There are many illustrations of the genuine catholicity that pervaded Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual consciousness. Today, when we are constantly thinking in the terms of democracy, we cannot help being impressed with which dynamic force he brings this specific ideal to a practical issue. Certainly, there is nothing so needful for the endless and multiple diversity of these modern times as unity in diversity. It is the only foundation for universal tolerance, based as it is upon wisdom and truth. Although Sri Ramakrishna did not claim to be a social reformer or religious agitator, he offered as the fruition of his spiritual contemplation some vital principles, equally applicable to the social, moral and spiritual needs of mankind.

Sri Ramakrishna was not satisfied with one-sided attainment. He wanted to enjoy God in many ways—through devotion, through prayer, through songs, through whole-hearted concentration, in the rapture of meditation, and sometimes by plunging deep into *samādhi,* when he became entirely oblivious of his physical existence. This trait in his nature unfolded itself through his remarkable harmony of spirit which was not merely tolerance but the ability to find the same essence existent in every expression of religion.

How refreshing to find in this world of dissension and conflict, one who is the living example of God-concentration and one who makes his spiritual realization include the wholeness of divinity and the allness of humanity. His life, his spiritual aspirations and his *sādhanās* (methods by which he sought to attain his goal) are profoundly helpful to the modern man. He does not denounce anything or anyone but he offers a spiritual hypothesis for the remedy of all evils. He proves in his own life that high ideals can be lived on earth in the flesh even in this so-called materialistic age. His silent life of dynamic force laid a firm foundation for ideal democracy, since it brought forth the truth that every man is fundamentally a part of divine Essence, and that in spite of all differences, dogmatic variation and barriers of caste and nationality, man is a child of one indivisible, Absolute Being. The

realization of this fact provides a solution for the social, political, and religious evils that rend the skies of the world with the lightning of dissension, and the thunder and havoc of war.

Sri Ramakrishna's mysticism proves that not only super-men may attain the highest but even a common man may unfold his divinity. His methods are entirely unlike those of most reformers. He does not strike ; he does not denounce ; but by gentle, unaggressive and unpretentious means, he clarifies the whole atmosphere of doubt and fear and fills the mind with positive thoughts. He is the veritable fulfilment of his own remarkable parable that if a piece of alum is dropped into muddy water, the mud settles in the bottom of the vessel and the water becomes clear. Intellectual scepticism and denunciation never produce anything constructive.

Sri Ramakrishna's practical idealism may be expressed in the words of the Nazarene, " Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." Also, " What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

In spite of the beauty and appealing idealism of these utterances, man has found it difficult to put them into practice, owing to his fear of personal loss. Despite his intellectual achievements, man has formed the habit of looking on religion with suspicion, fearing that it may deprive him of earthly gain. For this reason, when we see the great ideals of Jesus of Nazareth, of Gautama Buddha and of the Aryan Ṛishis manifested in the life of an exalted being, we believe that God and man are not separated by a vast expanse but are linked together through transcendental consciousness. We also see that God may become a living Reality in the life of man ; that we may not only aspire to know Him but that we may live with Him, talk with Him, walk with Him, and be wholly guided by Him in every hour of the day. When we are able to perceive this, then alone are we convinced of the eternal value of Truth and God.

Again, may I call Sri Ramakrishna the Messiah of Spiritual Democracy. He never forgets that his *Ishṭam* is the same in

essence as the chosen Ideal of all other existing forms of thoughts and beliefs.

We can readily understand his tolerance for India's multiple faiths, but it is more unusual that he should reach out to know and understand the basic principles of Christianity, Mohammedanism and other religions of the world. Is not water known by many names? One calls it 'water,' another *'vāri'* and a third *'aqua,'* and a fourth *'pānī,'* yet it remains ever the same substance. In like manner, the one Absolute Being-Intelligence-Bliss is invoked in different ways by some as God, by others as Allah, Hari or Brahman.

The mission of Sri Ramakrishna was not to create another new sect in the already overcrowded religious atmosphere of India and of the world at large. His rare gift to mankind cannot be over-estimated. His mode of living, his simplicity of conduct, his naive, child-like parables, dynamic with the force of Truth, disarmed every one completely.

To unveil the illumined life of Sri Ramakrishna is to venture to portray the invisible spirit. May his passion for humility and service, sanctity and ecstasy of God, stimulate our minds so that they may reach out and attain the unattainable.

It is our great good fortune that we may, today, pay our humble tribute to the Saint of Dakshineswar, who has brought us together under this one roof. May his beneficent spirit shower upon us his divine love. May he help us to abolish all our differences and dissensions and fill our hearts with gladness and peace.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S MESSAGE TO THE MODERN WORLD

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India is essentially a spiritual country. It is not surprising that it should produce men of the highest spiritual culture, thereby

shedding imperishable lustre on her name. Beginning from pre-Vedic Ages down to the present, she has shown the path of communion with God by love, devotion and self-surrender. The celebrations of the Birth-Centenary of a great Indian religious teacher is indeed a sign of the awakening of her religious consciousness. We are on the eve of a New Age which marks the Centenary of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, just a century after another world figure universally known as Raja Rammohun Roy who held aloft to erring humanity the banner of Universal Brotherhood.

Sri Ramakrishna has become a household word in Bengal, nay in all India. His *Kathāmṛita* which was published for the first time in the monthly journal *Pūrnimā* published from Bansberia and edited by my humble self is an admirable book replete with sound moral maxims and simple but profound religious truths which fell from the lips of this great religious teacher of the world. In his life the highest morality and the highest spirituality met. He was married at the age of twenty-four to Sri Sarada Mani Devi, a girl of six. It was a marriage but in name ; for a betrothal it was and it was nothing more. He did not live with Sarada *en maritalement* when she grew up into womanhood, but constantly lived in spiritual ecstasy and accepted her as his first disciple, whom he used as an instrument for working out the Divine Will. Her life like his was dedicated to the service of God and humanity.

The name of Vivekananda is closely linked up with his *guru* whose religious enthusiasm inspired him to preach the Universal Religion of the Vedānta.

The world is moved today by the spiritual power of Ramakrishna who was the embodiment of Truth and Renunciation. Simple and unostentatious, with little or no scholastic education, he reached the highest pitch of perfection by a systematic course of religious training and discipline in all its different phases, and in spiritual realization, through the passage of years, he gained an intensity unparalleled in the history of the world. The harmony of all religions was the lesson of a life which realized the unity of the Godhead in diversity and the presence of the Divine Mother in everything. The worship of *Śakti* was the keynote of his religious life.

India, the spiritual home of the world from hoary antiquity, had degenerated, having lost her spiritual fervour, but has re-awakened at the divine call of Ramakrishna. This religious awakening betokens a glorious future for India, which had always sought to impart its teaching through the Vedas, Upanishads, *Gītā*, Tantras, *Chaitanya Charitāmṛita* and other sacred books for the highest good of humanity.

We see on all sides, the pulsations of a new life in a rejuvenated India, which has produced numberless sages and saints to the lasting glory of her ancient culture and civilization, thereby demonstrating to the world the triumph of soul force over brute force. The softening influence of Sri Ramakrishna had a wonderful effect upon the fiery spirit of Vivekananda, whose thundering voice moved the world to a sense of divinity and soul-power. Their ennobling influence has played no mean part in shaping the disintegrated moral and spiritual forces of the great human family, in spite of the vicissitudes of maddening strifes and struggles during the last hundred years.

The life of Sri Ramakrishna, therefore, furnishes an example of the realization of God in man by life-long *sādhanā*. His ideal of sacrifice and service to humanity irrespective of caste, colour or creed,—to men and women whom he regarded as no less than visible symbols of the Godhead—has effectively captured the imagination of the best thinkers of the world today. The inner significance of this world-wide celebration of the Centenary of his birth consists in the silent inauguration of a New Age which is fraught with the deepest consequences for the future of our nation as a whole. Sri Ramakrishna has infused new life into the philosophically dry bones of India. The potency of his teaching is bound to act and react powerfully on the jaded nerves of humanity.

It is quite in the fitness of things that a World Parliament of Religions is being held as a part of the Centenary celebrations. Sri Ramakrishna himself was a living Parliament of Religions, for did he not undergo the spiritual disciplines of Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and other religions, one after another and realize God

in each path? May he give us the strength to live the life he lived and practise the ideals he taught!

SRI RAMAKRISHNA

AS THE TEACHER OF SYNTHETIC HINDUISM AND OF A NATION-BUILDING RELIGION IN INDIA

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I. SOCIAL AND NATIONAL ASPECTS OF RELIGION

Religion has not only an individual value but a social and national value as well. It is easy to confine religion to mere individual ecstasy or to mere philanthropy. But he is the man of integrated vision who realizes that the true religion not only binds man to God but binds man to man as well. It is easy to make religion a divine force. Indeed the history of humanity is largely the history of hatreds in the name of the God of Love and wars in the name of the Prince of Peace. All this has been due to a false and distorted vision of religious values in life. Even in regard to the purely individual and personal values of the religious life, we find that some persons starve the body and others hamper it and yet others try to forget it in their search for the welfare of the soul. It is not given to all men, not even to all saints, to have a calm and balanced and inclusive outlook. It is the privilege of the greatest of the sons of God to have a unitive vision and an integrated outlook, to see life steadily and see it whole, and to irradiate the life human by the life divine.

It has been the good fortune of India to have a succession of such saints of integrated and unitive vision. India has been well called the mother of religions. Whatever may have been the heights or depths of political life in India, she never faltered in her vision of God. From the time when the Ṛig-Vedic Ṛishis declared—*Ekaṁ sad viprā bahudhā vadanti,* the inclusiveness of the Indian mind has grown and has never declined or decreased.

In the *Bhagavad-Gītā* the voice divine carried the inclusiveness to the loftiest heights possible. The same integrated and unitive vision was the privilege of Kālidāsa and of Śaṅkara. Though in later times narrowness and sectarianism became rampant, many later teachers recaptured the ancient vision again and again and gave a renewed vigour to the national heart.

II. WHAT IS SYNTHETIC HINDUISM?

Hinduism has no founder in the sense in which other religions in the world have got founders. The source of Hinduism is the Veda, and the Veda is eternal and is merely imparted by God, at the beginning of each cycle of creation as a chart for the guidance of humanity. The teachings of the Vedas are implemented and amplified by the Darśanas and Smṛitis and Itihāsas and Purāṇas and Āgamas. There is a synthesis running through all of them, and that synthesis (*samanvaya*) has been achieved by the Vedānta. So to an outsider Hinduism appears chaotic and even self-contradictory, but the doctrine of the *adhikārī* brings in a cementing and unifying bond and makes Hinduism a League of Religions which are congruent and harmonious and which have their final source in the Vedas.

Let us never forget the primary fact that the basis of the higher spiritual life is the ethical life. The *Katha Upanishad* says:

Nāvirato duścharitānnāśānto nāsamāhitaḥ
Nāśāntamānaso vāpi prajñānenainamāpnuyāt.

i.e. " Neither the unrefrained from wickedness nor the unrestrained nor the unmeditative, nor one with unpacified mind, can attain This (Ātman) even by knowledge." *'Dharma'* is the name given to the totality of thoughts and words and acts binding towards the welfare and salvation of the soul. Unless each human being does his duty well, social life would be impossible. Without proper social life, the spiritual life would be hindered at every step. Let no one imagine that *Dharma* means ritual alone. Ceremonial purity must go hand in hand with ethical purity. Both are needed to achieve mental purity without which spiritual happiness is absolutely unattainable.

The Hindu religion stresses the doctrines of *Karma* and Re-incarnation. These doctrines distinguish it from all the other religions of the world. They mean and declare that there is a law of moral causation which is similar to the law of physical causation. They reconcile most rationally the inequalities of life with the abounding grace of God. *Jñāna* (wisdom) can burn up *karma* and cancel *Sañchita* and *Āgāmi karmas* and also nullify the deep-rooted *vāsanās* (tendencies), though not the fruits, caused by *Prārabdha karma*. This is a cosmos ruled by God, and hence, just as old *karmas* must have their way, the counteracting new *karmas* also must have their way. God is Love as well as Law. Devotion to Him will make us realize our true nature as being pure soul in its essential and eternal and inalienable nature of *Sachchidānanda* and as being separate from the body and senses and the mind and will confer on us eternal and infinite bliss.

It is on the bed-rock of the above truths that the higher *sādhanās* of Hinduism have been built. The link between the general activity of the embodied soul and the self-realization of the eternal and infinite bliss of pure soul life is *Karma-Yoga*. It has the element of *karma* and the element of *yoga* as well. It is called *yoga*, because it introduces that transmuting touch (*Yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam, Gītā*, II. 50) by which the state of action and striving and pain is transfigured into the state of self-poised spiritual bliss.

When the mind is thus purified by *Karma-Yoga*, it should practise meditation and contemplation by *Yogic sādhanā* so as to attain concentration. It is only a man of true concentration of mind that can turn his mind definitely and continuously in the direction of God-love and God-realization. The ascending scale of *sādhanās* is *Karma-Yoga, Raja-Yoga, Bhakti-Yoga* and *Jñāna-Yoga*. *Bhakti-Yoga* is concentrated devotion, and *Jñāna-Yoga* is concentrated knowledge in its highest form of *Anubhava* or *Vijñāna* (Realization).

Bhakti and *prapatti* are often said to be separate, and the southern school of Vaishṇavism exalts *prapatti* over all other *sādhanās*. Here we get into sectarian emphasis. The battles of

jñāna and *bhakti* were fought. And yet later we had the spectacle of a civil war between *bhakti* and *prapatti*. But after all we cannot love God without knowing Him and we cannot know Him without loving Him. Even so we cannot become full of self-surrender (*prapatti*) without becoming full of devotion (*bhakti*). Nor can we become full of *bhakti* (devotion) without becoming full of self-surrender (*prapatti*). Nor are we justified in imagining any cleavage between *kaiṅkarya* (service) and *bhāva* (devotional feeling). Devotion means love of God and rises in value when it becomes more and more free from all selfishness and makes us love humanity more and more and immerse ourselves in God-meditation more and more.

III. SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S SYNTHESIS OF HINDUISM

The greatest of the interpreters of God to man in India in recent times was Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. His early life was a wonderful preparation for the vast and vivid synthesis of his ripe religious realizations. He fell frequently into ecstasy in his boyhood when he saw beautiful objects in nature or heard devotional music full of ravishing tenderness of feeling. He became the priest of Rani Rasmani's Kālī temple. There his realization of the divine secret of the world became keen and full. One day, after years of vain longing and frustrated expectation, he realized the omnipresent divine. He himself said about that sudden and unique experience: "I saw an Ocean of Spirit, boundless, dazzling. In whatever direction I turned great luminous waves were rising . . . . I lost all *ordinary* and *natural* consciousness and I fell . . . How I passed that day and the next I know not. Round me rolled an ocean of ineffable joy. And in the depths of my being I was conscious of the presence of the Divine Mother." That was why and how he was able to reply to Vivekananda who asked if he had seen God (a question which he put in vain to Keshab Chander Sen and other great men) and say: "I see Him, as I see you, only far more intensely."

Such realization of the omnipresent Divine is the highest summit of all human realizations. It can be reached by any one

of the many well-known roads leading to the kingdom of Heaven which is in all of us. Such store of *sādhanās* has been called by Rolland as " the science of directed ecstasy." A *sannyāsinī* and later on a *sannyāsin* named Tota Puri aided Sri Ramakrishna by imparting to him their disciplined knowledge of the scriptural and traditional means of attaining superconscious and blissful spiritual experience. In modern India the preoccupations due to the complexities of modern economic life which require higher standards of life and to the intricacies—often purposeless and ineffectual and sometimes socially deleterious—of modern democratic life leave but little time or energy or inclination to men and women to seek and get the composure and serenity which form the *sine qua non* of true spiritual illumination or to go through the long and arduous travail of the *sādhanās* needed for the attainment of such illumination. If this is the case in modern India despite racial experience and tendencies during many thousands of years, we can imagine the averseness of modern men and women elsewhere in the world to submit to the discipline and travail of such arduous *sādhanās*.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa was tireless in his *sādhanās* and reaped the divine fruit of his matchless striving and search. He was blessed with a ceaseless and blessed vision of the Divine Mother. He realized and proclaimed that Religion is not mere creed or ritual or dogma or even mere philanthropy but is realization. In a world dominated by the concept of the Fatherhood he gained the loving devotion of all to the concept of the Motherhood of God. In India there has been ceaseless internecine war over the superiority of this or that *sādhanā*, over this or that aspect of God, and over this or that realization of God. Sri Ramakrishna ended that war for ever by proving all the *sādhanās* and realizing all the aspects of God. Many have been the battles in India as to whether God is formless or has form. Sri Ramakrishna realized both aspects and said: " God with form and God without form are not two different Beings. He who is with form is also without form. So to a devotee God manifests Himself in various forms. Just think of a shoreless ocean,—an infinite

there visible blocks of ice formed by intense cold. Similarly under the cooling influence, so to say, of the deep devotion of His worshipper, the Infinite reduces Himself to the finite and appears before Him as a Being with form. Again as on the appearance of the sun the ice melts away, so on the appearance of the sun of knowledge, God with form melts away into the formless."

Thus his teaching that religion is realization has given us a dynamic power that will make us pure. His teaching of the Motherhood of God will make us tender and sympathetic and kind to one another. His teaching about the value of the various *sādhanās* and the truth of the various aspects of God will make us tolerant and united. We shall hear no more about the ancient and futile controversies about *Advaita* and *Viśishṭādvaita* and *Dvaita,* or about *jñāna* and *bhakti* and *karma.* When the people are pure and tender and sympathetic and kind and united a great nation must and will be born. On this occasion of the celebrations of the Centenary of the birth of Sri Ramakrishna let us offer our homage to the great Indian nation and to its greatest modern teacher of nation-building religion.

IV. RAMAKRISHNA AND VIVEKANANDA AS NATION-BUILDERS

Thus in Sri Ramakrishna, the man of spiritual realization, we find intense love and service of man. He taught in homely words and in beautiful parables and stories like Christ. Though he discussed shrewdly every kind of selfishness and hypocrisy, he never hated any one though he admonished many persons whose professions and practices did not agree. The man of true religious realization is a man of large tolerance and charity of spirit. Life was to Sri Ramakrishna a *divine comedia,* which he observed with amused and observant eyes. He showed that the golden lamp of spiritual realization will not go out in the wind-tossed crowded thoroughfares of life.

Swami Vivekananda got his flaming passion for service and power of synthesis from his holy master. He cried out in a passion of anguish: "May I be born and reborn again and suffer a thousand miseries if only I am able to worship the only

God in whom I believe, the sum-total of all souls, and above all my God the wicked, my God the afflicted, my God the poor of all races!" It was he that inspired the Ramakrishna Mission with the ideals of Renunciation and Service which have been their watchwords all along.

V. THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION AND THE IDEALS OF THE HAPPINESS OF SERVICE AND THE SERVICE OF HAPPINESS

The Ramakrishna Mission is the result of the dynamic inspiration imparted by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. Its ideals are the Happiness of Service and the Service of Happiness. To the war-weary and distracted West it emphasizes the service of Happiness. To the starving and idle East it emphasizes the Happiness of Service. The essence of the teachings of both the Master and the Disciple is thus expressed by the latter:

> "Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest the divine within, by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this, either by work or worship or psychic control or philosophy—by one or more or all of these—and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines or dogmas, or rituals or books, or temples or forms are but secondary details."

Let the whole world treasure and follow this supreme message!

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

PRESIDENT FREDERIC B. ROBINSON
College of the City of New York, U. S. A.

The lives of vital men leave great influences behind them recorded in books, expanding in organizations and working in the lives of others. There have been few men more vital than Vivekananda, strong and handsome in body, keen and penetrating in mind, and ardent in spirit, as he was. In the flesh for but thirty-nine years, his spirit manifests itself now more strongly than ever and we who pay tribute to him can possibly form a truer estimate of his life and work than could his contemporaries.

It is impossible to understand Narendra Nath Dutta without some insight into the influence of Ramakrishna, the saint of India who is said to have given his most beloved disciple, Dutta, the name of *Vivekānanda*, which means "the Bliss of Discrimination." Furthermore, it is necessary to recall certain movements of reform in Indian religion and politics.

Unlike the Christians who accept Jesus as the only incarnation of God on earth, the Hindus believe that divinity appears from time to time among men. By many, Ramakrishna, who was born in Bengal in 1836, is regarded not only as a reincarnation of the divine essence itself, but also of other gods in eastern theology. At any rate, this saintly man who had attained spirituality that was obvious to all who came into contact with him, attached to himself a group of disciples. Among them, the most vital, intellectual and energetic was Dutta, who after Ramakrishna's passing on August 15, 1886, became the leader of an ardent Order of Swamis dedicated to the continuation and spread of the ministry of Ramakrishna. Although Vivekananda never claimed divinity for himself, he accepted Ramakrishna without reservation and dedicated his life to the spread of his master's gospel. Furthermore his own spiritual experiences were had according to his own testimony, through the influence of Ramakrishna. Vivekananda can be likened to the Christian apostle Peter, in that he was the definite choice of his master to carry on a ministry, and he may also be likened to Paul who saw a great light on the road to Damascus and later preached throughout the world.

But what was the situation in India and what was the peculiar message of Ramakrishna? India had drawn the spirit of its religion from the earliest days of Aryan life. Its sacred literature was rich and a hierarchy of divine beings had been evolved. Rituals were followed in temples and numerous sects had sprung up. The essential teaching of Ramakrishna has been that:

1. To find God man must look within and the goal is attained when there is a realization of oneness with God.

2. There is good in all religious systems, they are but

different languages or modes of expression suitable to people of different countries, speech and circumstances. Properly pursued all lead to the one realization. Therefore creeds and rituals are but incidents; the essential helps to realization are love and sincerity.

3. But realization for self, or self-salvation is not enough: there is need to bring others to this realization.

It is obvious that a successful mission along these lines would not only effect the immediate happiness of many in a religious sense, but would lead to widespread social and political reforms. This was understood or at least expressed more clearly by Vivekananda than by his master. Furthermore, Vivekananda's later visit to America strengthened the social objectives of his Order of Swamis. I shall speak of that later.

The little band of apostles formed a permanent organization not unlike that of the Christian St. Francis. They assumed vows of chastity, poverty and good works. They sought mastery over themselves that their souls might be free and unhampered by the fetters of material life or the beclouding influences of sensuous indulgence. They also taught the love of all men and all things as a beginning that would lead to a disinterested love of good in the absolute sense. For a way at least, divine understanding and human affection, working themselves out in service to all, went hand in hand. The final stage was permanent to none of the works or affairs of the world, but absorption into the infinite good—the absolute divinity.

Ramakrishna was more concerned with the absolute and was somewhat distrustful of good works or philanthropies because of the existence of selfish motives in many of those who promoted or took part in them. But Vivekananda, without losing sight of the ultimate goal, worked with men on their own plane, gave much thought and effort to direct ministrations and with these as points of departure, sought to lead men to the rarefied region of oneness with God.

In 1893 the brotherhood delegated Vivekananda to represent them at the Congress of Religions held at Chicago. There had been many in America acquainted with the Hindu philosophers

and religious beliefs, long before this visit, such as Emerson and others of the transcendental school. The works of American historians, philosophers, psychologists and poets reflected the essential teachings of the Vedas. Walt Whitman also sensed the spirit of India and wrote his poem that begins, " Passage, O soul to India" and ends, "Passage to more than India." But it was Vivekananda, at Chicago, who gave widespread publicity to the doctrine of the divinity in man as preached by Ramakrishna, and the idea of the fundamental oneness of all religions. He popularized and publicized among the many of average intelligence the concepts that had been clearly understood by a smaller group of intellectuals.

So attractive was his personality and so clear and direct were his teachings that he won many adherents who joined the Vedānta groups he established and reaped also the profound respect of others who, while adhering to the doctrines of their own churches, recognized a common ground as described by Vivekananda where all men of goodwill could meet. Indeed, as we look back at the 1893 Congress of Religions the outstanding personality was Vivekananda, and the only permanent outcome was the establishment of Vedanta centres.

Not only did he establish many centres in America, but through his lectures and association with donors, he obtained the means of founding and maintaining monasteries in India. He brought a message to this country but America also taught him many things and provided the means for the development of his work in India along effective lines that would otherwise have been impossible. The mother monastery is at Belur and there are many more besides. In one, at the foot hills of the Himalayas, there is complete retreat from the world, where members of the Order may find seclusion for meditation and the attainment of the superconscious oneness with the Infinite so vividly described by Ramakrishna. The others are more closely related to the world of men and concern themselves not only with religious pursuits in the pure sense, but also with applied religion manifesting itself in the good works of hospitals, philanthropies and instruction. The

Order has added to its work the conduct of the Ramakrishna Mission with centres of study, devotion and publication.

There can be no doubt that Vivekananda did much for America and he took back with him to India practical methods of strengthening not only religious life at home, but also social reform. These reforms are not advocated because of some personal or political party advantage, they are the result of an elevation of spirit. They are the forerunners of the disappearance of the objectionable social and political limitations of the caste system which doomed the untouchables to hopeless lives.

Vivekananda came before Gandhi. His teachings are the best foundations of a real national life for India—a life that finds its roots in the ancient teachings of the Vedas, that adapts itself to scientific and educational progress and that will wax strong through a just balance of serenity and action.

There is no difference between the doctrines of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda and the words of St. Matthew—" Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness ; and all these things will be added unto you."

No people could have had a more sincere leader with a truer message. If the people of India and the people of the world find God and His righteousness within themselves, then indeed will matters of daily life fall into harmonious order and then will be peace.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA, A STUDY IN SPIRITUAL CONSCIOUSNESS

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Serious mistakes are committed in our effort to understand Sri Ramakrishna and his teachings in terms of intellect and to draw intellectual philosophy out of his sayings. It has been indeed the practice of ages to thrust an intellectual construction

upon the sayings of the great spiritual teachers, like Kṛishṇa, Buddha, Mahomet and Christ, but in this attempt the dignity of their lives and the sublimity of their teachings have not been clearly realized. Intellect is an inefficient organ to understand spiritual truths. Intellect has its forms, and generally human mind finds a relief when it can put the teachings of a great teacher under a construction and it is why, that of matters spiritual, there emerge so many constructions, often varied and diverse, when their profound realizations of spirit are understood by intellect. The human intellect works under limitation, and there rises a great demand in us to get beyond the limitations to enjoy the movement of life and consciousness, in its unfettered freedom and wideness of expression.

Spiritual life is still shrouded in mystery, because man has not still outgrown his conceptual habits of thoughts and cannot read the intimations of spirit independently of thought. The finer ascents of the soul are not accessible to intellect ; intellect even here schematizes and makes forms, but the movement of life in its radiance and fragrance is still missed. Kant has usefully pointed out the limitations of intellect, but he has not gone far beyond the moral values which are true in the realm of will. The finer urge of spirit is not known to Kant. It goes beyond the movement of will or reason. The defect in Kant becomes glaring in the incompatibility between moral life and happiness, and to make up this the hypothesis of a God is introduced. Spiritual life outgrows the implications of moral thought and consciousness and unless we are bold enough to soar beyond, it remains a closed chapter to us. To get a clue to the spiritual mysteries and truths in the movements of thoughts will always end in dismal failure. Spirituality has its own expression and movement, it may inspire our being—intellectual, moral and aesthetic—but it is not solely confined to them ; and its true expression and law cannot be discovered in them. This has been the fundamental teaching of the great spiritual masters.

Sri Ramakrishna is an appeal and inspiration, he makes a unique start and approach. His approach is completely spiritual. His uniqueness lies here. He has this advantage in his nature

and being that he can go beyond at once the mazes and intricacies of thought and start with a spiritual yearning which appears to intellectual men as wild phantasy but which can wake up and move the psychic being in man, disclosing supramental truths beyond the reach of intellect and thought. Ramakrishna is often, therefore, a puzzle to many who want to find logical consistency in place of spiritual felicity in his teachings.

The greatness of Ramakrishna lies in this that he could at once feel the fine dynamism of spirit not known to Kant, functioning through the psychic and cosmic forces. His *sādhanā* consists in completely removing consciousness from the scaffoldings of vital and mental life and opening it to the supramental fineness and transcendental reaches. Ramakrishna discovers the natural gravitation of life to spirit. The beauty of mystic life lies in discovering the thread of connection that runs through the heart of existence. It becomes quite easy when this subtle thread of life is realized and its functioning definitely understood through all the grades of existence. The spiritual flame is quite ablaze in the Mystic and in it the doubts of an intellectual mind are vanished. It is this fine spiritual appeal that makes Sri Ramakrishna's life at once an attraction and a wonder.

To all the world Sri Ramakrishna is known to have been a worshipper of Mother-spirit on the basis and on the lines of the Tantras. Doubts are even today entertained by the puritans about the spiritual efficacy of the Tāntric form of worship and discipline. And it is natural, for the Tantras are so vast in their literatures and so diverse in their disciplines and practices that it is not unnatural to entertain a doubt of their efficiency and efficacy as helpful spiritual guides. The truth is that few can approach the disciplines who have not the finest spiritual aspiration and psychic opening. The Tāntric discipline takes its start in this psychic dynamism of our being and unless the psychic being could be brought to the front nobody could with advantage follow the Tāntric path and envisage its complete fulfilment. In the complex composition of man the vital and the mental work along with the psychic and the spiritual, and in most people the vital being, the vital desires and the vital feelings are very strong. They rush

up to the front when a little pressure descends down into the man from his finer being and nature. In such circumstances the intervention of the psychic is helpful and unless the psychic being be active, nature cannot open completely and make an offering of it to the divine. The value of mystical approach lies in submitting all the parts of our being to the influence of spirit. Mysticism makes all the parts of our being elastic and responsive, and unless the grossness of the lower part can be eliminated the higher forces cannot work with advantage, and occupy with full force our complete being and move it with spiritual harmony.

Deep-laid harmony in vital and mental being can be the condition of success in spiritual life. But where the aspiration is deep rising from the total self it naturally moves the whole being in harmony. It starts radiant psychic forces which introduce almost a Divine Peace and a Blessed beatitude. Sri Ramakrishna had to his advantage the intense aspiration for the Divine. He is the personification of this aspiration. It is this God-ward bent and flight of his being that secures for him fine psychic opening and the move of psychic forces. The psychic luminosity can trace the spiritual being in man and its direct connection with the Divine-life that saturates the whole existence with its benign peace. In the Upanishads and in the Yoga Darśana emphasis has been laid down on the concentration on the heartcave as spiritually the most sensitive spot in our being. When the concentration on this centre becomes continuous, a fine current of spiritual force is generated which presses upwards and unites the vital knots of our being allowing the cosmic will and consciousness to play in us. This is the path to the sacred and secret wisdom. It is fully developed in the Tantras. It opens out vast spiritual possibilities and gives immediate awareness and direct vision. It often appears as an arduous task, for our consciousness is centred in the tide of events and gets entangled in the stream of movements. It takes long to rise to that height when it stands freed from all the intricacies of life.

The Vedānta gives the gospel of freedom, and a philosophic understanding of it. But the Tantras show the way to attain it

not by a philosophic dissertation but by a spiritual aspiration and opening. In one way it is more appealing, for it acquaints us with the psychic framework of our being and the subtle knots which impress upon us the sense of individuality and which disappear like a mist before the sun-rise when the cosmic vibrations start in us and direct us from the limited to the wide opening of consciousness initiating radiant feelings, luminous thoughts and vaster knowledge.

The adept passes through a delightful procession of experiences and feelings too deep for words. Such penetration lays bare to us the immanental immensity of the divine life through the orders of existence and strikes us with its sublimities, dignities and beauties at every point of its expression. These ideal experiences are not the only things that attract us while on the path. They are indeed pleasing and attractive but the greatest attraction which almost becomes spontaneous after some time is the realization of the vastness and wideness of our being, its transparence and luminosity. A point may be reached in the realization when we overcome the concentration of our being to a certain area with its play in impulses and feelings and may rise to the height of the cosmic consciousness embracing the totality of existence, gross and subtle, and at the same time far exceeding it in its reaches. Few can stand in equilibrium at this stage for it means a high pressure on the psychic being and almost a complete inhibition of a normal functioning of the faculties and a stupendous silence.

Spiritual consciousness is most interesting, arresting and educative because it gives more than what ordinary intellect can conceive. Its wisdom is beyond all imagination. Its possibilities are infinite. Generally men seek spiritual life because of the inherent demand of a finer and wider existence and the pressure of this demand does not stop unless the widest reach of being is attained where a sense of harmony prevails along with supreme puissance. There is a tendency in us to pass into silence in the dark night of the soul, into that height of consciousness which is cut off from our limited vision. In spiritual life no possibility is thought higher than this for it releases us from the entanglements

of life and affords a clear realization of consciousness freed from all limitations.

Some find access into this height of existence and become dead silent to all the concerns of life and pass into the calm. Others are there, who after the great consummation make a re-orientation of life, to start a new cycle in thought and expression. They can see the Divine purpose in life, the beauty of the illuminated life, its holiness and its majesty. They concentrate themselves to work out the Divine plan in life and defeat the forces of darkness and ignorance which stifle the Divine unfolding, the sharing of the Divine joy of life. The life-lessons of the great spiritual teachers are the secret message of this divine solicitude; for the original limitation of creation is to be set aside, if life is to be divinized. And the sacrifice of the great spiritual teachers of their lives for the uplift of mankind exhibits that there is in the divine life a constant effort to eliminate the inertia and stir life in such a way as can best imbibe the divine freshness into it and make the divine life manifested in Earth consciousness.

This task is really reserved for a few elects. Many make adventures in spiritual life and find in the loneliness of contemplation the higher and loftier ranges of being and consciousness open unto them ; the delight and the joyousness become so absorbing that they do not allow them to be disturbed in their silence and become completely hidden in the mood of thought. They become for ever buried in the inner temple of silence.

There are a few indeed, who are privileged enough to enter into the vortex of life to elevate humanity and to scatter the divine peace and the divine aroma of life by radiating a spiritual current from them. They scatter light, joy, peace and power. They descend from the tower of silence to meet a definite problem in a particular epoch of civilization.

There is great joy and relief in individual redemption. There is greater blessedness in the liberation of the collective humanity. This is the divine plan. With the growth of spiritual susceptibilities the plan becomes evident, for the law of spiritual affinity

consciously or unconsciously helps the uplift of the whole humanity whenever the earth-conditions become such as can react to the ingress of spiritual force. The lives of the great Masters in spirituality are interesting studies illustrating the great spiritual truth that humanity through its pangs, trials and sufferings gets occasional glimpses into the divine solicitude for its finer spiritual evolution—the God appears also as a struggling God against the forces of darkness and in the struggle the most human side of His nature is manifested. The first one appeals by the depth of wisdom, the second one by the moving picture of the struggle of God against the enveloping darkness and ignorance and there lies the hope of the whole humanity. Humanity need only to understand the sublimity of this conception to feel its spiritual potentiality and attractiveness and realize the beauty of struggle for instilling the divine aroma of life. The first movement in spiritual life may be to taste the blessed privilege of freedom and unbounded expression of being, the second movement in spirit is the expression of divine love and sacrifice for the suffering humanity.

Spirituality is an active force in life which is more than of academical interest, because it is the most effectively shaping force which consciously or unconsciously guides us in cosmic affairs. It brings down higher inspiration and fills the earth-consciousness with them. A spiritual force takes us unawares but spreads its influence most gently but surely. This accounts for the tremendous influence which a spiritual genius imparts during his life time. He often energizes and guides the thoughts of generations to come. What is more, he creates psychic atmosphere which unconsciously helps the fine formation of spirituality. The greatest redeeming feature of a spiritual genius is that he unconsciously directs the thought-formations of ages to come. However original people may think themselves, their thoughts are indeed comments upon the sayings and expressions of spiritual genius. We need eyes to see and receptivity to feel their influence. And it is indeed amazing that they do more by their personal influence than by their teaching. Because they are centres which can directly visualize the divine order of things and feel inspired to help humanity. The divine influence works through them directly. They can create a

spiritually charged area. The influence of a Buddha, a Krishna, a Mahomet and a Christ has been unmistakably and immeasurably greater than the influence of a Kant, or a Fichte, because they are living in constant touch not with the fringe but with the very centre of cosmic consciousness.

Indeed, because of the difference in the responsiveness of the parts of being, the spiritual expression in the lives of the great teachers has not been uniform. The concrete spiritual life, therefore, exhibits apparent differences. They are not really differences, they are matters of accents and emphasis. Love, knowledge, compassion and power are the inestimable privileges of the divine life, and when the chords of being are vibrated, they become the natural possessions of the seeker.

In India intellectual philosophy has not been separated from spiritual philosophy. The great teachers of thought have been the great teachers of spirituality. Philosophy, rightly understood, is the search and the discovery of spirit. There is a great demand in man to achieve immediate awareness and feel directly the movement of spirit. We can hardly, therefore, confine ourselves to dialectics of thought. The divergence that is felt between philosophy and life in the West is not felt in India. The great teachers do not only illumine thought, they also inspire life. In the texture of our being, thought and life are set together and in the unfoldment they help each other for thought is the reflection of life. Whenever thought has been cut off from the inspiration of life it suffers in elasticity. Even where the men of spiritual genius have not given out a systematic thought, they have influenced life and started finer oscillations of being which help direct and immediate realization. A spiritual force is a tremendous influence upon life and helps its unfoldment in such a way as can in the final reach vouchsafe the transcendental truth. It is this silent influence of the soul and the divine magnetism that differentiate the truly spiritual genius from the leaders of thought. The passionate zeal of the men of thought often stops with system-construction but more often the forces which really give power and influence to spiritual genius remain inactive in them. It is this mysterious influence of their personality which explains the

initiation of new life current which spiritual men usher in. They have the advantage of seeing the divine forces at work through the different layers of existence and they can rise so high and grow so much spiritually sensitive as to be able to catch the spiritual currents that emit from the centre and be ultimately identical with it. This is their special privilege by their special fitness. Spiritual geniuses have, therefore, before them a living influence which in many cases escapes the notice of great thinkers, for they cannot rise above the logical mind to invite the kindly way of light that does not deceive. They not only receive the divine forces but they transmit the divine influence through human society. Sri Ramakrishna scatters such a silent influence.

But where and to what end? He is the forerunner and inspirer of a new consciousness that has become imperatively necessary today for the fostering of a new understanding, the initiation of a spiritual force, the awakening of a wide catholicity in spirit which could see the beauty of every faith and realize its spiritual potentiality. To Ramakrishna there has been only one gospel of faith. Faith is the stirring of the integral consciousness to realize the commonalty of spirit in its widest extension and the deepest intensity. It is the impelling force to rise above all narrow considerations of life and to invite life in its redeeming grace and uplifting influence. Faith is a moving power and in an age when the forces of different civilizations are meeting one another, an understanding and inspiration of the kind that Ramakrishna left for us is greatly helpful to the cementing up of the differences that divide us and to the realization of an integral divinity in integral humanity. Humanity's finest aspirations and noblest hopes have been almost identical. It has been left to Sri Ramakrishna to go through the whole orbit and circuit of spiritual life, not in its abstract philosophy but in its concrete making up and declare that the spiritual composition of our being is identical. The differences in creeds are more superficial than real and they rise from the traditional acceptances and timidity of our nature and its refusal to go through the whole range of life and its experience.

Spiritual demand and its concrete expression in every age

have not been the same, for the formative forces in the epochs of civilization have been different—each age has its special spiritual necessity and time-force has its unique individuality. Though the Truths of the spirit are widely universal, still every one of them does not get identical expression all the time, for in the concrete life, all of them cannot be equally active. And if one follows the evolution of spiritual ideas through the advent of great teachers, the truth stands revealed that spiritual ideas find progressively effective expression through the course of civilization, for whatever the spirit may be in its transcendence, it has varied phases of expressions. Sri Ramakrishna represents the force of spiritual harmonization by recognizing that the living faiths have the same aspiration and the same objective—the active union with God. He seems to have stressed the universal element in spiritual life by freeing faiths from their creeds which instead of providing us with true spiritual fervour in its widest commonalty introduces mental constructions which can only touch the fringe of spiritual life, but cannot enter into its central reality. The note of division becomes prominent when the spirituality is sought to be understood, but not actually felt, or lived. Spirit is the essence of our being and in its ascent through the wider stretches of consciousness, it can realize its own play, its notes and its vaster amplitudes, for spiritual life not only impresses us with a wider mental horizon, but actually passes beyond the mentalized consciousness and acquaints us with our potential divinity. Nay, in all forms of spirituality, the limitations of our mental being are transcended. The touch of spirit gives us cosmic feelings, cosmic intuitions and cosmic movement. Spirituality is not a study of ordinary psychology and many confusions and conflicts in spiritual life can be set aside, if the spiritual reactions can be studied in themselves without the imposition of the mental laws upon them. Ramakrishna is a study in the fine dynamism of spirit energizing the mental and the vital life without sharing their limitations.

Spiritual truths lie often dormant in our consciousness and the fellowship with teachers impresses upon us the value and the presentation of a particular expression. Naturally when a dispensation is established, attention is narrowed down to the person and

his memory but not the influence that he generates and the teachings that he imparts. The Church Universal is lost in the master individual. It is indeed difficult to separate the teaching from the medium through which the truth becomes dynamic, but unless we are awake to truths which are more actively fruitful in enlarging our consciousness and in widening our being, the fondness and adoration to the memory of a master has the effect of gradually directing our energies into questionable channels. Churches in the East and the West have hardly been able to save themselves from this kind of influence and have not been able to invite the living inspiration from every faith and realize the great truth of the Church eternal. The specific notes of every faith add to the richness of life if they are properly received and appreciated, for religious ideas are expressions of some truths deeply laid in some parts of our being. This universal sense and this wide acceptance are generally lost upon us if our being is not spiritually well strung, for it is not infrequent that some parts of our being make response and some other parts remain irresponsive. A theoretical and an academical acceptance of the truths of faiths can give a momentary illumination and an intellectual expansion but this does not carry us enough to generate that sympathy which can inwardly enjoy the beauties of faiths, the richness of life and the inspiring influence of great teachers. Sri Ramakrishna demonstrates the great truth that every faith has its saving power, each its divine inspiration, a spiritual attraction and beauty. Their living inspirations can be felt if we follow them to the end. It is not only that Ramakrishna felt in actual life this redeeming power of faiths and envisaged the invisible but the eternal church of God and the eternal religion of spirit in place of denominational churches and their credos. Ramakrishna lived to realize this truth and passed it on to the future humanity that it might foster a nobler understanding and a spiritual friendship and save humanity from confusion and from the forces of fanaticism. Ramakrishna has given the gospel of spirit more than any theological creed or any philosophical theory. He stressed the movement of spirit and its expression through the finer rhythm of the heart, the diviner movement of the will and through the luminous intuition of intellect. Spirit takes possession of every organ of the human mind;

and because it took possession of the full being of Ramakrishna, therefore, that the spiritual expression in him had been varied—there were deep intensity of feeling and spiritual emotion verging on a psychic inequilibrium, and easy access into the transcendental reaches of consciousness, and a ready will to serve the suffering divinity in the shape of man. Every chord of his being used to vibrate with spiritual currents but his fragile body was too weak for the spiritual surging. Ramakrishna opened the floodgate of spiritual currents and the whole humanity today is enjoying the fruits of his *tapasyā*. Surely the men of God do not live alone for themselves, they are instruments which remind us of the living presence of God in our heart and the possibility of divine life and lift up the course of evolution to a higher plane. Men of God always live for this consummation.

THE ADVENT OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

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(Original in Bengali)

পরমহংসদেব শ্রীশ্রীরামকৃষ্ণের শতবার্ষিকী জন্মতিথিতে এই সর্ব্বধর্ম্ম-সম্মেলনের অধিবেশন ভারতের ইতিহাসে এক অভূতপূর্ব্ব ঘটনা। ইহা ভারতীয় অধ্যাত্ম রাজ্যে এক নবজীবনের আরম্ভ। হিন্দু, মুসলমান, খ্রীষ্টিয়ান্, পারসিক প্রভৃতি বিভিন্ন ধর্ম্মবাদের অধিনায়কগণ একই মঞ্চে একই উদ্দেশ্যে মিলিত হইয়া স্ব স্ব ধর্ম্মের স্বরূপ ব্যাখ্যান করিয়া বিশ্বমানবের মহামানবতার চরম লক্ষ্য কি তাহা সভ্য মানবের মনে অঙ্কিত করিবার অকপটভাবে এমন বিরাট সম্মেলন এমন সুশৃঙ্খলতার সহিত সম্পাদন করিতে পারেন, এরূপ কল্পনা এ ভারতে আর কখনও হয় নাই। সুতরাং এই মহা সম্মেলনে সনাতনধর্ম্মাবলম্বী হিন্দুর প্রাণের কথাটী কি তাহা সংক্ষেপে বলিবার জন্য আমি যদি কিঞ্চিৎ প্রযত্ন করি তাহা যে অসাময়িক হইবে, ইহা আমি মনে করি না।

হিন্দুর ধর্ম্ম, হিন্দুর সমাজ, হিন্দুর সভ্যতা স্মরণাতীত কাল হইতে এক অপরিবর্ত্তনশীল সুদৃঢ় ভিত্তির উপর প্রতিষ্ঠিত ছিল, আছে ও থাকিবে। সেই মহা ভিত্তির নাম—ঔপনিষদ ব্রহ্মাদ্বয়বাদ। পরিদৃশ্যমান

অনন্ত প্রকারের ভেদ, অসংখ্যেয় বৈচিত্র্যময় এই প্রপঞ্চের মধ্যে, ইহার আদিতে, ইহার অন্তে সকল প্রকার ভেদের, সকল প্রকার বৈচিত্র্যের একমাত্র আধার বা আলম্বন যে বাস্তব বস্তু সর্ব্বদা প্রকাশমান—যাহার নাম নাই, যাহার রূপ নাই, অথচ সকল নামে সকল রূপে তাহারই সত্তা পরিস্ফুরিত হয়, তাহাই উপনিষদ্ প্রতিপাদ্য ব্রহ্ম, তাহাই তোমার আমার বিশ্বব্রহ্মাণ্ডের সকল প্রাণীর আত্মা, তাহাকে না জানিয়া থাকার নাম বন্ধ, তাহাকে নিজের সাক্ষাৎ অনুভবের বিষয় করার নামই মুক্তি। তাহাকে যতক্ষণ জানিতে না পারা যায় ততক্ষণই আমি তুমি। আমার তোমার ভাবিতে ভাবিতে মানুষ সংসার-সাগরে পতিত হয়, চির শান্তির মধ্যে ঘোরতর অশান্তির সৃষ্টি করে, আপনাকে পর করে, মানুষে মানুষে সমাজে সমাজে জাতিতে জাতিতে ভেদ-কলহ-যুদ্ধরূপ অশান্তির দাবানল সৃষ্টি করে এবং তাহাতেই জ্বলিয়া পুড়িয়া হাহাকার করে। তাহাকে বুঝা ও বুঝিয়া পাওয়ার নামই মানব-জীবনের চরম বা পরম পুরুষার্থ; তাহাই ভারতের ঔপনিষদ আত্মা। ইহাই হইল ভারতের বাণী। এই বাণীকে নূতনভাবে সময়ের উপযোগী করিয়া ভারতকে বুঝাইয়া এবং ভারতকে দ্বার করিয়া সমগ্র পৃথিবীর অজ্ঞানমূলক দেহাত্মাভিমানে বিড়ম্বিত, দুঃখিত ও অশান্ত মানবজাতিকে বুঝাইয়া সকল প্রকার বন্ধ হইতে মুক্ত করিবার জন্য শ্রীভগবান্ পরমহংসদেব-রূপ ধরিয়া দেখা দিয়াছিলেন। তাঁহার সেই বিশ্বধর্ম্ম-সমন্বয়ের মূর্ত্ত প্রতীক ভগবান্ শ্রীরামকৃষ্ণ পরমহংসদেবের পাদপদ্ম-যুগলে আমার কোটী কোটী প্রণাম।

(*English Rendering*)

This Parliament of Religions held in connection with the Birth-Centenary of Paramahamsa Sri Ramakrishna is an event unprecedented in the annals of India. It heralds the dawn of a new life in the spiritual domain of the country. That the leaders of Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Zoroastrianism and other faiths could sincerely meet on the same platform for a common purpose and hold such a gigantic Convention in so orderly a fashion, expounding the real nature of the religions they professed, in order to impress upon the minds of civilized men the ultimate goal of humanity at large, was a thing undreamt of in India. I, therefore, do not consider it inopportune to make a humble attempt to indicate briefly the theme that is dearest to the heart of the orthodox Hindu.

Hindu religion, Hindu society and Hindu culture have from time immemorial stood, as they do and will stand, on an unshakable adamantine foundation. That great foundation is called the *Brahma-advaya-vāda* (the Monism of Brahman) taught in the Upanishads. Behind this visible universe with its infinite diversities and differentiations, at its beginning, middle and end, as the background or substratum of these countless differences, lies that Reality which is ever manifest, which has neither name nor form, but which alone is manifested through all names and forms. It is the Brahman inculcated in the Upanishads. It is your soul and mine as also that of all creatures in the universe. To live in ignorance of It is bondage, and to realize It intuitively is liberation. So long as we do not know It, we are in the realm of 'you' and 'me'. Engrossed in this thought of 'yours' and 'mine', man falls into the ocean of birth and death, creates dire unrest in the midst of eternal peace, makes of one's self an alien entity, raises the distracting forest-fire of differences, quarrels and fights between man and man, community and community, nation and nation, and being scorched in it, sets up a howl of lamentation.

To know and realize Brahman—the Ātman taught in the Upanishads of India—is the highest goal of human life. This is the message of India. To teach this message to India in a new form adapted to the needs of the times, and through India to human beings all over the world, who on account of ignorance have the misfortune to identify themselves with the body and suffer torment and worry, and thus lead them to freedom from all kinds of bondage, God appeared on earth as Paramahamsa Deva. My countless salutations to the holy feet of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, the visible symbol of the Lord ushering in a synthesis of the religions of the world!

CHAPTER VII

SECTION V

Religion and Philosophy

THE MESSAGE OF TRUTH

ATUL CHANDRA BANERJEE
Baranagore, Calcutta

The diversity and inequality in the world of religions that baffles today the thinkers of all nations will, in reality, cease to exist, if they only care to dive into the very depths of religion itself. The variations characterize only the outer shell, the dead formalities and stony conventions of religion, which prevail in different climes and cultures. On closer contact with the Spirit, on perfect realization of Truth, this co-efficient in the angle of vision eliminates itself, the soul is emancipated and Truth becomes self-evident, self-revealed in all its fullness and glory, permeating all forms though by itself formless, and taking up a thousand and one names though by itself beyond nomenclature. The seeker then grasps the Supreme Reality that is one in all. It is one and the same Truth after which all the various communities and sects—Hindus, Christians, Moslems and Buddhists—are, consciously or unconsciously seeking for ever.

A hundred years have rolled by since the message of universal harmony emanated from the divine personality of Sri Ramakrishna. The world is well aware that the same message found expression, and we dare say, is still vocalized, and, let us hope, will be for ever resounded throughout the ages to come, in hundreds and thousands of seers of this blessed land.

This same message of final and supreme Peace, lit up by the effulgence of self-revealing Truth and inspired by the vital spark of Life at its source, found vivid and exquisite expression from the lips of another of India's glorious hierarchy of seers, Sri Sri Satyadev, who lived about a score of years ago in the heart of this very city of Calcutta. Religion did not deaden into cold sectarianism in his hands. He sought in his unique way to harmonize the conflicting diversities in the world of faiths and made a rare contribution to the cause of the advancement of

Truth by evolving a religion in the realization of the Oneness, Sameness, Immutability of Truth—a point where all the tributaries of world-faiths will fain agree to meet and coalesce. He arrived at the fundamental unity that would keep all religions together. He set up " a common church for mankind, a universal pattern to which every act of worship and aspiration must conform." Though the mortal remains of this superman be no longer with us, his inspiring message and high ideal will ever lead us on the path of peace.

THE LIFE OF DETACHMENT

PROF. HARIMOHAN BHATTACHARYYA
Asutosh College, Calcutta

The conception of man's spiritual goal has varied in various times and climes in accordance with his environment, temperament and culture, but amidst these variables what has persisted all through them as a constant factor, is his sense of detachment from what is not truly his own spiritual self. If man's spiritual ideal is admitted to be his self-fulfilment and if this self-fulfilment is his fullest realization of what his true self is, then such self-fulfilment presupposes a necessary self-alienation from what is other than its true nature. And this self-alienation of the self from what it is not, is what goes by the common name of detachment (*vairāgya*) ; and the theme of my discourse will be this life of detachment which has been recognized as the common propaedeutic to man's spiritual goal by all the great religious teachers of the world. True indeed that here again in the manner, intensity and ultimate significance of this life of detachment there is a marked degree of divergence noticeable among them, and though it is not possible for me in this short discourse to bring out in full the nice nuances in the spiritual discipline involved in it, it will be my endeavour to present before you their main implications in general outline.

The Ṛishis of the Upanishads saw and felt that the souls of men are of God, are in God and have come from God. They are

immortal and their immortality (*amṛitatva*) and freedom (*svārājya*) constitute their true essence. They are sons of God, sons of immortality (*amṛitasya putrāḥ*). What clouds and covers their true essence is their life of the non-soul, their life of the body and flesh with their excrescences, their life of attachment with what is not theirs. It is the life of the object, the life of emotions and desires, passions and prejudices that despiritualizes the soul. The soul seeks to find a false fulfilment in this life of objectivity but it brings a spiritual death in its train and not immortality which is its essence. The opening *mantra* of the *Īśa Upanishad* reminds us, as if with the finger raised, that in this world of objects which is permeated by the Divine, every one of us has to live in it as if he were out of it, guided by a sense of *tyāga* or detachment from what is not his own. The *Kaivalya Upanishad* tells us how Brahmā initiates *Ṛishi Aśvalāyana* into the efficacy of detachment leading to the attainment of the essence of the spiritual life by her unequivocal insistence on the same principle of detachment. The *tyāga* or self-abnegation, be it noted, does not carry with it, as is often wrongly conceived, an idea of anything like loss (*nāśa*) or unmitigable emptying of the soul reducing it to vacuum, but rather it suggests the attainment of the fullest stature it is capable of. It is not destruction but re-fulfilment, not vacuum but plentitude. The soul has to abdicate all that has overgrown upon it to make room for all that is its own—for all that it has forfeited in its transactions of the object-world.

It is the veering back of the soul to its own moorings ; it is thus negative only in appearance, but supremely positive in its essence ; and this is the inner significance of the life of detachment or renunciation, whatever you may call it.

Jesus the Christ said, " Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Mark the word ' pure.' What else is this purity of heart than the abnegation of the lower self to make room for the higher? What else is it than that receptivity of the individual self for all that would give it its fullest spirituality which is its birthright? Look to what Jesus Christ said to Nicodemus: " Give up all that thou hast and follow me."

Nicodemus dared not and fled. We are all aware in the heart of our hearts how most of us belong to the class of Nicodemus who dare not and flee. We are all aware that the things we cling to will not cling to us unto the last, because they are not of us. There come moments—rare auspicious moments—in the midst of our enjoyments of the objective world, when we are warned by the spirit within us that what we do covet are not worth coveting. But this warning voice of the spirit in man is drowned under the louder insistence of the biological and psychical aspects of his being, which are no part of his true self, but which make up his lower nature. The Lord Buddha reiterates the same thing to his disciples when he encounters, on the Gṛdhrakūṭa hill of Rājgir, some Niganthas or Jaina monks practising severe austerities. With the characteristic directness of feeling of a great seer he talks, out of the fullness of his heart, on the necessity of the life of suffering and tribulation (*duḥkha*) for the attainment of *Sukha* or *Nirvāṇa*.[1] He tells his disciples if *Sukhan* were attainable by *sukha* (material happiness), then the reigning king Bimbisāra rolling in all manner of earthly happiness must have attained *Nirvāṇa*. The *Dhammapada*[2] says: " Bhikkhu, empty this boat! If emptied, it will go quickly ; cut off from passion and hatred thou wilt go to *Nirvāṇa*."

The words of Mahāvīra[3] bristle with injunctions for the attainment of spiritual life by dissociation from all that is of the *pudgala* (matter) or object-world. The object-world is a drag to the soul's attainment of its own *svabhāva* or essence, and it is by a life of *saṁvara* that it can recover its lost glory. The Jaina saint Kumdakumdāchārya remarks, " If the soul gets back its own *svabhāva*, its own true nature,—all its *abhāva* or otherness and deficiency is gone—it is then quite free from the bodies and is indestructible."

Without multiplying the sayings of the great teachers of the world we can sufficiently realize how the true spirit of detachment lies at the foundation of all spiritual life. Christ's ideal of detachment has lost its real original significance for the people of the

[1] *Majjhimanikāya*, I.2-4. [2] XXV.369.
[3] Schubring's *Worte Mahavira*.

West who have under the weight of the objective life have turned that ideal into the greater and greater fulfilment of the self in the object-world, evolving morality and religion which find their satisfaction not so much in the inwardness of the spirit as in its outward expansion. With the exception of a few mystical writers like Eckhart and Jacob Boehme and perhaps Spinoza, this has been the general tendency of Western thought and culture. The life of detachment preached by the Lord Buddha, insisting as it does on the dissolution of the individual physical centre has, we think, the apparent difficulty in satisfying the demands of a true spiritual life, though it has amply compensated this deficiency by socializing the individual will which has to realize itself in the service of humanity. The Jaina ideal seems to us less erring on the side of its conception of the being of the self, but it is more rigoristic and individualistic in its conception of the spiritual life, in so far as there seems to be little or no provision for social service and so far as the aspirant is to look exclusively to his own personal uplift by complete self-abnegation, not refraining in some cases even from suicide.

Now the life of detachment which is prescribed with no less emphasis in Hindu religion as the indispensable *propaedeutic* to spiritual realization has, as already observed, more positive than negative outlook. The recovery of the true self lies rather in its discovery than in its death—in its retirement from the object-world which is not its true essence, into its more enriched inner being, but not altogether forgetful at the same time of its duties to other selves, which form part of the object-world. The conception of the *jīvanmukta* which is reached undoubtedly by a process of the discipline of detachment is not without its elements of disinterested social service (*lokānugraha*). This ideal of detached life which has been the guiding principle of the Hindu aspirant since the Upanishadic age has found its rejuvenated expression in the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, the Centenary of whose birth we have assembled here to celebrate. That the inwardness of being coupled with the outward *lokavyavahāra* and *lokānugraha* or social service should constitute the essence of

though the emphasis on the need of service to mankind was stronger in the life and work of Swami Vivekananda, his foremost disciple, who saw and felt such a need to be more urgent in view of the demands of the society of his time. The true life of detachment thus is not negative as is wrongly viewed but more positive in its outlook, in so far as it leads ultimately to the realization of the spirit in man which brings in its train sacrifice for others who are in reality at one with the spirit of the aspirant. The object, viewed as an object, will necessarily bind the spirit in man to the narrow immediacy of the object, but it is detachment from the immediate object that can really bring back the universality, divinity and immortality which constitute the essence of the spirit.

INWARD VERACITY IN ITS RELIGIOUS SENSE

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The spiritual mood of inward veracity differs greatly in degree, and can in fact only be judged with regard to great varieties of character. That is to say, we may begin with a man's honest desire to safeguard himself against self-deceptions and also to allow no intention on the part of others to mislead or confuse him or prevail over him, and end with the passionate determination to vindicate and defend, even at the risk of his life, what he holds to be true. In all these attitudes of mind, however varied in degree and quality, the intellectual question, "What is true?"—"What is real?"—will always play its part.

Nowhere is the soul more deeply concerned in this endeavour to get at the real substance of truth than in a man's striving to find a religious form that will satisfy his mind and give a comprehensive significance to his life. This struggle is by no means confined to individual souls, but takes place also in the mutual influencing and self-encouraging of men of the same religious faith who sometimes understand and sometimes misunderstand one another,

i.e. who believe themselves to be in agreement and who are yet only apparently congenial.

If even people closely connected by the same creed may be in doubt as to the moods and feelings of one another and exposed to grave errors, how is it then possible to characterize religious life as such at all? Rather then attempt to produce proofs, deductions and the like, let us try to reduce the problem to its simplest form. We all judge the religious sense of other people according to the possibilities of comparison which we find between our way and their way of feeling. This way of feeling we assess according to its intensity, its artistic expression and the moral life of the people concerned. To this we add the conviction that religious feelings would under all circumstances preserve a certain original independence in the spiritual life of man, or that a predisposition to religious life exists which cannot be explained as arising from other primary forces. Consequently, even if religious cults undergo developments of the most varied kinds, even if they be associated to a high degree with ideas wholly strange to us, we yet maintain that there does exist a fundamental fact in the nature of religious feelings. If, as has recently been claimed, faith, hope and charity exist even in primitive religions, then we should be able to produce empirical proofs as well in support of our view.

Such predispositions, however, cannot simply be termed individual tendencies: they are at the same time an integral part of social life and cannot be detached from it, without giving rise to serious conflicts. We must admit that the Arabian philosophers in the Middle Ages, and later the earliest period of English enlightenment and the champions of religious toleration believed that there was to be found in the human heart a divine original text of what is true in a religious sense, and imagined religious development to be free from any other influence apart from that of Nature herself; whereas the later philosophers of the age of enlightenment, especially the French, in the second half of the eighteenth century, took the opposite course and made man's attitude to religion appear to be particularly dependent on education, perhaps more so than all the other forms of his intellectual life.

If we call to mind the philosophy of Spinoza, we find that in

it the love of God is declared to be man's greatest possession. Accordingly only he obeys the divine law who seeks to love God. One of the principal commandments is that we should be just and love our neighbours. How would that be possible outside the bounds of some form of human society? How could a man serve God outside the bounds of human society? Consequently, however deeply the religious predisposition may be rooted in the nature of the individual, it could not, according to this system, be developed or formed outside the bounds of social life.

The histories of philosophy and literature teach us to regard Spinozism also as a kind of frame of mind and spiritual mood. Other philosophical systems, intrinsically related to Spinozism, give greater prominence to the nature and significance of this mood-content. And if we proceed to the example of the English Spinoza, namely, Francis Herbert Bradley (1846-1924), we shall be able to notice this fact most clearly. Bradley, too, was of the view that the emotions give us a positive notion of a non-relational unity (*Appearance and Reality*, II, Chap. xxvii). Only an infinite being can be completely harmonious. If we strive emotionally towards the infinite, we resemble the river hurrying down to the sea: the ego loses itself in love.

No matter whether our spiritual mood is the consequence and result of our participation in a religious cult, that is to say, is a consequence and result of our social life, or whether it appears as the expression of emotional intensification, the spiritual complex can make itself the object of its own analysis, can become the object of a psychological explanation, in order to reveal the intellectual aspect of what is felt and desired.

Behind such an effort there will be a passionate determination to get at the truth, a determination which will increase more and more in intensity, affect the whole personality, and in fact in the end completely absorb it. Obviously a man then not only distinguishes between himself and his own more real self, but places himself in contrast with the religious community from which he has gone forth. The determination to get at the truth is then a striving towards detachment and individualization, in a sense even towards isolation.

From time immemorial there have been men whose inward insincerity has kept pace with their outward insincerity. They proclaim metaphysics, they do not believe in it, cannot believe in it, because it is absurd, repugnant, and an offence against even the most elementary good taste. The most grotesque logical discords can no more deflect them from their purpose than a fist banged down on a piano can disconcert a deaf and dumb man. In order to deceive the people their abysmal untruthfulness leads them to feign, among other things, a theological mentality which was certainly never theirs and of the complete worthlessness of which they are themselves fully aware. All religions have not only opposed such conduct, but have produced examples of the contrary against it. Philosophy, from the earliest times, has characterized inward as well as outward lack of veracity, has in fact condemned the mere pretence of an idealistic conception of the world, an ideal sentiment, because at heart only mean avarice actually existed. Sri Ramakrishna, too, expresses himself in like manner on this point. He did not want to learn Sanskrit, because the priests, although they were able to speak about reality and appearance, Brahman and *Māyā,* the salvation of the soul by entrance into the one *Ātman,* in practice attached more importance to worldly pleasures. Giordano Bruno (1548-1600) declared that philosophers were for that reason alone the most wretched of all creatures, if they pretended to teach wisdom only in order to earn a living. Colerus could devise no nobler memorial for the great Spinoza than the words, "*Spinoza erat nullius rei nec simulator nec dissimulatur,*" i.e. he pretended nothing and concealed nothing.

A retrospective survey of religions, or more exactly, of religions at certain periods in the history of the world, enables us to estimate the value of participation or non-participation in the ceremonies of a cult as indications of a religious disposition. But in a cult dogmas and articles of faith are revealed. Max Müller, in his work *Ramakrishna, his Life and Sayings* (London and Bombay, 1898), says that to the great Reformer the image-worship, which the majority of priests performed in a mechanical fashion, was a matter of the most solemn seriousness. Whenever

he prayed to his tutelary goddess, the terrible, almighty Kālī, She appeared for the time being before his mind's eye, and he contemplated the symbolical meaning of Her attributes.

It will not be necessary to examine the religions known to us with a view to discovering what their symbols express, in order to declare that the attribution of a meaning to such symbols, and also the origin of the dogmas, are traceable back to fear, to human desires, hopes, spiritual moods, in a word to man himself. To whatever people or age we turn, we shall always find different gods corresponding to different desires and feelings; it may be that nature and environment, or that the native country in the sense of the people, is responsible for this variety. All peoples have their national gods. The hymns of the *Ṛig-Veda* make us acquainted in India with Indra, the god of thunderstorms, Agni, the god of fire ; Bṛihaspati, the Lord of the Brahman Vishṇu and Ushas. Naturally the people believe that they worship their gods in the proper way, that is to say, in such a way that they may expect from them the fulfilment of their desires, national as well as personal. Indra is a god of battles, endowed with power to perform warlike deeds: if, by means of the proper word, the suitable hymn, the adequate sacrifice, he is not only supplicated, but in a sense placed under an obligation, then he will not refuse his help in approaching battles, i.e., he will be a god of victory.

Only gradually, in the course of time, did the personalities of the old Indian gods recede in favour of the idea of a non-anthropomorphic, independent, cosmic principle. A process admitting of a similar psychological explanation takes place in many civilizations, if only they have lasted long enough.

If we regard the advance of Islam into North Africa and Southern Europe as a reaction against the wars of conquest of the old Roman Empire, then Allah appears as a god of victory and the divine incorporation of the dreams of the Arab tribes united by Mohammed. In the course of centuries, after victories which carried Islam as far as the north of Spain, contacts with Christians and Jews made more and more for a more independent and spiritualized conception of God, without, however, laying bare the fundamental psychological motives of earlier Islam.

In the consciousness of European Christians of today the idea of a philosophical identification of God with the expression of truth is at the same time combined with an elucidation of the psychological basis of the belief in the value of dogmas and ceremonial forms of worship. Let us remember the mystery of the Incarnation, as L. Feuerbach describes it, namely that God is of the nature of the heart: " The heart can only turn to the heart; it finds consolation in itself alone in its own nature!" We pursue the same train of thought, when we explain the mystery of the suffering God. Feuerbach says, " The heart is the source, the essence of all suffering. A being without suffering is a being without a heart. The mystery of the suffering God is therefore the mystery of feeling ; a suffering God is a feeling, sentimental God. But the axiom, ' God is a feeling being,' is only the religious way of expressing the axiom, ' feeling is in its very nature divine!' " It follows from this that religion is the reflection of human life in itself. If this is accepted, then the following mysteries can be traced back to the nature of man himself ; the Trinity, the logos, the world-creative principle in God, the omnipotence of the spirit, i.e. of prayer, faith, miracles, the resurrection, the personal God, personal immortality, etc. In all religions prayer is one of the most impressively efficacious features ; for it demands of God nothing less than an interference in the causal sequence of events, and in fact makes Him get at variance with the laws governing the course of nature. To man, when he prays, God's arbitrary power is boundless, i.e., the omnipotence of God's benevolence is to man identical with the omnipotence of the desires expressed in his prayers. Here we find one of the most important roots of our problem of inward veracity. Fear of the " natural " course of things comes into conflict with the belief in the compelling power of prayer. What is more powerful—the inherent force of the course of events, or the longing of the heart? The New Testament demands of us that we should worship God in the spirit and in truth; modern European philosophers, e.g., Campanella, speak of man's having a share in the original divine attributes: power, *wisdom* and love; and finally Descartes, the ' father ' of modern philosophy, says that God should actually be

worshipped as a veracity. The veracity of God gives us therefore a guarantee for the reality of the external world.

If veracity, the perpetual determination to pretend nothing, is founded in the character or nature of God, if it is here that we must look for the source of all certainty, then the striving after veracity is divine. That being so, the question of acknowledging the alternative between the omnipotence of our heart's desires expressed in prayer and of the natural course of events forces us to clarify our own mental attitude. We must now know what is true, what is real.

We cannot define reality simply as the coherence of our perceptions and incorporate the real into this coherence, but rather we must express the perceptions gained in one sphere by means of others belonging to a different one and find a mathematical form in which to express this. The mathematical expression will tend more and more to take on an abstract form; but still it will enhance the unity of our knowledge of the external world. The times are past when the astronomer had simply to calculate and explain the position and course of the stars, or when the physicist, the chemist, in other words the scientist in the laboratory, merely explained the phenomena and processes that presented themselves to him in experiments and definite observations. Today the exact sciences can be regarded as being indissolubly bound up with one another. Temperatures, such as we shall never be able to produce, reveal themselves to us in the interior of the stars. Even through the most powerful of telescopes these stars can be seen merely as specks, and yet we know at least as much about what is going on in their interiors as we do about the processes on the surface of the sun. We apply this knowledge also to that gained in the laboratory, just as conversely we make use on a cosmic scale of our practical knowledge gained close at hand. Astronomy does not only merge into astrophysics, but obviously into general physics and chemistry as well. Over all this unity a new mathematico-physico-logical law now obtains: probability has now become a general physical peculiarity of all things (*in abstracto*).

For thousands of years people were wont to say that there was nothing new under the sun, and such vague and highly

popular phrases have even been repeated, and emphatically repeated, by philosophers. It is certainly true that in all philosophizing the "right" combination of fixed and settled meanings of designations plays an important part, but does that warrant our subscribing to F. Max Müller's opinion: " All philosophy can be called a war between the old and the new meanings of words " (*Das Denken im Lichte der Sprache,* Leipzing, 1888, p. 557)? No, it is not really a controversy over words; entirely new ways and possibilities of thought and entirely new methods remould man's mental attitude.

Centuries ago, i.e. in the classical age of the natural sciences and during the age of enlightenment, the conviction definitely obtained that everything happened of necessity and that it was in the nature of the human mind to judge everything from the standpoint of necessity. Only once admittedly, and then only for a comparatively short time, was there for this a kind of definite pattern: we refer to the cosmic formula of Laplace. Laplace maintained that all processes could be expressed by differential equations as used in Newtonian mechanics. But Laplace's theory had, strictly speaking, only a bearing on mass-points, and could only be upheld in the case of heavenly bodies which are so remote that they, i.e. the suns and planets, can be regarded, of course only approximately, as mass-points. Only in this case, and on the vague assumption that everything happens in the same way on a small as on a large scale, could a hypothesis be developed, according to which all events might be calculated (in a pre-relativistic sense) backward in the past and forward in the future. But the mechanics of the *continua* enables us already to transform Laplace's causality into a statistic view. As soon as we pass from statistics to the theory of probabilities, we have already rejected Max Müller's view; for who would have thought of applying the modest considerations of probability made in the 17th century to astronomy, mechanics, the science of electricity, the science of population, and so to history? It is clear, therefore, that we must repeatedly revise what we have learnt ; that is to say, our striving after veracity can only take the form of working and co-operating in the progress of the natural sciences

and the humanities. In this connection all truth would only be historical, not absolute. Truth is co-operation.

From this premise, however, new light will also be shed on the religious conceptions of the past, in the present connection, e.g. on chance and probability in the question of salvation. In the sense of physical chance, from which we started, chance is denied and rejected by the Christian religion, as this religion makes everything dependent on God and consequently removes it into the sphere of divine arbitrariness. Thus Feuerbach says that the mystery of predestination is the mysticism of chance. This religious mystery of chance, therefore, is incompatible with the scientific nature of chance. To work out the scientific nature of chance and to leave the religious mystery to be the object of psychological analysis implies the sacrifice of the passionate, i.e. divine love of truth to the heart's longing for peace.

The religious-metaphysical problems do not, however, simply resolve themselves into physical problems, and even if this were the case, it would not mean that a comprehensive statement of the problems had been made. It is not possible to maintain that an apparently nonsensical scientific problem is in principle insoluble. Let us consider, for example, the necessity for astronomy and physics of a definite beginning of the world in time, i.e. of the origin at some definite date of the galaxies of stars. It is impossible to conceive how such an origin can be expressed in perceptional or mathematical terms. What could there have been before the so-called " beginning of the world "? No theory of relativity, no statistics, nothing, absolutely nothing, could make intelligible to us the transition from the *potentia* to the *actus*, and that is our only concern here. In fact, it would not even be possible to formulate a philosophical problem, which would enable us to allow for a *suspensio judicii*. Certainly we have much more solid ground under our feet when we discuss the problem of the increasing spatial expansion of the universe, or the end of the world as the result of cooling off, and the loss of energy of the atoms by radiation, but this presupposes nothing less than that we have some opportunity to participate profitably in astronomical and physical research. Consequently, considered

from this point of view, inward veracity is a spiritual mood which is able to forego world-embracing systems, but which also makes a point of being as scientifically conscientious as possible. Nevertheless, the probabilities as to what is happening in the firmament, biological possibilities, sociological theories and history give us the possibility to make a speculative characterization of the world which, after all, because of this misconception, will enable the human character to participate again in what is going on in the universe.

So man's views and notions about truth and reality mature but slowly ; they are only to be found in scientific progress, and in them he is aware of unavoidable sources of error and also of the limits that are set to the possibilities of perception. Participation in such research, however, can produce a love of truth of an almost religious fervour, i.e. can produce a frame of mind which will exclude all toleration of what is obviously false and all sympathy with what is irresponsibly asserted. and which will simply demand that war be declared on what is manifestly untruthful. That would be a good, a really religious war, a sign of a mature mind.

THE SYSTEM OF DVAITĀDVAITA

SWAMI DHANANJAYA DAS BRAJAVIDEHI MOHANTA
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I deem it a great fortune on my part to participate in the deliberations of this World Parliament of Religions, convened in the hallowed name of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Deva. Sri Ramakrishna belonged to no sect ; no sectarian narrowness ever touched him. He equally honoured and accepted all creeds and faiths. It is his universal acceptance of faiths that has drawn today saints and savants, philosophers and thinkers of the East and the West to this august assembly.

I belong to Śrī Nimbārka School of Vedānta. The religion inculcated by sages like Sanaka and Nārada, and preached by

Śrī Nimbārka is also universal and all-comprehensive. It will lead to peace and blessedness by dispelling ignorance and discord among mankind.

Philosophers have written different commentaries and built up different systems on the Vedānta Philosophy. In names only these systems are different, but in essence they are one. Their ultimate goal is identical. The *Vedānta-Pārijāta-Saurabha* is Śrī Nimbārka's Commentary on the *Brahma-Sūtras of Bādarāyaṇa*. His system is called *Dvaitādvaita-vāda* or the theory of Monism standing side by side with Dualism. This system is in entire consonance with other schools of thought.

The Philosophy of Śrī Nimbārka is broad-based on the Śrutis, the Smṛitis and the *Brahma-Sūtras*. It propounds that (1) Brahman or the Supreme Self is Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute and Bliss Absolute. In this aspect He is One without a second. It is in this aspect that He is known as Impersonal, Immutable, etc. (2) Again, He is the incomprehensible Dispenser of various phenomena—the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of this Universe with endless names and forms. He is both the efficient and the material cause of this universe. So He is all-knowing, all-powerful, all-dispensing, all-pervading. In this aspect He is called *Iśvara*. (3) He projects Himself and enters separately into every part of this vast universe. The separate projections are called individual souls (*jīvas*). So individual souls are endless and every individual soul is His part in respect of *Chit*. As the relation of both difference and identity exists between the part and the whole, similarly the relation of both difference and identity exists between the individual soul and Brahman. (4) Brahman manifests Himself in endless names and forms, and enters into every part of the universe as enjoyers and individual souls—these names, forms and individual souls are technically called the phenomenal world, which is ever-changing. Brahman is the material cause of this universe and as such He is not separate from but is identical with it. Again, Brahman is the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of the universe and at the same time He transcends it, is also its efficient cause and apart from it. This *Dvaitādvaita-vāda* is

consistent with the different texts of the *Brahma-Sūtras* (*Brahma-Sūtras*, I. i. 2, 3, 4; II. iii. 42; III. ii. 27; II. 1-14), and the Upanishads (*Taitt. Up.*, *Svetā. Up.*, etc., etc.).

This system is also in entire agreement with the Philosophy of Sri Ramakrishna, who says: "The Absolute or Unmanifest Being is the Manifest Principle. He who is Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute, manifests Himself in various forms for Divine Sport or *Līlā* (*Śrī Rāmakṛishṇa Kathāmṛita*, Part III, p. 77). The aspirant follows the path of discrimination and reasons, 'Not this, not this', and thus reaches the Absolute. When he attains the Absolute, he again sees that the Absolute manifests Himself as the Universe—the finite soul, phenomenal world and the twenty-four categories (*Ibid.*, Part III, pp. 82-83). The great spiritual teachers like Nārada are *vijñānins*. A *vijñānin* fears nothing and visualizes God with forms and without any form. I have extended both my hands and this is why I accepted *in toto*" (*Ibid.*, Part III, p. 85).

The Philosophy of Nimbārka has no conflict with that of Śaṅkara. Regarding the essence of Brahman, Śaṅkara and Nimbārka have come to the same conclusion. As regards the relation of individual souls (*jīvas*) to Brahman, Śaṅkara says in his commentary on the *Brahma-Sūtras*: "When Brahman is the Undivided Whole, He cannot have parts. So when Brahman is the Unidivided Whole, why is *jīva* (individual soul) not Brahman?" (*Sūtra-Bhāshya*, II. ii. 43). Again, Śaṅkara says in his *Sūtra-Bhāshya*: "When the Śrutis have described the individual soul as both essentially different from and identical with Brahman, we must ascertain the truth in terms of a snake and its coil. As the snake, when coiled, lying still or in motion, is the snake itself in different forms and postures, similarly in different states *jīva* (individual soul) and Brahman stand in both separate and identical relations" (*Sūtra-Bhāshaya*, III. ii. 27). As regards the relation of the phenomenal world to Brahman, Śaṅkara says: "The Śrutis have described the origin of the Universe from Brahman; they have similarly described that Brahman remains in His essence (*svarūpa*) transcending the

ever-changing phenomenal world. By this it has been known that Brahman is separate from the phenomenal world" (*Sūtra-Bhāshya*, II. i. 27). Again, Śaṅkara says that Brahman is identical with the phenomenal world (*Sūtra-Bhāshya*, II. i. 14-20). With conditioned mind and body-consciousness, *jīvas* are absolutely independent entities, endowed with the capacities of separate existence and activity from Brahman. But as the result of the method of reasoning, namely, 'Not this, not this,' when the mind ceases to be moved by desires, the conditioned mind vanishes and the soul goes into super-conscious state, the aspirant realises his identity with the Absolute Brahman.

The Philosophy of Nimbārka is not in disagreement with Rāmānuja's Qualified-Monism either. Ramānuja says in his commentary on the *Brahma-Sūtras*: "The separateness of *jīva* and Brahman is taught on the basis of the difference in nature between the attribute and the thing attributed; the relation of identity is established on the fact that the attribute having no separate entity cannot exist apart from the thing attributed but so-exists with the thing attributed (*Śrī-Bhāshya*, II. iii. 45). Rāmānuja has expressed similar views regarding the objective world also. (*Śrī-Bhāshya*, II. ii. 29).

Sri Nimbārka's Philosophy has also no conflict with Śrī Madhva's system. Śrī Madhva, too, has mainly accepted both the dualistic and the non-dualistic statements of the Śrutis (*Pūrṇa-prajña-Darśana*, II. iii. 42, 43, 44).

A Vaishṇava is he who worships the All-pervading Principle, Vishṇu. Not only the four Vaishṇava sects but also all other aspirants worship Vishṇu. There can be no conflict when the real essence is comprehended. The teachings of the seers differ in accordance with the different quest, predilection and fitness of the individual aspirants. The ultimate goal is one. Knowing that the Supreme Brahman manifests Himself as the finite soul and the phenomenal world, we must love all and sundry. Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda have set this very noble example before the world and exhorted us to serve all beings as gods. And their followers have dedicated themselves to this ideal of service.

DIVERSITY IN UNITY

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For many centuries, the noblest and most far-seeing spiritual leaders of mankind have been urging us to see " Unity in Diversity." And it is largely under their visible or invisible influence that men have been gathering into groups always more numerous, centring round some ideal, whether religious, national, political or other. Without that tendency, man could never have achieved the progress of which we may justly be proud.

But as groups are getting stronger, better organized, more numerous, as efforts are now being made for uniting, cementing, synthesizing, internationalizing *gradually*, we come to a position which is fraught with ever greater dangers. Instead of the small and more or less harmless wars between small local rulers, we saw nations fighting ruthlessly against nations, we saw world-wars in which men were killed or wounded by crores. Instead of the bitter political strifes which were kept inside the boundaries of one small state, of one city, we see internal war now reaching beyond the frontiers of one country, and the situation in Spain is a grave warning of the dangers of the internationalization of political parties.

The great teaching—"Unity in Diversity"—is being distorted and often used only as a cover for greed of power, as a euphemism for " *L'Union fait la force.*" It is becoming more and more dangerous, more and more insufficient. More and more we are thinking in terms of groups of units, and not in terms of units or in terms of the whole. Instead of " world," we now use the awful word " international."

Really, substantially, there is for man only one natural group, viz. mankind. And there is only one natural unit, viz. the individual man. All the classifications, divisions and sub-divisions between the unit and the whole, all churches, parties, nations, groups of all sorts, whether newly invented like nations, or sanctified by time like religions, are artificial, and correspond to nothing

real. A man is a man, and a member of mankind, and nothing else.

Whatever other tag you may put on man, it is artificial and arbitrary. The tag may be useful, and often is, but it is only a tag. We should never look upon it as God-given, we should never worship it more highly than we do man or mankind. When we fall into that mistake, we see our brother-men who happen to wear different racial or national or political or religious tags as competitors, as enemies. Let us keep and use the tags, let us not be deluded by them.

The time has come to go one step further, and no longer to see " Unity progressively installed in Diversity ", but to see " Unity " as the first and only reality and to see " Diversity " as radiating from Unity, as a manifestation of Unity. Then we shall be able to classify and divide as we like without danger. Then we shall get away from the exclusive allegiance to one idea which is at the root of all fanaticism, and we shall merrily owe allegiance simultaneously to many groups—one national, one racial, one religious, one political, etc. And the more the frontiers of each group differ from those of the others, the less the danger of becoming fanatical and homicidal.

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

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This is a parliament of religionists. Is it also a parliament of philosophers? That is the question I am here making an attempt to answer.

In the minds of the immense majority of men philosophy is invariably associated with religion. They speak of Christian philosophy, Muslim philosophy, Hindu philosophy, Jain or Buddhist philosophy and so forth. Even competent and cultured scholars generally put religion and philosophy together. There is

undoubtedly a justification for it. Every religion has its own interpretation of life or existence, which is philosophy. But if enquiry should proceed a little further, it would be found truer to say that every man has his own view of life as a whole, and has therefore a philosophy of his own. But does this indicate all that is meant by philosophy?

In the history of religion no event is more remarkable than the recent volcanic eruption in Russia which has nearly levelled to the ground the edifice of religion. No doubt, at all times, there have been individuals more or less indifferent to one or more aspects of religious life. But a wholesale rejection of it by an entire society has been witnessed only in this age. Posterity will perhaps see its significance better than we do. For it is a phenomenon that has already influenced and is bound to influence further the social, political and economic life, not only of the Russians but of civilized nations generally. This event will perhaps be characterized as the most outstanding feature of the history of the twentieth century. The question is often asked by thoughtful men nowadays, " Are we still in a fool's paradise? Even if we have been in it in the past, is it desirable that we should be so any longer, after seeing the revolution in Russia?" The time evidently appears to have come for a re-valuation of the religious factor in human life.

USES OF RELIGION

Generally people believe that religion implies a God or Gods on whom man's life, present and future, depends. But we actually find that there are religions without any belief in God or Gods, not even in an ' other ' to which some of the latest thinkers attach much importance. Whatever may be the implications of religion, —for it has been defined variously—no one seriously doubts that in the past it has guided and shaped the entire life not only of individuals but also of communities. It has been the greatest source of consolation to millions of sorrowing and suffering people. It has brought peace and prosperity to communities by effectively binding together myriads of separate individuals for beneficial

purposes. It has to a remarkable degree developed fine arts. It has often promoted social good of the highest value. And for that reason self-sacrifice, voluntary or forced, made in the cause of religion has won the greatest admiration everywhere. Further, the most effective of sanctions for moral life among the great majority is religion. Even from a political point of view it is religion that has served as one of the best means of wielding the mass mind.

Nevertheless, history equally truly points to the dark side of religion. There is no crime or vice known to man that has not been committed in the name of religion. The bloodiest of wars, the cruelest of murders, the most inhuman of tortures, by methods infinitely worse than those invented by science, are traceable to religion. Let alone the past: think for a moment of what happened and is happening particularly in this land of ours. What has transpired all the world over in this respect is well known. This is not all. There is no kind of vice or immorality that has not been perpetrated and perpetuated in the name of religion. And for such practices the most elaborate justifications have been invented. Even those religions that are said to possess the highest ethical codes are not exempt. Such undesirable aspects of religion furnish incontestable evidence for the theories of those psychologists that trace the religious sense in man to sex complexes. Further, in some countries it has tended to the disruption of society and social solidarity, of which political intriguers have taken considerable advantage. Would we not then be nearer the truth if we substituted 'religion' for 'liberty' in that famous utterance of Madame Roland, and said "O Religion! What horrors have been committed in thy name?"

THEOLOGY AND SCHOLASTICISM

Those looking at the bright side praise religion, whereas those that see most of the dark side condemn it outright. But now when we could get glimpses of both the sides, does it not behove us to make an unbiassed enquiry, though we be devotedly attached to our own religious beliefs? There is a South Indian proverb: "Even ambrosia when indulged in beyond measure would be

poison." Could not the same be said of religion? Even 'good customs' are believed by Tennyson to corrupt the world.

Whether there exists a God ; whether He is the creator of the World and whether He is still creating ; whether He is the Governor and Judge that punishes the wicked and rewards the virtuous ; whether there are Heaven and Hell and what they are like ; what God's nature is ; what attitudes of man please Him ; what forms of worship are welcomed by Him ; what connection there is between Him and the Bibles, the Korans, the Vedas and other scriptures ; whether they are eternal and superhuman ; above all, how evil came into this world ; whether God could be good when He has created a Hell: if God should be absolved from evil and the Karma doctrine should be adopted, what are the proofs of its validity?—a thousand such questions form the subject matter of Theology. And the answers given vary with men's inclinations, tastes and culture.

Taking for granted that such dogmas as the above of traditional beliefs and scriptures to be true, men set out to interpret them finding arguments for and against with the help of science, logic and grammar. Since these dogmas have been viewed from a variety of standpoints, the literature that has grown up is enormous. The great majority of men usually mistake these discussions for philosophy, though in truth they form the subject of scholasticism.

The upshot of theology and scholasticism is that there is no unanimity of views on any point. Every topic has its *pros* and *cons*. Conflict and contradiction characterize them all, and are and will be *endless* as some Indian philosophers have pointed out, on perfectly rational grounds. Lest such natural differences should produce doubts in men's minds, zealous religionists have not hesitated to suppress them by declaring that the doubter is doomed to perdition.

Most men, either because they are too absorbed in earning their livelihood to think of such matters, or because they are too lazy to exercise their minds, or because they have only a slave mentality, meekly submit to the judgment of the

theological or scholastic heroes in their midst. Even atheistic religions have their dogmas and scholastic literature. But with the march of human civilization, we find that the thoughtful set to enquire. Neither the dogmas of the theists nor those of the atheists can be accepted as truth without enquiry which is the province of science and philosophy. These conflicting aspects were noticed thousands of years ago.

MYSTICISM

Those that fail, however, to derive any satisfaction from theological or scholastic disputations reject them wholesale and seek refuge in what are known as mystic " experiences," " ecstasies," " visions," and above all, what they term " intuitions." They believe they have found here the bed-rock on which religion stands and consider it impregnable. For, it is seen that even some of the acutest scientists fear to approach this domain of the mystic. They hold religious experience or intuition to be beyond the reach of science. But this hesitancy or weakness of the scientist is no proof of the strength of mysticism. Whatever the opinion of the scientist, the fact remains, as has been observed for thousands of years in India, that the views of the greatest mystics regarding their own experiences and their knowledge of the World are contradictory and in conflict with each other.

Again, as an effect of it on society, we find that for every immaculate and irreproachable Ramana Maharshi, there are hundreds of frauds and fakes whose spiritual haven is the company of such women and men as have met with great sexual or other disappointments in life, not to say anything of the free use by them of wine offered, as in some of their cults, to the Deity. Nay, mysticism also lends itself easily, as an Indian philosopher says, to be used for attaining worldly comforts of other kinds.

This is not all. When mystics seek their satisfaction in this manner and they or their activities in life do not interfere with those of the others, they are most welcome to rejoice in their 'intuitions.' But when their lives or actions influence the societies in which they move, and when we find harm resulting

therefrom, we are compelled to enquire into the truth-value of mysticism. If the 'divine' intuitions of the historical murderers, or of the famous parents that roasted their praying children alive, or of the perverts that seduced innocent women by the score had only confined themselves to their cells or chambers rejoicing in their divine intuitions or ecstasies, we should have had nothing but praise for them.

This essential weakness of mysticism was noticed by thinkers of the days of the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad,* thousands of years ago, and by Śaṅkara, the critic, who says that even a "fool" says, "I know, I experience, or I have an intuition of the highest reality." Where is the proof that what he sees or knows is Truth? This is the question of questions that has exercised the minds of the thoughtful men of India.

When seriously asked, the believers in mysticism betake to flouting reason and declare to the world that religious experience is above reason, and that " truth-values " are inferior to what they call the *values of satisfaction,* which are *spiritual* as they term it. Now it does not need much argument to show that such defences have unfortunately fallen flat on enquiring minds because of the patent contradictions which have shaken the confidence of many observers. In a word, even mysticism, like the rest of religion, has its good as well as bad features.

Few are the men that care to weigh both sides—for, small is the number of those that can detach themselves from their religious bias which has been flowing in their veins for ages ; and fewer are they that are able to subject their own experiences and thoughts to dispassionate scrutiny. Emotion often gets the upper hand in the generality of mankind and subordinates reason.

NATURE OF RELIGION

In life men invariably seek enjoyment, *peace* or *satisfaction* of some kind. They pursue religion, with God or without God, to the extent to which it helps them to attain this object. And men are of different tastes. So are religions of different kinds,

from the most virtuous to the most vicious of patterns, suited to their temperament, culture and capacity. On the other hand such as have found religion to be an obstacle to seeking their pleasures have rejected it, or modified it so as to keep religion out of their way. Hence though numberless are the religions already in existence, new varieties spring up every day. And every one of them is backed up by the most elaborate arguments, metaphysical, physiological, psychological, with their various theories of intuitions, sublimations, sub-conscious cerebrations, cataleptic states and the like. Religion is the manifestation of a craving. It is thus a universal as well as natural phenomenon. Continuous differentiation is one of its most essential characteristics. Like everything else in nature, it is seen to obey the law ' From unity or uniformity to multiplicity and variety,' in spite of all that men do to the contrary to suppress or check its growth.

TRUTH AND RELIGION

Every follower of a religion thinks that what he believes is truth. What does truth then signify? If what we understand by truth be something like the meaning given to it in mathematics, i.e. as two plus two are equal to four, we see that such must be its *universal* import. It is only such truth that holds good for a Christian or a Mohammedan, a Hindu or a Hebrew, an Asiatic or a European, an American or an African, a man or a woman, the aged or the young. Its chief characteristic is non-contradictability.

But like everything else religion also is changing. Change implies difference. What was believed to be true a hundred years ago is modified considerably today. Can truth be subject to such changes? Again, no persons, however much they may differ in all other respects, are seen to fight in respect of the truth that two plus two are four. But the endless disputes, quarrels, nay wars of religions are proof positive that religion is not based on Truth. And consistently do the mystics reject truth or reason as a test of the worth of their experience. Whatever they

perceive, feel or think, or imagine, is of supreme value to them, provided it brings them *" satisfaction."*

Now, if the highest stage of religion, that of the mystic in which he declares that he is above 'reason' and ' truth,' satisfies one, there is nothing more for such an one to do. But if the feeling be that this matter demands or justifies investigation, one should proceed a few more steps. " The easiest person to deceive," says Lord Chesterfield, " is one's own self." Shall we not then rely upon our ' intuitions ' *only* after we make sure that what we know is truth?

Now, to attain to truth by removing all contradictions, could we prevent these growing differences among men of religion? Could we check the wars of the disputants? Could we, in a word, check Nature's process of multiplication? Since the last great Parliament was held in Chicago, some forty-three years ago, religions have increased without number. Multiplication brings with it differences, and differences we cannot do away with. The primitive way of making religion true by means of conversions, or by wiping out of existence the weaker followers of other religions is still prevalent. But this aboriginal method has proved futile ; for, the converts have only developed new variants. Differences, conflicts and contradictions are again seen to spring forth endlessly.

The problem, how to prove any religion to be "true" or how to make it true, has yet to be solved. For, religionists want satisfaction before truth.

THE VALUE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF RELIGIONS

It is *not,* however, to be thought that religion has, at the present time, whatever it may have been in the past, no useful purpose to serve. It is still of the highest value as a means, though very slow, of leading men step by step to think of the value of truth. The very multiplicity and variety and the necessary conflicts often bloody, sometimes verbal, goad and force men to think of the need for knowing the truth in religion. Religions in the plural are a necessity that each may see the

defects of the other and expose the fact that religion as such is not based on truth but on mere *satisfaction,* varying with imaginations, which is the cause of a great deal of the human suffering. But adversity yields the sweet milk of philosophy. Next, proselytization and propagandism for a universal religion are mere attempts of childlike minds, for they run counter to the nature that can never be eradicated by any means, do what we will.

The common feature of all cravings is to possess something found or believed to be outside of it, and that as permanently as possible. But what is specially characteristic of the religious craving is its stronger emphasis on the Permanent. In this world of continuous changes and of joys of a most fleeting character the human heart thirsts for " Permanence." Religion seeks to attain it by certain acts of propitiation or of renunciation or by both. But it does not worry itself as to whether the " Permanence " has been actually attained or not. Religious men only imagine that " Permanence " is realizable after they are dead, and while alive, can only believe in it. But where is the proof that any kind of permanence is attained and secured after death? Again, the aim of art and science also is the attainment of the " Permanent " in a measure. All anti-religionists may ignore or even try to suppress religion ; but they can never suppress the craving for the Permanent. If diverted from the channels called religions, this urge flows into other channels such as those of science and art. For the same reason, if some forms of religion be suppressed, other forms spring up. Wisdom, therefore, consists in working with nature and taking advantage of religion to attain the object of life or existence.

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

We now see that the real worth of religion lies in its being an effort at seeking the Permanent. But what is the Permanent? Religion cannot answer because of the contradictions in men's views of it. If it were based on truth, there could be no contradiction or conflict, and no religion would have attempted to make converts. For, no mathematician proselytizes another to

bring home to others the truth that two plus two are equal to four. Truth is the direct objective of philosophy—not of religion. The Permanent is sought by everyone individually or collectively, in all actions and thoughts. Whether what is Permanent is manifold or single is ascertainable only when man possesses all knowledge comprehending arts and sciences, not merely religion. What points this out is truth. The artist seeks it, the scientist also seeks it. It is philosophy that co-ordinates all efforts and seeks to get at the Permanent as it actually is. Religion by itself cannot attain the truth. Here let me quote a few words from a philosopher of India:

I. " The realization of truth is brought about by enquiry and not in the least by the observance of ten millions of religious rituals.

II. " Knowledge of truth is seen to proceed from reasoning and not by pilgrimages to sacred rivers, etc."

III. " Let men quote scriptures and make sacrifices to the Gods and let them perform religious acts and worship the Gods. There is no attainment of truth . . . . not even in the life of a hundred Brahmās . . ."

IV. " Neither by *Yoga* (mystic's practice) nor by *Sāṁkhya* nor by religious acts nor by erudition (scholarship) is the attainment of truth possible."

V. " Loud talks consisting of showers of words, the skill in expounding scriptures and likewise great learning bring on a little personal enjoyment to the scholar but are no good for realizing truth."

VI. " The scriptures consisting of many words are dense forests which only make one ramble and get lost."

VII. " For one who has been bitten by the serpent of ignorance, the only remedy is the knowledge of the ultimate truth (Brahman). Of what avail are the Vedas, scriptures, *mantras* and medicines to such a one?"

We learn from philosophical enquiry that all urges, all cravings, all processes in life are but efforts at attaining the Permanent. From eating and drinking, playing and enjoying, up to governing and ruling and acquiring knowledge, all endeavours to attain self-preservation are but the pathways to the Permanent. Neither Russian nor any other power on earth can root out this urge towards self-preservation. Religion is but an aspect of this urge. Till from a knowledge of the changes, general conflicts and contradictions of faiths there arises in one's mind the doubt as to whether what gives "satisfaction" is the Permanent, one remains in the stage of religion and art. When one feels the need for devising other tests of Permanence than satisfaction, to ascertain whether what is conceived as such is the Permanent, one rises to the stage of science. But one remains in the scientific stage till one realizes that all that is known as fleeting and that all knowledge of the world is coloured by imagination or conception, and above all, till a doubt again arises as to whether the Permanent that is beyond all changes and all contradictions is felt. One enters the gates of philosophy, with a view to get beyond the reach of even possible doubts, which alone characterizes truth. Thus the seeking for the Permanent proceeds from religion to philosophy through art and science. Religion interests the largest number ; for, it is the simplest and easiest thing to find satisfaction by imagining whatever pleases one to be the Permanent. Whereas Philosophy interests the fewest ; for, there, it is not imagination or conception that counts, but truth that is independent of them and that is unchanging. So, what could be "Universal" is only Truth, in the world of philosophy, but not in that of religion. And philosophy is, as already indicated, impossible without a knowledge of science also.

That the religious faith of man is subject to change was noticed thousands of years ago in India and is so recorded. That the outlooks of one and the same religion vary with the natural, economic, social and political environments and demands which continually change, is evident to all students of history. Further, what is considered religious by some is considered irreligious by

some others of the same religious body. New adaptions vary not only with the above-mentioned external factors but also with men's tastes and moods. It has been rightly observed by one no less than Swami Vivekananda that there are and will be as many religions as there are human faces and minds. Therefore, there can be no permanent peace based on anything connected with religion by itself or science by itself, i.e. religion or science divorced from philosophy.

The urge towards the permanent, being universal, knows no distinctions of creed, colour, caste, age, race or sex, though the form it takes, called religion, varies with men's minds. It is a knowledge of the nature of the urge, and of its goal called truth, that takes one beyond religion to the enquiry known as Philosophy (*Paramārtha tatva vichāra*).

What is characterized as sectarian, such as Christian, Hindu, Muslim, or Jain philosophy, is, till it reaches the goal of truth, no philosophy proper, but theology or scholasticism or mysticism. Truth is one and the same for all. There is no secrecy about it, no cell or screen is needed for it ; no exceptional intuitive experience, no vision, no individual or scriptural superiority monopolizes it. Truth is as wide as the world, and open to all alike, as the knowledge that one added to one make more than one.

TRUTH AND THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS

Religionists most undoubtedly feel the urge to seek Truth, but mistaking 'satisfaction' to be Truth feel that they are not called upon to ascertain the nature of 'Truth' which is the province of Philosophy. The foremost question for consideration for a Parliament of Religions, therefore, appears to be this: should we do anything to check this multiplicity? The primitive or aboriginal effort at unifying all religious views and of seeking a universal religion, which is in itself a contradiction in thought, is found to be puerile and futile, because it seeks to run directly counter to nature. And variety which nature produces with its contradictions is the best means of directing men's thoughts to the fact that religion is but

a preparation for attaining the Permanent, which is reached only through a knowledge of Truth. And let it be remembered that philosophical knowledge which leads to Truth is based as much on science and art as upon religion, nay on the whole of life. Religion with the knowledge of science and art is beneficial in that it makes for Truth. The common term "philosophy" used by all faiths and sciences shows that the common factor, viz. truth, indicates that in itself it has no distinctions.

Lastly, the highest authority on religion, may tell us that he is in God or is in touch with God or that he is himself God. Let alone the question how he knows that his God is the same as what all others understand by the term "God." If we ask him how he knows that what he refers to as God is the Permanent, the ever-lasting in the *future* and without a beginning in the *past,* he must play the well-known trick of saying: "You will know it when you become like me capable of having intuitions like mine." This trick, as has been pointed out already, anyone can play. A Parliament of religious thinkers will, therefore, be as much a Parliament of philosophic thinkers, if the former will only see the proper place to give to the objective of "satisfaction" as compared with that of 'truth.' The urge towards the goal of the Permanent is inexorable ; it will not cease till truth is attained. Hence the pure philosophers of old said, *"Awake, arise and stop not till the goal is reached."*

CONCLUSION

A Parliament like this has, therefore, not only to take stock of the differences and contradictions of faiths, but also to inculcate the best course of making the way easy for attaining the Permanent, which depends upon a knowledge of truth, the goal of Philosophy, that is, Truth uncontradictable. The attainment of truth, however, demands an ethical discipline of a most rigorous character, which sometimes goes under the name of religion as some Indian Philosophers have pointed out. And this discipline, the Parliament will, I presume, unanimously uphold and actively

encourage in every denomination. The Parliament, it is presumed, accepts variety in religious experiences as a necessity and will discountenance the vanity of proselytization, exposing the absurdity of the idea of a single universal religion. Though as a social feature, religion has been at times most harmful, its value as a factor in individual life is unquestionable. Let every individual man or woman seek his or her own religious satisfaction without being induced or forced by another and without inducing or forcing another to the same course. To fulfil the object of the religious craving, nothing is more necessary than the acquisition of knowledge not confined to religion alone, though it is within the reach of the largest number, but of knowledge of all fields of life or existence, knowledge as deep and as wide as is possible for man, for such knowledge alone is the path to the attainment, not in the next world but 'in this world' and 'in this life', of the Permanent.

WHERE WE ARE ONE

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" The seers, getting rid of all their desires, realize the Self, that is the Highest Bliss not to be ascertained in terms," so said Yama, the spiritual instructor of Nachiketas, in going to establish the true nature of the Self for his disciple. The question that is put by Nachiketas is a very serious one, involving, as it does, the two great philosophical problems that have engaged the serious attention of the thinkers of the world ever since the dawn of civilization, giving rise to two seemingly contradictory schools of thought. "How should I know the Self that is the Highest Bliss?" asks Nachiketas of his spiritual instructor, " Does It shine itself or does It shine in and through the universe of names and forms?"[1] To put the thing philosophically, Nachiketas wants to know the ultimate truth regarding the true nature of the Self,

[1] *Kaṭha Up.*, II.ii.14.

whether it is absolutely real or relatively real,—whether the Self is to be realized in its own glory, apart from or in total negation of the universe of names and forms, or in and through the universe, i.e. through its evolutionary process? Apart from its philosophical side, this question of Nachiketas also records the two lines of *sādhanā* (spiritual practices) that had their birth at the very dawn of the spiritual in man. The one line of spiritual *sādhanā* is the *yoga* process, which finds its culmination in *samādhi,* in total negation of the universe of names and forms, i.e. the entire phenomenal world, and the other line of spiritual *sādhanā* is the *jñāna* process, which culminates in a perceptual change of the universe of names and forms into Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute. The practice of *yoga* leads the *sādhaka* back to his own Self as the One Great Cause of the universe, and the effect, i.e. the universe of names and forms, is negated for the time being ; but so long as the cause is there, the possibility of a relapse into evolution is there—in the state of *samādhi* the universe is not negated once for all ; it is only a relative cessation or suspension of evolution. The practice of *jñāna* on the other hand, reveals the universe as an evolution of the Self—an evolution in and through which the Self has eternally been realizing Itself as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute. In the practice of *jñāna* the universe is not negated, but it is taken in its entirety as a condition—an indispensable and necessary condition—for the evolution of the Self as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute, which is its true nature. The *jñānin* or philosopher thus takes the whole evolutionary process into account and sees, in and through it, only an evolution of his own Self as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute. " All this is verily Brahman "[1] is thus the final word of the *jñānin* relating to his realization of the Self ; and when the *jñānin* has attained this height of Self-realization—the highest height to which the realization of the Self can attain—the cause and the effect, i.e. the spiritual and the material, have been blended, merged in One Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute, thus fulfilling the one grand object of

[1] *Chhānd Up.*, III.xiv.1.

evolution, the *jñānin* becoming eternally established in his own true Self as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute.

Whether we want it or not, the evolution is there, because it is the very nature of the Self to evolve. The Sanskrit word for the Self is *Ātman,* which is derived from the root *ata,* which means " to go always, to evolve always." The *Ātman* or the Self thus means that which evolves always. So the attempt of the *yogin* to stop or negate the evolution of the Self once for all is thus futile. It is not by negating but by reading the true nature and object of evolution that one can have the object of one's life eternally fulfilled. But the practice of *yoga* has got a relative value, as it takes the *sādhaka* in the state of *samādhi* back to his own Self in total negation of the universe of names and forms, thus showing the true nature of the Self as the Absolute-Conscious-Bliss-ful-Existence. The practice of *yoga* is thus complementary to the practice of *jñāna,* as by showing the true nature of the Self as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute it helps the *jñānin* to realize that Self in and through the universe of names and forms.

Let us listen to what the spiritual instructor of Nachiketas has to say by way of reply to the question of his disciple: " There the sun does not shine, nor does the moon, nor do the stars, nor do the flashes of lightning,—what to speak of the fire."[1] This shows that negation of all the luminary bodies, i.e. the entire phenomenal world, reveals the Self in its absolute state of Existence, " which is the only effulgence or Consciousness Absolute " and by " that absolute effulgence all the luminary bodies—i.e. the entire phenomenal world—shine forth."[2] This again shows the Self as self-effulgent, i.e. as Absolute Consciousness, and all the phenomenal world as revealing that Absolute Consciousness. " It is through its effulgence that all the luminary bodies—i.e. the entire phenomenal world—shine forth as distinct bodies."[3] This also proves the relative existence of the entire phenomenal world. In these two *ślokas* the philosophy of the Upanishads is given in a nut-shell—that the Self is the only Reality and it is absolutely real, and that relatively also it is the Self that is real. In this Philo-

[1] *Kaṭha Up.,* II.ii.5. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*

sophy of the *Upanishads* we thus find a wonderful synthesis of the individual self (*jīva*), the universe (*jagat*), and the Supreme Self (Brahman)—the highest synthesis, which philosophical speculation can arrive at. Establishing the Self as the only Reality, it does not negate the universe, but takes it as an indispensable condition for the evolution of the Self as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute,—" All the phenomenal world shines forth or reveals only that self-effulgent Existence."[1] The fact is that the Self, which is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute, evolves Itself as the universe of names and forms in the very act of knowing or realizing Itself as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute. The evolution of the universe is thus eternally going on in the Self for the realization of itself as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute,—" In order to realize that nature of His," which is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute, " He evolved himself in various forms."[2] The myriads of creations are thus the forms, in and through which the Self manifests and realizes Itself as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute.

"Study your Self through nature"—is the dictum of the Vedic seers, and we find an echo of this Vedic dictum in the words, " Know thy Self " of the great Greek philosopher. But the verdict of the modern world is, " Study nature," and nature being as eternal as the Supreme Self, whose nature it is, and it being eternally changeful, the study of nature will be going on eternally, never reaching an Ultimate Truth, for which we feel, by the very constitution of our being, an intense longing. But even such is the dramatic irony that while we are thinking that we are studying nature, we are really, though unknowingly, studying our self all the time! The difference that is drawn between the individual self (*jīva*) and the Supreme Self (Brahman) is only this, that while the Supreme Self is knowingly or consciously studying Itself through the evolution of nature and enjoying Itself as Infinite Bliss, the individual self is doing the same unknowingly with the result that it is suffering sorrows and miseries, its so-called happiness being only a make-shift, a temporary suspension of misery. When the individual self does this knowingly, i.e. when it comes to

[1] *Ibid.* [2] *Bṛihad Up.*, II.ii.19.

know that through all its works it is only studying itself, it realizes itself as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute, even as the Supreme Self that has been doing the same knowingly throughout all eternity ; and in this matter of enjoyment of the Self the individual self and the Supreme Self—the *jīva* and Brahman—are identical.

" Evolution of the Self as Absolute Consciousness " upholds the Śruti, " is the cause of the universe of names and forms."[1] The evolution of the Self as the universe of names and forms is spontaneous in the Self. It is not out of a sense of want that the Self evolves itself as the universe, but it is only out of a sense of enjoyment of the true nature of the Self that the Self evolves itself spontaneously as the universe of names and forms. From the stand-point of the Supreme Self this universe is thus a reflector of its own nature, which is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute. So there is no sense of want, because through this evolution the Self does not get something other than its own Self, but enjoys its own Self that is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute. It is totally unlike our individual creations, where we create only out of a sense of want. It follows then, that, though the *jñānin* must begin with a search after the true nature of his own self, which implies a desire on his part, he must ultimately give up even this desire—this search, and surrender himself totally to the Self, in which state the universe will appear in its true perspective, evolving spontaneously to reveal the Self as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute. If, in the act of knowing or realizing itself as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute, the Self has evolved itself as the Universe of names and forms, the desire to know the true nature of that Self will only be adding and multiplying fresh creations and that *ad infinitum*. The passage, " How should you know the knower, i.e. the Self?"[2] thus settles the eternal quest of the *jñānin* and asks him to give up all his desires and throw himself completely upon his Self, and then and then alone the universe of names and forms will appear as an " evolution of Consciousness," revealing the true nature of the Self as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute. " All this

[1] *Varāha Up.*, III.7. [2] *Bṛihad. Up.*, II.iv.14.

is born in me, in me is all this established and it is again in me that all this is merged, so I am Brahman, the Supreme Self, One without a second."[1] This is the highest state of Self-realization in which " the individual self and the universe, the *parā* and the *aparā*—the superior and the inferior—are merged in the Supreme Self, Brahman, and all the knots of the heart are cut asunder, all doubts vanish and all the works that keep it bound in the domain of nescience are destroyed."[2] This is the Religion of self-surrender or Love, which dawns upon the individual the moment he has realized his identity with the Supreme Self and has read the true meaning of the universe only as an evolution of Consciousness. " The Religion of Love is that attachment which the *jñānin* feels for the Supreme Self after he has realized his identity with it."[3]

The question is not then, whether the world exists or not, but what the world of names and forms stands for? And the question has once for all been settled by the seers of the Upanishads, which is voiced forth in the famous line quoted above—" In order to realize that nature of His, He evolved Himself in various forms." It is only the Self that exists both absolutely and relatively—absolutely, i.e. independent of the evolution, and relatively, i.e. in and through the evolution. It may be added here that relatively also it is the Self that is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute. To cite the famous illustration of the Vedānta, it is the rope that exists even when one perceives the snake in it: " Like the existence of the rope in the perception of the snake it is only the Self that exists as the substratum of the universe of names and forms, the universe exists not."[4]

From the consideration of the ultimate philosophical truth, which thus establishes the Self both absolutely and relatively as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute, let us now turn to the process of realization of that Self as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute—from the theoretical aspect of the truth let us now turn to its practical side. " With a rational mind the search after

[1] *Kaivalya Up.*, 19. [2] *Muṇḍ. Up.*, II.ii.8.
[3] *Sāṇḍilya and Nārada Bhakti-Sūtra*, 2.
[4] *Ātmaprabodha Up.*, 12.

the true nature of the Self must begin, when it will be revealed that in the Self there is not the many ; he who sees the many in the Self passes from death to death."[1]

There are three angles of vision regarding the world, viz.—the ordinary unreasoning angle of vision which regards the world as absolutely real ; the angle of vision of a rational mind which regards the world as inexplicable ; and the ontological angle of vision which regards the world as Brahman, i.e. Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute. As students of philosophy we are here concerned only with the last two angles of vision.

As the *jñānin* or philosopher proceeds, through a most rigid process of analytical reasoning, backward to the heart of things and keeps steadily on, the world of names and forms then undergoes a change which is only conceptual—perceptually it remaining as before. And as he reaches his innermost Self, the Ultimate Truth, and is seated therein, the world then undergoes a change which is not conceptual but perceptual,—the world of names and forms then melts away, as it were—and it is then a state of Pure, Undivided Consciousness, in which the many is merged and the One without a second prevails, thus revealing the unity of the *jīva* and *jagat*—the spiritual and the material—in Brahman, i.e. in Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute. " Brahman is One without a Second ; in It there is not the many whatsoever."[2]

The discipline of the Vedānta wants that the *jñānin* or philosopher should give up all his desires—desires for the enjoyment of the objects of the world—in order to attain this perceptual change of the world of names and forms ; otherwise his philosophy will remain halting only at a conceptual change, thus failing to give him the Highest Bliss, which only a perceptual change of the world of names and forms as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute can offer. " When all the desires of the heart are got rid of, the mortal attains immortality, and in this very life he realizes his identity with Brahman, i.e. Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute."[3]

[1] *Kaṭha Up.*, II.i.11.
[2] *Tripādvibhūti-mahānārāyaṇa Up.*, 13.
[3] *Kaṭha Up.*, II.iii.14; *Bṛihad. Up.*, IV.iv.7.

This perceptual change of the world of names and forms as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute, which is the one great object of all the forms of Religion and which is the one grand object for which the whole creation stands, far from retarding the progress of the world-evolution, will only help to usher in a state of universal peace and order, thus helping man to become what he claims to be—divinely human and humanly divine. It is not a negation of life, nor does it mean a total surrender of the duties of life ; on the contrary it is the fulfilment of life through all the forms and phases of the world-evolution. One, blessed with this perceptual change of the world as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute, realizes that the whole evolutionary process has been for the gradual unfoldment of the Supreme Self that is within, and so he has no quarrel with any form and phase of the world-evolution. At the height of his Self-realization, which brings about this perceptual change of the world as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute, the *jñānin* comes to know this eternal truth that it is not blind, inert matter that starts the evolution of the world of names and forms, but a Supreme Power which evolves itself as the world of names and forms to realize itself as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute, which is its real nature ; and as this Supreme Power is a Conscious Power (*Chit-Śakti*), it is all good and there can be nothing evil in the whole evolutionary process which it starts, and whatever the *jñānin* does, when he has attained this height of Self-realization and has been seated or established therein, he does for the good of mankind in its grand march onward to a perfected state of Blissful Existence.

It will appear from what has already been stated that the Self *is the only Eternal Reality, the Common Repository of us all, where we are one.* It is the infinite ocean of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute, upon which is the eternal play of the wavelets of individuals. It is the water that is the only reality both in the ocean and in the wavelets ; even so is the Self that is the only Existence both at the back of the world-evolution and in the evolutes. We are thus all one in the Self, both absolutely and relatively. Strange indeed is the play of nescience that hides this real nature of ours from our view and makes the world an

eternal battle-field for individuals, wherein they thus enter not as the Self realizing its true nature as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute, but as individual selves, fighting as *yuyutsus* (fighters) for supremacy, for power, for victory and what not.

We, finite human beings, are held fast and bound under the domination of this tremendous cosmic nescience ; and forgetting thus our true nature of Conscious and Blissful Existence, we are, by the storms of our finite, individual desires, being tossed up and down, to and fro, like so many wavelets in the formless ocean of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute. Creations add and multiply, but the one grand object for which the whole creation stands, viz. the realization of our Self as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute, we seem to have forgotten in our quest after creative enjoyments ; and forgetting our real nature which is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute, we are all on the mad rush of finite creations in the fond, never-to-be-realized hope of capturing the Bliss of Infinitude in the finite, thus adding grief to grief and sorrow to sorrow, and paving the way for universal unrest. The dissensions and discords, in which we see individuals standing against individuals in their struggle for existence, at the very dawn of the world-evolution, have, through evolution of centuries now taken an organized form, in which we see nations standing against nations, the urge at the back being the same, viz. struggle for existence, and all this is due to the tremendous power of nescience that hides from our view *our real nature of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute, where we are one*. The Self is thus divided against itself and it is waging eternal warfare against itself.

Coming down from the consideration of the world as a whole to the philosophic world, here also we find a conflict of ideas and ideals—in our conceptual way of thinking we are not coming to a philosophical synthesis ; we also are thus adding our quota to the world-strife. In our desire for worldly enjoyment we have lost the sure anchorage of our Self and we are thus wandering farther off from the shore in quest of the unknown, creating worlds after worlds after our individual desires and running after them like the ignorant following their own shadows or like persons

of frenzied brains following the creations of their own fancy. But, " the Self, that is reflected or revealed here, in this world, is the same Self that is reflected or revealed in the other world, and the Self, that is reflected or revealed in the other world, is the same Self that is reflected or revealed in this world—he who sees the many in the Self passes verily from death to death."[1] It is high time that we should square up all our differences in the conceptual world, and culture and nourish a spirit of extreme desirelessness to attain that perceptual change, in which the manifold is merged and the Self is revealed in its own eternal glory of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, both absolutely, apart from the evolution, and relatively, in and through the evolution. What the world wants today is a galaxy of philosophic seers who, blessed with this perceptual change of the world as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute, will help humanity to turn once more back to *the Self where we are one.*

The picture of a " Golden Age " that is drawn for us in almost all the forms of Religion in the world, shows a galaxy of such phisolophic seers at the head of humanity, whose realization of the Self as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute and whose faith in that Self as the Supreme Ruler of the universe, born of that Self-realization, help humanity to have faith in that Supreme Ruler of the Universe, termed in various forms as Īśvara, God, Allāh and the like in the different religions of the world, and evolve a better state of life in which all the individuals work through all the functions for a common cause—the worship not of *individuals but of the Individual, the Supreme Self, where we are one.* It is but idle to expect that humanity as a whole will ever attain this philosophic seerhood ; what is expected is a set of these philosophic seers called Ṛishis, whose light of Self-realization will break the spell of matter and thus help humanity to march onward in the right course,—the course that will take them all back *to the Self, where we are one*—and the dissensions and discords that we see raging over the whole world will give place to Equality-Liberty-and-Fraternity, thus ushering in the Golden Age —the dream of every sincere worker for the cause of humanity.

[1] *Kaṭha Up.*, II.i.10.

Let us then silence all our differences in the conceptual world before the highest synthesis, voiced forth by the spiritual instructor of Nachiketas and adapt ourselves to the life to extreme desirelessness, which alone in the words of the Vedānta, is the only sure gate to a perceptual change of the universe of names and forms as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute. "When all the desires of the heart are got rid of, the mortal attains immortality and in this very life he realizes his identity with Brahman, i.e. Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute."[1] "Knowing the true nature of the Self as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute from the spiritual instructor, the *Brāhmin*, i.e. the *jñānin* should realize the Self, in a state of extreme desirelessness, as Existence-Consciousness-Bliss Absolute ; he should not be given further instruction regarding the Self, as that will only be a waste of words."[2] Again, "In the Self are established the heaven, the earth, the sky and the mind with all the organs of senses ; give up all other vain speculations and know only the Self that is one, because He is the only causeway to immortality."[3]

HARMONY IN SCIENCE AND RELIGION

PARSIDH NARAYAN

Gaya, Behar

The science of spirit, briefly speaking, is this:—The Prime Element from which the entire Nature and Super-nature have emanated is one, the Absolute Energy. It is self-existing, infinite, eternal, all-intelligent, all-conscious and all love, truth, etc. This Prime Energy is sometimes latent and sometimes active. When it is latent, there is no manifestation. When it is active, it manifests itself in all possible forms ; and this universe is a manifestation of the same. A thought to manifest arose in the Prime Energy ; and, with the thought, innumerable units of forces began starting, with accelerating velocity, to manifest, and will be constantly starting till another thought may arise not to manifest,

[1] *Kaṭha Up.*, I.iii.14. [2] *Bṛihad. Up.*, IV.iv.21.
[3] *Muṇḍ. Up.*, II.ii.5.

i.e. till eternity. To some length the forces proceeded passively and with the velocity, the sound *'Om'* was produced. So long the units got the name of *Śakti,* and on account of their passivity are styled as female. As the velocity increased, some of the units got better advanced and began to devise means for active manifestations. These are named as Lower Brahman or Creator. There being affinity (love) among the units, they attracted the inferior units which clustered round them, and formed into fine atoms called ether. There was forward motion in the inferior units, but they were attracted sidewise and so, by a resultant force, they began to rotate round the central units, and like a pyrotechnic *charkhi* at full rotation they began to appear like a ring. Thus the atoms got form and volume, and thus grossness began. Similarly, as the velocity increased, advanced atoms of ether attracted inferior atoms, and molecules of air were formed. Their forms became grosser by the above process, and by their rolling on with greater velocity blowing capacity was produced in air. In the same way, advanced molecules of air attracted round them clusters of inferior molecules of air, and as their volume and velocity increased grossness increased. By the friction of the molecules of air, in the course of their rolling on, heat was created, as lightning is created by the friction of vapours of the cloud, and molecules of fire were formed. As by similar process the volume and velocity increased further, heat increased, and the molecules of fire liquefied, like the melting of metals on fire, and molecules of water were formed which were cooled by contact with air. As volume, velocity and power of attraction increased further, by the increase of power of attraction, power of cohesion was created, so that grossness changed into denseness and dense matter, water, came into existence. Lastly, as the velocity increased to its extreme, by similar processes, volume and grossness increased further, and as the power of attraction increased by largeness of volume, the power of cohesion also increased and density changed into solidity, so that molecules of water congealed into molecules of earth which condensed into minerals. Thus the five principal *tattvas* came into existence.

As shown above, in each atom or molecule there is a central

unit of force, and that is its leading and active, and, therefore, its life principle. But during the above processes, as the velocity and volume went on increasing, the forms taken by the units of forces went on becoming grosser and grosser till the form became grossest as earth, stone, minerals, etc., and the spirit-form of the units of forces gradually became altogether indistinct, and finally invisible ; and so life became invisible in matter, and the original attributes of life, intelligence and consciousness also got submerged in velocity. Velocity makes the form indistinct and causes unconsciousness too, as we see that when we rotate a beautiful toy fastened to a string round our finger it looks like a clumsy mass during rotation, and a fast running man, under the influence of velocity, loses much of his consciousness, so that he does not know what cuts or pricks his feet, and he finds out the cut or prick only when he comes to a standstill again. When, in this way, the units of forces got the extreme velocity and reached their grossest stage of manifestation as unlife-like earth-element, forward action of manifestation ended, and reaction began. This reaction is called the process of evolution, for the units of forces now evolve their original conditions. In this process the units of forces, like a ball thrown on the ground, did revert their courses of action backward, that is, towards latency or Brahmanhood, whence they emanated.

When we let fall abruptly a cupful of water upon earth, by reaction it reverts and tries to reach the point whence it fell, and in so doing the cohering particles and molecules of water disintegrate and scatter in various directions, and the central drop only rises straight upwards to the point whence it dropped down. Similarly, as the forward force in creation reverted backwards, the sidewise forces of attraction or cohesion also changed their courses and reverted backwards, that is, changed into forces of repulsion.

During the course of reaction or evolution, as the central unit force rose up and up backwards towards Brahmanhood, it went on repelling, i.e. shaking off and off the cohering molecules, first of earth, then of water, then of fire, then of air, and lastly of ether, till it became pure unit of force (Spirit) free from all transverse forces of attraction, cohesion or repulsion.

In each of the shaken-off molecules or group of molecules a new potent nuclear unit force took the lead and became its active or life principle and carried on its own evolution with the rest of the molecules as auxiliaries.

Thus three forces of evolution, repulsion and attraction began to work simultaneously and the different kinds of molecules got disturbed and confused, but their disturbance was yet systematic and cosmic, and the five *tattvas* began to combine chemically. By their combinations, by the process of permutation and progression, innumerable compounds—say the eighty-four lakhs of the lower *yonis*,—each in two sexes, were formed. These are classed into five groups, viz. the mineral, vegetable, insect, bird and animal kingdoms, according to the largeness of proportion of earth, water, fire, air or ether element respectively in their constitution. In each body or organism, thus formed, there is a central unit of force—as in case of atoms and molecules—which is its life and leading principle. In the body of man it is named as soul, in sub-conscious stages it is called life, and in unconscious stages it is called energy. Thus there is a soul in every body, and thus it is by nature eternal and, therefore, immortal. The form of soul in mineral body is as solidity ; in vegetable body it is as moisture ; in insect body it is as heat, and so every insect is more or less venomous ; in the body of bird it is as air, and so birds can fly ; and in animal body it is as ether, and so beasts are more affectionate and tamable than birds and insects, for love is the propensity of ether. Thus, each human soul is a unit of force which has crossed the stages of unitary life, atomic life, molecular lives, and organic lives of eighty-four lakhs of *yonis* through the unconscious and subconscious stages of evolution, and in human life has reached the conscious stage. At this stage no transverse force is acting contradictory to its straight and upward tension of evolution, but only a vibration caused by the detachment of the transverse forces is quivering the straight and upward-going unit of force (soul) in the form of *vāsanās*, as vagrancy of the mind, which when settled and calmed, after their due manifestation and proper control, the soul shall reach the super-conscious stage of *jīvanmukta* and gods, i.e. the stage of divinity, which will be

manifest by its regaining its original divine powers and lustre, and shall finally attain to Brahmanhood.

The attainment of Divinity can be effected in one human life, simply by moulding the thoughts and regulating the mode of life. This is the secret of *Karma-Yoga*. Its process, however, can be accelerated by developing the divine attributes, which all are present in man, in a methodical way—by education and practical life, by psychic control and by *jñāna*. For this purpose he must practise calm and one-pointed thinking, with one mind to one topic, and without deviation, for at least thirty minutes daily. This will mould his thought and will teach him devotional thinking, i.e. concentration. Just as the divergent rays of the sun, when concentrated through a lens, can kindle fire, so concentration of the mind awakens the latent divine potentialities in man. Concentration leads to *dhyāna, dhyāna* leads to decisions, i.e. intuitions, decisions give *jñāna* and *jñāna* gives Peace, i.e. *Nirvāṇa*.

Formation of *tṛishṇā,* i.e. attachment to a *vāsanā* is the only deviation from the right and natural course of evolution, and is the only real sin. It makes the soul fall in a whirlpool of rebirths and brings about all the calamities that infest a *tṛishṇic* life, in the shape of disappointments, heinous diseases or disasters; for, enjoyment is in your share or fate only as much as is due and proper, i.e. as is required for due manifestation, and is ordained by nature and evolution. Any further longing is unnatural, and is met with disappointments and disasters. Save this whirlpool of rebirths and consequent calamities there is no other hell. All reports about hell are utterly false. After death the human soul either goes to the region of Divinity, if it has so evolved itself, or, if it has got unmanifested *vāsanās* or has formed *tṛishṇās,* it at once begins to build up its new body. Fear no death, have hope, have peace, and have faith in your *self* which is surely divine.

THE DESTINY OF MAN

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I. LIFE'S IRRATIONALITY

" Chance," " fatality " and "destiny" are words which call forth in us a series of ideas, projected upon a common background of mystery and melancholy.

Full of joy and satisfaction, caused by some good deed just performed, we go into the street to return to our home. But, lo! we step upon an orange peel, thrown away by a child in an outburst of joy, and we slip for ever out of the entanglements of this life. Or, maybe, we notice it a moment earlier, and with the point of a stick we push it out of the way to protect others from this misfortune.

When we expect it the least, we meet the man or the event, that we did never hope to meet with, and that will be from now onwards a cause of great misfortunes or, on the contrary, of the most fervently desired realizations.

Someone would say, "It's mere chance!" hiding under these words the ignorance of the entanglements which have caused this event ; or say, " it was his destiny," wishing to define thus the firm belief in a determination which, he thinks, had revealed itself to him in its general outlines ; or again, " that was his fate," claiming thus the presence of a mysterious influence upon the details of our daily life.

"Chance," "fatality" and "destiny" are words through which we wish to explain life's irrationality—events which are beyond the normal logic—but which do not flatter at all our pride as rational and free beings. Even if destiny overwhelms us with its favours, we can be neither proud nor particularly glad. A sentiment of humiliation, however faint it may be according to the moral sensibility of each of us, slips into the soul of one who came to be a possessor of goods which were not gained by a freely devised effort.

In the case of an undeserved and unexpected gift, we have the impression of a wrong done to someone else, as in the case of an undeserved disaster which befalls us, we have the impression of being wronged ourselves. In both situations man feels helpless like the toy of powers which use him like a lifeless thing.

Now, our life is full of such events. There are luckless men, apparently born for disaster, as well as others who meet luck wherever they turn, even when they try to avoid it.

2. THE MEANINGS OF THE WORDS " DESTINY " AND " DETERMINATION "

Among all words used to express our bewilderment in the presence of the unexpected and often strongly affecting, " destiny" is the one most frequently used. Through this word we express the diverse meanings which " determination " may assume in the life of man.

One meaning coincides with " determinism," according to which all that happens in this world belongs to a chain in which every link occupies the only place which it could occupy in view of the antecedents, for so necessary is the connection which unites them. All happens in a causally determined succession. Whatever happens must needs rise from preceding situations, and at the same time it conditions those which follow, in such manner that they will not be otherwise as they are. Another meaning coincides with " fatalism ", according to which whatever happens, therefore the fate of man too, is either fixed in advance—thus it was written for him—and cannot be avoided consequently, or it is determined in every detail by a superior power, which interferes continuously, in spite of all human foresight.

The relationship between determinism and fatalism is close, and that is why these notions are used frequently, one instead of the other. Fatalism is a kind of determinism, but a determinism in which finality and not causality is playing the part. From this point of view there may be established easily an important difference—a difference which appears clearly in the terminology of contemporary philosophy, the technical terms of " causal

determinism " and " final determinism." According to causal determinism any event—therefore the destiny of man as well—is of necessity such as it is, being the result of preceding events, without a special previous intention to make it such as it is. On the contrary, in fatalism emphasis is laid on the intention that man's destiny should be thus and not otherwise. According to fatalism the destiny of man could have been different, if decreed otherwise. Fatal events, too, must not correspond to a chain in which causality, or at least motivation, plays a part. They may follow one after the other in the absurdest way with regard to their mutual relations. These relations must be looked for outside the chain, in the intention which has predetermined them, or which continues to determine them incessantly.

Considering man solely as the product of the causal forces which govern nature, we are in the hypothesis of destiny as determinism. But if we believe that the life of man is guided in the rhythm of its evolution by an almighty will, called God or something else, then we are expressing the fatalistic conception of destiny, which is also a kind of determinism as we have seen above.

All the current conceptions of destiny may be arranged within the frames of determinism and fatalism, or of a kind of determinism which is not yet penetrated by the human intelligence, but which nevertheless would be determinism. Into these frames there could not enter a conception according to which man would be free, because then the notion of destiny itself loses its current meaning, assuming that of a life freely built up by the individual himself. But that is no more destiny. Destiny is always understood as a limitation and therefore subordinated to determinism, which means an obstacle put in the way of liberty. But the life of man can be so understood that liberty should play a part by which he would be able to intervene and modify. We have then liberty in fight with determinism. If we could coin for this idea the word "vocation", we would be able to say, from a certain point of view, that man's vocation is to reduce the restrictions, to remove them, or to subdue them at least partially.

3. CONTEMPORARY CONCEPTIONS OF DESTINY

As the idea of destiny is very much current among men, we shall examine the opinions of some of the most popular writers who have treated about it. Spengler opposes his conception of destiny to causality, fatalism, predestination. He says: "Destiny is the word for an internal surety which cannot be described."[1] By that is meant an internal direction (*ein inneres Gerichtetsein*) which, far from being causality, must neither be confounded according to him with finality against which he rises. History is *"heavy with destiny"* and *"free of laws."* Nevertheless we "may divine the future, and it is a look which penetrates deeply into its secrets, but we cannot calculate it."

Now, if we can divine the future (*"Man kann die Zukunft ahnen"*), it means that the future must needs happen, it means that history must needs evolve in a certain way and not in another.

A particular form of determination must, therefore, be at the base of destiny, even if it is not a question of the causality of natural sciences. That is why even Spengler cannot but make that difference between causality and destiny: " Causality is realized destiny . . . . . hardened in the forms of intellect. Destiny as such stands outside and beyond whatever notional nature" (*stebt jenseits und ausserhalb aller begriffenen Natur"*)[2]

Although destiny cannot be explained with a "therefore and that is why," it is nevertheless characterized by " the innermost necessity!"[3] That is why Spengler, although he rises against predestination as an "absurdity,"[4] speaks nevertheless of culture (which belongs to the world of destiny) as of something the course of which may be foreseen: (*"hier zum erstenmal aber kann eine Kultur voraussehen, welchen Weg das Schicksal für sie gewahlt hat"*).[5] It is not possible otherwise, even if "we can divine the future."

[1] Oswald Spengler *Untergang des Abendlandes,* Vol. I, p. 153, ed. 66-68, Munchen, 1923.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 154.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 181.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 182, 183.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 205.

But in this case can a destiny, which can be divined and foreseen, be opposed so absolutely to determinism and identified with liberty from whatever laws? All that must happen of necessity is either subject to a law (e.g. causally determined) ; or it is fatal in the sense of a predestination or of a primary cause which acts directly upon events without the intervention of secondary causes of the nature of those governing the natural sciences ; or it is subject to a new kind of determinism. Destiny outside determinism cannot be constructed by Spengler in spite of all his efforts.

Keyserling also develops the conception of a destiny with a deterministic character. He understands by destiny "a necessary tie between the soul of man and his fate (*Geschick*) . . . . . a necessary relation between that which is internal and that which is absolutely external."[1]

It is the question of a psychological connection which is detected by Keyserling between man as he is with all his determinations, and the external events, which, in the majority of cases, do not appear at all as the work of chance, but which appear to be called on purpose by man—so much do they fit in with him and with the essence of his nature.

Let us see, however, if destiny must be looked for in this tie between man and external circumstances, or if this tie be not the mere manifestation of another factor which, as such, rather could be called destiny. Truly, the necessary relation between the soul of man and the external circumstances, may be understood very well, considering the selective power of man who, according to his faculties, makes a selection, approaching some of them, avoiding others. As with some one born blind, who will not be able to make the portrait of anybody and who will be deprived not only of all the joys, but also of all the sorrows which are linked to the aspect of the surrounding world, but who will be able nevertheless to interpret the world the more lively by aid of the other senses, so it is with everyone of us who will bring into his sphere of life

[1] Graf Herman Keyserling, "Das Schicksalsproblem" in *"philosophie als Kunst,"* p. 148, ed. 2, Darmstadt, 1922. See also p. 151, where it is said: "The problem of destiny deals with the general relation which exists between the interior of man and his external surroundings."

first of all the events for which there is a certain resonance within him, but who will pass by the others with indifference, unmoved by them. If a certain string in us does not vibrate in the presence of certain external events, the relation between us and them will be a relation of indifference, and the whole evolution of our life will be different from what it would be when these events bring forth in us a powerful reaction, be it a positive or a negative one. Now, even Keyserling orients his idea of destiny in this sense: he affirms, "Men, on the whole, attain the purpose for which they are called, and if the ship of their life is wrecked, it is because the rock was usually within themselves."[1] But, if it is a question of certain faculties inherent in man, by which the external events will be called forth somehow by him, or will be removed, we do not see how his destiny could be looked for any longer in their adaptation to the external circumstances ; but destiny, on the other hand, must be found where it is located in reality according to that same conception, viz. in the soul of the individual man, which is so built up that he has these faculties—faculties which call forth these events and no others. And then the problem of destiny is another one than that which Keyserling wishes to deal with. It is no longer the necessary tie between the soul and circumstances, but another idea about which he does not intend to treat—as he declares from the beginning—and about which he treats nevertheless without intention, with a view to discussing a new and original conception of destiny. This fact introduces of course much obscurity in his argumentation. The idea of man as being the origin of the events of his life has been treated long before very beautifully by Emerson and Maeterlinck, with whom Keyserling, nevertheless, opens a controversy. Maeterlinck, like Keyserling, had said really: " Let us not forget that nothing happens which is not of the same nature as we ourselves."[2] And even on the same page in which this passage occurs he adds: "On the roads of chance you will not meet anybody by yourselves." Emerson spoke about destiny in the same sense: "the soul contains

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 149; see also p. 151: " nur das vermag es (das Leben) zu affizieren, was sich dem Rahmen seiner Eigenart einfügen kann."

[2] Maurice Maeterlink " *La sagesse et la destinee,*" p. 35, Paris, Fasquelle.

the event that shall befall it." . . . . Events are the children of our body and mind. We learn that the soul of fate is the soul of us, as Hafiz sings."[1] Even more, in Emerson we find almost word by word, as later in Keyserling, the formula: "The secret of the world is the tie between person and event."[2] Destiny as "tie" etc., is reduced to destiny as the nature of the human soul, therefore to another notion of destiny than the one about which Keyserling wished to talk. But he does not stop here ; his idea of destiny becomes even more obscure because of other meanings which he introduces into it. Thus, if destiny, as we have seen above, was defined as " the necessary tie between man and his fate (*Geschick*)", meaning thereby the tie between man and the external events, then we find immediately following the assertion that "the internal man grows in correlativeness with his destiny (*Schicksal*),"[3] and then destiny is no more the tie between man and events, but these events themselves. He uses first the word *"Geschick"* (translated by us "fate") to name the external events, and destiny was the tie between the soul of man and these events. Then we saw that destiny was identified with the soul, as in Emerson and Maeterlinck. Now destiny becomes something external, in correlation with which "the internal man grows" (*der innere Mensch erwachst*). But not even that notion of destiny was intended by Keyserling, so much the more, as by destiny in that last sense he understands just the events, the hazards and even the whole surrounding medium. Still more, even on the same page he asserts in addition: "There exists a rule, which brings with necessity certain hazards into the sphere of a certain life. We not only discover subsequently the adaptation of destiny to the man whom it befell, but we can divine that destiny.[4] Now, it should be noted that there is a difference between the necessary tie" in the first definition, viz. that one which he gives as emphasizing the meaning of destiny, to which he clings, and "the rule" which appears now, a rule in which we find the idea of destiny in the sense of an event decreed to happen

[1] R. W. Emerson, "Fate" from *" The Conduct of Life,"* p. 32, Vol. V, *" Works of Emerson,"* London, Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1902.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 32.
[3] Keyserling, quoted passage, p. 150.
[4] Quoted passage.

thus and not otherwise and therefore in another sense than the one about which Keyserling intended to speak.

The problem of destiny is treated in a much more luminous manner by the other two thinkers and writers of real genius, mentioned previously.

For Emerson as well as for Maeterlinck, destiny confounds itself with the limitations imposed upon us by nature, be it the question of the nature of each of us, the nature of our soul, or be it the external nature. Those limitations are fatal. But for both there exists something which is called liberty, and which can resist fatality and limitations.

"But if there be irresistible dictation," says Emerson, "this dictation understands itself. If we must accept Fate, we are not less compelled to affirm liberty, the significance of the individual, the grandeur of duty, the power of character."[1] The power which gives us the possibility to fight against fatality dwells in our intelligence, in our spirit, which will use fatality itself to oppose fatality. To those who believe that all is fatality, Emerson says that then " a part of Fate is the freedom of man."[2] It is fatal that man should be free, he therefore may oppose the fatality "of choosing and acting in the soul" to the fatality which imposes limits upon him. But not only so much, man has at his disposal intelligence, thought, spirit, and "Intellect annuls Fate,"[3] making us free. Our thought is "the thought of whatever intellect." "It is poured into the souls of all men, as the soul itself which constitutes men."[4] And when the souls reach a certain clearness of perception, they liberate themselves of all that is inferior, base, selfish, of all that is a limitation, and " accept a knowledge and motive above selfishness." Depth of thought leads to strength of character. Thought makes us free. But besides thought, there is the moral sentiment, another force of liberation. " The moral sentiment makes us free, because with the perception of truth is joined the desire that it shall prevail."[5] Still " perception is cold, and goodness dies in wishes."[6] But

[1] Emerson, quoted essay, p. 4.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 19.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 19.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 22.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 23.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

their union may lead far: " There must be a fusion of these two to generate the energy of will." By the power of will man can oppose whatsoever. Clarity of intelligence and warmth of sentiment, united in will, can transform in truth man into a formidable power, which will use fate to govern it, subdue it, to make it a helpful element of freedom, because " Fate is the name for facts not yet passed under the fire of thought—for causes which are unpenetrated."[1]

Maeterlinck also does not discover fatality except in certain external disasters, but says that internal fatality does not exist: " The will of wisdom has the power to mend all that does not touch our body with death."[2] Therefore, in our spirit, when it knows how to look at things from a sufficient height, to take them as they are and not to be deceived by their proportions, which appear quite changed when looked at from too near ; in our spirit, when it knows how to guide will, resides the power of resistance against fate.

The destiny of man is only to a small extent the fruit of fatality. In each case, whatever be the external chain of the events of our life within us resides the power to make the internal events such as we wish them to be.

Wisdom has the power to " paralyse destiny." " There are disasters which Fatality does not dare to inflict in the presence of a soul, that has subdued it for several times, and the wise man who goes through, interrupts thousands of dramas."[3]

Emerson and Maeterlinck do not pretend to make a theory. They write out of an impulse to contribute to the welfare of mankind, and moulding the souls through the direct influence of their words, springing from the depths of a noble soul. The logic of their argumentation is nevertheless wonderful.

4. INTERPRETATIONS

The conceptions of destiny, examined in the preceding sections, offer different suggestions. On the one hand, as in the

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

[2] Maeterlink, quoted part, p. 43.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 40.

case of Keyserling, we see how much lack of precision in thought is manifested with regard to a problem which is of such ardent interest for man. On the other hand, these conceptions, with regard to the problem of destiny as such, show us the way in which the modern man looks at it. Destiny is considered by some like Spengler to be an elementary creative power which realizes itself in accordance with its internal verve, its surety or its internal direction. In this case, the sense of destiny is the same as the sense of life, perhaps unintelligible to logical thought and therefore irrational,—as neither the law of causality nor the more general principle of sufficient reason can explain it fully—but creative of new forms of life. Thus considered, it is like an artistic creation, which can be understood or rather recognized by those men who are not governed by logical thought with its rigid schematism, but by that special sensibility, that power of divination, that penetration into depths into which logic cannot penetrate, i.e. by artists, be they poets, musicians, men of action, men of rapid and inspired decisions, men of the army, politicians or business men. Others like Emerson and Maeterlinck look upon destiny as upon the resistance which is opposed by the external reality to human freedom or by the rigid and inert nature, compared with which the spirit, superior in mobility and delicacy, is often apparently overcome, because the material mass to which is linked its presence in man is overcome. But in the end it proves to be the real victor, the conqueror of the higher and higher positions, out of which nature was better and better overlooked and subdued, the conqueror embodied in the continuous succession of generations and of the man of creative power.

These are two of the most important conceptions of destiny prevalent among mankind today if we leave out the ancient conception of Moira, of Fatum, which means a perfect fatalism.

At first sight these two attitudes seem to be contrary, but when viewed at close quarters, the likenesses appear immediately.

What Spengler understands by destiny is life not subject to causality, life which develops in accordance with a necessity other than that in the world of causality. To make clear for himself his notion of destiny, he quotes Goethe:

So musst du sein, dir kannst du nicht entfliehen.
So sagten schon Sibyllen, so Propheten ;
Und keine Zeit und keine Macht zerstückelt
Geprägte Form, die lebend sich entwickelt.

That "*Geprägte Form, die lebend sich entwickelt*" is "the internal direction," "the internal surety" of Spengler. Here we have the idea of purpose, and although Spengler wishes to establish his idea of destiny as opposed to determinism and finality, he does not succeed and arrives only at a destiny in the sense of a final determinism. On the other hand, with Emerson and Maeterlinck, destiny is clearly shown as being the limit put by nature in the way of human freedom. For them, destiny is a causal determinism. In any case destiny is understood as a determinism.

But looking beyond the written word, we see that things are, however, otherwise. What Emerson and Maeterlinck call destiny is just causality in opposition to which Spengler unavoidably advocates *his* idea of destiny, as he does it in opposition to finality. And what they call freedom much more approaches what Spengler calls destiny.

From this new point of view, the difference no more consists in their conceptions, but only in the different meanings which they ascribe to the word "destiny." Both consider man in fight with the limitations imposed by natural causality. Spengler's destiny and Emerson's freedom have much likeness ; they represent the independent element according to which man faces the rigidity of causality.

But Spengler remains with his destiny within a pure vitalism, in which life develops according to its internal direction. That is why Spengler's destiny cannot be interpreted otherwise than as a determination and therefore a constraint as compared with the spirit. As compared with the spirit, causality as well as the law which governs in the biological stratum. may be ranged in the same great category of limitations, of obstacles met by the spirit. From this point of view Emerson's destiny and Spengler's destiny seem really to indicate resembling things, that is an inferior plan of existence, above which rises the spiritual plan. We may be sure that it was not Spengler's intention that destiny should be

thus considered. He values life and destiny above all. But from Emerson's point of view freedom has its full value, and all that is limit,—therefore the vitalistic notion of destiny as well—constitutes the element against which the spirit must fight and over which it must triumph.

5. HARTMANN AND THE THEORY OF FREEDOM

For the elucidation of the problem of destiny its relation with liberty appears now to be important. Destiny and freedom are notions which seem to exclude each other. But what have we to understand by " freedom," and in man, by freedom of will?

The problem of man's freedom is really one of the most difficult problems of philosophy, and the solutions proposed are very approximative. From the days of Kant till today, the best solution of the problem of freedom is that by Nicolai Hartmann.

Starting from Kant, he shows that the notion of a negative freedom in the sense that man might find himself in a state of indifference in the presence of a certain situation, being able to choose this way or that, is mere nonsense. That would not be freedom of will, but lack of will. " The free will is not an undetermined will, but on the contrary, a determined will, which chooses in a determined way."[1] Moral freedom does not mean independence, indetermination, but " *determination sui generis* " (p. 589), that is freedom in the positive sense..

Hartmann discerns several strata in the whole of existence, each one having its type of determination. In the whole series of such types of determination causality and finality are only two of the best known.

Thus we have a " primary ontological " determination, a mathematical one, a causal one, a determination governing the sphere of life, a psychological determination of the sphere of conscience ; and above the last-mentioned one, we notice other determinations in the spiritual world, and among them the one of values, for which the person, and not the conscience, is the subject.[2]

[1] Nicolai Hartmann, *"Ethik,"* p. 588 (Walter de Gruyter & Co., Berlin and Leipzig, 1928).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 616, a.s.o.

We know only a part of the determinations which become manifest in the strata of existence. Nevertheless, what we know is sufficient for us to see that things are more complicated than in the traditional conception which knew only causality and finality. The theory of the plurality of the strata of existence with their determinations, may protect us from many mistakes made till today, as for example, the one which links the biological stratum to causal determination or to final determination, because the specific of the biological stratum with its determination has not been seen. It is true that the causal determination is best known till now. But, not knowing other determinations, we must not draw the conclusion that they do not exist ; and we must not, too, try to understand a stratum of existence, applying to it a law which does not belong to it.

Hartmann establishes with regard to these determinations of existence a twofold law, of strength and of freedom.

The inferior the determinations which permeate the whole of existence, the more powerful they are, so that the highest determination which we know, viz. that of the spirit, is in a material dependence of the whole chain of inferior determinations, and has therefore a smaller sphere of application. The teleological determination presupposes at any rate the psychological, the psychological presupposes that of organic life, that of organic life the causal, the causal the mathematical, and the mathematical the ontologic primary determination. The finalist determination is therefore in function of the whole chain of determinations shown above and of those which are intermediate and not yet known, up to the last ontological determination, which thus passes through the whole of existence.

Every determination depends on the inferior one, and is independent of the superior. Yet, the superior determination does not depend on the inferior with regard to its specific, i.e. " the inferior does not hinder the superior in its specific, but allows itself to be super-formed, super-determined by it."[1]

The superior determination finds itself in a relation of form to matter with regard to the inferior one. The matter lets itself

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 620.

be handled by form. From this point of view the form is free as opposed to matter, although it is subject to the determinations which are contained in the matter, but which cannot extend up to the specific of form, and therefore up to the specific of the superior determination.

This means that every superior determination, although it is linked materially with the inferior and is weaker than it, is nevertheless "autonomous and free from the point of view of the category"[1] to which it belongs. In this way freedom is understood positively, and it is not only something reserved for man, but every stratum of existence possesses it with regard to the inferior strata, conscience with regard to organism, organism with regard to the causal mechanism of the inanimate nature, and in the same manner the person with regard to conscience.

Freedom means, therefore, the possibility for a superior stratum to intervene in a determining manner in the inferior strata, to intervene as an additional determinant in the play of the determinants corresponding to these strata.

Surely, there is no question here of an absolute freedom, but only of a relative one. It is sufficient nevertheless to save the dignity of human manifestations, as well as to explain the sentiment of liberty, which man always had possessed.

Which relation exists between the person, free with regard to conscience, and the determination of the world of values, for which she is called to decide herself? The values constitute a stratum, in which their special finalistic determination is not complete. They have no other determining power than that one, which is given to them by the person through her intervention. They establish only ideally their absolute "Must" (Seinsollen) with regard to the ethic reality, which partly corresponds to them and partly not. Thus room is made for the freedom of will with regard to the values. Will does not find itself in the presence of a determinism of the values—as it finds itself in the presence of a determinism of the laws of existence—but just in the face of an indeterminism of the values, at least in the face of a partial indeterminism.

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 620.

Freedom in the negative sense exists only with regard to values. Will can have only a positive freedom with regard to causality, " because that one (i.e. causality) determines its sphere integrally." But besides a positive liberty, Will has also a negative liberty with regard to the determination of values, because " the determination of values not only does not determine integrally in reality, but does not determine at all without a free intervention of Will for it."

In this way, neither Will alone nor the Values by themselves, but only the interpenetration of Will and Values, can constitute the determinant, which Will inserts into the causal nexus.

Nicolai Hartmann starts with the affirmation that negative freedom does not exist and cannot exist (i.e. a freedom of indifference, a freedom which may bring about a *pro-* or a *contra-*decision), but only a freedom in the positive sense, in the Kantian sense—freedom subject to law. Yet, with regard to Values we see that Will is in a special situation, being able to have such a negative freedom with regard to them, because Will may approve and accept a Value, or may deny it.

Hartmann believes that, nevertheless: " The sentence that ' freedom in the negative sense ' as such is not yet freedom of Will, does not lose anything of its value. The free Will with regard to Values, is not an indeterminate will, but completely determinate, not determined directly by them, but by a Will which determines itself with regard to them."[1]

Thus Will, and therefore " the person as bearer of moral actions," is at the same time free in a twofold sense—because it is free in two directions—with regard to the ontologic principles and at the same time with regard to the axiologic ones. In both directions exists the same autodetermination, therefore positive freedom, but in the direction of Values there is also the negative freedom besides the positive.[2]

After this discussion, if we have to answer the question: " How must we understand the essence (*Wesen*) of the personal autonomy, how is it possible from the ontologic point of view?"

[1] Annotated work, p. 715.
[2] *Ibid.*

we must affirm, " This question cannot be answered." Surely, " the autodetermination of the person must have a kind of new determination, must be a true categorical novum with regard to the other two,"[1] i.e. with regard to the causal and the axiologic determinations. Hartmann says that it is at any rate a finalistic determination, but to say what it is, seems as impossible as to say " what are principles?", " what is reality," " what is a value?"

Important in Hartmann's theory of freedom is the definite acknowledgment of the different strata of existence, each with its determination (an idea, which Hartmann must acknowledge with certain restriction to Boutroux) and the relation of strength of the inferior determinations with regard to the superior determination, as well as of freedom with regard to the inferior determination. The same importance is given by him to the demonstration of the antinomy between " will " and " must " (*Wollen und Sollen*), an antinomy through which is explained the specific of the determination in the world of values, as a determination which cannot be realized except inasmuch as it is received by Will or by the person, as well as the specific of the Will or the person to receive or not to receive the value ; and only thus, Will together with Value, in their specific interpenetration, can intervene in the nexus of inferior determinations.

The theory of strata, however, with their determinations, which mean freedom through the power they have to intervene determinately in the inferior strata, is not perfectly satisfactory, as according to this theory there is left a moment of freedom to every stratum only inasmuch as the superior determination does not intervene, determining as well. From the moment in which such a superior determination intervenes, there does not remain anything of the freedom of the inferior determination, and the final resultant of the whole of determinations may be quite another one than that towards which it tended. But if the lack of freedom of the strata inferior to the person, is of less interest for us, in the case of the freedom of man this lack of freedom would have been felt particularly inconvenient. That is why, in Hartmann's theory, the *sui generis* relation between Will and Values (therefore

[1] *Ibid.*, p. F 19.

two strata of existence with two different determinations) comes to establish at least for man a freedom, no more hampered by the determination of a superior stratum, because persons have negative freedom as well, with regard to Values.

We must, nevertheless, ask ourselves, On what grounds do we ascribe to Will and to the person this special situation? Is it not only an illusion that Will has freedom of choice with regard to Values, if Values have really their own determination? And must the Values be understood like a stratum of ideal existence, different from the strata of real existence? Could it not be the part of Spirit to acknowledge the law of human individuality, and to help thus individuality to manifest itself in conformity with itself? Freedom would be just this manifestation, and it would be a real freedom, remaining a positive freedom without the need of a metaphysical stratum of Values.

HARTMANN AND FICHTE

Hartmann gives Fichte the credit of having brought forth plainly the problem of the antinomy between " will " and " must," but only as a passing flash of light, which he did not utilize.

We believe, nevertheless, that Fichte's merit is greater than that. According to the remark of Hartmann, who reproduces the characteristic quotation,[1] Fichte sees that Will is in a special situation in the presence of the principle (or the value), which means freedom as " indifference " with regard to the life of values, against which Will may and may not act. And the life of values, " wears only the ideal form," has a power which reaches only up to a legislation, up to a " must " (*Sollen*).

Fichte has, moreover, the credit of having offered the possibility of a new orientation, giving the following definition of liberty: " It seems to me to be free in the single events of my life, when these events are the expressions of the independent strength which has been given to me as an individual (*die mir für mein Individuum zu theil geworden*); but to be kept back and limited, when by a concatenation of the external circumstances,

[1] Annotated passage, p. 629.

which appear in time, but have no place in the original limitation of my individuality, I cannot do at least so much as I could do, according to my individual strength, and to be constrained when that individual strength is forced by the preponderance of others opposed to it, to express itself even against its own law."[1]

Freedom, therefore, means for Fichte the power of manifestation in conformity with the proper laws of individuality. Now, that conception of freedom is the same as that one acknowledged by Hartmann for each category of determination, when he told that every form of superior determination, although weaker and materially linked to the inferior, is nevertheless with regard to that one " autonomous and free from the point of view of the category," because the inferior determination does not refer to the specific of the superior."[2]

We find, therefore, in Hartmann, with a remarkable clearness and constancy, ideas, the principal point of departure of which appears already in his predecessors such as Boutroux and Fichte. The merit of Hartmann is very great, because he has shown with an extraordinary logic, the twofold law of strength and freedom, which characterizes the strata of existence. But has not Fichte shown, in the definition of freedom quoted previously, the very road on which freedom must be looked for?

7. BODY, SOUL AND SPIRIT

The theory of the strata of existence with their specific determinations is very well suited to protect us from the mistake of interpreting the whole reality according to the determination which governs in another stratum of reality, as would be, for example, the interpretation of life based on a causal determination.

From the very moment we admit in our existence a plurality of determinations, we understand easily how it is possible for the spirit to have its own determination—another one than that of the matter.

Even if we do not know perfectly well all that belongs to the spiritual determination, it is, nevertheless, of great importance to

[1] Fichte: *Die Bestimmung des Menschen,"* p. 20, Reclam.
[2] Nicolai Hartman, quoted passage, p. 620.

know that this determination exists. In this way are satisfied not only the social needs, which are based on the presumption of human liberty, but even the needs of freedom, manifested in the individual conscience.

Truly, we all feel that we are not mere body, that we are not only soul, but also something else, i.e. spirit.

In this characteristic union, our body is the necessary instrument to come into contact with the surrounding world ; the soul means the power to dwell in a body, and the spirit means the superior reality, which establishes the contact with the world through the intervention of the soul. Vasile Pârvan,[1] that great thinker, likewise expressed his idea of " spirit " as follows: " The propulsive force of the human matter, vegetating in the animality, is the sixth sense of the Buddhist philosophers, *' the thought.'* It could be told that the thought exists as such, as an autonomous element with regard to humanity. There does not exist in reality an ontologic consequence between the psycho-physical sensations, on which is based our knowledge of world and life, and the pure ideas."

The soul is " spirit " inasmuch as it is linked to the body, but the spirit is " soul " inasmuch as it is free of the matter, therefore of the body. That definition[2] of these notions shows clearly our ignorance with regard to certain realities, which are nevertheless so familiar to us. At the same time the positive contents of relationship and difference, which we think behind them, also appear. There exists a strong tie between body and soul, exactly as there exists one between soul and spirit. The differences, nevertheless, are important, and appear clearly when we examine the extremes of these three great circles, i.e. the body, soul and spirit.

The spirit is that something in man, through which is given

[1] Vasile Pârvan, late university professor of Bukarest: " Despre ritmul istoric " in " *Idei Si forte istorice,*" p. 141, Bucuresti, Cartea Românească, 1920.

[2] Schleiermacher Friedrich *"Psychologie,"* edited by L. George, p. 25, Berlin, 1862. Dchleiermacher thought he could admit the same idea, considering as equal the notion of activities of the soul without body, and the notion of spiritual activities.

to him the completest deliverance from the matter. That becomes clear to us especially in the moments when our thought comes into conflict with all that is called instinct and organic determination.

The verse of Ovidius, "*Video meliora, proboque, deteriora sequor*" is typical as showing the special characteristic of the spirit, which consists in a just vision. The soul, inasmuch as it is spirit linked to the matter, has not the power of that clear vision, which the spirit does possess. Here we must look for the great part ascribed to the spirit. He, the spirit, sees in what his law consists inasmuch as he is soul, he sees the relations between himself and the surrounding medium as well. He, therefore, is able to indicate to the soul the liberating attitude, the attitude corresponding to his own essence, even if this free attitude does not succeed always in imposing itself on the inferior strata, the soul and the body.

8. SPIRIT AND FREEDOM

There does exist, nevertheless, a means by which the spirit can, eventually, impose itself on the soul, and through it on the organism. It is a kind of fascination and suggestion, which may be exercised by the spirit upon the soul. The evidence of the views of the spirit, if sufficiently repeated, succeeds in determining an attitude in conformity with it, in the soul. Thus Kant is right in maintaining that virtue is learned.[1] The moral law must penetrate into the human conscience, becoming thus evident. Now, according to Kant, that is achieved by the repeated and continual presence of the moral law. Here we have something like the relation between spirit and soul. The soul stands for a photographic plate, very little sensitive with regard to the much too diaphanous object which is the spirit. There must be a prolonged exposure to get the image on its surface. A continuous representation of the spirit before the soul is necessary, in order that one should be determined by the spirit. In a somewhat

[1] See C. Narly, "*Pedagogia lui Immanuel Kant*," p. 41, ed. Cultura Românească, Bukarest, 1936.

similar way does the soul exercise on the organism an influence which ultimately is due to the spirit.

Vasile Pârvan expresses almost the same thing in this way: " Passing into our human world, a great intensity of the spiritual life agitates the more *rudem indigestamque molem,* the more directly and nearly it dominates it."[1]

But whatever the explanations, which for a long time may remain imperfect, the human experience was able to get proofs that the influence of the spirit upon the attitude of man does exist. Human experience, too, has stated that x, which we call " spirit," exists really within us, and exists as that x, from which the just vision proceeds. That is sufficient to strengthen our conviction of a human freedom.

Then freedom consists on the one hand in seeing just, and on the other, in being able to influence (assisted by soul and body) the development of external events. Spirit, soul, and body create the total attitude of man. Through this attitude we intervene in a modifying way in the surrounding world. The life of man might be different from what it is, if we help him in his spiritualization. Education is meant to drive out, more and more, that phantom which he believes to be " destiny," and which is only the opacity of matter in the presence of the spirit on the one hand, and the subjugation of the spirit by the soul on the other. The spirit needs for its own clarification the soul, soul, which awakes it, so to say, to life. The spirit is manifested through the conflict of the soul with the surrounding world. But once manifested, it can exercise an influence upon the world. It is like an eye, which must be opened to be able to see. The soul does that work, and opens the eye of the spirit. Once opened, the spirit sees even that which the surrounding reality would keep unseen.

The soul, inasmuch as it is dominated by the organism, binds up its eyes very often. But the spirit succeeds in forcing on it its own view. And that is the great force of the spirit.

[1] Vasile Pârvan, " Despre valorile istorice," (On historical values) in " *Historic ideas and forms* " (Idei Si forme istorice), p. 74, Bukarest, Cartea Românească, 1920.

9. SPIRIT AND DESTINY

In this case destiny exists no more. There does exist a resistance with regard to the spirit,—the resistance of the inferior determinations,—in the language of Hartmann, a resistance which may be overcome to a certain extent by the spirit. The life of man is no more the product of a fatality, but the result of the fight, in which the spirit has to say an important word.

That is why all the great thinkers, who are not satisfied with mere words, have conceived destiny as nothing else than the resistance of the surrounding reality, and, at the most, as the part of the defeat of the spirit in the fight with that resistance. But in this case, as we have pointed out above, the notion of destiny does no more merit its name. Destiny is no more a fatal road on which man must needs go on. *" Ducunt volentem fata nolentem trahunt "*—is no more the expression of a truth, but only a semblance.

In the presence of the reality of the spirit, destiny remains like a mythological notion, playing a romantic and literary part, but disappearing in the serious troubles of man.

10. FREEDOM AND ORIGINALITY

Even if we acknowledge the great power of a clear view of the spirit and of its intervention in the reality, there exists in man and with man something, which appears to us like a gift, which we can only receive and fructify, but which cannot be changed. That gift are we ourselves, such as we are born, an organic, psychic and spiritual totality.

The spirit, in spite of all its clear sight and all its power of intervention in its own psycho-physical being, and, further, in the surrounding world, cannot do anything unless it follows the line of the proper laws, the proper possibilities of the individuality to which it belongs. To take an example, an individual with the clearest spirit imaginable, will not be able to modify some physical deficiency with which he was born, or which he acquired later, and as a result he will not be able to prevent a certain bitterness from entering his soul, which will give a specific aspect to his whole behaviour. It depends on the spirit,

however, whether this physical deficiency becomes the wings to take one up into the height of heaven, or a leaden weight and fetter.

Spirit means freedom, but only within the limits of the possibilities which it finds in that substratum.

Each of us is born with certain possibilities, due to heredity, and the combination of the hereditary elements, called the *specific originality*. Each of us becomes something, as a result of the contact between that specific originality and the surrounding medium. Here the spirit has the word. The very moment it appears, like a flash of lightning brought forth by this contact, it gives light, it shows the way to the soul. Inasmuch as the soul follows the straight way, it will be free ; if it takes a wrong turning, it will remain fettered.

We all feel that specific originality to be our great dignity. Each of us feels to be different from his fellow-man. There is something within us, which only we possess, which is most precious to us, which is our specific originality. Any great problem whatsoever, referring to Man's freedom, loses its value for him as compared with the importance of his originality, which he feels to be his greatest treasure, the constant and never-deceiving source of true happiness, inasmuch as he can be happy.

If man desires to be free, it is to be able to act in conformity with his specific originality.

Any manifestation in its direction produces satisfaction ; any obstacle is felt as pain. Freedom and originality refer closely to the same reality, and claim each other. Originality is the base of an adequate development. Freedom is the possibility of that development.

Thus viewed, freedom in human manifestations means manifestation in the direction of one's own law, one's own specific originality, which becomes vocation, if matured through the contact with the surrounding medium. To see things just, according to the preceding definition, means to see one's originality.

The possibility of free manifestation is given to us by the spirit. It is based on our originality. Originality and freedom presuppose each other.

II. MAN'S VOCATION

This is the place to introduce in place of the sad idea of destiny another one, viz. that of destination, or rather that of "vocation," the first being too heavily loaded with the weight of destiny. In the realization of his vocation man is pre-eminently constructive-creative.

The vocation is fulfilled by a conscious human effort, not like destiny, indifferent to man's will. The specific originality, without being able to become something completely opposed to it, may be stopped in its development, may become a dry and shrunken fruit ; but it may as well take the superior form of a creative life. It depends only on the spirit, if that one can impose its light with evidence, or if it cannot. Now, there are ways to help the spirit. Man has felt it instinctively from the very beginning. Hence the necessity of education. Education is the way, followed deliberately by the human being in the realization of his mission in the fulfilment of his vocation. From this point of view, education may be called the process which helps to spiritualize our psycho-physical being.

Vocation has a twofold aspect: the vocation of man as such, of man as a species, and the vocation of man as an individual. Inasmuch as man is "spirit," there resides within him the possibility of the realization of the human general ; but inasmuch as man is "soul," i.e. individualized spirit through its union with matter, we find in him the individual inclination to fulfil the human general and superior. The vocation as individual and the vocation of the species are fulfilled in the same person in an individual way.

Man's vocation is to represent the human superior, which is but the vocation of man as a species, in an individual form, the form which corresponds to his specific originality. In this process of individualization of the human superior must intervene all the intermediate spheres, as nation and other social formations.

But is it possible to gather into one formula man's vocation so as to satisfy all these points of view?

Is it possible to know, even approximately, in what that

human superior consists, and at the same time, how it appears in the specific originality?

In two famous lectures Theodor Jouffroy, a French philosopher of the XIX Century, spoke about "The Problem of Man's Destiny" and "The Method to Solve the Preceding Problem."[1] He believes that history, seen through the prism of man's self-knowledge, may show the "law which governs humanity." History alone, at any rate, cannot solve the problem: "One thing, therefore, is more evident than the light of day," says Jouffroy, "that is, that the historical facts, such as they are represented by mere erudition, are not sufficient to solve the problem of the destination of mankind; as long as no one has deeply meditated on the purpose of man and of society, these facts remain real hieroglyphs, the key of which we do not possess."[2]

With regard to this rather great historic optimism of the preceding century, relating to man's destiny, the most recent and most popular literature takes a quite opposed attitude. Nicoles Berdiaeff, a Russian writer, rather popular in Europe, sees in history "the failure of man, the failure of culture, the destruction of all human schemes; history does not fulfil what man proposes, and the meaning of what is fulfilled in it, is not understood by the human being."[3]

"In front of man," says he, "rises the class or the race, the idolized collectiveness or the State. Modern nationalism bears the stigma of bestiality. It refuses to recognize in every man a value, shaped after the image and likeness of God."[4] The Russian, Italian and German (especially the last one) dictatorships are for him blemishes in the evolution of mankind. The bitterness caused by these historical phenomena, is projected upon the whole of history, which in his opinion ceases to have any human sense whatsoever. His historical outlook, as it appears above,

[1] "Du probléme de la destinée humaine" and "Méthode pour resondre le probleme precedent."
[2] "Méthode pour....." in *"Mélanges philosophiques,"* p. 361, ed. Hachette, Paris, 1875.
[3] Nicolas Berdiaeff, "Destin de l'homme dans le monde actuel," p. 8, Stock, Paris, 1936.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

is too narrow. In this dark picture Berdiaeff is too much influenced by temporary apparitions of history, which are contrary to his religious and social convictions.

Compared with this attitude, it seems to us that Jouffroy is right. History is truly eloquent, if not reduced to a work of erudition. If we look in history not for facts, but for man who stands behind them, and if we shall start for this search armed with a maximum of knowledge about man, then the interesting phenomenon may happen, viz. that history as well as our previous knowledge of man, will enrich and elucidate each other. In this way history will be able to help us in the knowledge of man, and therefore in the knowledge of his vocation.

The history of education and of the ideas about education is especially rich in teachings, because in it are crystallized the real tendencies of mankind. The educational institutions and the opinions of the great thinkers about them are the synthesis of the purposes of mankind in their succession. The human superior manifests itself in an ascending line, in progress. The conquered ground is crystallized in moral values, which become thus compulsory, as opposed to the errors, to which the concrete man and society are subject at times. The moral values indicate the halting places through which mankind passed in their realization, such as the spirit has succeeded till now to impose them. In them we see the beginning of the rising line of man's achievement, following the way of his law shown by the spirit. The human superiority resides in them, and must go on along the line indicated by them, in an incessant realization.

But the general direction is given to us. The individual way of this realization is also given to us. A study of this kind shows that, symptomatically, man's vocation was always vaguely felt, even when not yet expressed clearly in theory, as a realization of a maximum of social happiness by way of a maximum of individual happiness. But happiness is but a symptom, a sign. It shows us something more important, i.e. the call on the road of realization, or the absence of that call. The different values, acknowledged universally by mankind (honesty, love of fellow-man, respect for labour, devotion, etc.) are for themselves signs

of the coincidence of the individual vocation with the generic one. Human society has always longed for certain achievements, the most perfect with regard to quality and the amplest with regard to quantity. The totality of achievements claimed by society from the individuals who are its members, is solved in the totality of professions.

The individual, on the other hand, could not wish for a greater satisfaction than a free manifestation according to his internal law, according to his vocation, however humble and little that vocation might be. It could be stated that the vocation of the human species is to reach the greatest social happiness (happiness considered as a symptom), and that of the individual to contribute as much as possible through the realization of his own possibilities, according to his specific originality.

To express this idea I tried to coin sometime ago the notion of "personality" as follows: *The maximum of development in a human being of his specific originality, within the boundaries of the social principle, i.e., within the boundaries of a productive harmony with the medium.* This formula shows the way of liberation of man, the way of the realization of his twofold vocation. He becomes a personality inasmuch as he succeeds in fulfilling it. Personality, thus understood, represents therefore man's vocation itself.

The realization of this imperative of the personality in everyday activity, appears in "the vocational profession," which is the maximum of realization of the social principle inasmuch as it is profession, and the maximum of realization of the specific originality inasmuch as it is individual vocation.

Opposed to this supreme purpose, all the others which may exist for the individual or for society, are but subordinate purposes.

But the happiness of mankind, as well as individual happiness is only a symptom which opens only a much deeper perspective. It is most wonderful how in vocation coincides individual happiness with the social one. But that only would not be sufficient. Happiness is in the end something which the superior man can renounce. It may appear somewhat paradoxical, but happiness

may be discovered by the superior man in all kinds of misfortunes which may arise on his way, leading to the realization of his vocation as an individual and as a species.

That happens because happiness is but a symptom in the realization of vocation. The vocation is the main thing. To fulfil it, man is able to suffer. The sufferance itself will seem to him much more valuable than whatever concrete goods would be offered to him to make him renounce it. Here appears the importance of the great example offered by Jesus Christ. Here appears the importance of the example which the great heroes of mankind offer to us.

Nothing is of greater value than vocation. The vocation of the individual must express the vocation of the generic man, the vocation of mankind. Upon that axis, individual-mankind, the nation appears like an obvious ring. The nation is an individualization and at the same time a socialization. Through the nation we come in contact with mankind, through the nation mankind communicates with us. Through his individualization man is linked with certain ancestors that have determined the elements of his specific originality ; further, through his individualization he is bound to a certain soil, to a familiar and dear landscape, to a culture expressed in a certain form, which all have contributed to the awakening of the spirit in that conflict, or what means the same thing, in that primitive and original embrace, which woke the spirit to life. That is why the spirit, which is the element of liberation, and in which the eternal and superior human is so obviously represented, is at the same time the national expression. Let us not confound the nation, in which the spiritual is predominant, with the race, which is a biological unity and which can be acknowledged only with difficulty, except in the case when we stop at the notion of civilized race.

The vocation of man is a synthesis of the vocation of the individual, of the nation, and of mankind. Thus looked upon, it represents the mission of peace and progress, the creative mission, which means freedom in the development of the human person, according to its specific originality, and through it simultaneously, according to the general human superior.

VAISHṆAVA PHILOSOPHY

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Vishṇu is the immanent, all-pervasive Principle. This immanence or all-pervasiveness is not that of the trammels of inexorable laws—it is the embracing of a child on the lap of its mother. Philosophers have designated philosophy as the science of ascertaining the Truth by the process of reasoning and argumentation. But the derivative meaning of the word 'Philosophy' (*darśana*) is different. It signifies the direct vision or seeing (*dṛishti*), realization or experience of the Supreme Truth. It is to feel intuitively and taste the Ultimate Reality in the very recess of one's being. This *seeing* is quite different from an attempt to ascertain the Truth by reasoning alone.

By Vaishṇava Philosophy is meant the science of visualizing and tasting the Truth by a Vaishṇava (a worshipper of Vishṇu). Śāṁkhya, Pātañjala, Vaiśeshika, Nyāya and Pūrva Mīmāṁsā—these five systems of Philosophy have given prominence to reasoning, divorced from any kinship with God, and definitely attempt to attain bliss by eschewing earthly miseries. But the great sage Bādarāyaṇa does not recognize the importance of these above processes of reasoning to attain the Ultimate Reality, but holds that human miseries are finally terminated and liberation attained by the conscious realization of the Supreme Being.

Ineffable bliss or *ānanda* is indeed the real essence of the Supreme Being. The representation (*Śrī Vigraha*) of God is beyond ordinary human conception and reasoning. There is no other way to realize it except by worship.

Vaishṇavism embraces all systems but at the same time ever shines in its own distinctiveness. There can be no rest and peace of the heart without *feeling, realizing* and *seeing*. Vaishṇava Philosophy recognizes the All-powerful and the power as One and ever-playful, and serves to all an unceasing flow of divine bliss, which soothes, embalms and heals all souls. This bliss or love is what is called worship or devotion. Vaishṇava Philosophy

fulfils the very essential thing of awakening 'love,' which is man's real nature. No system of Indian Philosophy except Vaishṇavism has been able to tap the very fountain-head of that ambrosia in human breast. Vaishṇavism gives us a clue to that Vishṇu, the all-pervading Love-Principle, Who dwells as the subtlest entity in all beings.

The bliss and joy which the Upanishads aim at are to be found in Vaishṇavism. So Vaishṇava Philosophy is nothing but the Upanishads. The *Brahma-sūtra,* which presents the salient thoughts of the Upanishads in a lucid and methodical way, expresses itself elaborately in and through Vaishṇava Philosophy. The Supreme Brahman of the Upanishads is identical with Vishṇu of Vaishṇavism. *'Brahman'* means 'the Great.' The All-powerful God manifests Himself as this objective world of His own accord—this is the teaching not only of Vaishṇavism but also of the Vedas and the Upanishads.

Scholars are wrong in thinking that Vaishṇavism is a system of sectarian Philosophy. It is far from that. By " Vaishṇava " is meant one attaining the stage of the highest manifestation of Divinity. Judging by this criterion, all the people of the world are entitled to be called 'Vaishṇavas,' when they are able to know their true selves.

Many people say that the Upanishads primarily teach knowledge. But knowledge wedded to intuition is nothing but love or devotion. The realization of Bliss Absolute by an Upanishadic seer is identical with that of the Sweet Lord by a Vaishṇava. An Upanishadic seer has sung: " Thou art the dearest of the dear, the choicest of the jewels, we pray to Thee." A Vaishṇava's kinship with God is the same. Again, the seer sings: " He is Bliss Absolute ; when the heart is filled with that bliss, the soul becomes Bliss Itself." It is then all sweetness. On behalf of the Vaishṇavas we say that this knowledge inculcated by the Upanishads is another name for *bhakti* or divine love, bliss or sweetness, which Vaishṇavism preaches so eloquently.

THE VEDANTIC CONCEPTION OF PEACE

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The motto printed on the cover of the centenary programme is highly significant. It reads: "*Ekaṁ sad viprā bahudhā vadanti*" (i.e. the wise speak of the One Existence in many ways). This message of the ancient Ṛishis of the Vedas is the foundation of the Vedāntic conception of Peace. It is a simple truth, but it appears that simple truths are usually the most difficult to realize in practice. "The wise man," says Spinoza (the much persecuted Vedāntist of the 17th century Europe), "cannot die, but enjoys for ever the true peace of the spirit." He was right in holding that God was not a particular person, one among the many, but as Substance He pervaded the whole universe, that no particular nation or race or country could claim to have a special revelation of God, but that God revealed Himself in equal measure to all. In the same spirit, we believe that all religions are but different expressions of the same divine spirit, and that each provides within its fold what the other type promises to fulfil. In this liberal spirit, religions must be viewed as having their own pragmatic justification, so that no one has a right to prescribe his own type of religious belief to others, because rightly practised every religion leads to the same goal of perfection and freedom.

If this truth is realized in earnest, if people desist from unduly eulogizing their own religious beliefs while denouncing other types, if they bear in mind that the religious consciousness of mankind has revealed itself in various forms, which though different in expression are nevertheless of the same spirit, much of the world's troubles arising from intolerance, arrogance, aggressiveness and fanaticism and much of the unnecessary wrangling and futile controversies over the superiority or inferiority of certain religious types would cease, and that would necessarily pave the way to a better mutual understanding and to a more real contact among us.

The Vedānta teaches us that religion is life, it is experience, it is something to be lived and practised and demonstrated in one's

everyday life, rather than a sum-total of certain doctrines and rituals. Particular types of faith assume a fixed form as systems of doctrine or creed, and people generally regard them as the quintessence of truth. But truly something very much more than an implicit faith in the truth of such creeds is required. Mere faith in creeds does not help us much. The essence of religion lies in *realization,* in living the truths embodied in the doctrines, in making our life sanctified and holy. When we are honestly striving towards a realization of the religious spirit, we are already on the road to peace. Nothing possesses a higher spiritual value than peace. True blessedness is another name of true peace. The Hindus have been in particular desirous of peace, peace not only on this earth, but peace in the whole universe composed of no less than fourteen worlds. Whenever we find opportunities, we recite the well-known *Śāntipāṭha,* and our prayers, our lectures, our arguments, our discussions, our sermons end in the words, *Śāntiḥ, Śāntiḥ, Śantiḥ.* This spirit of peace has pervaded our whole tradition. But its fulfilment can only come about if we follow our precepts, if we really live up to our ideals, if we lead a peaceful life, if our dealings with our fellowmen are peaceful. The very first requisite to the spiritual life is *śama* (peace). Peace is the alpha and the omega of the spiritual life. *Moksha* is another name of absolute and unmixed peace.

It is peace which the present-day world needs more than anything else. But peace cannot be secured merely by preaching it, especially so long as there is a wide gulf between our thought and action. Objective peace requires first of all subjective peace. Subjective peace comes about by practising the virtues of the spiritual path, described in the 16th chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gītā.* It is only when we practise truthfulness, honesty, sincerity, love, that we are qualified to bring about objective peace. It is only then that our dealings with our fellowmen are transparently honest. Nations no less than individuals need a definite moral training to be qualified to bring about objective peace with any marked success. You cannot work for peace with a sword in the hand. That means distrust and suspicion, which are the worst enemies of peace. The mere profession of striving for peace is not enough

to secure it. It must be accompanied by a strict moral discipline, which will purge the will of all feelings of revenge, vindictiveness, ill-will, exploitation etc. In actual life we generally try to take undue advantage of each other, we allow jealousy and vanity to dim our true perspective. Above all, we are all hypocrites more or less in our dealings with our brothers, with our fellowmen, with the world at large. We have developed the art of self-deception to perfection. So long as we do not throw off this cloak and practise truth and humility, there can be no hope for real peace. Hypocrisy is the greatest sin of the modern world, and when it is coupled with vanity, it is capable of doing immense mischief in bringing about our moral and spiritual degradation.

There is no gainsaying the fact that we live in a world today that is in no way happy. The spirit of discord and distrust is rampant. In spite of that, it is our duty to make every possible endeavour to bring about a better mutual understanding, and this Parliament of Religions is certainly a very laudable attempt to bring about such an understanding among us with special reference to our beliefs, and let us hope that all such attempts will be crowned with success.

RELIGION AND LIFE'S HARMONY

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We know that we are now, each a law unto himself, and would not learn it from a foreign source. Those who in bygone times sought it from a *guru* had less self-respect than we moderns have, and they were often so many dupes in the hands of wily and designing people. Our reason directs us in all our affairs, and who should so far forget himself as to allow his reason to abdicate its office so as to make room for foolish faith? The task of a teacher, therefore, is the most delicate in these days of individualism. Standing at the bar of reason and logic we want to face facts as such, tearing the veil of magic from off their face. We are thus a race of brave men who not only like to be our own

guides, giving the law to ourselves, but also want to challenge what we call the lies and hypocrisies which had shut out the naked reality from our sight. In this our bold attempt before which the past gives up its dead as dead that had been hitherto masquerading as the living and so falsely inspiring us, we seem to be merely busy with the present and its immediate problems. The present which might have its meaning and reality today may turn out to be false tomorrow. But this need not dishearten us, for the morrow may bring us something better, when the mere fad of clinging to the past would appear to be foolish. To adjust the claims of the old and of the new was the problem not only of King Lear: it is the eternal problem of human life, if reason be made its guiding principle, and not simply an idle veneration for the old because it is old. This is certainly the right attitude of the truth-seeker, and in so far as this attitude is the attitude of sincere and pure reason, it seems promising. But is it always the case that the old is decrepit and that we in the present-day world are all so many anxious and straightforward seekers of the truth, who are out to know and understand? Those who are truly honest in their challenge of the old find that the old and the new, the past and the present, are linked up together into one whole and that the attempt to divorce the two is suicidal. The present that never had a past was nowhere. The same law of growth animates the ages. But the dilettante who makes his quest of knowledge a mere fashion of the moment, a pastime to make a name, might blot out the past as a black mark from the white pages of his present achievements. To such an one the passing mood only presses its claim, while the law underlying all changes escapes his shallow gaze. When such is the case, theories begin to multiply, which come and go as so many shifting phantasmagoria, dazzling the multitude with their seeming brilliance at this moment, to fall into a dust heap at the next. The numerous *isms* which thus crop up as mushrooms blind us to the *is*.

Our own self-love which we mistake so often for love of truth is at the root of all this evil that threatens the real progress of knowledge. Vanity and truth never go together. Truth is meek and not fond of noise and fuss ; it retires when falsehood loudly

blows its trumpet and seeks to hold the field. And when the march of truth is thus sought to be retarded, we become busy with experiments, just for the fun of the thing, and not with the object of discovery for which all experiments are meant. We must experiment to find a truth, not to pursue a hobby. Experiments are not to be taken in hand in a light mood, as all scientists will tell us. But some of the leaders of the day all over the world think little of their experiments and they think that they may try them with impunity. The shy maiden that Truth is, then, shudders in her solitude, but waits, until all the newfangled doctrines and theories and experiments come to be swept away by the irresistible onrush of her power! Our faith in the eternal verities, though challenged, thus comes to assert itself, and before this triumph the truth-seeker has to submit himself and take his very defeat as his victory. This victory is another name for the realization that the *present* has a *past* and a *future*, the *here* a *whence* and a *whither*, that life is an endless unfolding, not a fungus or chance growth that depends on the sweet mercies of the most up-to-date law-giver. To find life and its phenomena a link in an infinite chain and so to understand its serious import is the right perception. Life is not a mere merry sparkle or a shining bubble,—the delight of the moment—but it has its deep shadows which it casts before and after, and the truth-seeker struggles, in all his sincerity and earnestness of purpose, to find the light behind. This struggle is not a mere sportive effort made in a holiday mood, but one long, painful and continuous endeavour that never flags. Our sciences and philosophies are so many expressions of that endeavour, and who may deny, without being perverse, that it has brought us at least a few sparks or scintillations of that light which man has been struggling to find since the budding of his reason or the dawn of civilization? The thunder of Jupiter is no more a mystery and finds us no longer as helpless victims before it, for we know how to harness Nature's forces to meet the same. Neptune may be angry and the winds may cease to blow, but unlike poor Agamemnon, we are not required to offer up our Iphigenias to propitiate the angry deity. Our diseases are no more the visitations of divine wrath which we must appease before we

may hope for recovery ; for they are all now traceable to definite causes which are controllable, and curable by the discoveries of a Pasteur or a Brahmachari. Our royalties or crowned heads have now lost their ancient glamour for us and they are no longer deified: but they are all so many mortals like us, who also have their foibles and follies. My right to live is my own right ; it may, for certain common purposes of the society, be temporarily vested in the king, but he must not think of using it as he wishes. In my spiritual life also, I do not find my priest to be a person with any mystery about him. He is as much a mortal as I am and has his appetites as I have mine. He may not lead me into the divine presence, unless I be fit. My own purity must be my guide, not another's. While representation may do in political or social life, nothing but actual presentation of my own strict account will do in religious life. Thus it will be seen how human reason is asserting itself in individual life, as a result of the culture which the age has brought with it. The saying, " where ignorance is bliss, it is folly to be wise " is in itself a folly, just as the complacent faith of Adam in the prohibition of God was. If Satan stole in to disturb the innocence and happiness of life in Paradise by kindling the first man's desire to know, was he not doing the part of a friend (though without meaning it), just as Prometheus did, for having stolen the fire of Jupiter's altar? Those who help us to think for ourselves and so progress in the path of truth are our real friends today, and not those who only want us to submit to authority, however high.

With our reason and imagination thus kindled, we are trying to realize our high destiny as men. We are thus all grateful, and that in all sincerity, to those who have toiled all their lives and brought before us the fruits of their labour by wresting a secret here and a secret there from the great storehouse of secrets, which Nature is. But with all this progress and advancement, why are we not happy? Why is the cry going up from us, " Which way peace?" Why do we find ourselves in the same helpless state as marked the primitive man who was ever fearful of rapine from his more powerful neighbour? Why, with all our attainments and achievements of the head which have made us proud of our

modernism, are we still behaving, like the ape man, with our chatterings and grimaces? Alas! the reason is not far to seek. While the individuality and rationality of man has been awakened, his heart has been left to pine in a state of inanition. While the head has been busy in the laboratories, devising ways and means to heal the afflicted body and also to kill the blooming one, the heart has, like the forlorn medieval maid, gone on sighing for her true love shut up in her lonely tower standing on a perilous sea. If knowledge goes on raising its edifice busy ornamenting its surface, without caring to make the foundation deep and durable or the inside commodious for the happiness of those who come to live there, that edifice would prove itself a mere mockery like the old Tower which had been raised high enough, but fell into a ruined heap, as there had been only ambition at its source, and not love. With all our lofty talk, the jealous spirit of individuality has delved itself deep into our national life, and, in the name of the nation, we are today guilty of the most atrocious crimes before which the old, simple tale of savagery pales into nothingness. Even the awful reckoning, which had come as a reminder to proud man, not very long ago, that all was not well with him, has not been able to leave him better and happier. No doubt we have tried to take the terrible hint: and the poet has sighed, the philosopher protested, the statesman looked blank, while some of the finest poetry and philosophy has enriched our libraries. The wise politicians also have not been slow to raise a high structure and swell their mountain-high records full of their pious resolutions! But yet have men remained the same old warring tribes, only the invisible forces let loose by the scientist's alembic or the politician's portfolio have taken the place of the rude spear or the axe.

The progress of the head, which is undoubted, and which has gone to add to the amenites and complexities of life, miscalled happiness is not what alone will ensure peace and brotherliness amongst men. With the heart pining, the individuality of man comes to degenerate into self-love and he lives only in the hard cocoon of his selfish existence, lost to all true life which comes from a sense of contact with the Universal. Self-preservation is a moral virtue, but not self-love. The former is necessary to help

us in the struggle for existence, but unless kept within its natural bounds, it threatens to develop into a disease. While struggling for my own life, I must not forget that my neighbour also has a life to live. Self-love ignores that my right to live goes with a similar right of another in society. While everyone wants to live for himself alone, no one truly lives and grows and society hastens to its ruin. The ethics of individual life must merge itself into that of the national life and the national ethics should ultimately lead on to Universal Ethics. Ancient history shows how nations that had built up only their own systems of ethics regardless of the Universal ideal came to perish with all their grandeur. Socrates with his philosophy had necessarily to perish before the narrow, parochial outlook of his countrymen, and Christ with his gospel of universal love had to suffer crucifixion before the national pride of a people that boasted itself to be God's " elect." The intolerant Brahmanical code of our unhappy land did not breathe the true ethical spirit that binds man with man—it was the word of the Ṛishis whose eyes rolling in their spiritual frenzy saw *Īśa* everywhere, and also the universal ethics of Buddhism which really made Indian Ethics the admiration of the world!

If the civilization of the West is to endure, the Universal ethics of Christianity must be clothed in flesh and blood and not simply live its hollow and abstract life in the pages of the Bible. As it is, a dark spirit of heathenism now clouds the outlook in the West and the living spirit of Christ stands once more in danger of crucifixion!

The pity is that while we talk so much of reason and logic, we do not see the unnatural and irrational conduct of which we ourselves are guilty with our cult of selfish individuality. There is no room for pettiness or meanness in rationalism. A truly rational or scientific gaze is that which looks upon the individual from the standpoint of the Universal: it wants to establish a harmony between the two, for the one without the other may not stand. The individual without the Universal is blind, the Universal without the individual is empty.

Let us not hold science responsible for all our unhappiness and misery. The scientist who sacrifices his life's pleasures to

find out a truth is not to be despised as selfish. Who loves his fellow-brethren better than he? It is the misapplication of the truth which he has found after a life of ceaseless toil that divides man from man. In our anxiety to apply the findings of science to the promotion of our own comforts and pleasures, we have sadly missed the universal outlook of the scientist and so have let the heart starve and die. The heart draws the sap for its life, when it is embedded in the sense of the Universal, when it sees the One in the many and the many in the One. This inter-relation of the individual and the Universal is not a mere abstraction which the poet, the philosopher or the scientist deludes us with. It is a concrete reality which has been perceived as such by those whose hearts have yearned for this realization with longings of love infinite. A mere imaginative or intellectual perception does not give us any more than an abstraction, and an abstraction as such may never be made to fit in with life. Life responds to life, and a mere abstract image of the Universal, unless blessed with the true breath of personal realization, may at best bring us but a temporary aesthetic joy. But he who has himself drunk deep at the perennial fount of beauty and joy brings us a message which goes straight into the heart and gives it new life. The Universal is not a figment of imagination nor a myth of old that has ceased to fit in with modern life, but it is as much a reality now as it has ever been. Only, our gaze which now looks at things piecemeal and in a haphazard way has been too intellectual and analytical. Hence all the trouble and strife of which the air today is so full. The remedy does not lie in the scientist's crucible, the poet's imaginings, the philosopher's consolations or the archives of the League of nations but in religion, in bringing forth our God-consciousness which is the highest synthesis or universalization of all our perceptions. Before this synthesis the particulars of our individual experience lose their identity and merge themselves into One, when we come to feel that

> "The One remains, the many change and pass ;
> Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly ;
> Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
> Stains the white radiance of Eternity."

This vanishing of the many into the essence of the One is the vital principle of every true religion. One life, One harmony, One law moves through all forms of energy and so makes them kin. Differences and partitions which raise their high walls of separation between things, when viewed in themselves are all levelled down, as we feel within ourselves the presence of the One that unites. The jarring notes of different sounds which threaten our peace with their strange harshness melt away, when our ears get attuned to the One harmony which once chanted itself in the solemn music of the *Om* of prophetic realization. The lawgivers and statesmen all over the world, who seem so anxious for peace, but are yet divided by their mutual hatred and jealousies, will find themselves united, once they realize that all their differences are but the many modes of expression of the same Law which holds Nature together through all her diversities and forms. True religion will thus work for harmony by helping men to realize their God-consciousness and so enabling them to feel their mutual bond of fellowship. This realization is more an achievement of the heart than of the head, for while the pride of a soaring intellect discriminates and divides, the humility of a loving soul draws together and unites. Let the head soar, but let not the heart pine away in her solitude. She must also sally forth to find her own likeness in seemingly strange appearances! We find in the career of every religious prophet how his heart had yearned for the good of all, for is not the One manifest in all? The heart of a Buddha, of a Christ, of a Chaitanya, of a Sri Ramakrishna, of a Vivekananda has been the world's most priceless possession for the love which such a heart breathed into it has been still giving it its life and soul. As long as that love continues to shed its beneficent and healing influence on us, we shall stand blessed and fortified against all the evils with which we may be threatened. The celebrations of the centenary of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa's advent, which during the past one year were held in so many parts of the world proves that the soul of humanity is still awake to the great call of Love that had gone forth in the past from different religions. That call is not the phantom's dark or dubious beckoning, luring us to destruction, but it is that living gesture, which if

followed, will lead us into a world that teems with our very breath and longing. A Chaitanya or a Ramakrishna is not an idle visionary or a false guide but is a friend with a gripping sense of what is good for us, and we lose nothing in such companionship. It removes our hardness of heart and makes us see in the sun a sparkle, in the rose a beauty, in the mother's kiss a charm which no zeal of the analytical spirit may dissect. Life, under such influence, comes to gain in its sweetness and also in its width, it does not appear to be a mere drudgery or a slaving away to no purpose. Far from being a vanishing breath or a flying atom, life looks like an ever-expanding truth, being blessed, not only by the light that burns, but also by the light that mellows. While the flash-light of reason shines to show us what is dark, the soft ray of the heart also glimmers to enliven our knowledge and make us feel that there is beauty there. Under the softening and chastening influence of such spiritual friendship, our vanity and pride which had made our little success loom large before us and so had shut out possibilities of which we could take no count, hide their heads in shame. Who may be sure, with all his successes, of his calculations and forecasts about the happenings before him? The scientist, who sure of his findings and gay at the thought of coming on an unwary world with his surprises stands flattering himself, may find all his hopes suddenly belied. A sense of sweet dependence thus is another gain of spiritual life. Such a sense never militates against the truly scientific spirit. On the contrary it only strengthens the adventurer in the domain of the unknown. So not even the most learned of scholars need be afraid of losing anything, by believing in, and following, some religious or spiritual leader. Look at the great Swami Vivekananda of recent history. We all know the immense gain which was his for having been blessed by his Master. We know how with the beneficent light of the Universal Reality sweeping into his ken under the touch of his Master, the young aspiring soul lost his proud individuality therein and realized once for all, never more to be distracted by doubts, the harmony of his life—a harmony which he ever afterwards saw in others, after having dedicated himself to work it out in his lofty but sweet gospel of service.

Swami Vivekananda's case has also its strong modern appeal in another way. He has proved that religion is not a static creed, a blind acceptance of the word of any man but is a dynamic realization which shows itself in one's thought and deed, that religion is *not a belief* only but it *is life* itself. Religious faith, he showed, is as much a truth as any other. Atheism is irrational and illogical, for it comes to an abrupt end before it has run the whole gamut of thought-processes. The end, if seen, will be found to burst forth in its real glory, which a short-sighted vanity or indolence refused to see. And superstition or fanaticism which simulates as religion, is both irrational and immoral, for it hates truth and pretends to love God, while it hates man. But true religion is based not on dogmas but on laws and rules well reasoned out. The word ' science ' is not the monopoly of the chemist or the physicist, but religion's claim to it is no less strong—for, what is that religion worth which may not stand the scrutiny and searching criticism of an anxious enquirer? It is a mistake to associate magic with religion and logic with science. There is as much of magic as of logic in both. The scientist would err if he thought and pretended that his explanations had given us the last word and that there remained nothing mysterious about this world or its plan. Similarly, the religious believer who claims only magic for his province and shuts out logic from the same does not know his own business, but he is a mere quack or miracle worker. If science and truth must go together as they must, is it not foolish to divorce religion which is the highest of all truths from the former? Swami Vivekananda had learnt and realized this, sitting at the feet of his Master. Religion, he realized, is not any sectarian dogma but a Universal Truth whose forms may and must differ but whose essence is the same. God is infinite and so manifests Himself in diverse ways which all ultimately meet in harmony. This message of religion being a scientific realization and also a living faith—which makes us see the One in the many, Unity in diversity, harmony in discord—is what we most require today. At this crisis in human history, when civilization and barbarism are contending once more for supremacy, when all sorts of theories and experiments are only landing us in confusion

without giving us any definite lead for true self-expression, we should do well to turn to the healing counsels which religion alone may promise. And who brings the fulfilment of this promise better than Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, the mighty Master before whose fascination the sceptic intellect of many a cultured mind has surrendered itself, the Master whose own life of realization of the Universality and Harmony of Faiths should be the most eloquent reminder to the Christian, the Mussulman and the Hindu that they are all One?

THE RELIGION OF REALIZATION

SWAMI SHARVANANDA

Ramakrishna Mission

It is a most interesting as well as an important fact of religious history that all the great revealed religions of the world which command the allegiance of the civilized world today owe their origin to divine inspiration. All the great Prophets, be they of the Semitic, of the Indo-Aryan, or of the Mongolian race, proclaim with one voice that what they teach—their religion—was not developed from the intellectual plane or based on an intellectual comprehension of the Reality, but that It was seen, perceived, realized. As the time at my disposal, is very short, I shall not be able to traverse all the psychological ground in explaining the import of the word 'realization.' But I shall touch on one or two points. All along you have been hearing that the glory of Sri Ramakrishna was that what he preached was not from the intellectual plane,—his religion was not a philosophy of metaphysics—but his religion was the religion of realization. And you might have been thinking what is meant by the word 'realization.' What is its content? What is its force?

We find not only the Prophets, seers and sages of different religions keeping up the religious traditions, the fervour and the life of religion in the different countries in the different denominations

by their realization: there are also the priests, philosophers and professional theologians who all dwell upon the intellectual side, emphasize the intellectual and theological religions. The true force of each religion, however, lies in the lives of those great saints and sages who have proclaimed from the house-top as it were that what they speak is not mere intellectual quibble or philosophical disquisition, but religion, truth, realization.

We cognize this universe, this physical world with our five senses, and we consider this universe, this world of perception, as real. As some philosophers would tell us, the test of reality of an object is our abiding consciousness of it. It is our consciousness that gives value of reality to things and we think of this world as real, because we have a permanent consciousness of it, and this value of reality is given also to things that are somewhat conjectured, things that are somewhat rationalized with the help of philosophy. Even in science we would find that there are hypotheses and theories, for everything in it is not experiment and observation. These hypotheses and theories are not realized, and even so we find that the Prophets, the saints and sages have declared unequivocally that the truth they realized is the supreme truth. Yet the priests and preachers who could not attain that sublime height of realization would only say, " Have you faith in what is preached, in doctrines and dogmas." Religion naturally degenerates in the hands of these professionals. In the creed of religion, in the church of religion you notice that corruption creeps in, but true realization comes through different planes of observation. Human consciousness can exist in three different planes, viz. the physical plane, the psychical plane and the spiritual plane. The universe that we see and consider as real is the universe of the same plane. Because though we may rationalize and philosophize, here lies the ultimate unity of the material world for all practical purposes. The spiritual morality and the material plurality are the essential characteristics of the physical plane of consciousness. So however we may philosophize and however high we may soar in poetry, when it comes to the source of life, our poetic religion, our philosophical religion fails us. The physical limitations and other conditions of life are so

bitter and stern in the ethical plane ; when we try to assert only our intellectual conception of Reality, the physical consciousness asserts its reality with all its grimness, and we fail to fulfil the promise of our intellectual religion or poetic religion. Then we find intellectually—as modern science is groping to find and as every system of philosophy tries to assert—that behind the plurality of expression there is a fundamental unity. The material monism was an established fact among the scientists at the early beginning of the century. Among the philosophers the general tendency was to find out the common background for the plurality of this universe so much so that the philosopher and the scientist have now joined hands. They say that there is a common background behind life and matter itself. Mind has become matter and matter is nothing but the concrete expression of mind itself. Well, that is the outcome of intellectual analysis. So mind always tends to unity but we do not feel the unity. Yet, there are experiences, there are stages of human consciousness, in which our senses get sublimated as it were and the mind that looks through these senses comes directly to comprehend the unity behind the apparent plurality of the universe. And lastly the principle of consciousness in mind, what we call the Self or Ātman, the true spiritual principle in man, stands in its solitary grandeur divested of all its external implications of both the physical and the mental, and he realizes his Consciousness, the supreme unity, and that is what we call *samādhi* or superconsciousness. These different stages of spiritual realization we find more or less in every religion. That is the ideal of true religion—to soar to higher and higher stages of consciousness until you come face to face with the Ultimate Reality through consciousness. There is then the shifting of consciousness from the physical plane to the spiritual plane of consciousness, and this is realization. Of such realization Sri Ramakrishna stands as a glorious example before the world. He passed through the three different planes of consciousness—the physical plane of plurality, the plane of unity in diversity and the plane of the absolute unity in the highest *samādhi*. This is the basis of all religions. Let us strive to cultivate the real religious spirit by endeavouring to realize it.

THE DOCTRINE OF SELF-SURRENDER

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Of all the paths to spiritual realization perhaps there is none so simple to understand, so natural to weak mortals, so consoling in time of distress and so unique in its practical discipline as the path of self-surrender. Its innate sweetness and easy accessibility to men of different stages of development in different walks of life, its emotional appeal to the vast majority of mankind and its inherent power to annihilate the individuality and land one on the highest pinnacle of realization—these are some of the outstanding merits of the path that command the earnest and persistent attention of many great souls in various climes and among different races of mankind.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF THE DOCTRINE

Whatever may be our conception of the Supreme Being, whether personal or impersonal, whether with form and attributes or without them, it is admitted on all hands that the diverse world of matter and the myriads of souls live and move and have their being in Him. Since the very existence, the fundamental impulse for activity and the foundation of the universe of souls are all derived from the Supreme Being, it follows as a corollory that the relation between the individual soul (*jīvātman*) and the Supreme Being (*Paramātman*) is one of absolute dependence of the former on the latter, and that this relation is true whether in the bound or in the liberated state of the individual soul. The Śāstras declare in unmistakable terms, " The soul is the property and Brahman is the proprietor absolute, of all souls," " All individual souls by their very inherent nature are slaves to the Supreme Being ; none other is the relationship between the two whether in the bound state or the liberated state of the individual soul." The roots of the doctrine may be traced to the very fountain-head of all Indian wisdom, the Upanishads, wherein it is stated— " This Ātman cannot be attained by fine speech, intelligence or

even by profound learning. Whomsoever the Ātman chooses, by him It is attained." Hence the pious belief, deep-rooted and widely prevalent, that an individual can save himself is but the offspring of ignorance, error and delusion as to the true nature of the soul and its eternal relationship to the Supreme Being. It is true that some great seers have described the soul as of the nature of bliss and knowledge absolute, but their emphasis has been rather on the external attributes of the soul's nature than on its internal and indispensable attribute, without which the soul becomes, as it were, non-existent. Those brave souls on whom has dawned the intuitive vision of the blissful and all-knowing soul, no doubt, attained deliverance from sorrow, bondage and rebirth ; yet this is only partial liberation and the higher religious life only begins with this soul-realization. The self-complacent bliss of the soul to which they are heirs blinds them to the consciousness of the truth about the indispensable nature of the soul viz. that the Supreme Being is the sole Proprietor, Protector and Refuge of the *jivātman*. An insight into this true nature of the soul inspires the individual so profoundly that he is ever after engaged in the one act of supreme self-surrender and self-effacement. The knowledge that the individual soul exists solely for the service of God transforms his life into one of consecration to and a passionate longing for the selfless, joyous and endless service of God—a service which extends to and embraces all His children. The ecstasy arising from this continued selfless service to the Supreme Being, inspired by no motives of reward or enjoyment of this world or the other, but flowing out of the glorious realization of the eternal nature of the soul is the crowning achievement desired by all Vaishṇavas and the consummation to which the earlier stages of soul-intuition and God-inspiration lead the earnest seeker after the perfect liberation. To feel that the individual soul is wedded for all time to the Supreme Being, the sole Master of the universe, in ties of perpetual service is the high-water mark of divine wisdom and illumination.

The other fundamental doctrine on which the theory of self-surrender as a means to soul-redemption rests is the doctrine of the Motherhood of God. The Supreme Being is conceived of in

Hinduism as both the Impersonal Brahman and the Personal God, as *Purusha* and *Prakṛiti*, as *Brahman* and *Māyā*, as the Father and the Mother of the universe, the latter aspect depending entirely on the former and both being entirely non-separate except in name. They are one as fire and its burning power are one, and represent the twin aspects of justice and mercy, both of which have to function in the Divine administration of the universe. The Lord of the universe, as its sole inspirer and sustainer, rules the universe according to the stern laws of *karma*, viewing with witness-like indifference the sorrows and the joys of struggling mortals ; but the Mother of the universe bleeding with mercy for the suffering mortals and yearning to redeem the souls caught in the rolling wheel of *Saṁsāra*, exercises the function of mediation for the sinners and seeks to win them over to the feet of the Lord by Her infinite love and grace. The one is the basis of being and the other the basis of becoming. The one corresponds to the Father, and the other corresponds to the Son of the Christian Trinity. The motto of those that reach the Father directly is tremendous self-exertion ; whereas the motto for those that wish to reach Him through the Mother or the Son is complete self-resignation or self-surrender. The Mother taking no cognizance of the sins or crimes perpetrated by Her children against the Father of all and being over-powered by Her mercy, inflicts countless sufferings on Herself for the sake of Her children and subjects Herself at times to the ordeal of fire and crucifixion. She is the connecting link between the Supreme Being and man, between the Infinite and the finite, and frees both from the slavery to the laws of *karma*, thereby awakening mercy on the one side and the innate purity of the soul on the other. Yet the Supreme Father is the means and the Mother acts only as the Mediatrix. She takes no part in the means, for plurality of means is opposed to the very essence of this philosophy. " There is only one means of salvation and, that is the Supreme Being Himself. The Mother's part where God is the means can be compared to that of a filter-bed which purifies the water and passes it on. The filter bed is not the means to pass on the water, but it removes the dirt and sends on pure water. So also the Mother withholds the sins

as the individual soul passes on to the Supreme Being. Even when the Father is the goal, She receives the service of the individual soul and transmits it to Him, magnifying and sweetening it." Although for the sake of distinction we speak of two aspects, yet in reality there is no difference, for the aspect of becoming is absolutely dependent on the aspect of being and both are really perennial fountains of grace, the former being grace potential, and the latter, grace kinetic. It is this conception of the Godhead involving the inter-related twin aspects of Fatherhood and Motherhood that lies at the back of the sweet philosophy of self-surrender.

THE PRACTICAL BASIS

It is common knowledge that all systems of practical discipline advocated by men of realization aim consistently and persistently at the annihilation of the ego and its activities, which is the sole condition for the attainment of salvation. The doctrine of self-surrender fulfils this aim by laying the axe at the very root of the ego not only with regard to the inherent nature of the soul but also with regard to the means of attaining liberation, and, what is almost unique, even the goal of final beatitude. The singular merit of this doctrine in its practical aspect lies in the triple renunciation of the *jīva* in respect of the ego, the means of protection and the goal entirely and solely in favour of the Supreme Being. The common idea in other systems of philosophy is that the soul being endowed with wisdom is a free agent who chooses either the performance or the avoidance of the prescribed spiritual exercises and who finally enjoys the fruit of his exertion in the enjoyment of the goal. But this philosophy establishes that this idea is quite erroneous and that the *jīva* is no more a free agent than any inanimate object and that the Supreme Being is the sole Proprietor, Protector and Refuge. Hence his very nature forbids the use of any means of saving himself other than God and excludes his own participation in the joy of liberation, since the joy of regaining the lost property pertains entirely to the proprietor and not an iota of it to the property. Further no finite means, however efficacious, can land one on the shores of the Infinite, and besides, the very exercise of the ego in practising

the means frustrates the purpose for which it is intended—namely, the destruction of the lower self. Nor will even a multitude of expiatory of propitiatory ceremonies be of any avail to remove one's sins, for says the Śāstra, "What graver sin can one commit than the sin of stealing the Ātman (that belongs to God) and making it one's own?" Thus the practical aspect of his doctrine affords not even the least scope either for independently initiating any activity for one's own benefit, or relying on it as a means or for enjoying its fruits.

THE DOCTRINE AND ITS SOURCE

The doctrine of self-surrender is a grand revelation made by Śrī Kṛishṇa to Arjuna and through him to the world at large on the battle field of Kurukshetra, and forms the final teaching by Śrī Kṛishṇa to his qualified disciple on the question of salvation. In simplicity and efficacy it surpasses all other means of salvation laid down in the various religious ordinances. The spiritual teachers of Śrī Vaishṇavism of the middle period down to the preceptor of Śrī Rāmānuja looked upon this teaching as a holy secret to be imparted only to those persons who by a rigorous course of spiritual training demonstrated their fitness to be favoured with the trust. They were never for casting this priceless pearl of Divine wisdom before th swine. But Śrī Rāmānuja took quite a different view and held that such a pearl of divine wisdom, the quintessence of divine grace, could not be deteriorated by being exposed to the gaze of unholy persons, even as the sun did not lose his glory by shining upon the stinking bogs in the slums in which the swine plunged and rolled. His generosity and overflowing love for mankind overstepped the bounds of orthodox conventionalities and he broadcasted the message freely and indiscriminately so that it might reach the sinner and the saint that may be willing to listen to it and rescue mankind from the thraldom of the worries of the world.

The necessity for this final teaching was as follows. Arjuna was sorely perplexed and grieved by the highly metaphysical exposition made by Śrī Kṛishṇa of how a man may reach the goal of life. The methods preached involved a physical and

mental discipline quite beyond the capacity of ordinary mortals. There was also the risk that the ardent pursuit of these means might lead to the ignoring of the ideal altogether and tighten the grip of the demon of egotism to the utter ruin of all prospects of salvation. Śrī Kṛishṇa divining the grief of Arjuna tells him as follows:—" Giving up completely all *Dharmas,* regard *me* alone as the means of salvation. I shall be bound to absolve you from all sins ; grieve not." The *Dharmas* here referred to are the diverse means laid down in the numerous religious scriptures to attain salvation, such as *Karma-Yoga, Bhakti-Yoga, Jñāna-Yoga,* etc., and Śrī Kṛishṇa advises Arjuna to give up the whole lot of these means as though they were veritable sins, even with a sense of disgust and shame for the past delusive apprehension of them as the means. This renunciation of the *Dharmas* is a *sine qua non* for looking up to God as the sole Saviour, since the *Dharmas* are in reality not only inefficacious as a means of salvation but constitute also a positive obstacle to the free flow of divine grace and consequent salvation. The egoistic clinging of the imbecile mortal to the slender means at his disposal not only cuts off his connection with the Infinite power instantly, but also strengthens the barrier between him and God ever ready to come to his aid. Further, when God, the goal of all our aspirations and endeavours, Himself becomes the medicine for curing the disease of worldliness, it is highly welcome and carries a charm ; and one is thereby relieved from the painful necessity of swallowing the bitter pills of hard austerities and stern self-discipline. Again, the discarding of all earthly *Dharmas* finds their true fulfilment and their consummation in the joyous embrace of the goal, namely God, the Embodiment of all *Dharmas,* as the means. Such is the very teaching of the Supreme Being Who incarnated with a view to establishing the highest righteousness on earth and gave us the immortal and priceless sermon on the battle-field, to wit, the *Bhagavad-Gītā.*

THE UNIQUENESS OF THE DOCTRINE

Self-surrender to God, while excelling all other means in its efficacy and naturalness, is also unique in its nature and transcends

all means as such. Here it is not a question of acquisition but only of acquiescence, since the means, viz. God is ever-existent and imperishable. Here the means is all-knowing and all-powerful unlike all other means. This method is not fraught with any danger and is entirely in conformity with the inherent nature of the individual soul. This involves no active effort, so to say, and is unfailing as a means of success ; but other means, whatever they may be, involve great effort on the part of the *jīvātman*, and after all, the success ultimately rests in an extraneous agency, God. They are subject to risks and many pitfalls and are quite inefficacious as compared with the sovereign remedy of salvation herein proposed. Here one taps salvation at the very fountain-head instead of in the tainted courses lower down, known as *Dharmas*, which in reality carry one farther and farther away from the fountain-head. Here the supplementing of God by other means proves not only futile but also ruinous to the prospect of salvation. Here there is neither seeking nor striving but only the regarding of God as the eternal means. Even the effort in seeking God is discountenanced as savouring of egoism. Moreover, it is fundamentally wrong to suppose that the perfect God requires a consideration for His protection, that He requires to be sought after to induce Him to protect the individual. It is the duty of the *jīvātman* as one endowed with wisdom, merely to rest content with the knowledge that God is the sole means of salvation. Even the clinging of the individual to God in an attitude of supreme faith in His infallibility as the means partakes of the nature of egotism, as in reality it is a gift of His unconditional Divine grace. Whereas with other means the abstention from effort indicated is a bar to their success, here the application of self-effort is an egregious blunder and is a bar to the success of the means prescribed by this method. It is thus that the individual soul performs his own part of the great covenant between man and God, which consists in the abdication of all means of salvation followed by the prescribed mental adoption of God as the sole means in an attitude of serene quietness and unbounded faith in God.

THE PROMISE DIVINE

The other part of the covenant lies in God's assurance that He shall be bound, under the condition mentioned above, to liberate the individual from all sins. This promise has been vouchsafed to us by God in His Almighty and All-knowing aspect as the majestic receptacle of the entire universe of matter and souls and as the sole arbiter of its destinies. The light of His effulgence can pierce even the densest mass of the accumulated sins of many births. In reality the deliverance of the individual requires neither his effort nor even God's ; for at the very thought that God is the sole Saviour and the only means of salvation the sins fly away without leaving even the least trace behind them. The moment that all self-effort to secure one's salvation is renounced, and God's mercy is looked upon as the only refuge, all sins disappear miraculously. So long as one thinks that salvation rests in one's hands, God keeps aloof. But the moment we surrender ourselves to Him, we become a part of His body and the removal of the dirt of sins from His body becomes His concern. Again, since sins are after all only acts that cause displeasure to God, when He takes us under His protection, His displeasure is bound to cease and the sins that caused His displeasure are automatically wiped out. The truth is that neither the sins nor the virtues count in this connection, the grace of God being the only factor that counts.

ITS IMPLICATIONS IN PRACTICAL LIFE

The doctrine of self-surrender implies several features in practical life, which it is our duty to remember. First and foremost in practical life a single act of taking refuge in God by words, acts or contemplation with the firm conviction that He is the only Saviour of all souls constitutes self-surrender or *prapatti*. It is indeed completed by a single act ; for it will have no meaning if it is to consist of a series of continuing acts. Yet the continued remembrance of that one act is not objectionable and is even unavoidable, owing to the inherent bliss the contemplation of the initial act generates and the guarantee it affords against any relapse into the ante-*prapatti* state or the state before

self-surrender. Secondly, the act of self-surrender is independent of time, place or conditions and of all qualifications and purposes. At any time, in any place, and under any condition, whether pure or impure, irrespective of all qualifications on the part of the soul that surrenders and of all purposes held in view whether secular or spiritual, it can be resorted to by any individual ; but it bears fruit only when the person who receives it happens to possess the requisite qualifications of Masterhood, affability, wisdom and power. Thirdly, self-surrender may have its origin in a sense of one's own utter unworthiness and helplessness as in the case of the ignorant and the weak, or in a vivid consciousness of the inherent dependence of the soul on God as in the case of the wise ones, or in the overwhelming flood of *prema* or intense devotion to God which makes it impossible to entertain the thought of any means other than God, as in the case of the supreme devotees of God ; yet all the three types are acceptable to God. The vast majority of those that resort to self-surrender are of the first type ; the renowned preceptors of spiritual wisdom like Yamunāchārya and others belong to the second type ; while the Āḻvārs of unparalleled frenzy for the Lord that transported them beyond the realms of body-consciousness and mind-consciousness into the pure regions of celestial effulgence come under the third type. Fourthly, making one's act of self-surrender a means to the end of God's protection is akin to the son's insistence at the age of adolescence on the father's execution of a registered agreement for his protection. The uniqueness of the path of self-surrender consists chiefly in the absolute intolerance of anything else or even itself as being regarded as a means. Fifthly, the indispensable requisite for attaining the fruit of self-surrender is our willingness to submit to the ever-active grace of God, based on the knowledge of the eternal relationship between the soul and God. The wind of God's grace may be incessantly blowing ; yet we should unfurl the sails of our boat, if we wish to profit by the wind and reach our destination. Sixthly, absolute self-surrender to the Supreme Being or complete dependence for one's protection on His infinite mercy implies a three-fold renunciation of all dependence upon temporal agencies and possessions

as means of protection, as source of enjoyment or as the goal of one's aspirations.

SOME OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

The exposition of the doctrine of self-surrender in the above-mentioned fashion is bound to provoke in the minds of novices in this line of thought certain queries, answers to which are undoubtedly conducive to the clarification of some fundamental principles of this doctrine. (1) At the outset it may be asked, "If the means such as *Karma-Yoga, Jñāna-Yoga,* etc., advocated in the sacred scriptures of divine authority including the *Gītā,* besides being ineffective, are positive obstacles to illumination, why are they preached at all?" The answer is that the various *Yogas,* pious acts and rituals are but restraints imposed with a view to breaking the erratic ways of the individual swayed by egoism, to enable him to gain a true insight into the limitations of his real nature. They are like the stumbling blocks attached to the necks of cattle that, spurning the grass awaiting them in the homes of their masters, break loose and graze the crops of others stealthily. (2) The objection might be raised, viz. "Will not the abdication of prescribed *Dharmas* imply or lead to the adoption of the proscribed *adharmas* or unrighteous acts?" "Emphatically not," we answer; for the performance of unrighteous acts is inconsistent with the attitude of self-surrender to God, the Personification of all truth and righteousness. The complete detachment born of surrender to God leaves no room for immorality of any kind. (3) Will not the act of self-surrender itself with its preliminary preparatory attitude of non-dependence on aught but God as the means constitute by itself a positive means? Why should the aspirant at all put himself in the frame of mind to regard God as the only means of salvation? Why should not God protect him, irrespective of this mental attitude? The mere receptiveness to divine grace or voluntary submission to its influence cannot be regarded as a means by itself for the following reasons: (a) It is simply the negative abstention from resistance unwillingly offered, in the garb of self-effort, to Divine protection. (b) Such an attitude of submission is an unavoidable

necessity in every system of religious discipline. (c) The individual soul is specially endowed by God with wisdom to appreciate the fact of soul-relationship, of which this attitude of voluntary submission to God's grace is a necessary consequence. (d) The same mental attitude is bound to persist even after attaining the goal. (e) It is entirely in keeping with his nature of absolute dependence on God. That which distinguishes the soul from mere matter is the attribute of wisdom which has to justify its existence by manifesting gratitude towards the Lord for His beneficent efforts on his behalf, and delight in His service. Further, His thought of us, rather than our thought of Him, is the means ; but it succeeds only when our thought of self-dependence vanishes of itself. Again, making the thought of self-surrender a means is like regarding the flower offered as a mark of respect and devotion to a mighty emperor by a beggar during his visit, as a fit price for the gracious gift of an enormous treasure bestowed on the beggar. It is a maxim in logic that the end achieved should be commensurate to the means employed. Lastly, if no mental attitude was deemed necessary, then we shall be driven to the logically difficult position of explaining why all individuals should not be indiscriminately absolved from sins, and why God's protection should take effect only at a particular stage and not earlier. (4) Why should not the word *'Dharmas'* be interpreted to mean optional *Dharmas* as opposed to obligatory *Dharmas* or the fruits of *Dharmas*? We answer, the construction is not warranted by the text of the verse and is a grievous offence against the very essence of the text which lays down God as the only means of salvation. The omnipotent means preached herein will not suffer the addition of any supplemental means (which tend only to stultify the act of complete self-surrender) just as the divine weapon, Brahmāstra, Indrajit hurled at Hanumān—which made him drop down in a swoon—lost its effect, when the rank and file of Rāvaṇa's army tied Hanumān with ropes. (5) Next, is the complete abstinence from *Dharmas* possible in practice? Will it not virtually tantamount to the suspension of all physical and mental activity? We admit that such activity is an inherent mental necessity ; but we maintain that our

objection to the practice of *Karma-Yoga, Bhakti-Yoga* and *Jñāna-Yoga* is only to the practice of them as means of salvation, but not to their utilization as modes of service to the Supreme. Since service is an inherent attribute of the individual soul and its cherished goal, unremitting service for its own sake with no ulterior motive of salvation or other gain should be the motto for the aspirant. His *karma* becomes transformed into service, *jñāna* (wisdom) affording the necessary illumination and *bhakti* or devotion supplying the necessary taste or longing for the service. (6) Is not this doctrine of self-surrender likely to breed indolence and spiritual barrenness? We humbly submit that neither logic nor experience warrants such an apprehension. The doctrine of self-surrender to God with all its implications of thorough renunciation of everything but God, when sincerely pursued, is bound to confer on the aspirant the highest wisdom. The sincere *prapanna* (the man treading the path of *prapatti* or self-surrender) becomes in course of time an embodiment of wisdom, renunciation and humility ; and his unbounded faith in God as the only Saviour provides him with wings that take him up to the spiritual regions where God lives for ever with him in his consciousness. So spiritual plentitude falls to his lot, instead of spiritual barrenness. Although logically speaking, no finite means can lead to the attainment of the Infinite, still practically speaking, exertion is not abandoned but is sublimated. The attitude of self-surrender only dispels the gloom of egotism and delusive self-effort but does not result in the abandoning of exertion as such. Every ardent follower of the path is intensively active in the sense that he is engaged in the continuous meditation on the grace of God, the ceaseless pursuit of some kind of selfless loving service for the sake of God or His devotees and in the unending endeavour to completely submerge the self and its longings in the Divine consciousness. As a matter of fact these activities arising out of his very nature become involuntary and spontaneous.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the gist of the doctrine is that service to God

and His creatures being the essential attribute of the individual soul, surrender to God with selfless service is the only means of salvation. The ordinary believer in God looks upon God as the means (*upāya*) and finite perishable possessions and achievements as the end (*upeya*) ; the man of ordinary devotion regards *Dharmas* and other finite methods as means and God or God-realization as the end ; but to the supreme devotee God is the eternal means and the eternal goal of all his activities ; this devotee makes the end the means. The progress of the devotee takes place in two stages. In the initial stage the egoistic attitude of doing action or *karma* with an eye to its results is sought to be displaced by the attitude of the servant or devotee of God by the constant dinning into the mind of the real nature of the Ātman—its *'seshatva'* or its existence solely for the sake of service to the Lord. In the later stage this preliminary purification is further enhanced, supplemented and perfected by the attitude of complete dependence on the Lord like that of non-living matter on the will of a living being. The servant ego, which is after all the refined individual ego, is sought to be merged in God's ego by the constant meditation on the essential and innermost truth about the Ātman that it is but a tool in the hands of God, with this differentiation that it is endowed with consciousness, however veiled, in its bound state, and can attain to the realization that it is a tool and its wielder is God. At this stage service is rendered for its own sake as a natural outpouring of the inherent nature of the soul, in much the same way as a rose plant produces flowers. Herein is the harmonious and simultaneous engagement of the head, the heart and the hand, the consecration of all our faculties to the ideal of service for its own sake. Here is a combination of idealism and practicality, of mystic contemplation and active service for fellowmen, and of *karma, bhakti* and *jñāna*. Since service is the life-breath of the *prapanna,* his one ambition is, as the great saint Nammāḷvār exclaims, "At all times, in all places and under all conditions, shall we do unceasing faultless service to our God, the origin of the whole universe." The only prayer on his lips is—as uttered by Śrī Āṇḍāḷ, the paragon of all devotees, in her immortal poem—

" Lord! we are all bound to Thee in all Thy manifestations in ties of intimate relationship both for the present and for all time to come. Hence ours is the privilege of perpetual service of all kinds to Thee and Thee alone, a service that Thou art bound to accept at our hands ; so grant that all our other desires are merged in that one supreme longing to serve Thee."

May it please the Supreme Being, by whatever name He may be called and in whatever form He may be worshipped, to grant that people of the world in increasing numbers be imbued with supreme faith in this ideal of self-surrender to God, with the spirit of selfless service and thereby uplift themselves and their fellowmen, making this earth an Eden like the Heaven above!

THE REALIZATION OF BRAHMAN

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Oh man! Do you know the value of your life? You are the inestimable treasure of the mystery of God's creation—you are to realize the importance of your life. You are the manifestation of the infinite power of God ; dive deep into the unfathomable depths of the Sea of Immortal Bliss. Salvation will come to you. The Supreme Consciousness within you will be realized in meditation. Sit down with an unflinching resolution. The Supreme Brahman or Universal Soul is the object of your love and adoration. Peace will come unto you with the attainment of Brahman, Who is ever Beautiful in all climes, in all ages, at all times and manifests Himself in the phenomenal world. Undaunted by obstacles and vicissitudes you are to realize the bliss of the Absolute. Meditation will guide you in your path. Peace, complacency and freedom will come in the journey of your life. Ye are the children and inheritors of Immortal Bliss. In the dim pre-historic past, your forefathers, the Vedic seers of India, declared: " Lead us from evil to good, from darkness to light." Deeply immersed in the bliss of the Absolute, they attained salvation.

Unless you whole-heartedly take to the Vedānta, and realize Brahman, you will lose all, and your births and rebirths will not cease. The very dust and atom, land and water, ether and the sky of India are permeated with the spirit, the religion, the dynamic truths, of the Vedānta. The only truth of Vedāntic India is Brahman. Be, therefore, initiated into the mysteries of Vedāntic truths: you find yourself deeply enmeshed in the riddling intricacies of scriptural texts and inexorable social laws and customs. Cut these shackles asunder and be free. You are to realize the Infinite of the Vedānta. If you surrender yourself solely at the feet of the Lord, all troubles and impediments will disappear. There is no way other than this self-resignation. Love Him with all thy heart, with all thy mind and with all thy soul.

The inspiration, which Śrī Kṛishṇa gave to urge Arjuna on to the great holy battle of Kurukshetra, is the vital inspiration of modern India. All the civilized nations of the world are eager to learn the synthetic teachings of knowledge and work that Śrī Kṛishṇa taught the warrior-prince Arjuna in the latter's hour of despair, misgivings and peril. Blessed are those that are inheritors of these noble teachings!

The future generations are looking forward to your guidance. The beaconlight that you will hold aloft will illumine the paths of the young hopefuls to their goal of liberation. The bliss that will come to you in the wake of your practice of religion and selfless work will be shared in by the men and women of the world. Do you forget the life-giving messages that Śaṇkara, Rāmānuja, Kabīr, Nānak, Dādu, Buddha, Chaitanya, Rammohan, Keshub, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda gave to preserve the *Sanātana Dharma* and establish on a firm footing our national honour and solidarity? Don't you know that the stone-image of the Blissful Mother talked with Sri Ramakrishna in the holy groves of Panchavati at Dakshineswar? Will you sit idle and not strive for the realization of Brahman?

CHAPTER VII

SECTION VI

Religion and Social Service

THE SERVICE OF HUMANITY AS THE TRUEST FORM OF RELIGION

A LAYMAN'S VIEW

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Religion has two aspects—

1. Personal, which deals with man's relationship with the Unseen.

2. Social, which deals with his reaction to his fellow-beings, and his relationship with them.

These aspects, of course, cannot be separated from each other, and cannot be put into water-tight compartments: for social religion—our dealings with our fellow-beings—is intimately connected with our personal religion, with what we believe and what we consider to be the absolute standard. It is an erroneous notion which unfortunately is too common among people of all religions including Hinduism, that a man can turn his face against the affairs of the world and direct himself solely to what he regards as the spiritual life—to make his peace with God. No doubt, for a certain type of the superior man who has obtained a vision of the Ultimate Reality, it may be possible to detach himself from his surroundings, and to act as a spectator—as one who finds himself in tune with the Infinite, and rides above the storm clouds of our unhappy mundane existence, even as Lao-Tze and a number of other sages, saints and mystics have done. But even for such as these, it is a question whether their detachment is ultimately apparent or real. For the ordinary run of men, however, such a detached attitude is neither possible, nor can it be the right way. A man's personal religion must be there, as a broad base upon which he has to build his personal conduct, before his peace with himself and his neighbours and his successful striving for the attainment of the spiritual goal he proposes to himself become possible.

Many thinkers of the West like Auguste Comte have stressed on the importance of the social religion to the subservience and even suppression of the personal religion: they have sought to restrict man's higher aspirations merely to the service of his fellows, and have even attempted to quash faith or inner religion—a belief in a Godhead and prayer to, and meditation on, it—as a relic of primitive mentality. This atheistic-altruistic attitude we find in an extreme and militant form in the Soviet State and Soviet mentality. In India, Buddha, according to one school of Buddhism, was a preacher of this message of a Godless altruism. Of course, Buddha believed in an ultimate reality which was *Nirvāṇa*. This *Nirvāna,* according to some, is a mere cessation of existence,—it is a nihilistic conception only; according to others, however, *Nirvāṇa* was something positive, it was a state which was not divorced from bliss—in fact, it was an ultimate reality conceived in happiness.

We have thus two attitudes well defined: altruism on the basis of an Ultimate Reality—good work and service, as the corollary of faith; and altruism independent of faith—service of man without postulating a God.

Most saints and sages of India, and teachers of all theistic religions have always kept the Divine Reality as the unescapable background, as the very basis and foundation of good work and service. In Europe from the time of the Greeks there was a leaning towards humanism. In later Greece though the pendulum swung from God towards man, Socrates and Plato were at the parting of ways. There is plenty of faith in both, but their greater interest would seem to have been in man and his ways, and their concern was to ameliorate the condition of man spiritually and materially, rather than to find out the hidden or mystic side of things, even though that had a direct reference to man himself. This attitude we find more pronounced in the Chinese sage, Confucius, who was a practical moralist with the definite aim of bringing about the ideal state inhabited by ideal householders, ruled over by an ideal prince who was assisted by a set of ideal officials. With the pragmatic sense of his race, Confucius shunned mysticism. The contrast between this practical (one might say material) altruism,

and the altruism of a benevolent and beneficent interest in man which is broad-based on a perception of the Ultimate Reality, very well comes out in a short conversation between Socrates and an Indian sage who met him at Athens, which has been recorded by Eusebius, the Greek Christian writer. The Indian asked Socrates what the scope of his philosophy was, and on being told that it was the study of human phenomena, the Indian smiled and said, " How could it be possible to study human things, unless one had the knowledge of the Divine?" This remark of the unnamed Indian thinker who met the father of Western thought gives us a glimpse of a very precious truth. Man's conduct can have a meaning only when it is based on a sense of the Ultimate Reality. Centuries afterwards, the Vaishṇava teachers of Bengal pithily expressed the same idea in four words, *nāme ruchi, jive dayā*, i.e. love for the name (of the Lord), and then charity towards all life. The problem of this interrelationship between the phenomena of man and the conception of the Ultimate Reality has exercised the seers and sages of Ancient India. Why should a man love his wife? Why should there be service of humanity? The *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* says that we can love our fellow-creatures when we love Brahman or the Ultimate Existence, i.e. the Godhead, or God, speaking in simple lay fashion. Christianity enjoins the love of our fellow-beings as we are sons of a common Father. Here this love becomes a moral duty enjoined by the Great Task-master. But in Vedāntic thought, love of one's fellows is not so much the duty, as the inevitable corollary of the idea that individual souls are differentiations of the same Great Spirit—the *Paramātman*. I must love my fellow-beings as they are through Brahman or *Paramātman* my other selves—because, in fact, they and I are one. And it would be only natural that when I have a true vision of such a nature of things, I shall feel at one with them, love them and serve them. All *jivas* or individuals are forms of Śiva or the Godhead: and human love and charity, fellow-feeling and service can only be firmly based on an attitude like this.

The necessity of faith as the basis of conduct towards our neighbours, however, is not the subject on which I intend to

express my view, nor is it necessary for me to emphasize upon the importance of the moral life as the unavoidable preliminary to any spiritual endeavour. By moral life, I mean a life which is not divorced from the truth. What has impressed me as a man of the world is that the best way to prepare oneself for the attainment of the Ultimate Reality is the service of others. Serve man and you will serve God—this seems to me to be the last word in a good life. And this love of man is the inevitable result of the appreciation and inner perception of the Essential Oneness of All Life. There is a story of a saint who was found to have fainted away and to be bleeding from wounds on his back when he saw in front of him the lashing of a delinquent slave—so intensely was he feeling this sense of oneness of life. This is an extreme case, like the story of the stigmata of St. Francis. Nevertheless, the feeling of a broad charity and acting up to it can be set forth as the gateway to the life which is in tune with the Infinite. A life based on truth and morality is of course a preliminary requisite.

This fundamental doctrine of human conduct unfortunately appears to be commonly neglected, although most of the great teachers have preached it to all and sundry, and frequently have borne testimony to it with their heart's blood. This virtue has two wings, as the ancient Indian teachers have put it: a passive feeling of pity (*karuṇā*) and active doing good (*maitrī*). Mere profession of charity, unless it is made good by active service, is no use, and would appear to be just lip-service. Then there is the negative doctrine of *ahiṁsā* or non-injury, which in itself is a great principle no doubt, but is a first step only. Unfortunately in our lethargy, in our disinclination to be up and doing, most of us, particularly in India, make a good beginning with *ahiṁsā*, but stop there. But that is not the ideal of the true servant of God. He must be active. This is the lesson taught by he *Gītā*. God is best worshipped by work.

This great lesson India was forgetting, and it was the crowning glory of the great Swami Vivekananda, whose life in a way was a commentary on the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, that he with his clarion voice called forth the aspirants for spiritual life in his country to dedicate themselves to the service of their fellow-men

and fellow-women ; the service of the poor, the ignorant, the sick and the down-trodden—" of God among the wretched " (*Daridra-Nārāyaṇa*), as he put it—was the first duty of man ; and this ideal fortunately the Ramakrishna Mission has placed in front of itself, as an example to mankind.

Apart from the inner spiritual significance of this service, which need not be elaborated for those who are convinced of the Ultimate Reality and who look upon life in all its variety as a many-sided expression of the Great Spirit, it is plain that this ideal of service is of inestimable benefit for the bringing of peace and harmony on earth. The present-day movement against war is unquestionably one expression of this ideal of love and service. This ideal alone can bring selflessness among men, without which there cannot be true citizenship. Service and fellow-feeling are the great bridges to gulf the differences between man and man, which unfortunately have been created by ignorance and prejudice, which would not understand that the diversities of race and colour are God-ordained variations in human society, individualizing various groups of the same great race of man, and that differences in faith are but different ways of approaching God, which are as true as they are inevitable and which only bring out the great truth contained in the words of Christ—" In my Father's house there are many mansions." Hinduism took up this attitude in a spirit of broad charity, and was able through this to train up many backward peoples of Asia along the path of civilization and the dedicated life, in centuries gone by. Christianity fortunately for itself and for humanity at large used this principle of service as its protective salt, to counterbalance the exclusiveness of its dogma. In strange contrast with the dogmas of Christianity, which would deny salvation to non-Christians, there was this principle of love and service of man, with which saintly workers like Father Damian lighted up and gave a new spiritual content to the religion they professed.

As a layman, it would be impertinent for me to speak: but on this great occasion, when the representatives of different creeds, thoughtful men and women who have pondered over the duty of

man and who have found out a solution for themselves for the problems of life according to the teachings of their own Masters, have assembled here to fraternize with one another and to express their appreciation of the Great Message, which India once again delivered to Humanity through the mouth of Paramahamsa Ramakrishna Deva, that all different religions are but different paths to God (*yata mat tata path*), I feel constrained to bear testimony to my personal experience of the great Truth which has been so nobly expressed by Swami Vivekananda—

" In diverse forms, and before thy very face:
Casting these aside, where dost thou seek thy God?
The man who shows love to all kinds of life,
He indeed serves God."

The universality of this noble sentiment is attested by these lines of Coleridge, the English poet, which seem to be an echo of the Vaishṇava doctrine quoted above: *nāme ruchi, jīve dayā*—

" He prayeth best who loveth best,
All things both great and small."

I close with the great prayer of Buddhism—

Sabbe sattā sukhino bhavantu,
Sabbe santu nirāmayā

" May all creatures be happy,
May all be without any suffering."

THE IDEALS OF THE BRATACHARI MOVEMENT

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Bratachari purports to present a complete synthesis of life. It comprises a complete philosophy of life, a complete code of conduct and a complete system of practical training and discipline for the building up of the inner life and character and for the right performance of duty.

It does not claim to be a separate religion in the current sense of that expression, but it has a very vital bearing on religion in that it is based on the quintessence of all great religions and is thus eminently fitted to promote harmony between all religions. '*Brata*' in Bengali (Sanskrit '*vrata*') signifies a solemn or sacred purpose or ideal which is pursued as a rhythmic ritual and '*chāri*' denotes one who pursues a purpose or ideal. According to the Bratachari, the whole of life should be regarded as a *brata* and should be pursued as a solemn and sacred ritual inspired by a noble purpose which is at once spiritual and practical. The single *brata* or solemn ritual of life is divided into five *bratas* which, however, must be pursued simultaneously and not in separate compartments. These five *bratas* are:—

Knowledge, Labour, Truth, Unity and Joy.

The movement seeks to create a nation-wide discipline of common citizenship among persons of both sexes, of all castes and creeds and of all ages including children as well as old people, by developing a high standard of character, physical fitness in ideal and practice, the pursuit of constructive work, an insistence on the dignity of labour and a joyous community spirit through common participation in national dances and songs as well as community dances and community songs. Certain common formulas of salutation, mode of address and a common community well constitute its outward conventions.

The movement is intended to provide a complete philosophy of life and to appeal to persons of all classes and of all ages. To translate the five fundamental principles of Knowledge, Labour, Truth, Unity and Joy into practice every Bratachari of Bengal has to take 16 *paṇs* (vows) and 17 *mānās* (don'ts). The most important and characteristic vows are those that relate to the dignity and indispensability of labour, and the development of healthy and clean living and cheerfulness of spirit. There are twelve separate and distinctive vows for the 'Chho-Bas' or junior Bratacharis.

The wars and conflicts, disunion and disharmony in inner as well as in outer life in the modern world are primarily due to an

analytic and intellectual instead of a synthetic approach to life and the pursuit of life in separate watertight compartments such as science and religion, physical, intellectual and moral life and to the complete divorce of the pursuit of life from the fundamental principle of rhythm and the consequent disuse and decline of rhythmic faculty in the average modern man and woman. As a result of this compartmental and fragmentary treatment of life, science and religion have been rendered sources of disunion and the life of the average man and woman has been repressed and inhibited in its most vital aspect of rhythmic self-expression and has in consequence been disintegrated and stricken with disharmony and dissension. In the sphere of education also the same fragmentariness of treatment has led to vicious consequences in physical, moral and spiritual training and the result has been the production not of whole men or whole women but of monstrosities devoid of the peace, harmony and balance which should pervade the inner as well as the outer life of the complete man and his relation with his fellow-men.

The Bratachari movement is an attempt to rescue the life of man from its present vicious disintegration and to restore to it the wholeness of ideal and harmony of conduct by making all humanity conscious of its true harmonious inter-relationship with the cosmos, with the world of humanity and with the traditions of regional culture and by furnishing man with a simple system for the attainment of inner self-discipline and national and international unification.

According to the Bratachari ideal all life is derived from joy and is based on joy. Every aspect of life, therefore, whether physical or spiritual, unless it is based on joy and on rhythmic discipline as a means of invoking joy, becomes unreal and disintegrated. Rhythmic training, however, must be directed towards a wholeness of ideal of life which is simultaneously spiritual and practical and this ideal is furnished by the fivefold *bratas* or ideals of the Bratachari, viz. Knowledge, Labour, Truth, Unity and Joy.

It is the simultaneous pursuit of the above five ideals or

bratas that enables humanity to attain to the wholeness of life and to realize the unity of all humanity as well as the inner joy of spirit. Without rhythmic training directed towards a common spiritual object there can be no achievement of mastery over self, no unification of life whether within the individual or amongst a multitude of individuals. Rhythmic training, therefore, is essential for complete and harmonious individual development and the establishment of national and international unity. In this aspect the Bratachari movement is a re-expression of the old Indian ideal and has a good deal in common with the Greek ideal of training in citizenship expounded by Plato.

The simultaneous rhythmic discipline of body, mind and speech is utilized to develop a passion for true knowledge, a passion for work and labour, a passion for sincerity and right conduct, a passion for unity and fellowship and service in national and international spheres and a passion for joy in every sphere of life, including religion and daily labour.

The modern divorce of religion from rhythm is an unnatural and unhealthy phenomenon. As Havelock Ellis has pointed out, even Christianity was in its earlier phases expressed in rhythmic worship and he has observed that when a real religion of the spirit appears, instead of mere anaemic religion of the intellect, it always expresses itself in some form of rhythmic worship or dance. Indeed even at the present day in many great religions the call to worship and the actual mode of worship take the form of rhythmic chants and rhythmic movements of the body. That deep spiritual urge always expresses itself in simple rhythmic dance and song is exemplified in the lives of such great saints as Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and Chaitanya, as well as of members of the Sufi community.

The two most important factors of the Bratachari idea and practice are self-dedication in service of others and the vigorous pursuit of work and duty, individual as well as social. The rhythmic expression of the ideal of duty and work generates a resistless energy for its joyous execution and banishes apathy and inaction. Thus although based on a deep spiritual foundation,

the movement expresses itself in a vigorous pursuit of work and duty in the practical field and thus promotes the realization of inner unity by self-dedication in the joy of work and service. This aspect of the movement is now well known throughout Bengal. Wherever it has spread it has led to a widespread mass movement for village reconstruction work.

The Bratachari vows, dances and songs also constitute a simultaneous rhythmic discipline for the purification of the inner life, the control of subconscious passions and instincts and the achievement of self-mastery over the inner life. They also conduce to the harmonious building up of character as well as physical fitness instead of developing one at the expense of the other.

By restoring to humanity its birthright of rhythmic self-expression and presenting to it a comprehensive ideal of life based on the eternal spiritual factors—rhythm, joy and unity of all life, this movement is calculated to bring about the harmony of life and of religion in a sorely distracted world.

THE SPIRIT OF SOCIAL SERVICE IN INDIA

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India can justly take pride in being the first country which taught the world the Gospel of Social Service. It was Lord Buddha who first preached the service of humanity. For the welfare of his fellow-beings Buddha made the great renunciation. He gave up his throne, riches, family and everything he had, to serve the poor, the unhappy and the oppressed. With his supernatural nobility and boundless humanity he propounded a religion based on truth, love and service. The unique fame of Buddha rests on the fact that he attempted to achieve a synthesis between the earthly and the ideal by asking men to realize their spiritual nature through social service. So insistent was Buddha on making asceticism a mode of altruism that long after him, in

Aśoka's time Buddhism became a missionary religion radiating the gospel of social welfare, while Buddhist monks were pioneers in spreading culture and organizing social work.

In Hindu *Dharma, moksha* (salvation) is the ultimate goal of existence. But our Śāstras speak of the need of social service. We have a saying that " kindness is the root of religion." We Hindus, as a rule, have kind hearts, and we feel sorry for the poor and the miserable. But our kindness does not go further. Very few of us have a desire to serve our fellow-beings and to remove their woes. If there was the real spirit of social service among us, there would not exist in India today thousands of beggars and lepers and the untouchables that we see around us. One who really feels for these unfortunate human beings would never sit idle without doing some kind of service to improve their lot. One who is a true social worker takes delight in serving humanity. But unfortunately in our country, where the need of social service is so great, to the majority of people, life consists in eating, drinking, acquiring wealth and enjoying. Some have a desire to get fame and they do a little public work mainly to become well known. Indeed, there are some selfless workers but their number is very small. The Ramakrishna Mission has produced a number of devoted workers who are doing excellent service to the poor and the needy all over the country. Great credit is due to Swami Vivekananda for organizing this band of selfless workers. In India we have hundreds of *sādhus* and *sannyāsins* who are not doing any work and are burdensome to the public. So we have " the idle poor " in addition to " the idle rich." If these *sannyāsins* follow the example of the Swamis of the Ramakrishna Mission, they can work wonders in a short time. In the old days the Ṛishis used to have *āśramas* where they kept pupils and taught them for a number of years. In this way the Ṛishis solved the problem of boys' education in their time. The first and foremost work that the idle *sādhus* of our country should take up is the removal of illiteracy. Illiteracy is a curse and the sooner the country gets rid of it, the better for its progress. Until and unless this is done, efforts in other directions are bound to fail.

We have thousands of unfortunate child-widows, who are debarred by custom to take any active part in public life. If they were encouraged to do some kind of social service then we could very soon have a troop of workers for institutions of women. Supposing a good many of them take to nursing as their profession, then the long-felt need of good nurses in our hospitals would be at once removed. Not only that, these widows who live on the mercy of their relations would become self-supporting and at the same time they would be doing the most humanitarian work of serving the sick and ailing people.

If the Ranis and Maharanis and the other rich ladies who are doing very little useful work make a firm determination to take up the work of uplift of women, they can also become a boon to their less fortunate sisters.

Thus we see that we have a number of potential workers amidst us. But the spirit of social service should pervade them. It is true that no social work can be done without sufficient money. Our temples and their authorities have enormous riches. If this money could be used in social service, there would be no want of funds.

Mahatma Gandhi has awakened the spirit of social service amongst our countrymen. Gandhiji's social service is as great as, if not greater than, his political service to the motherland. There is not a province, nay not a district in India, where there do not exist social workers who have derived their inspiration from Gandhiji. The All-India Spinners' Association started by Gandhiji has opened a new field of social work in India. By establishing the Harijan Sevak Sangha Gandhiji has made it easy for his countrymen to take up the work of emancipating the so-called untouchables. He is trying to remove unemployment among the villagers by starting the All-India Village Industries Association. He is thus trying his utmost to spread the spirit of social service amongst his followers.

Even before Mahatma Gandhi we had Sjt. Gopal Krishna Gokhale to whom service of his fellow men was his life's mission. It was Gokhale who by starting the Deccan Education Society brought college education within the reach of poor but intelligent

students. Not only that, he also created an army of selfless teachers who devoted their lives to the cause of education and social work. The Servants of India Society started by Sjt. Gokhale is, as you know, doing splendid social work in all directions. Gokhale's influence was so widespread and lasting that even today we find the spirit of social service more alive in Mahārāshṭra than in any other province of India.

We must be grateful to Swami Dayananda, the founder of the Arya Samaj for spreading the spirit of social service amongst his followers. The Arya Samajists take keen interest in education and they are running several *gurukulas* for boys and girls in almost all the provinces.

Now we come to Christianity which is the fountain of social service. The life of Jesus Christ was full of acts of kind service to the poor, the outcaste and the needy. To the Christians their religion has been a great source of inspiration for social service. All over the world the Christian missionaries are rendering valuable service to that part of mankind which is usually neglected by society. The Salvation Army by its splendid organization of social work has rightly earned the appreciation of the world. We have much to learn in the sphere of social service from Christianity.

Now the question is: how to spread the spirit of social service in India? So long as men do not feel that it is their duty to lessen the miseries of their fellow-men, they will not take up the work of social welfare. If we wish that the next generation should be less selfish and more helpful to the needy, then we should introduce the spirit of social service in our children. At present the children of the rich and well-to-do classes have no idea whatsoever of the miserable condition of the children of the poor. The children of the well-to-do classes should be taken to the slums and shown how their unfortunate brothers and sisters are suffering. I know by experience that children are very kind-hearted and they cannot bear the idea of other children not being as happy as themselves. I am sure when children see the slums they would at once feel that they should do something to remove the unhappiness of poor children. This spirit of social service kindled in their heart would not be extinguished if from time to time they are

encouraged to do small services to the poor children. In schools also there should be social service leagues by means of which children can do some useful work for charitable institutions. The present social system is very much responsible for the lack of social service spirit. If the children of the rich and the poor mix together in play and in school, they would naturally try to help one another and ultimately there would not exist such a wide gulf between those who have and those who have not. I am sure children who are brought up in an atmosphere of social service will never become snobbish and selfish and they will always be willing to help others. We can try to spread the spirit of social service in the future generation.

WOMEN AND RELIGION

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What is religion?

It is a realization of the ultimate unity of which the world of creation is a manifestation, and conduct based on such realization.

Why is it that man alone cares for religion, and not beasts and birds?

Because man alone is endowed with reason, he is called the apex of creation. In him creation becomes self-conscious—he by reason of his rationality is formed to look for the First Cause, the Creator of the universe and finds ultimately his own unity with the Creator—and necessarily with the rest of creation. This realization can be attained:

By Knowledge (*jñāna*) through reason,
By Devotion (*bhakti*) through faith,
By Practice (*karma*) through conduct.

Which path for women?

The path of Reason or Knowledge was, we know, chosen by very few women like Gārgī and others of ancient times. Barring a few such exceptional cases women generally are not fitted by nature for this path.

The path of Faith or Devotion has been the most usual path for women through all the ages, women being by nature and constitution fitted for this path. But the hold of Faith and Devotion has been loosened today by the light-hearted luxuries, the catch of the cinemas and theatres and other hectic pleasures of the modern age.

Besides, the times are such that women should take rather to the third path, namely, the path of *karma* or Action—the state of the world today demands it.

Today the world is in travail. Men have forgotten God—and love and *Dharma* have left the world leaving hatred and *adharma* to rule. Men and nations are ready to cut one another's throat to satisfy their greed for power or pelf.

It is now the woman's job to restore love and religion to a world shorn of both and thus save the human race. Thus religion for woman in the present age is to save mankind from irreligion and annihilation. The human race is in need of the protection of woman with her characteristic motherly instinct today more than ever.

Science has added to the armoury of man, guns, gases, bombs and so many other infernal weapons. These have been invented by man for the destruction of man. Man today is rushing madly in search of newer weapons to kill his fellow-man.

Neither is Nature more favourable to the human race today. Let alone floods, typhoons, tornadoes and earthquakes, every day new and devastating diseases are appearing to give the finishing touch to the process of destruction started by man against man.

Can woman afford to look on unconcerned while this massacre of humanity goes on?

Women, since the beginning of creation, have cared for and looked after the health and comforts of men and in illness have nursed them back to health. This spirit of service of ailing

humanity at home transcended the limit of its four walls during the dark days of the Crimean War, when Miss Florence Nightingale of blessed memory came forward to help in tending and nursing the wounded soldiers on the battle-field of Crimea.

The example of Florence Nightingale soon inspired her country-women to follow her lead and to join the sisterhood of mercy in large numbers. And today we have the peace-time organization of the sisterhood of nurses comprising millions of women who have devoted their lives to the service of sick and suffering humanity. Is not this service of mercy also indirectly fulfilling the ideal of religion?

But I am ashamed to own that we have till today left this sisterhood of nurses as a neglected if not a hated community, as the Harijans of society. That is why we fail to find in this big meeting of the Parliament of Religions today any members representing that noble sisterhood. I do not, however, for a moment suggest that the nurses are free from all blame. They do have, like other members of society, their own faults and failings. But what I suggest is that with a little moral support we can easily lift them to a very high level and that it would be quite unfair of us if we fail to extend our strong arm to pull them up.

I demand, therefore, from this Parliament today its sympathy for the nurses and support to my plea for a moral and religious background for the life and activities of the nurses, so that they may be better nurses, better citizens and better servants of humanity.

Not every woman can be a nurse or a social worker either. But even within the household there is ample scope for woman to practise this *dharma*.

Turn for a moment to the world-wide economic distress, unemployment and starvation which are grinding humanity mercilessly and killing it slowly. Well, it is definitely within woman's power to help humanity out of this distress. Let her be economical, less luxurious, more hardworking and more of a help-mate to man than a burden, and a costly burden at that.

When men are so much depressed and oppressed, when nations and races are fighting and killing one another, when communities are ranged against communities, classes against classes and sects against sects, let us not add to this conflict the conflict of woman against man. There should be no rivalry or competition between man and woman.

Let woman look upon man in distress as a child, and just let her try to protect him from harm and tend him to a better state.

Woman need not go into the forest in quest of her religion, nor need she join a religious order for her salvation. Her religion and salvation lie in her daily life in serving, in helping and in protecting the human race.

Women are rulers of the home, and if they wield their influence properly on men they can certainly do a lot to minimize the forces of hatred and destruction let loose in the world today.

I am rather inclined to think that in this distressed condition of the world the Lord has condescended to reveal Himself not in the form of an individual but in the form of this Parliament of Religions, and that the Parliament's invitation to women to participate in it is a call to the womanhood of the world to unite and join in a world-effort to save humanity from irreligion and ultimate extinction.

SOCIAL SERVICE IN PUBLIC HEALTH

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The cardinal aim of life in Hindu philosophy is to merge the mind with the Great Infinite and to enjoy the bliss of that symphony. With such a basis as the background Sri Ramakrishna preached the unity of all life and all religions, and Swami Vivekananda expounded a synthesis of *jñāna* (Knowledge), *bhakti*

(Devotion) and *karma* (Service) *yoga* (disciplines in life) in one's relation to one's environment. The philosophy of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* was so interpreted by Swami Vivekananda that a *sannyāsin* or monk who wanted to realize the Great Self and not retire to forest wilds or to mountain caves could practise the *yogic* discipline in everyday life, if the devotee would place "service above self," and thereby attain the same goal. The foundation of the Ramakrishna Mission is an expression of this idea, where no less than 500 monks are now rendering unselfish service in various directions in India and abroad.

Unselfish service in the cause of religion has been an accepted principle in life in India since very ancient times, but organized social service, particularly in the domain of Public Health, has been of recent growth.

It is my purpose in this short paper to show that social service in the domain of Public Health constitutes an excellent avenue for the practice of *Karma-yoga* not only for medical men but also for the lay citizen. The rendering of service becomes a joy when one does it without any selfish motive and for the good of the community. The only gain which the worker achieves is a purification of his mind. As the mind gets purer and purer, the thrill and the joy of work sincerely attempted can be better appreciated than described.

In a country where only 7% of the people are literate the number of educated men who can practise this philosophy in life is not large. In a country where the average citizen earns an annual income of Rs. 40 only and where poverty and ignorance account for a major part of the misery, there is no better way of leading the life than by devoting it to the service of the impoverished, the suffering and the ignorant population. In a country where 25% of infants depart from this world within a year after birth and the death-rate from malaria, tuberculosis and other preventable diseases is appalling, what better avenue for service can a doctor or a social worker find than in raising the hygienic standard of living of the population? For a population of 360 millions, there are only 30,000 qualified medical practitioners in

India today. In a country where no compulsory Health Insurance scheme has yet been introduced and where a very primitive public health service is operating, there are enormous opportunities for rendering unselfish service in everyday life.

There are three categories of social workers in every country, viz:—

(1) Whole-time workers employed by the State.—There is very little of this type of organization in India today.

(2) Whole-time social workers like the monks of the Ramakrishna Mission, the Christian Missionary Societies and similar organizations.—The number of this type of workers is also very small in comparison with the needs of the country.

(3) Part-time voluntary social workers, who have to earn their livelihood and who devote their spare time to social service of different kinds.—The number of this type of workers is fortunately gradually increasing but is still lamentably low in comparison with the needs of the suffering millions.

It is well known that in this country the State is not yet in a position to undertake social service as widely as it is being done in Western countries. But, in spite of the widespread activities of the State in those countries, the citizens not only initiate but extend and supplement it in many directions. In presenting a few facts before you today, I wish to point out that we ought to change our outlook towards life. We must realize that when we are offered opportunities for rendering social service, we should come forward and devote ourselves to the task as much as we can, and that unselfish work of this nature does more good to our own mind and soul than to the community.

The stupendousness of the problem can be appreciated if I cite an example. Let us take the question of tuberculosis. It takes a toll of 1,00,000 lives every year in Bengal and one million lives in the whole of India. Out of a million people who are thought to be suffering in Bengal alone today, there are at least 30,000 children crippled through bone and joint disease. For this enormous population of mute sufferers, there are only 280 beds in hospitals and sanatoria to accommodate adults only but none

for the crippled children. In tubercular homes, the number of deaths among infants and children from tuberculosis is several times more than that from general mortality. A band of voluntary workers here is trying to render service in prevention, education and treatment. They are not only handicapped for money but also for workers and sympathetic co-operation from the citizens in various parts of the province. The cinemas in Calcutta are seen to be overcrowded by thousands of poorly dressed Indians. Do these people ever think of the sufferings of the enormous number of their folk? Where is that spirit of service which arises out of a desire for self-realization through *Karma-yoga*? During occasional upheavals of the spirit of nationalism you notice a spirit of service, but it is often like the quicksilver column, collapsing as soon as the excitement goes down. Where is that spirit of sustained work which is so necessary for elevating the mind and for enjoying the thrill of rendering unselfish service? Social service is only an avenue for service but the mind must be prepared by a daily exercise of the will-power and concentration. If this is done daily, the mind, after some years, will gain a momentum which is not likely to vacillate or collapse very easily under depressing circumstances. The temptations for name, fame and money are all there, but these ought not to affect the worker whose sole object is to cleanse and purify his mind and to feel the joy of communion with the Infinite through service to one's fellow-beings.

Our Western brothers and sisters are far advanced in rendering social service than our countrymen. When I think of the enormous amount of work which is being carried on by the Christian missionaries in India in the cause of rescue work, education and public health, I consider our efforts to be extremely poor in comparison with theirs. Men and women alike are devoting their lives in the cause of social service, in the domain of public health or otherwise. We have had more than one Woman Honorary Secretary of the Tuberculosis Association of Bengal belonging to the British race, who used to devote five hours a day for voluntary service. One of them happens to be the wife of a highly placed State Official and the other used to live here on

her own money. We have tried to find an Indian lady of that type for nearly eight years and have failed.

What is the reason for this difficulty in obtaining social workers of this type in India? Is it in the traditions or is it in our usual outlook on life? The people of this country have much more leisure than those of Western countries. How is it then that voluntary social workers, who are prepared to do sustained work of this nature, are difficult to obtain? There is fortunately more of this spirit among members of the medical profession than among the other professions, but still the response is inadequate. Honorary doctors in senior and junior capacities are always available in most parts of India, in connection with social welfare work, but the initiative for organized work is lacking in most places. An average citizen must earn money for his livelihood, but he has also plenty of leisure time. If he only utilizes this leisure for the uplift of his countrymen, so much misery could be reduced and so much unalloyed joy can be appreciated by the workers.

Organized work for social welfare requires the co-operation of all sections of the community. It is a problem as to where and how to begin to inculcate these ideas into the average citizen. Movements like the Missionary societies, Charitable societies, Women's organizations, Public Health societies, certain educational institutions, etc., are showing an increasing measure of keenness in social welfare work, but organized work in cities and mofussils is yet in a backward state. Where is that spirit whereby each citizen feels the pangs of hunger of the unemployed or the famine-stricken and contributes his share to the national fund by foregoing a meal as the German people are doing? Apparently they do not care to have a religio-philosophical inspiration in their lives to act as an incentive to these constructive mass efforts. It is more a spirit of nationalism which induces them to undergo such great hardships and sacrifices. Where do we find an expression of such a spirit in our people here? If it lacks here today, what is the reason behind it and how to improve the existing apathetic condition of the people. This apathy is as much evident among the youth of the country as among the elderly

people. This means that, in spite of a highly developed philosophy of service in our philosophical treatises and as practised by great workers from time to time, we have not yet been able to build a tradition of voluntary service, by men and women, in the cause of social welfare work. If it is not there, how can it be encouraged?

It seems to us that the inspiration for this service must begin at the school, where the teachers, in co-operation with the citizens, should not only educate the boys and girls in social welfare work but also initiate practical exercises for them. The Boy Scout Movement, the Bratachari Movement and others like them might form an interesting vehicle through which this tradition might be built up. But no tradition will stand on sure ground unless the guardians and the average public learn to encourage these movements. In spite of the large number of lawyers, doctors, students and teachers in the rural areas, why can't we keep the villages clean and sanitary? The voluntary labour of this human material ought to form the capital for a healthy transformation of the countryside. If the learned assembly present here can suggest a method of approach, not only my humble self but, I think, the whole country, will remain grateful to you.

I once went to one of the countryside places where there were practising lawyers, doctors and other educated people like them and where there exists a pretty big High English School with 300 boys. The compound of every house was found to be full of overgrown useless weeds and bushes, the roadsides were filled with jungle, and there was no proper drainage for rainfall and waste water. There were a Union Board at the place, a Sanitary Inspector and a State medical officer. At the same time malaria and every other preventable disease were rampant and invalidating large numbers of the population of the locality. Most of them had an enormous amount of leisure which could be transformed into productive purposes for the welfare of the society. Most of the citizens were educated Hindus, Mohammedans and Christians. It is surely a stagnation and apathy of the mind which could not be stimulated to electrify the body to take action, as I cannot assume any ignorance on their part as the cause for such inertia.

It is then the lack of a spirit of social service, of the spirit which comes out of a broader outlook on life and from a sense of responsibility of the citizen towards the community, that is responsible for this state of affairs.

Is education with a religious background likely to improve the state of affairs? Here again it is difficult to give a uniform religious background to education in this country, owing to the narrow outlook of people of different religions. Is it possible, therefore, to evolve a universal code of ethics and procedure, which is common to all religions just as all religions lead to one God, which may stimulate and maintain this spirit of service? If service is not rendered in a selfless manner, no true joy can be derived from the efforts and the worker will not be able to attain that state of approximation to the Infinite Soul which has been expounded so well in the Upanishads and the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. It strikes us, at the same time, whether it matters if a social worker who wishes to render unselfish service follows the religio-philosophical path or not. After all, *yoga* or the control ot the mind can also be obtained by repeated practice and detraction from material attachment as can be had by devotion to God. Need we then supplant religious education in schools by an ethical code and a course in social service work? These are the problems which crop up in my mind from time to time. It is true that an enormous amount of work has to be done around us and that unless a genuine spirit of social service develops in the country, such work will be slow and primitive, to the detriment of the hygienic and other types of welfare of the population.

It has occurred to me many a time as to whether we can throw aside the dogmas of different religions and biuld up a universal religion of service, if possible through a synthesis of religions. The whole world is now so full of jealousy, hatred and strife that it surely needs a working hypothesis for ensuring international harmony through unselfish service in various spheres, be it in the domain of economics, politics, education, social welfare and the like. If religion is to be applied in the service of God's Kingdom on earth, it must be developed as a practical code of ethics, easy of practice in the everyday life of the human race,

irrespective of the different religious systems prevailing in different parts of the globe. If it can be put into practice, is it likely to prove an easier and more stable way of approach to international peace, understanding and goodwill than those put forward by several international organizations, like the League of Nations, International Women's Peace League, the Rotary movement and the like?

CHAPTER VII

SECTION VII

Historical, Comparative and Other Studies of Religion

THE ESOTERIC SCIENCE OF THE ARYAN ṚISHIS

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It is a privilege to stand before an audience assembled from all quarters of the globe in this holy land of India and attempt to lift the veil from some of the truths discovered by the Ṛishis of old. The call had first come in stirring words some decades back from Swami Vivekananda himself and is still ringing in his published letters. But the Hand that moves and writes out the affairs of men did not inscribe my response to it ere this. Even now I accept the honour and approach the task with great diffidence.

During the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in the Punjab some British tommies while digging up earth near an encampment found the live body of a *yogi* in deep trance. One of them more brutal than the rest awakened him by repeated thrusts on his body. With a return to the plane of physical consciousness in intense bodily pain, the *yogi* opened his eyes, lifted them to his assaulter and said calmly, "Thou art That," after which he fell down senseless and gave up the ghost.

This utterance of the *yogi* sprang from a higher region of consciousness than that of Christ's "Father forgive them." It flowed from the same level whence Jesus had exclaimed—"The Father and I are one."

This is not merely an intellectual assertion or the emotional effusion of poetic imagery. It is an ecstatic affirmation of knowledge and feeling combined, a simple expression of a great Truth discovered by the ancient Sages in their pursuit of Spiritual Science. Just as chemical truths are couched in formulas, similarly the Ṛishis used to make a few words called the *mahāvākyas,* i.e. *words of great import,* the repositories of great spiritual truths realized by them.

The quintessence of this Aryan article of faith—"That Thou

art,"—is contained in the parable of Jābāla. The story forms the fourth *prapāṭhaka* or chapter of the *Chhāndogya Upanishad*. Its chapters are easy and delightful to read, casting a spell on the mind with the music and mystery of their language. Yet all who read may not enter into their inner meaning unless the key to that has been obtained from any master who may possess it.

The story of Jābāla runs thus:—The God-seeking boy of unknown parentage is accepted by the teacher as a deserving spiritual pupil through the touching test of truthfulness in him with regard to his birth. The rites of Initiation gone through, he receives his first instructions in outline, and is asked to develop and fill up the same in solitude and self-communion while tending cows.

Years roll by. The few head of lean cattle which he was entrusted with multiply into a thousand, fat, well-fed and strong ; and his task fulfilled, he wends his way homewards.

On the way a *Vṛisha* or Bull out of the herd speaks all of a sudden in human voice and calls out—" Satyakāma!"

Satyakāma answers amazed—" Sir."

" I will teach thee of Brahman " says the Bull, and enlightens him, describing the First Step of Brahman as *Prakāśavān* or Manifestation. " He is manifest in all the quarters," adds the Bull and becomes silent.

Satyakāma proceeds, and at evenfall halts under a tree and lights fire. In the quiet of the darkening day the Fire calls out in human voice—" Satyakāma!" " Yes, Sir "—exclaims Satyakāma with wonder.

" I will teach thee of Brahman " says the Fire, and forthwith describes the Second Step of Brahman as *Anantavān*. " He is Vest, Infinite and Endless in His Diversity. Brahman manifests Himself as Earth, Sky, Heaven and Ocean."

At dawn the next day a Swan came flying through the heaven, flopped by him, and called in human voice—" Satyakāma!" Satyakāma answered astonished—" Sir."

" I will teach thee of the Third Step of Brahman. It is

Luminous. Brahman manifests Himself as Light through all regions gross of subtle—in the fire, in the sun, in the moon, in lightening "—thus said the Swan.

At night when Satyakāma was about to rest on the banks of a river a Diver-bird called *madgu* in Sanskrit—the literal meaning of which is the Cave of Self—flew near him, sat by his side and called in human voice—" Satyakāma!" Satyakāma answered in surprise, " Yes, Sir."

" I will teach thee of the Fourth Step of Brahman. It is Form or Body. Heart, mind, ear and eyes are He."

Next day when he reached his teacher's home and sought his presence, the master glanced at him and said, " My handsome! The light of the knowledge of Brahman shines in your countenance, who taught you?"

" No human being, Sire! What man can instruct one who has thee as Teacher?"—replied Satyakāma.

From this narration we gain a clear idea that the Universal Spirit is ever manifesting Himself; that He is endlessly Diverse in His Self-expression; that He expresses Himself from subtle spirit down to gross matter or form. In other words, God the living Light, projects Himself into Infinite Time and Space, in Infinite varieties and forms both physical and spiritual, animate and inanimate. At the most this is the simple sense of the words of the Bull, the Fire, the Swan and the Water-bird that we can infer. To penetrate into the deeper truths underlying these words we have to take the help of teachers who are adepts in Esoteric Science.

These have observed that Life-force is at the root of all speech, the living alone speaks, with each utterance of a word Consciousness or the Energy of Life within one flows up to the vocal cord and makes for sound or word along with the physical air as breath. So speech or word is life itself. The brighter the fire of life shining within, the more potent the sound or speech. Sound therefore is the conveyer of life: the word is the vehicle of the Primal Energy known as Life—rather of One who is the Life of lives.

Howsoever you think in words, they become pictures in the

mind. Your world is your mental picture of it made up in words: with the withdrawal of the mind from the picture it fades away and the world disappears.

The same is true of God's world. The Universe is the functioning of His mind in terms of words. By a change of the Cosmic mind or the Cosmic Word the World appears or disappears. The Universal Spirit known as Consciousness from His subtlemost state of Static Calm and Inactivity steps forth and manifests Himself as Potential Energy, and thereafter passing through the intervening stages of emotion the propelling Force and thought or word becomes the Universe. By a process of Involution He reverts to His State of Calm Inactivity again.

It is a matter of daily experience to us both in the inner and in the outer world to find objects appearing and disappearing alternately. Yet even when they disappear they leave a sense of continuity of existence in the form of Potentiality or Latent energy. Here is a seed, for instance, which grows before your eyes into a tree, withers away after some time, and disappears. But we note that it does not disappear altogether, for it lives in the potentiality of appearing again in the hundreds of seeds at the top. This phenomenon acquaints us with the truth that there is an undying eternal existence underlying all things which is sometimes manifested as Effect and at other times as Cause. Thus appearance and disappearance are the twofold expressions of the Self—the *Vṛi,* i.e. *Vṛidhhi* and *Sha* or *Śesha* of *Vṛisha* the Bull. His manifestation is Dual in its nature, *patent* and *latent.* To disappear is for the Power or Potentiality to remain under cover, to appear is for it to blossom forth into visibility: and the root or mainspring of both lies in Eternal *Being.*

It has been said—"The word is God or *Śabda Brahman.*" How that is so has been explained above. The Word is the flow of Energy, the current of Life-force, or Consciousness that is God.

The mind or thought-concentration of Brahman is the cause of the Universe. As many thoughts whose bodies are words,—as play in The Mind of God,—so many worlds are evolved. Every moment Brahman is manifesting Himself as millions of worlds—both in the material and in the mental plane, creating or

uncreating them by ceaseless thinking or unthinking in terms of words—unfolding the Dual Nature of His manifestation.

Sa tapo'tapyata sa tapastaptvā idaṁ sarvamaśṛijata.

The Cosmic Energy of Life which has been shown to be at the root of word is symbolized in the material world as fire. The Fire of Life is Word. Hence word or fire is depicted as the Second Step of God or *His vehicle for manifestation.* We shall come to this again later.

We proceed now to the Third Step, i.e. *The Mode of His Manifestation.* It consists in a rhythmic movement called the Pulsation of Cosmic Life or the Movement of the Great Swan or *Haṁsa* with its physical counterpart of breathing.

The very movement in us of the *Haṁsa* is our being alive. The rhythmic flow of emotion and thought creating anew each particle of our body is the movement of the Swan or the throbbing of life within us. Life does not imply the function of breathing only, but connotes going through the process of sensing and feeling, thinking and willing in terms of words and composing their living receptacles—the heart, mind, brain, throat, etc., as well as arranging or rearranging the atoms of the physical body into live nerves, muscles and limbs performing voluntary or involuntary action. This is the Symphony of Life—the whole gamut of it.

From the Cave of your Self, the Great Cosmic Mother or the Primal Energy of the Universe is stepping out in a rhythmic dance up to the very gates of your physical being, keeping every particle of it alive, and is dancing back rhythmically—whereto? Into the same Cavity of your Self—the Self that is not Ego,—the Self which is the Seer or Spectator from whom springs the Actor, the Person with its sense of separateness in the cell of the Ego, and its whole play of activity called Life. The Content of Life is your Emotion and Intellect, Perception and Sensation, Will and Thought, your Past, Present and Future, your Conscious, Sub-conscious and Super-conscious planes, your Powers and their display. It is the Cavity of your Self from which all these spring and which is the Fourth Step of Brahman. The division of Himself into countless Individual Selves is His last word in manifestation. In other

words Brahman is within you. To know Thyself is to know the One in all.

By reversing the process by means of concentration of the mind at different centres one turns the objective world into perception of it, perception into pleasant or unpleasant feeling for the same—feeling into the flow of Life-force and Life into Self from which it springs.

Vāṅg manasi sampadyate manaḥ prāṇe
Prāṇastejasi teja parasyaṁ devatāyām.

The above is the theoretical side of the Science of Brahman, the Symphony of Life, and is comparatively easy to grasp. But the Practical Art of Realization is yet another Music or *Udgītha*. That is The Song of Fire. It is the dominant note in the whole Chromatic Scale of Esoteric Science. Through the mastery of this, *yogins* attain Supermanhood by awakening dormant Powers within the Self and moving in the rhythm of Brahman with *Ānanda* or Joy or Love and Union with All in the One.

I shall just take you up to the fringe of this Fire and finish with salutation to the Teacher who has guided me and given light and inner vision.

We learnt in the story of *Jābāla* that the fourth or last stage in the manifestation of Brahman is Form or Body:

Thoughts are Things.

The concentrated thought of Brahman takes the form of the Universe. Mind becomes matter. The knowledge of this is the basis of one more *mahāvākya* or word of great import.

Sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ Brahma.
" All this is verily Brahman."

Established in this truth, firm in the faith that the root of all is Eternal Being, that every thing in creation is an Evolute of Brahman the Real—nothing is unreal or Illusory to them. Thus their interpretation of *Māyā* is quite different from that of Śaṅkara's interpretation of it as Illusion. Creation was regarded by the Ṛishis as Manifest Brahman, hence they could not possibly conceive of it as unreal, false or as an Illusion. In their lexicon the

word '*Māyā*' stood for the Primal Energy or Power of the Conscious Spirit which is sometimes revealed and sometimes hidden in the forms of objects in the outer or inner world. Hence their principle in life was to make their daily acts conform to this faith. With that in view they not merely ordained that every mortal action of man be given a spiritual turn by dedicating it to God, but specific actions called *yajñas*, homas, or Ceremonial Rites performed in Sacrificial Fires were also prescribed with God as their direct Goal. In these *yajñas* objective rites were performed with a subjective inner look. This was called the welding of action with knowledge. It is in this sense that the *Īśa Upanishad* exhorts—

Tena tyaktena bhuñjīthā.

Discard the material aspect of things and enjoy. In other words, you need not leave the world and its duties or pleasures—only change the outlook, turn the objective into subjective, matter into spirit. This is the way of mortals to be at one with the Immortal Spirit—

Atha marttya amṛito bhavati
Atra Brahma samaśnute.

It has been said before that fire was adopted as the chief symbol of Brahman, Consciousness, or Life which is the mainspring of words. Hence in spiritual phraseology Fire is the Synonym for Word. The Physical Fire and *mantras*, i.e. God-directed specially potent words, were the soul and body of a *yajña*.

Fire was also classified under three heads—Gārhapatya, Dakshiṇa and Āhavanīya—the Domestic Fire, the Heaven-words Fire and the Heavenly Fire. The Gārhapatya Fire was the fire kept constantly burning at a place for use in domestic requirements such as cooking, lighting lamps, etc. To enfranchise the human mind from slavery to domesticity or material life, this very Fire was made use of with a resolve to turn the mind Godwards. Some little fire was drawn out of the Gārhapatya altar, purified with holy chants and turned into the Dakshiṇa Fire. The simple resolve to give a direction to the outwardly bent desires to inwardness,

to turn the matter-bound mind towards spirit is Spiritual Dakshiṇāgni.

Finally this was transmuted to Āhavanīya or complete absorption in God-sense. Some fire was culled from the Dakshiṇāgni altar and sacred rites performed in it—thereby transforming it into Āhavanīya by changing the Fire outlook into an absorbed Inner Vision of Spirit, Consciousness or Brahman alone.

The normal mind shines as Gārhapatya Fire. When a push is given to the Life-Force to dispose the mind towards thoughts of the Spirit, the mind becomes Dakshiṇa Fire, and when in the process of that it knocks at the Cave of Self it is turned into the Āhavanīya Fire. Mounted on this the last, the Ṛishis used to kindle the Flame of Brahman, scatter the sparks far and wide and merge in Him Who is the Essence of Truth, Light, Love. The Secret of this *sādhanā* was the Esoteric Science of the Ṛishis. To master this was to be a Brahmin or at *one with Brahman.*

Is there a mortal who, like young Nachiketas on listening to This Music of the Fire as sung in the Upanishads, is not tempted to step on the Fire-lit path of human-fulfilment which leads up to Power from Poverty, to Strength from Frailty and from Death unto Deathless Divinity?

THE CONQUEST OF THE GRAIL

MLLE. M. CHOVIN

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INSPIRED PLACES

A grave, powerful and mysterious impression emanates from places where events happened that unveiled man's superior nature. People then say these spots are inspired and the expression is right, because they speak to souls who contemplate them, as if they retained in the imponderable, the reflex of their heroic past. Mr. Maurice Barres rendered in unforgettable words this influence of vanished times:

" There are places where the spirit breathes! There are places that rouse the soul from its lethargy, places wrapped up, bathed by mystery, elected through all eternity to be the seat of religious emotion."

" And, let us not doubt it, there are throughout the world infinity of these spiritual spots that are not yet revealed, similar to these veiled souls of whom none recognized the greatness."

" For the soul these places are powers like Beauty or Genius. It cannot approach them without recognizing them. There are places where the spirit breathes."

—(*The Inspired Hillock,* Chap. 19).

This emotion, so well described by a great soul, is that which seizes religious thought in front of certain regions of the Pyrénées ariègeoises. As the Forum and the Catacombs of Rome keep the memory of the early Christian Martyrs, as the Cevennes are the sacred lands of the heroes of Reformation in France, the hills and the valleys of the Ariège guard the recollections equally precious of a nation of believers, the Catharists or Albigenses, whose doctrine was bordering Christianity, and who were exterminated as heretics. The privileged places that sheltered the more advanced of the adepts of Albigeism, the region of Foix, the castle of Montsegur actually in ruins, Ussat, Ornolac and their grottoes, the hills of Thabor and of St. Barthélemy are still vibrant with the impressions they preserved of their passage. Every attentive soul therein perceives the resonance of things that asserted in the past, the precedence of spirit.

The recollections are there, wrapped up in the silence of the country, clinging to the paths of the hills, and mostly in the depths of the caves where the Catharist Chiefs had elected abode, and where they celebrated Divine Service! A sage and seeker, Mr. Antonin Gadal, watches over these vestiges of a departed time with a zeal and an attachment beyond all praise. His whole life is devoted to the protection of some of these grottoes whose history is an epic poem. He supervises the excavations that redeem from their diggings the buried testimonies, thanks to which the study of the ancient ages will become fruitful. With him, the

visitor can understand the fantastic labour of subterranean nature ; by their revelations appear, in their real majesty, those wide erections of whom some are imposing as cathedrals, and where occurred events humanity has no right to forget!

On a different, but parallel track, Mr. Otto Rahn, a foreign writer, with the sympathy of a comprehending soul, wrote a serious and very captivating study, where the Catharists and their doctrine survive. *The Crusade against the Grail* is a learned book where are grouped with talent and great knowledge the impartial information borrowed from records of the country and from historians, and the songs of the Troubadours, those poets of whom a great many were Catharists, or at least used to serve the doctrine.

Thenceforth, without descendants to sustain the flame of remembrance of the ancestors, the Albigenses are protected from the silence of oblivion: lofty and fearless minds have removed from their shroud the remains of their history.

THE ORIGINS

What is the origin of these Catharist people? At what date do we see them arise in the Pyrénées, win to their conceptions all the south half of France, extending finally towards the north, Belgium, Great Britain, and Central Europe?

To understand this immense spiritual movement, it is necessary to question the admitted ethnological facts, and to trace the origin back up till the prehistoric period. Notions which perhaps are vague teach us that a free and independent people, who lived in the regions of Caucasus, known under the names of Iberia and Albania, about fifteen centuries before our era, emigrated and scattered over the West in two branches. It is believed the oldest of these migrations, the Iberians, crossed Asia Minor, the north of Africa, and came to Spain, giving to this peninsula, gained from primitive tribes, the name of their own first native land, Iberia. The other branch, which formed the Celts, departed probably from Albania a little later and spread over Europe up to Gaul, England and Ireland. And, as Spain had received the name of Iberia in remembrance of the Caucasus Iberia, likewise England became Albion, and Ireland Albany,

these two names being connected with the primitive land of the Celts. Finally the Celts came down to Spain where they met the Iberians, and their joining formed the Celtiberians, apparently the ancestors of the Basque people.

This double migration spread on its passage the knowledge of oriental religions. In the West, these notions mixed with Northern Mythology and formed Druidism, which long ruled over Europe.

However strange it may seem, quite an active intercourse existed in antiquity between peoples very far removed one from the other. In this manner ideas circulated, the ancient religions and the new doctrines crossed distances and were propagated, like waves, generally from East to West. It is certain that in prehistoric times, the inhabitants of Caucasus had numerous dealings with India, Persia, Greece and Egypt, and that communications were established between the countries of Europe overrun by the Celts and Iberians, and the birthplace of the conquerors. On the lands thereafter people by the great Indo-European family which showed as much taste for travelling as ardour for metaphysical questions, these connections multiplied. As early as five centuries before our era, when Buddhism appeared, it was certainly known in the West. So was it for Christianity, which must have been brought to the Mediterranean coast of Gaul before the death of the first disciples of Christ.

In the III century, at the birth of Manichcism, a wide synthesis of the religions of the East and Christianity, this creed spread abroad easily. Did it not find the soil prepared by numerous generations? And did it not come to show to all these doctrines the bond that united them in a wonderful fraternity? It grew the more quickly because the oriental soul has the gift of accepting any novel doctrine, without renouncing the former one; it knows how to assimilate what is convenient for it without forsaking the ideal already shaped in itself by the attainments of the past.

DRUIDISM

Druidism, which seems to be the first comer in the West, in

the mists of pre-history, was all wrapped up in symbolism, and was originally transmitted orally, as was done by the people of the old ages. The Druids worshipped a great Spirit, Supreme and Eternal God. They admitted metempsychosis, and the transmigration of souls in multiple lives. Their still renowned human sacrifices had certainly the purpose of immortalizing the primordial sacrifice of the divine emanation, by which God gave life to the world. For, they chose for holocaust a high-class young and good-looking man giving one the impression of a God.

The oak was for the Druids the sacred tree. The priests lived in oak forests, where they celebrated their worship, as Abraham who settled amid the oaks at Mamre, and built there an altar to the Eternal (*Genesis,* xii. 18). If the mistletoe was cut with a gold sickle during imposing ceremonies, it was because the mistletoe symbolized the spiritual being that is formed in man and grows within him as a foreign plant, in view of the return of the soul to the kingdom of Heaven.

The Druid priests were sages, thinkers, seers, like the Magi and the Brahmins. Their deep learning in philosophy, pedagogy, and theology, placed them apart from the ruling classes of their country. Their authority was powerful and respected by the people. Mr. Carcopino, a historian, maintains that the Gauls, subdued by the Druids, were of a more advanced civilization than the Roman invaders of Caesar.

The first Christian missionaries had no hold on the Druids who were opposed to the new doctrine. But, in the III century, the Druids themselves received under their protection the Pricilliens, a sect formed by Manicheism and Gnosticism, already persecuted by the Roman Church. With an oriental basis the doctrine of the Pricilliens is supposed to have brought round to Christianism the proud descendants of the early Celts! Did the converted Druids become the perfect Catharists? And did the Bards and the Vatès, who were the sacred poets of the disappearing religion, have the Troubadours as followers? It is quite possible that this supposition of Mr. Otto Rahn is correct, because from that time Druidism was gradually superseded by the Pure whose

doctrine spread victorious till the XIII century in Romany which included the regions conquered by the Romans.

BUDDHISM

But, before Manicheism, the influence of Buddhism was felt in Europe. Prior to our era, it seems, a head of Buddha was found in the south of France ; the *svastika* is commonly found in the Pyrénées, where it decorates ruins of altars dedicated to Apollon, and on doors of Basque houses. The costume of the Catharist priests was similar to the robes of the Buddhists, till the moment when the Perfect would suppress it, not to be recognized by the Inquisitors. Finally, it is recorded that some children were consecrated to priesthood since their early infancy, as is usual with the Tibetan Buddhists. These are practically tangible proofs that Buddhism had penetrated deeply into our Western Provinces. Even more evident are the traces of Buddhism in the sphere of thought. We will find among the Catharists, all the characteristics of Buddha's teaching—Pessimism confronting the material world ; ideal of perfection that guides to the liberation of the soul, to the deliverance from a sphere of misery; rigorous asceticism that hastens the detachment from earthly goods, the spiritual development and the evasion of the soul towards the Realm of Spirit. When the Catharists, taking hold of these conceptions of life, pushed them to their extreme limits, they were quite naturally considered as " the Buddhists of the West."

All these systems formed an important acquisition in the religious treasure of the peoples of Europe when appeared Christianity that met prepared souls, formed by many influences. As a crowning, the new doctrine came to implant itself on a compound of the ancient religions of India, of Persia, of the Hebrews, of Egypt, of Greece; when Gnosticism and the School of Alexandria joining in turn this immense mass gave birth to Albigeism, which was in reality, a New-Manichean-Christianism edified on the ancient wisdom of past millenniums.

THE CATHARIST SYSTEM

The scattered records remaining from the unhappy Catharist people, in spite of the destruction that beset them and their writings, emphasize the importance of these oriental influences, and make it possible to rebuild its system in its principal lines. These included Metaphysics, Ethics and a religion; we shall not be surprised to meet in these three groups similarities with the doctrines we just enumerated.

THE CATHARIST SYSTEM: ITS METAPHYSICS

It seems that the Catharist Sects were numerous. On certain points they differed one from the other, which is quite natural, considering the variety and the wealth of accumulated documents. But the Catharists were all agreed on the essential questions. They were understood to declare that the material world, doomed to suffering, to error and to death, is evil. It could not be God's work, since what is created is identical with its maker. The heretic Garcias is supposed to have said, " God is very good;" " in this world nothing is good; thus God has not made anything that is in this world.....He did not create visible things. Nature in its imperfection could only be the devil's work."

But God being the primary cause of everything that lives, the devil himself was a creature of God. In this way, the devil could only be a rebel angel, and they called him Lucifer. Moreover, God being almighty, this evil-spirit could himself only act by God's permission; in view of this co-operation of two opposite powers, the difficult problem stopped at this conclusion: God had created the principles of the worlds, of the beings, and the things; and Lucifer was moulding the tangible universe and its inhabitants.

This dual theory they borrowed from the Bible of which they had probed the depths, gave to the Hebrew God the part of a subaltern divinity, and placed high up above him God the Spirit, the Absolute, the God of Love, whose sacred name the ancient races never pronounced.

So far as it is possible to understand the whole of a doctrine when the essentials of its teachings have been destroyed, and when

the rest is lost in the contradictions of disputed evidences, the Catharists established a barrier between Spirit and Matter. This was perhaps their great mistake. They used to say: By his physical body, man is Satan's handiwork; but the spirit that animates him is of divine origin. God created him by a series of hypostases; the spirit of man is of the same essence as the Spirit of God; the spirit of man may communicate with the Spirit of God. But, for the Catharist people, man remained " an abyss of contradictions, the world's greatest enigma." According to Mr. J. Guiraud,[1] " One must not disregard the greatness of this theory which, by one side, blends with Christianity."

Dwelling upon the Bible, upon the Epistles, as much as upon the data of Asiatic religions, the Albigenses, without pretending to withhold the total explanation of the great secret of things, thus resolved the enigma: God allowed Lucifer to give bodily life to souls that had been damned in a period prior to man's arrival on earth, so that these fallen souls might re-ascend from the abyss where they had sunk. Rehabilitation for rebel angels of a far-removed past could only take place through pain and penance; thus was it necessary to detain them, by physical bodies in the material world, in the sphere of suffering. A legend showed the human souls as having forgotten, in a deep sleep, the path to heaven, and being only able to retrieve it after enduring the awful pangs of anguish that awoke them. In that way they reconciled the works of God and those of Lucifer, the acts of the spirit and those of matter, both really indispensable to the formation of the superior soul and to its return to its celestial home.

Quite naturally this theory involved that of transmigration, well known in all the Orient, and which the Catharists discovered in the Bible itself of which they understood the symbolism.[2] With an inexorable logic they considered a succession of lives indispensable for the purification of souls and for their perfection which could not be accomplished in a short time. Thus they arrived at a theory of Redemption full of significance. The Albigenses would not consider Christ as an expiatory victim. In Him they

[1] *L'Albigeisme*, preface of the " Cartulaire de N. D. de Prouille."
[2] It was demonstrated in *The Bible and India*, that the doctrine of transmigration is contained in Bible texts.

saw the Son of God, a messenger of Heaven, a supremely wise Master, whose teachings guided mankind towards the path of Salvation, yet not taking from them the duty of their advancing by strenuous personal effort.

Mr. Guiraud who had little sympathy for the Catharists, stated as follows their conception of Redemption, in his *L'Albegeisme*:

" According to the Catharists, Redemption had nothing of a sin-offering. It was useless for the Saviour to suffer . . . The revolt of the souls having taken place in Heaven . . . they could not be redeemed by corporal sufferings. . . . Their punishment consisted in the domination of Satan, which would last as long as souls remained in oblivion of their celestial origins and destinies. Ignorance was responsible for all the misery of humankind. Deliverance would be obtained through science of their real origins, of their real destinies, the knowledge of the true God, and the revelation of the mystery of their divine soul captive in an impure and devilish body. The mission of Christ consisted in his Teachings. Redemption was a preaching and not an expiation. Christ was not the holocaust slayed to Eternal Justice for the salvation of mankind; but the Doctor who brought the Truth liberating the world " (p. 58).

Egypt like India had its part of influence on the populations of the West. A little statue of exquisite workmanship, all covered over with verdigris and representing one of the divinities formerly worshipped on the banks of the Nile, has been discovered in a grotto about Ussat—a fact proving ancient communications between Egypt and the Pyrénées. On the other hand, the respect of the Catharists for animals, which they refused to kill, is a rather possible reminder of metempsychosis, most particularly admitted by the Egyptians. We know that these people considered that human souls might sometimes incarnate in the bodies of our inferior brothers. When the Inquisitors suspected a Catharist, they compelled him to kill an animal; on his refusal, he was declared a heretic and judged as one.

Lastly, everything prompts us to believe that the taste for the science of the stars came to the Catharists from the Egyptian

knowledge of astronomy, very far advanced in the land of the Pharaohs. The contemplation of the heavenly canopy was dear to the Albigenses! In the shining fields of the stars they saw the homeland of liberated souls. Their aversion for the earth, the cursed planet, the haunt of all vices and all sufferings, was forgotten when they gazed at the splendid constellations on clear nights! Were they not the innumerable "mansions in the Father's House" of which Jesus had spoken? What consolation for these beings, after sacrificing everything in our inferior world of which they only knew sorrow and misery, to await the near future of their souls unfolding in those blessed islands of infinite space, for ever sheltered from the afflictions of the earth! Their sole ambition was to discover the "path to the stars" which must lead them towards the peaceful spheres where they dreamed of worshipping God in eternal Blissfulness! The Path to the stars, of which they had a glimpse at the end of the initiation ceremonies, became the supreme hope of these saintly souls who stepped towards death as one would go in the direction of a life of bliss.

THE CATHARIST SYSTEM: ITS ETHICS

The Morals edified on the impulsion of these beliefs could only be higher Ethics. They attained a kind of perfection where the most advanced spiritual Laws were summed up. In reality, the moral of the Pure was nothing but the most exacting Christian moral. The Catharists had a deep veneration for the teachings of Christ which they ardently followed as well as the Commandments of Moses which they admired without admitting that their author was the Supreme God. In imitation of Buddhism, the Catharist system included three groups of followers:

(*i*) The masses, who practised as they could the simple rules at their reach.

(*ii*) The sympathizers, who in principle held to the doctrine of salvation, and strove to rise along the austere steps of the observance.

(*iii*) The most highly gifted souls, the Perfect, whose part in

the Catharist Church was equivalent to that formerly played by the Fathers of the Roman Church.

Real militants of the holy priesthood, the Perfect, after reception of the Consolamentum, practised a number of inflexible and extremely severe rules: Purity of conscience and of deed in every act of life ; perpetual celibacy ; abstinence from any animal food, eggs, milk and fats being forbidden. They had no right to kill, either in self-defence or for their food. They owed complete fidelity to the doctrine, even up to torture and death. They used to say: " We lead wandering and harsh lives, we flee from town to town, like sheep amid wolves ; we suffer like the apostles and the martyrs; and yet our life is holy and austere. But everything is easy for us because we are no longer of this world . . . 'Tis a stern life that the friends of God live, persecuted by the Church; but it costs a great deal to a man built of flesh and blood to be admitted in paradise " (J. Guiraud, *L'Albigeisme* p. 73).

They lived far from the world, apart from their families, often in communities, and never went out alone, but two by two, as later on the Minor Brothers of St. Francis of Assisi would do. The severity of abstinence developed spiritual life in them ; their state of purity and, often, of holiness forced everyone's respect and admiration. The Pure were considered as beings who had gone beyond our humanity, and had not to return, as they were elected to the glorious dignity of the Blessed. It even seems as if the success of Catharism, that spread over whole peoples, should be attributed as much to the doctrine itself as to the veneration with which the Perfect were surrounded, and to their near triumph in the Beyond!

They were called " The Good Men " and, speaking of them, St. Bernard said: " Watch their manners of living and you will not find anything more irreproachable!" This unquestionable moral superiority still subsisted in spite of the dark slander spread on heretics to ruin them.

Thus, wrapped up in integrity, in severe austerity, the Pure accomplished their supernatural mission. They preached, they consecrated people, they consoled, advancing themselves towards a triumphant end—the end from which there is no return! Their

radiance was that of holiness. When they spoke to the faithful with their voices weakened by fasting and privations, they set all souls aflame. Their baptism was one of Spirit and fire, spreading like a conflagration . . . So was their church built, which was a Church of Love!

THE CATHARIST SYSTEM: ITS RELIGION

Truly theirs was a religion of Love! "Love God and Love your neighbour," summed up for these disciples of Christ, the supreme Law of God Who is Love! For them Morals and Religion met in an inseparable whole that transfigured the acts of the present life, tending to the blossoming of religious feelings. The research of Divine Love was the constant preoccupation of the true Catharist, compared to which all human advantage was valueless.

Viewed from the outside, their ceremonies were simple. They held various edification meetings:

The Appareilhamentum, a kind of self-examination where general confession of sins was made, resembled the Confiteor and the confession practised in the Reformed Churches. A Perfect then gave the order of penance, and bestowed Absolution on the repentant souls. The Pure, having in them the Spirit of God, had the right of forgiving sins!

The Melioramentum assembled the faithful for the Adoration; they bowed down before the Perfect who represented the Divine Paraclete, being themselves clothed by the Holy Spirit. The Congregation renewed its vows of Loyalty, and asked for the Perfect's Blessing.

The Consolamentum finally was pre-eminently the rite of Catharist worship, the gift of the comforting Spirit; It was practised by the imposition of the hands, as in the Primitive Church. Like the Apostles, a pious Catharist would communicate by touch the Spirit that was in him. The *Consolamentum* was never given to children, but only to adults who had undergone long preparatory trials. By exception it was given to the

dying, who, by the fact of having asked for it, contracted engagements that bound them beyond the tomb.

You can still see above Ussat the grottoes the Catharists called the Churches, and where they celebrated the ceremonies of their worship,—places sanctified by the elation of the souls who came to receive their consecration, and by the suffering of those who sought refuge there from the devastating persecutions. When the *Consolamentum* was to be delivered, a great many torches lit up the darkness of the caverns. The faithful, before service, washed their hands as a sign of purity. Then the Gospel was placed on a stone covered with a white cloth. The Holy Writ was read, there would be a liturgy of the ritual, a preaching . . . perhaps the recital of formulas whose secret was carried away by the fire of the stakes . . . Then the Imposition of the hands, solemnized by the religious silence of the grotto, made of the faithful postulant a Transfigured Being, a Perfect! Finally invocations would rise up towards the huge vaults, perhaps also chants and words of adoration,—*Adoremus, Patrem et Filium et Spiritus Sanctum*—and then the congregation would retire after benediction!

According to some writers, here should be placed the Embrace of Peace, which was also given before communion. The women only kissed the Gospel which the Perfect had kissed . . . All this strangely reminds one of the Apostolic times of the Christian Church.

The *Consolamentum* was, as a whole, the equivalent of baptism, of consecration and of extreme unction ; an outpouring of Holy Spirit that purified, enlightened and consoled. The Paraclete was really, in the eyes of the Catharists, the Consoler of whom Christ had announced the coming, shortly before his death. Those who received it, whatever the sufferings of their terrestrial lives, lived in an inner blissfulness, compared to which every human anxiety disappeared! The means used by the Perfect for this sacred transmission of Spirit remain unknown to us. None revealed them, even through the horrors of " question " and torture! But their mystery remains, and their power has never been denied. During the great torments of persecution, when the

heretics were led to the rack, it sufficed, it is said, that the condemned saw from afar the uplifted hand of a Perfect in the sign of showing them Heaven in blessing them, for these unfortunates to march towards death, brave and restored to serenity.

THE ENDURA

So great was the effect of this spiritual baptism, on prepared souls, that it brought about real transformations in them; so assured was their certainty of a life in the Beyond, that the Catharists sacrificed everything to the ideal they had just found out. To reach it sooner, they would even commit suicide, the *Endura,* which was allowed to the Perfect men. It has no connection with Christianism. It is perhaps in Druidism that we must look for its origin, so far as it may not be of pure Catharist source.

The uncertainty and despair of terrestrial life led, in the doctrine of the Pure, towards an appropriate consequence: The spiritual world, the sole abode of bliss being next to unattainable to men here below, death was deemed the most desirable way of snapping the chain of cursed matter. And suicide, that would put an end to suffering, and open to pure souls the Heaven of Blessedness, was allowed to pious ascetics, but on certain conditions that were rarely realized. Only those who had received the *Consolamentum,* and had become Perfect, might put an end to their life by *Endura.* Even then they should not meet death half-way unless they be in a state of grace or ecstasy! Lastly, another condition still reduced the number of cases of Endura: each Perfect had an elected Brother, as perfect as himself, a bosom-friend who never left him. Might he afflict his faithful partner by a premature separation, when it was contrary to the law of love to create suffering? They had to come to an arrangement . . . both had to consent to the supreme departure . . . be ready to leave together! One can see from this that these extreme cases met difficulties that prevented them from becoming a social plague. They were truly a very small number, those for whom death was " the magnificent hour " of deliverance, long prepared and waited for at every instant of their finishing destiny!

THE MINNE

The great revelation brought to the world by the church of Love, was the Blessedness of Spiritual life. The Albigenses gave the name of *Minne* or *Mani* (from *man* and *Manès*) to the raptures of ineffable communion, the exalted fervour of souls hereafter awakened in the spiritual sphere, and united to God. The *Minne* was Divine Love realized by the holy union of God and man's superior soul. The Mysticism of the Perfect saw in human love a symbolic reflex of the Celestial *Minne*. Given this resemblance, which presented to souls life in God as the supreme happiness, terrestrial love was recognized good, and allowed on condition that it remained strictly pure, and never left the sphere of feelings, corporal union and marriage being equally condemned by the Perfect, in their horror of tangible world. Willingly they declared it sinful to attract souls in the hell of earthly life! Chaste love, on the contrary, they considered as a virtue that improved people so long as it remained the pure image of Divine Love.

One may see directly what influence this conception of Love would exercise on the customs, even admitting that these sublime rules were not always observed outside the group of the Perfect. The respect for woman stood out greater; they recognized in her a divine being with prophetic intuitions. In the advanced souls, the observance of these rules of purity towards oneself and towards one's fellow-men, contributed to develop the inner life, and led towards the adoration of God, the evasion of the soul in the Spiritual world, the ecstatic experience, in short to the Buddhist *Nirvāṇa,* which is the annihilation of the physical being caused by the blossoming of the inner being of the Spiritual man, of Man become Blessed!

THE CATHARIST CHRISTIANITY

Scholars wonder whether Albigeism really formed a heresy, or was a new religion. Compared to the Catholicism of that time, in spite of all the points in common of the two creeds, Albigeism may be said to have been a religious system having its originality. The Catharists were Christians, but their Christianity, enlightened by other truths giving it all its brightness, was a compound that

really could direct them in the sacred path that Christ and the true worshippers followed. All their actions were inspired by Christ's example; the *Gospel of St. John,* more spiritualized than the three Synoptics, was their creed; in it they discovered the higher guidance, comprehensible to their souls already opened to the great truth which transcends our world, and of which they had an extensive knowledge.

Like the Lord who used to retire to lonely places to pray, they would meditate out-of-doors, in the solitude of the country or in the silent forests. Some centuries later, their example was followed by St. John-of-the-Cross.

Like the Christ, they loved to ascend the mountains and thence to instruct their disciples; they knew the power of the summits and the wide horizons on the inner inclinations.

In order to recall the solemn event of the Transfiguration, towards which they were straining themselves with all their might, they gave the name of Thabor to many hill-tops, amongst which is the one which rises above the grottoes of Ornolac, in their elected country. They had made a sacred place of it.

The Lord, down here, had no shelter to lay his head on; the Perfect chose to live in the discomfort of caves.

Just as Jesus instituted the last Supper, in the same way they reproduced it in their sacred meals, with the "bread of orison" consecrated by prayer.

Following his example, they fasted forty days by year, adding other fasts during the twelve months.

They revoked the baptism of John the Baptist, because this baptism of water reminded them of the immersion of Spirit in hostile matter; but they aspired to obtain the baptism of Christ, who baptized with Holy Spirit and fire and gave life. In every way they strove to imitate Christ, their Divine Model.

Only fragmentary scraps from their doctrines have reached us; but, putting them together and analyzing them we feel surprised at the similarity existing between Albigeism and the Primitive Christian Church. This has been already called to notice concerning the Catharist ceremonies ; some other remarks might be

added here: The very tradition of the Apostolic Church was continued in the Perfect by the transmission of Spirit. Full of Biblical quotations the Ritual of Consecration that escaped destruction has been compared to a "Manual of Orthodoxy" that might have been written by an Inquisitor. If we then say that this *ensemble* is closely related to the pure Christian sources and to the Protestant customs, nobody will be surprised at our attributing the origin of the true precursors of the "Huguenots" to one at least of the Catharist sects! "Catharist Rites of the XIII century," says Mr. Guiraud, "remind us of those of the Primitive Church, with a truth and reality which is greater as we get closer to the Apostolic age" (*L'Albigeisme,* p. 86).

THE VAUDOIS

An important group of the Catharist people who marched hand in hand for a long time with the Pure Men transformed little by little the foundations of Albigeism to strip it from anything but true Christianism. Was it to escape the suspicions of the Roman Church that they practised Christian beliefs as a refuge? Or, more likely, did the frequent reading of the Gospels, the love for Christ Himself, put in the background the primitive doctrines that formed the base of Manicheism? It is difficult to surmise. But, in the XII century a swarm of Vaudois Catharists grouped themselves under a venerable Chief, Pierre de Vaux, or Valdo de Lyon. We do not know whether they took from him the name of Vaudois, or if he himself was called after the name of the sect that seems to have existed before him. In any case, the Vaudois renounced their designation of Catharists, and, after having travelled over Dauphiné, Provence and Piémont, proceeded in Central Europe up to Bohemia. A few gave the title of the Vallées Vaudoises to the regions of Northern Italy where they settled down. The Reformer Jean Huss who evangelized Bohemia in the XIV century was certainly a descendant of the Vaudois, because the characteristics of the Catharist people, compared above with those of the Apostolic church, would precisely be those that would signalize to attention a new heresy—the early Huguenots. These characteristics are mentioned below:—

(i) An independent spirit attracted by liberty, unable to endure the yoke of the Roman Church, neither its dogmas, nor any medium between God and man.

(*ii*) The recognized authority of the Holy Writ: the New Testament is supposed to have been translated in Provencal by Pierre Valdo, and spread about in proportion as this was possible when printing was not yet discovered.

(*iii*) In the same way as the true Albigenses, and following the example of the Iconoclasts, the Vaudois were opposed to the worship of images, of Saints or of any other divinity but God revered in Spirit.

(*iv*) The Vaudois were of pure customs. It is said that the charges made against some Vaudois for dissolute lives, can scarcely be taken into consideration; it is known that the tendency of every religious system, in the periods of obscurantism is to slander the rival churches and to ruin them. A life stripped of everything, simple and austere—such was the life of the Catharists ; it was the same for the Vaudois and early Huguenots. Pierre Valdo emphasized the importance of poverty ; he distributed his property to the poor and for the work of his mission ; the Vaudois, disciples of Valdo, were called *The Poor of Lyons.*

(*v*) Lastly, it would be just to add here that the ecstatic experience, a common thing with the Catharists, but abandoned in the churches of Reformation, was, according to Luther, the natural condition of religious life.

The separation between the Vaudois and the Catharists was certainly the first blow given to Albigeism, the forerunning sign of the sinking where this noble doctrine would end. After the capture of Montségur, after the burning to death of more than two hundred Perfect and Catharist Knights in the " Cremating Field," at the foot of their vanquished fortress, the millenary science that was the real " Catharist Treasure " disappeared in the turmoil, carried far away from the new generations! Human evolution is so guided that the higher truths which accumulated during centuries, and which conducted their followers to the last summits, are removed in the Invisible ; each surge of humanity that rises

must in turn discover them, and, at the cost of immense efforts, reconquer them.

THE CATHARIST INHERITANCE

When we consider this dramatic and impressive stirring-up of ideas we are not surprised that ancient beliefs that served as a base to Albigeism, should have subsisted more or less deformed or indistinct. Inevitably, scraps of a dismantled system could only survive in altering themselves. For instance, the pessimistic opinion of the Catharists on man's physical nature, which is itself an inheritance of Buddhism, will be met with again in Calvinism, but in a form which is even more pessimistic. Such an estimation is right in one sense: by his lower being, man is really a creature of the devil, incapable of any lofty feeling and living like an animal. But what was discovered incomplete or veiled in the rigours of Calvinism, was, originally in Albigeism, a theory full of hope: according to the doctrine of multiple lives, the soul, although enshrouded in its animal covering, would grow and ascend through the ages, like the plants, to awaken little by little after a gradual and prolonged development, and resume the path to Heaven. This was a dogma beloved by the Catharists!

Though less recognizable, there came to us under the idea of "Predestination," the theory of Impending Justice, inseparable from the system of successive reincarnations; both belonged to Albigeism, that summed them up in this way: Each being comes to the world with a destiny he must submit to, without being able to avoid its principal directions, since he must there meet the sanctions justified by the acts of his previous lives. Thus it is correct to say that each life is *predestined* to a sum of good or bad events, not likely to be easily modified. But this luminous truth of oriental origin, took a strangely grim appearance as it extended in the western countries: God created beings either for an eternity of blissfulness, or for an endless damnation, and no effort of man, nor any of his mistakes might change anything of this sentence without appeal! Predestination that was asserted in the XVI century by great spirits of Port-Royal, is scarcely admitted nowadays.

This short outline suffices to show the deformation of ideas, so often met with in the history of religions, and it teaches us the great lesson of things that escape all disasters because they cannot die. Though scattered and modified, the Manichean principles restored to their real meaning, shall revive into the imperishable truths of the Catharist system, to reassert the eternal value of vanished theories. Historical events teach us the same lesson: The Inquisition mixed up and persecuted in the same way the Catharists and the Vaudois connected with Christianism; it is recorded that heretics were sent by thousands to death or to renunciation. But if violence brought over souls to the Church of Rome, the fire still smouldered under the cinders of this apparent victory; an uninterrupted chain could be established between Catharist heresy and Huguenot heresy, which prepared, by this secret life, the vast conflagration of the Reform, in the XVI century.

THE CAUSE OF THE PERSECUTIONS

In these days when the Roman Church gives evidence of a comprehensive psychology of the soul's aspirations, it is difficult to understand its comportment in the past, towards brethren whose doctrines were so close to its own. Mr. Guiraud asks: "Does not Christianity also teach the rivalry between Good and Evil? Is it not entirely established on the mystery of Redemption? In its God, Single in His Trinity, do we not discover the hypostases and the divine emanations of the Catharists? Lastly, did it not make of monastic life one of the surest paths to salvation" (*L'Albigéisme*, p. 211)?

To these questions Mr. Guiraud replies that it suffices to fathom the spirit of the Catharist and Christian doctrines to see that, proceeding from different inspirations they lead to the most contrary consequences. However true this appreciation, there were important concordances that must be pointed out, between the two organizations:

Were most Albigenses Dualists? But the Roman Church itself admitted the work of God and the work of Satan. The opposition of Good and Evil, of Spirit and Matter, of which man is a compound, has always been recognized by Catholicism; it

could deny it less than any other religion, having always maintained that the devil's power was contrary to Divine power, and despised the material world.

Redemption, according to the Catharists, was a long preparation that liberated man of his earthly ties, by purifying knowledge and suffering; it guided him to perfection that gives admittance to the Kingdom of Heaven. Was not the Roman Church teaching the necessity of moral progress, a kind of salvation by works and by penance? And is not the dogma of Purgatory, where it certifies that the soul purifies itself through punishments and sufferings after death, the negation of a gratuitous Redemption, as well as the picture of what takes place in earthly life where man meets the effects of his past actions and where he atones for his ancient errors till they be exhausted?

The only difference in this question is in credit of Albigeism which could not admit that the purification of souls could take place in the Spiritual world, *because it is the exclusive kingdom of God, of Good, where no one might enter unless he is perfect.*

Indeed the Catharists believed that man came over again in the material world in a series of successive lives, through reincarnation. Now the Catholic Church has the dogma of the resurrection of *the flesh,* asserted in the Apostle's Creed, and which is certainly a continuation of the doctrine of multiple lives, known in the Orient in the oldest antiquity.

The Roman Church gave as reason to the extermination of the Catharist people that Albigeism, condemning marriage and war was emptying the Catholic churches. Mr. O. Rahn writes: from the world and embraced celibacy, while the ordinary faithful lived and married as Catholic populations used to do, one is surprised at this reproach from a great Church whose clergy lives in celibacy, without family or descendants.

Finally Catharist ethics forbade to kill. The Perfect accepted to die, but did not kill. It is childish to ask if this be in opposition to the teachings of the Gospel that should be those of Rome. Only the *Endura* might be found fault with. But, we have shown

how this kind of suicide was rare, owing to the conditions in which it was allowed.

All this leads us to attribute the hate let loose against the Catharists to the jealousy roused by the success of Albigeism, that was emptying the Catholic Churches. Mr. O. Rahn writes: " The *Pure* doctrine accomplished, in the second half of the twelfth century, a regular triumphal march through the Roman provinces of Southern France; knights, citizens and even clerks discerned in the ' Good Men ' the propagators of the true Gospel, and Rome nearly missed by a hair's breadth her domination in Provence, Languedoc and Gascogne.

" Nearly all the Barons and Knights of the country were Catharist believers, who received with deep respect the Perfect men in their castles, waiting on them at table, and entrusting them with the education of their children " (*The Crusade against the Grail,* p. 177).

In 1145, St. Bernard was saying: " The Cathedrals are without worshippers, the priests without honour, the sacraments despised, the festivals not solemnized . . . ." He added that nearly the whole population had passed over to heresy.

How could the Roman Church not have been suspicious of a religion that was for her a menace? The brightest period of Catharism occurred when Catholicism was at its darkest. Had the Catholic clergy been able to fathom the depths of the Catharist heresy, they undoubtedly would have recognized therein most of the truths professed by their Christian faith.

But the ignorance of the Roman clergy, the love of luxury and the misconduct of the clerks enhanced the purity of the Perfect and their knowledge of religious questions. Instinctively the populations followed these leaders who extorted their veneration. Confronted by the swelling tide of Albigeism, Catholicism felt in jeopardy, and let loose upon the heretics the most awful hostilities, to save its life. Finally political questions got mixed up with the religious repression; it is even likely that if one could settle the respective responsibility of the Louvre and that of the Vatican, who both hurled on the peaceful southern provinces, the

populations of the North of France, the Church might be white-washed of a certain amount of crimes.

But we shall not intrude into this sphere that is special to history. We shall avert our eyes from the horrors of the Inquisition, originated to repress the Catharist triumph; we shall neither speak of the hecatombs of Béziers, Carcassonne and Lavaur, nor of the abominations of the torture-chambers, of the stakes, the caves walled-in on live refugees. Our study is of a religious order; we only want to depict here, not the bloody drama, but the value of Albigeism and its glorious ideal.

THE TROUBADOURS

It can be admitted that the Catharists lived for a long time without being mentioned, until Christianism wanted to impose its exclusive domination. Their beliefs, so very far remote, were quietly transmitted from generation to generation, every new acquisition adding to their "Treasure."

We must mention here the works of the Troubadours which seem to have proved a great help to the Perfect. As the Bards in the times of the Druids, these poets put their talent at the service of holy things. The Perfect accepted this homage. Besides, they considered intuition and inspiration as equally valuable; consequently they proclaimed that prophets and poets being under the influence of the Spirit, were all, without distinction, divinely inspired. In truth, at that time, poetry dealt mostly with sacred subjects, or epic tales where warlike and marvellous actions were combined. Most Troubadours enjoyed great consideration, whether they contributed with the Perfect to veil under poetic symbolism the truths asserted by the doctrine, or discovered themselves, as their name indicates, in the course of their wanderings and meditations, new information to be added to the knowledge previously acquired. Likewise a great many Troubadours were pure Catharists, and there were poets amid the Perfect, for whom prayer most naturally rose towards heaven under the aesthetic form of a hymn. This lyrical blossoming, inseparable from Albigeism, placed the Catharist mysticism under the

populations of the North of France, the Church might be whitewashed of a certain amount of crimes.

N. Peyrat in his *History of the Albigenses* states: "The Manicheans were intoxicated with music and melody . . . Manès had composed several hymns . . . Catharism contributed to the poetic and music development in the West" (p. 397, Book I).

In fact, religious hymns in Christian worship did not appear before the IV century that witnessed the birth of Manicheism.

Although a great many works were lost in the tempest of persecution, still what remains allows us to believe that the resplendent period of Albigeism knew of an abundant poetic production. Around the central subject of the Minne, of the Supreme Minne and the Consoling Paraclete, a cluster of poets celebrated Divine Love and all the mishaps in the path leading the soul to heavenly life. We have said that human love, so long as it remained chaste, was considered by the Albigenses as the picture of Divine Love of which it was a reflex. The "*leys d'Amor*" were truly symbols in which the soaring of the soul towards Divinity was revealed, and the chanters of the Supreme *Minne* lead us towards the summits where ascended with difficulty the Mystics of the Middle Ages, whom a stern asceticism diverted for ever from everything that had a human and terrestrial appearance.

In Germany, the most renowned of these singers of the *Minne* (the *Minne-dichter* or *Minne sânger*), seems to be Wolfram of Eschenbach. He was one of those who knew things without having learnt anything. Reading and writing were unknown to him; he used to say:

"Of what is written in books,
I remain ignorant."

But this did not prevent his having very remarkable intuitions. Some of his poems reveal a deep knowledge of Spiritual Truths and his symbolism is expressive and transparent. He is the author of a second Parcifal that inspired Wagner, and of which the original would be the work of Manès, that reached Wolfram of Echenbach through the Troubadour Guyot de Provins.

It is deeply to be regretted that the greatest part of this

Catharist literature was destroyed. *The Crusade against the Grail* contains beautiful fragments of this poetry rich with hidden meaning for the intellect attentive to revealing symbolism.

SYMBOLISM AND TROUBADOURS

Symbolism was held in great esteem by the Catharists. Following the example of every religious system concealing deep knowledge and supernatural truths, the Albigenses hid some of their theories under the treble sheath of prudence, symbolism and poetry. And how they had good reason to do this!

Songs and pictures allowed them to withhold from unholy glances, the higher truths they wanted to spread abroad, but they were perilous to be left to be understood by those who were not worthy. Thus they could screen a lofty revelation from an enemy who might have taken hold of it to do harm and to destroy. And also, why not display under the shape of tales, pleasing to the imagination and to the memory, the revelations which had better been enveloped with charm and beauty? Does not thought always demand a setting in harmony with itself? And is not beauty, that gives to idea her true brilliancy, the superattraction for the souls that dimly preserved in themselves the regretful recollections of a paradise lost, spheres of Spirit, of Light and of Splendour? And the inspired Troubadours sought in poetry the words that were needed to translate the eternal themes of life in God, and to disclose the tales, the legends and the emblems that guided thought towards the Beyond.

In the enumeration which would be long, let us take some of their favourite themes. For example, in *The Golden Fleece* and *The Expedition of the Argonauts,* the words " Weavers " and " Enrobed " all circled around the same truths, the preparation of the vestment of the soul become worthy of entering the Kingdom of Heaven. Oriental Mysticism gave a name to this " radiant superior clothing of man," pointed out by the *Muṇḍaka Upanishad,* whose brightness sometimes illuminates the Saints' physical figure. Christ had very clearly spoken of it in His parable of " The Wedding Feast " (*Matthew,* xxii. 11-14). St. Paul took up the idea to strengthen it (*II Corinth.,* v. 24). The *Book of Revelation*

(xix. 7-8) mentioned it, comparing the stuff of this robe to " fine linen, clean and white, shining and pure."[1]

In their meditations so often tending towards the celestial future of which their thoughts were full, how could the Catharists not insist upon this glorious festival robe, failing which the soul was pushed into the outside darkness? And the mantle had its place in their initiations. Also, to emphasize that each must work for its preparation, as it is said in the Scripture, and in token of that inner effort of the being building up its heavenly clothing, they themselves wove their clothes and people called them the Weavers and the Enrobed.

Mythological tales had carried about the story of *the Golden Fleece*. Catharist poets took up this expression they found excellent, and which so well indicated the shining robe of Spiritual man! The *Legend of the Argonauts* whose inuendoes completed the signification of the " *Golden Fleece,*" pleased these knowing souls that understood its principal meaning. Like the Persians, like the Manicheans, the Catharists whose name signifies *pure,* laid great stress upon purity, the first condition of all perfection. The Greek word *Agos* means " whiteness." The expedition of the Argonauts was an enterprise of White Beings, of pure Beings. And everything that concerned that journey to Colchis was in harmony with that purity. Their boat painted white was called *Argos;* its builder's name was *Argos,* and the town where they embarked was the port of *Argos*. They were going to Colchis, in the South of Caucasus, not far from the *Albany,* whose root *alb,* once again means *'white,'* and of which we so often meet derivations in invaded Europe. We noted that England received the name of *Albion,* Scotland that of *Albany*. *Albi* was the name of the principal town of Romany, and the Catharists called themselves *Albigenses*! *Montauban, Alban* and *Albias,* are still to be found in the South of France, *Los Alberes* in Spain, *Albanie, Albe* and *Albano* in Italy and Central Europe. In Toulouse, where Catharists took shelter for a long time, a church is still named " Our Lady of *Dalbade.*" It is supposed to have been erected on

[1] All this was explained in *The Bible and India,* p. 220, by Alex Emmanuel.

the premises of an ancient church built before the XII century, whose nave had white walls on which took place the miracle of luminous crosses of shining white. This primitive church is thought to have belonged to an order of Hospitaler-Templars, whose near relation to Albigeism is known. All this symbolism is more than clear, it is willed! If the Legend of the Argonauts ends by adventures remote from its real meaning, we must not be deceived; this is an usual scheme that serves to divert the souls not yet ready to learn the secret hidden in the heart of the tale.

THE MEANING OF THE GROTTOES

We remarked that the Catharists had chosen the grottoes of Sabarthès to retire in silence and poverty, and to celebrate their religious worship. Hermits who loved solitude dwelt in the most inaccessible of these natural retreats. When the persecutions took place, some of these caves were fortified, and they were called "Spoulgas." Battlemented walls are still seen, closing the entrance of these churches that were not built by man's hands. But it was not solely to live in meditation, or to escape from their foes through passages that are said to have hidden outlets on the hills, that the Perfect lived as Troglodytes: Another reason for this taste for underground dwelling was, once again, a symbolic idea, of which history does not speak, but which fervent mystics have revealed to us. Some years after the final disappearance of the Catharists, St. John of the Cross explained in his wise psychology of the inner life, the part of the "caves of the soul." No doubt this mystery was known by the Perfect who knew so many things and who conformed as much as possible their manner of living to everything that recalled the essential reality—the Presence of the Spirit in the human soul.

THE EMBLEMS ON THE ROCK

Emblems and signs cut into the rock, are commonly found in the venerable grottoes: *The Pentacle,* a star with five points to which the Catharists were partial because it was the picture of perfection; *The Dove,* a symbol of Spirit; *The Fish,* representing Divinity going through material world. Albigenses disliked the

catholic cross, but they had another *Cross,* double and adorned with ornaments whose mysterious meaning seems to be connected with the Trinity.

But their wide and valuable symbolism spread beyond the sculptured images in the rock.

The Fisherman had for them the same meaning that Christ gave to His words: " I will make you to become fishers of men " (*Mark,* i. 17). *The Ferryman* impersonated the mysterious boatman whose barque conveyed the elect souls across the river that separates them from the Kingdom of Heaven. *The Bridge* that none might cross without having obtained admission had the same meaning. *The Castle* on the mountain, surrounded by thick forests hard to walk through, where travellers lacking wisdom got lost, indicated the highest abode of the Spirit. This symbol might be explained as " The seven Mansions of the Soul " by St. Teresa of Avila. *The Casket on the altar* expressed the conception of a holy Thing hidden in its tangible wrapping. It has its equivalent in the Catholic Church where the Holy Sacrament is set in a shrine and deposited on the altar. Did the Catharists borrow this sign from the Roman Church? Or is it the reproduction of the Tabernacle of Israel? And did the Catholicism copy from the Hebrews their manner of pointing out the Invisible Presence of Divinity? Whatever it may be, the same great idea appears under these different aspects—the Divine Spirit enclosed in its material envelope.

THE LEGEND OF PYRENE

She gave her name to the Pyrénées! Pyréne, the daughter of King Bébryx, was love-struck for Hercules, her father's guest and forsaken by him. She wanted to join him, but was caught by a bear in the wild forest. Hearing her shrieks, Hercules came, but too late to rescue her; he found her dead and carried back her remains to King Bébryx, whilst the grottoes and mountains echoed his groans of despair.

This Legend illustrates most obviously the principles of Albigeism: Pyréne, in pursuit of Hercules, is the fire of Spirit

in the great souls of the Pure. Pyréne, expiring under the wounds of a wild beast, is the image of Spirit expiring in the inferior worlds. Hercules, carrying the King's daughter and burying her in her father's house, represents the people of the Pure men, crowning bulwark of Spirit!

And the Grotto of Lombrive enshrouds in its darkness the riddle of the Legend; in the everlasting silence of that crypt, are united the throne and the tomb of King Bébryx, the grave of Hercules and that of Pyrène. Heaps of stalagmites in the shape of tomb-stones guard the mystery of these legendary mausoleums, as the Pyrénées keep for ever, with the name of Pyréne, the idea of Fire, the symbol of the Spirit that inflamed souls in the country of Romany!

STONES

Finally there was the symbolism of stones that was of great importance in the whole of the catharist beliefs. The illumined Troubadour, Wolfram of Eschenbach, wrote:

> " Pythagorus,
> Who read signs in the Heavens,
> And, without contest, possessed
> Science such that since Adam
> No man equalled his wisdom:
> He could name the richness of stones."

The richness of stones . . . How can it be doubted in christian countries, when it is known that the Bible alludes gravely to this hidden symbology! It was clearly demonstrated that in some passages of the books of the Prophets[1], the rock symbolized Spirit! In *Revelation* The Holy City, the Celestial Jerusalem that was not built with tangible materials " has the brilliancy of a precious stone, a stone of crystal jasper " (xxi. 11). The City where God reigns, that can only be essentially immaterial, is also " as a pure crystal." Its twelve foundations " are adorned with precious stones " that are enumerated in that same chapter . . . and the twelve doors are twelve pearls.

[1] *The Bible and India,* p. 58.

Prophet Isaiah had said (*Ibid.*, xxviii. 16) " Here, In Sion I lay a stone, a tried stone, a corner-stone of price; soundly laid . . . he that uses it as a prop shall not be confused." Christ had taken up and laid stress upon this comparison; speaking of the Spirit that was in Him, He quoted the Scriptures, saying: " The stone that was rejected by the builders has become the principal one of the angle; it is the Lord's work, and a marvel in our eyes." (*Matt.*, xxi. 42) and (*Psalms*, cxviii).

When Peter, the Apostle, was still Simon the poor fisherman of Galilee, he heard Jesus saying: " Thou art Simon, but henceforth thou shalt be called Cephas, that is to say, Stone." A little later, the Master added the well-known words: " Thou art Stone, and on this Stone I will build my Church." For Christ to have thus insisted on the name of Peter, really He must have attached to it a primordial importance! Everything leads us to believe that He revealed to His disciples the symbolism of the rock that is Spirit. Later on, St. Peter took up the comparison and said (1 Peter 2) " Christ is the Living Rock, rejected by men, but chosen and precious in God's eyes." . . . and the souls and must be " Living stones shaping the Spiritual Mansion." This mystery cannot be explained without special knowledge, but it is certain that there is a primordial meaning that did not escape the Catharists, supremely clever in deciphering the hidden Truths in the depths of texts and things.

THE HOLY GRAIL

The symbolism of stones leads us to understand the meaning of the Holy Grail. Simple in appearance but imposing in its splendid reality, the Grail expresses the Inexpressible!—Infinite Life . . . Divine Spirit and its Bliss . . . Creation that is life's slackened rhythm! . . . Blessed be the symbols showing, mirror-like, what thought would be unable to express!

Let us content ourselves with saying that at first the Grail had been presented as the emerald cup that received the drops of Jesus' blood as they fell from the cross on the Calvary. Transported to our countries by Joseph of Arimathaea and Mary Magdalene, this cup, hallowed by the precious blood it had con-

tained, is supposed to have been hidden in an inaccessible castle and guarded by twelve Knights of great purity. The legend described these beings of superhuman perfection gathering around a Round Table as a symbol of their equal holiness.

But Wolfram of Eschenbach, the inspired Troubadour, thus defined the subject of this legend:

> " Profusion of wishes and Paradise:
> Such was the Grail (compared to which earthly
> Brightness is dull), the Stone of Light: "

He also taught us the Biblical origin of the Grail:

> " A pagan (he was called Flegetanis)
> Renowned for his deep learning,
> Elected from the race of Salomon,
> Born from Israel's stock,
> Was the first to lead us towards the Grail."

There is little doubt that this revelation came down from Spain to Romany, for Wolfram of Eschenbach added:

> " In the dust of Toledo,
> Guyot, a master of high renown,
> Found in intermingled pagan writing,
> The Legend from which all legends spring."

As has been indicated above, the Prophets of Israel used the words " the Rock and the Stones " to designate the Divine Spirit as a whole and in its different parts. Now, the legend of the Grail came from Iran where Manicheism was flourishing and where " Gohral " meant " Sacred Stone." A slight deformation seems to have transformed " Holy Gohral " into " Holy Grail." Consequently the Grail, *Stone of Light* . . . a lofty symbol, suggested the idea of God who is Spirit, and of the spiritual world bathing in divine light. But this Stone of Grail, this Sacred Emerald was in the shape of a cup; it had contained the blood of the Expiring Saviour whose death was the emblem of the life-giving divine sacrifice ; and the Stone of Light and the Divine Blood were, for the Catharists, representations of Spirit and Life, inseparable and of the same essence under their different aspects.

Then comparing again dispersed documents, they came to the " Primordial source of all legends," which is the " Primordial Cause of all causes." In this cup-shaped stone of Grail, their far-seeing eyes detected the unbounded universe framed by the Spirit of God materialized and enshrouded in His creation, of the same essence as Him, living from His Life and being Himself in His infinite diversity.

And lastly the Grail " Profusion of wishes and Paradise " was an artless translation, picturing the bliss of the Elect, living the life of Spirit, in God who is bliss: Spirit is infinite and its joy is infinitude!

In a wider sense, the doctrine of the Pure proclaiming the primacy of Spirit has been represented " by a heaven-fallen stone dispensing light and consolation to the world." (O. Rahn, *The Crusade against the Grail,* p. 171).

How wise of them to present under the form of mute symbols the mystery of unseen realities transcending human understanding!

THE CATHARIST WISDOM

It seems idle to say that some of these tales being related to mythology and pantheism were of heathen origin and consequently considered as worthless in Christian countries. For the meaning of most of the symbols and legends here mentioned are closely connected with the accepted truths of Christianism. The Holy Grail, for instance, is akin to the *Ark of Testimony* or Ark of the Covenant. Executed in accordance with the directions given by the Lord to Moses, this Ark was a casket of noble proportions, made of gold-plated acacia-wood, which contained the Law of God engraved on two stone tablets and a cup full of *manna*! The double sign of Spirit and Life might already be detected therein. But the manna placed into the sacred Ark bears a name greatly resembling that of *Mani.*

We cannot but admire the richness of human mind and its cleverness at hiding under various forms and legends what it could grasp of eternal truths. In this art the Catharists were

surprisingly clear-sighted. They borrowed in each and every system that which they knew to conform to the realities that last. The Perfect made their own the truths they had acknowledged, whatever their origins might have been. Following there the example of the Manicheists, the Albigenses taught the world that the informations drawn from every source, provided they be verified and controlled, contrived to form a whole whose splendour widely outshone that of the closely shut up religious systems.

Thus did the Troubadours, followers of that doctrine, draw the subjects of their poems from a wealthy mine. Messengers between the Perfect and the common people they propagated by their songs, these truths just glimpsed at, which so many souls were yearning for. Under pretence of telling their tales they mingled with everybody, going from place to place, stopping at castles where the hours seemed long to while away and recreations were welcome. They were often bidden to stay at lonely mansions. Their poems were appreciated, they delighted even those who, though unable to understand their inner meaning, were fond of the intellectual pleasure brought to them by these passing singers. But it often happened that more advanced souls felt intuitively the lofty ideas hidden behind that poetry that came to them like a heavenly rain. Then conversations would arise between the traveller and his hosts . . . and thus throve the thoughts of the Wise, spiritual food to the souls and hearts. Links were established in that way between the Perfect and the families scattered across the Provinces of Romany! It has been said, also that some Catharists would study medicine in order to mingle more closely with people. Thanks to these proceedings, the doctrine of the Albigenses spread with the least danger possible for the good Word and for its messengers, maintaining life by the renewal of ideas and teachings.

When the hostile movement burst out at the instigation of the Roman Church that was frightened at the growing success of the Albigenses, it disclosed the importance of their positions, spreading over Romany and far away like an immense spiritual empire. Up till 1160, when the council of Tours condemned that heresy, the religion of the Pure exercised its influence even on

Catholicism. Both systems were too closely related not to interpenetrate one another. Thus about 1160, Maurice of Sully, Bishop of Paris, preached a sermon of which a part has been preserved on account of its perfect style. We cannot determine whether this bishop was a Catholic or a Catharist, but the following extract testifies to an inspiration closer to Albigeism than to the Roman Church:

" There was a good monk who often prayed to God to show him something of the great sweetness He promises and gives to those who love Him; and our Lord granted him his wish. For, lo! as he sate him down one morning, all by himself in the Cloister of the Abbey, there God sent him an angel in the shape of a bird, who sat down before him ; and as he looked at this angel which he ignored was an angel, and believed to be a bird, he gazed at its beauty so deeply that he forgot all he had seen before, and up he stood to catch the bird he greatly desired. But, as he came close to it, the bird fluttered backwards a little, and the bird attracted the Good Man towards it, so that he fancied he was in a forest out of the Abbey. So he went forwards to capture it, and then the bird flew on a branch, and began singing so sweetly that no sweetness could compare with it. There was the Good Man in front of the bird, looking at the beauty of it, listening to the sweetness of its song so attentively that he forgot all earthly things."

THE END OF THE CATHARISTS

And yet those " Good Men " were exterminated! The cruel law that crushes down unmercifully the holy souls whose ideal is to bring to the world peace, light, love, hope . . . set to work against them. Should the Pure, like all the other martyrs, endure the bitterest pangs before taking the path to the stars? Does man only reach final victory, through the most horrid tortures accepted and born without faltering? Who could answer that question? We see but one side of things. We only know the Perfect had said to the world: " God is love . . . we must establish the reign of God which is a reign of Love," and men had preferred war and ruins. The Perfect had shown their priceless treasure

and wanted to share it with their brethren, but their brethren had turned upon them, destroying them and their treasure . . . and on earth, death took the place of life!

The Catharists' treasure! Invaluable treasure! In recent times, it was supposed to be found in the grottoes or the ruins of Sabarthès, as a material wealth. It was anything but perishable gold! The opulence of the Albigenses consisted of riches compared to which the earthly ones are worthless. They were inaccessible to destruction, placed so high up in the spiritual world, that they could not be taken away from those to whom they belonged! If the Catharists, just before being defeated, burnt to ashes their precious manuscripts, they certainly annihilated thus all that was palpable in their treasure. But in the Beyond, the sacred Truths subsisted whose untarnished brightness had enlightened their path up to the entrance of Eternal Life! When the legend mentions the great Esclarmonde of Foix retiring, dove-like, towards Asia, after the final ruin of Albigeism, she symbolized the Spirit lighting the world by means of the Catharist doctrine and rising to Heaven beyond the earth for ever hostile to souls that are God's beloved ones!

In reality the Pyrenean Thabor, its castles and its caves, are sheltering the remains of a momentous past. The superhuman souls of the Albigenses, incarnated the power of a wisdom accumulated during centuries in civilizations now extinct. They loved Truth and taught it to men ; their Christianity was that which "has no arms against truth." In constituting their spiritual treasure, they gave to their system a granitic base; they created the Church of Love, the ideal Church that consoled the sufferings of man, uplifted human love, and glorified the Love of God!

None could shake their beliefs that they propped up by certainties. How could the Perfect disown acquired knowledge of such value? Torments, worse than death, were powerless to separate these souls from their doctrine, the source of their communion with God . . . They cherished it as the Only thing, as their holiness that was its consequence, and that they were certain of taking with them beyond the tomb . . . When the hour of the supreme trials arrived, they were seen to walk to torture without

fainting, looking proudly at death which had ceased to scare them, and which was only for them the open passage to Blessed Immortality!

They passed . . . like a surge of humanity, that rose very high to disappear suddenly in a light of apotheosis, forever withdrawn from the world of suffering! They had won the Kingdom of Spirit, so long foreseen through their symbols. Their souls had penetrated the mystery of the Holy Grail; they had secured it, having gone through "The Straight Gate," and all the obstacles that cut off the Holy City from the profane world! Like the pure Knights of the "Round Table," they had discovered the Kingdom of Heaven, during long researches, in Its lofty retreat, and they were going, like them, to take the place of the Watchers that guard the borders of the Holy Land. . .

But, with them, went the Spirit that visited humanity under their empire. The luminous symbols, hereafter empty of meaning, retired to the heights in the dim light of afar, whence they would be vainly sought after.

After the death of the White Knights, after the extermination that followed the fall of Montsegur, last rempart of the Pure, Romany became a wilderness, spiritually sunken in a death-like sleep! And a XIII century legend stated that a certain *King of Occitany* had been received, with his *people*, in a palace of *Immortality*, while his forsaken earthly country had become *deserted Romany*!

THE IDEAL OF INDIAN SAINTHOOD

CONCEPTION OF GURU FROM THE VEDIC TIMES UP TO THE MODERN

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The high conception of enthroning the saintly form of a *sadguru* (perfect Spiritual Guide) in the heart of a *sādhaka*

(aspirant after God) and its importance in spiritual realization has become traditional in the Hindu mind. In fact, there is a great deal of truth in the doctrine that truth is not realizable without a *sadguru*. This doctrine of *guru-vāda* has been very forcibly enunciated from time immemorial and laid down in the Hindu Śāstras.

A little consideration of all that we see around us is bound to fill the mind with a sense of mystery of a very high degree, which abounds in the Universe. The first search begins with the wondrous vision all around, and naturally the Vedic Seers present a cosmogony of the Universe—a cosmogony that was revealed to them in their spiritual aspiration and search. The harmony pervading the universe gives rise to the panpsychic vision. But the search soon became internal and was directed inmost, and the real basis of philosophy and mysticism was based upon that search. But the search cannot be self-directed; because the mystery of existence is so vast, that soon the aspirant feels the incentive to approach teachers who are versed in spiritual science and get light therefrom. The idea of a *guru* grew up in the mind, not only out of individual necessity, but of the demand of the collective spirit, for the spiritual insight, after all, gives the vision of the great race of the teachers, who are active in establishing a spiritual hierarchy, so that humanity can be benefited individually and collectively and may be inspired to establish the world-federation in spirit.

The entire basis of the Hindu ideas of religion rests on the theory of surrendering oneself completely to the *guru* for the purification of the mind by means of *bīja-mantra*. It has the analogy of the sowing of seeds in the soil. Just as the seed is sown in the soil after it has been thoroughly cultivated and prepared and the plant grows by further culture into a big tree from the seed under the ground, so also the mind is properly cultivated and the *guru* sows the seed in it. This is perhaps the first essential for the attainment of the highest knowledge. The flesh and blood and bones encircling the inner self have got to be pierced through, and it is not possible to do it, only by the physical intelligence of man—

Naiva vāchā na manasā prāpta śakyo na chakshushā
Astīti brūvato'nyatra katham tadupalabhyate.

" It is sure that the Ātman is not to be known by speech, nor by mind, nor by eyes and in fact not by any one of these physical senses. So how can it be known except from one who believes in its existence?"

The question might arise as to what those teachings lead to. It will be found that those would lead the course of life automatically in a definite and distinct path without any vacillation. The life would be placed under the restraint of some disciplinary rules in the shape of rites and ceremonies, which are no mean factors in an organization. At the same time it will be felt that they are not all. It will give the life a definite shape and mould, and it will not be led by the wrong idea that the isolation of the body from the outside world and the ordinary pursuits of life is desirable.

Let us now examine, in short, the Hindu texts from the Vedic period up to the present, regarding the subject. In the *Praśna Upanishad* we find that the son of Bharadvāja and other Ṛishis went to Bhagavān Pippalada and questioned him about the highest knowledge to whom he replied thus:—

" Go back for a year and observe celibacy and meditation with full devotion, and then ask me questions as you like. If I know I shall tell you."

The great commentator Śaṅkarāchārya has interpreted the word *"Śraddhayā"* as *āstikya buddhyā ādaravantaḥ—samyak guru śuśrūshāparaḥ santaḥ.*

Again in the *Muṇḍaka Upanishad* we find:—

" One dedicated to the knowledge of Brahman after a careful examination of the results of the works done by his physical exertion attains self-lessness, realizing the fact that as there is nothing permanent in this world, there is no use pursuing after transient objects. Such a man in order to obtain that true knowledge of the divine, should approach and completely surrender himself to the *guru* who is a thorough adept in that

knowledge, with materials for worship, such as fuel for sacrificial purposes, in his hand to please him."

Śaṅkarāchārya in his commentary gives a cogent reason for the above proposition, anticipating a contrary argument that it might not be true in cases of men who are thoroughly self-educated by saying—

" Even if a man is thoroughly conversant with all the Śāstras, search after the Divine should not be attempted by himself, and it is therefore that the introduction of the *guru* in this respect, is enjoined in the authority of the text."

In later ages, from the texts of the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the above theory can also be substantiated. The Hindus strongly believe in the incarnation of God in Śrī Rāmachandra, the king of Ayodhyā and even the name of Rāma is still now held to be an infallible guide to millions of people in India. Even with such a great conception of Rāma, He has been described to be thoroughly devoted to his *guru*, Vasishṭha Deva, such a devotion being the highest duty of a man. In the *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*, Rāma is seen with folded hands falling at the feet of Vasishṭha Deva, and Śītā bringing water in a golden vessel and both of them washing their feet and bathing their heads in it. Vasishṭha Deva cognizant of the incarnation of God in Rāma, smilingly said thus:—

" Even Śiva considered himself fortunate by using the water of your feet on his head, and my father Brahmā got rid of all his evils by recognizing your feet to be his pilgrimage. What you are saying now is only to teach people as to how one should behave with one's *guru*. I know full well that you have accepted this incarnation with Lakshmī."

Also in the *Mahābhārata*, we find that Śrī Kṛishṇa, who also like Rāmachandra is God incarnate, and whose perfection of life in all directions surpasses human understanding, himself passed through the ceremony of initiation by his *guru*, Sandīpani Ṛishi in order to teach the doctrine to others.

In *Śrīmad Bhāgavata Purāṇa* we find the climax reached and the *guru* has been made identical with Brahman:—

Sarve priyatamaśchātmā yato na bhayamanvapi
Iti veda sarve vidvān yo vidvān sa gururhariḥ.

" There is not the least fear in practising devotion to God, because, He is the dearest of all ; one who knows this is wise and the wise one is *Guru* and *Guru* is God."

Tasmāt gurum prapadyeta jijñāsuḥ śreya uttamam
Śabde pare cha nishṇātam brahmaṇyupa samāśrayam
Tañcha bhāgavatān dharmān śikshed gurvātmadaivataḥ
Amāyayā anuvṛittyā yaistushyedātmātmado Hariḥ!

In the Tāntric ages this idea was advanced to a very great extent and in fact, the teachings of the Upanishads, the *Mahābhārata,* the Purāṇas and the Saṁhitās were all concentrated only to the worship of the *guru,* advocated very strongly in practical life in *mantras* and sayings of the Ṛishis, and the last and finishing stroke was given by the text

na guroradhikam tattvam na guroradhikam tapaḥ.

Later on, there was a rude shock to the Hindu spiritual culture by the Mohammedan conquest, and gradually a dark age ensued, resulting in a thorough degradation of the moral, physical and spiritual culture of the Hindus and in the chaos that followed, sprang up Śrī Gaurāṅga at Navadwip in Bengal. Divinity in him was apparent to any one who came in touch with him, and also to others who heard about him. He, in course of his short period of incarnation about four hundred years ago, brought back to the Hindu mind, the lost memory of the high ideals of the Hindu religion and preached throughout the length and breadth of India the efficacy of uttering the name of Śrī Kṛishṇa and Śrī Rāma as also the doctrine of *guru*-cult so effectively followed in former ages. Simultaneously with him Guru Nānak, the great Sikh leader, preached the same ideal in the Punjab and Northern India. These two forces were strong enough to revive the old ideal for some centuries but again lost their hold by several counter-influences from other parts of the world.

India gradually fell within the clutches of the Western culture by the English conquest and again a confusion followed, and the old ideals were threatened to be swept away, by the new streams

of thoughts imported from other countries, till the advent of Raja Rammohun Roy in Bengal, who succeeded in reviving the old ideals of the Upanishads to a great extent, and he was followed by Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, the father of the poet Rabindranath, who by his individual effort established the Brahma Samaj. All the educated Bengalis, having a hankering after spiritual culture, flocked round it in numbers, and found best food for the satisfaction of their religious hunger.

About the end of the last century, Brahmananda Keshabchandra Sen gave a distinct and definite shape to it by his unique, unrivalled and silver eloquence both in India and abroad, and succeeded in earning a world-wide fame by partially laying open the hidden treasures of India to the outside world. While Keshabchandra was actively occupying the mind of Bengal, Sri Ramakrishna the great saint of Dakshineswar brought out the Hindu ideals in its entirety and he was thronged with all seekers after truth, including Keshabchandra and Bejoy Krishna Goswami.

Swami Vivekananda, the great thinker and religious preacher whose fame is now spread throughout the world by his valuable messages through his missionary works sat at the feet of Ramakrishna and accepted him as his *guru*.

We cannot conclude this paper without making reference to Bejoy Krishna Goswami, the evolution of whose spiritual life up to the end of the last century is interesting to follow. A descendant of Advaitāchārya of Santipur, he was born under the Vaishṇavic influences, but in his youth he was struck by the ideals of the Brahma Samaj as established by Maharshi Debendranath and Keshabchandra, and joined it as a co-worker of Keshabchandra. He could, however, no longer get satisfaction of his strong desires for the attainment of that truth, which gives an unfailing and perpetual bliss of mind. He went, out of his fold in search for the truth, under pain of death, in the Himalayas and moved about quite alone suffering through severe austerities and at last found out the truth through the grace of his *guru* Brahmananda Paramahamsa of Manasarovar (Tibet). He attained perfect bliss, and all his doubts were at once removed. He came back to Bengal and began to preach the doctrines which were

mysteriously revealed to him, and in course of a very few years turned the tide of the religious life of Bengal by a practical exhibition in himself, of the light that he received. He had a hunger for this light, and it came to him when he was in touch with his *guru* and his soul blossomed into realization, by the seeds sown by the *guru*. The central basis of his spiritual life, derived from practical experience, was that truth cannot be fully achieved by one's own single-handed efforts, except through the grace of *guru*. This he preached not by any missionary work, but by his own example to his numerous disciples and it is therefore that he hid within himself the truth of the future. He was bold enough to put forth his views in recognition of the eternal truth in the ancient tradition of *guru-vāda* in these days of pugnacious individuality. He was absolutely non-sectarian and men of all castes and creeds were received by him without any distinction. The substance of all his teachings was to remember mentally (without uttering a single syllable) a potential name of Almighty and all-pervading God in the shape of a *mantra* delivered by him with the inhalation and exhalation of breath, so that any one accustomed to this form of worship would be mentally praying to God every moment up to the last breath of his life. The name of the Lord to him represented the thing for which the name stands in whatever shape or form that may appear out of the thoughts for the thing itself. He was full of Universal love and his catholicity of views made him respectful to all who had devotion to God, in any way they liked. His philosophy, if any, was the *Achintya Bhedābheda* (i.e. inconceivable difference in identity and identity in difference) as adumbrated by Śrī Gaurāṅga.

Kuladananda Brahmachari was an ardent disciple of Bejoy Krishna, and while a mere school boy, he was attracted by his teachings, and was in constant company with him for full thirteen years. Once when he was very much dejected, the position of *guru* in the life of a disciple was explained to him very beautifully thus by Bejoy Krishna—" You are now nothing but a fœtus in the womb. What have you got to think for your self? Just as the mother can feel the condition of the womb and can perceive

when it moves, likewise, the *guru* is always cognizant of all the conditions and workings of the disciple so long as the child does not come out of the womb it has absolutely no independent power of its own. Every particle of what the mother takes as her meal permeates through the blood channels to the fœtus and it is nourished only by that. So whatever is acquired by the *guru*, the disciple gets only his necessary share. The disciple improves with the improvement of the *guru*. After the birth, it is the mother that feeds the child and nourishes it by providing all necessary things. The *guru* would never leave the disciple, even after the attainment of his perfection."

Kuladananda was trained in the life of *brahmacharya* by Bejoy Krishna. His permanent contribution to Bengali literature consists in the publication of his diary in five volumes styled *Śrī Śrī Sadguru Saṅga*. It embodies his noted experiences and realizations as well as the precious teachings of Bejoy Krishna. He notes thus regarding his experience—" Since the first day I began to practise *brahmacharya*, I was a changed man, and both my body and mind were transformed into a new shape. I could see through my body as if in a glass, and feel that it had become much lighter and Vedic *mantras* of *brahmacharya* had come automatically to my remembrance, with the feeling that I am a true Brahmin and Ṛishi. The *mantras* are all alive and full of force and I felt the body absolutely pure." This is the practical experience of one whose life was dedicated to his *guru*. He nailed the flag of his *guru* to his mast before everything else and preached up to the last the spiritual value of surrendering to the *guru*.

Bejoy Krishna so steadfastly held to his truth and he had to pass through so many tests and ordeals that he had finally to suffer expulsion from home for his refusal to follow a false and hollow life of hereditary profession. The gradual evolution in his life showed how potent a force he was in Indian spirituality. He lived as a light-house to thousands of travellers in their groping pilgrimage for truth. He never preached what he did not practise in his own life. And this is the distinct feature of the Indian Saints. He remained immersed in his own self, in deep meditation,

and the reflection of his life created a soothing atmosphere all around.

Reverence of personality in the sainthood is thus the essence of Eastern culture. As the poet Rabindranath said, " We in India do believe in personality. In the West you have admiration for power. And wherever our heart is touched with something that is perfect in human nature in its completeness, in the spiritual aspect of it, it goes deep and we bow our heads before it. We have a feeling of reverence for the Divine in man and we revere it."

BRAHMACHARYA IN ANCIENT INDIA

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The practice of *brahmacharya* involving a rigid discipline of both mind and body is as old as the Vedas. It is mentioned in the *Ṛig-Veda,* and a *brahmachārin,* or one practising *brahmacharya,* is called ' a member of the gods' body ' (X. 109.5). In the *Atharva-Veda* one whole hymn is devoted to the glorification of *brahmacharya.* " The *brahmachārin* moves inciting both hemispheres of the world; in him the gods are harmonized. He holds the heavens and the earth; he fills the teacher with creative fervour." " Through *brahmacharya,* through creative fervour, the gods drove away death. Indra, forsooth, brought the light to the gods by his *brahmacharya.*" In the same hymn we find the *brahmachārin,* as invested with the sacred girdle, wearing skin of the black antelope, collecting firewood, and begging alms for food. The youth is initiated by the teacher into a new life (*upa-nī*), and the custom survives to the present day in the *upanayana* ceremony for the twice-born boys. The *Chhāndogya Upanishad* (II. 23.1) states that " *Dharma* rests upon three supports—first, sacrifice, study, and giving alms; second, penance; third, observance of rigid *brahmacharya,* living in the house of

the teacher. All of them lead men to the region of the holies ; but he who is established in Brahman attains deathlessness."

' Brahmacharya ' is a word which is peculiarly Indian in character and is very difficult to translate into English or any other European language. It is due to the fact that it conveys three or more different meanings and is sometimes used to denote a compound of ideas drawn from all the different meanings. Literally *' brahmachārin '* means one who devotes himself to Brahman. Now what is Brahman? The lexicographer Amara gives five different meanings to 'Brahman,' viz. (1) Veda, (2) the Essence, (3) Penance, (4) a Brahmin and (5) the god Prajāpati, and explains the word *' brahmachārin '* as one studying the Vedas, or one making penance, or one living in the first of the four stages of life.

An interesting story is related in the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* (III. 10.11) regarding the value of *brahmacharya* or study of the Vedas. The sage Bharadvāja having passed three-fourths of the span of human life in *brahmacharya* became old and decrepit. The god Indra coming to him said, " Bharadvāja, if I give you the fourth quarter of life, what will you do with it?" He replied, " It will also be passed in *brahmacharya.*" Indra then showed him three large mountains which were not seen before. He took three handfuls out of them, and said to Bharadvāja, " These mountains are the Vedas. Limitless are the Vedas. Of these you have done only these three handfuls in the three quarters of your life, the rest you have not yet studied. Come now, learn the Sāvitrī and Sāvitrī is all knowledge." In this passage the word *brahmacharya* means only the study of the Vedas and nothing else.

The *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* (I. 1.16) says, " Brahman verily created Brahmā on a lotus leaf. Of a truth he, Brahmā, thus created, thought, ' By what single syllable can I perceive all desirable objects, all regions, all gods, all Vedas, all sacrifices, all words, all function, all creation, whether movable or ' immovable.' He performed *brahmacharya* and he beheld the syllable *Om.*" Here *brahmacharya* means penance and not the study of the Vedas. The *Mahābhārata* (XII. 161.2) also states that the

whole creation was done by Prajāpati by means of penance (*tapas*). It is from a combination of these two meanings that a third meaning of *brahmacharya* developed. We hear frequently of *varṇāśrama* system. Mankind is divided into four *varṇas* or orders, viz. *Brāhmaṇa, Kshatriya, Vaiśya, Śudra,* and the life of the first three orders is divided into four stages or *āśramas,* viz. *brahmacharya, gārhasthya, vānaprastha, bhaikshya.* Here *brahmacharya* means the austere life of a student in the house of his teacher where the whole attention is devoted to the study of the Veda in an atmosphere of rigid discipline almost amounting to penance. Elaborate rules were laid down to guide the life of a student *brahmachārin* in respect of his food, clothing, and general habits.

The beginnings of the *āśrama* theory are met with as early as the period of the *Ṛig-Veda,* and the fullest development is reached in the time of the Upanishads. The *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* (ch. 2) prescribes a period of twenty-four, or at least twelve, years for the *brahmacharya* of a Vedic student, and urges him to conquer pride, the love of fame, sleep, anger, bragging, the thought of personal beauty, and love of scents, which remain deposited for the period in question with the antelope, the teacher, the boa, the boar, the water, the maiden, and the plants respectively. The *Maitrāyaṇa-Brāhmaṇa-Upanishad* states, "This is indeed the remedy for the elemental self: Acquirement of the knowledge of the Vedas, performance of one's own duty, therefore conformity on the part of each man to the *āśrama* to which he happens to belong. This is indeed the rule for one's own duty, other performances are like the mere branches of a stem. And if people say that a man does not belong to any of the *āśramas,* and that he is an ascetic, this is wrong" (IV. 3). The *Taittirīya Upanishad* contains a fine picture of the relation between the teacher and the pupil during the period of *brahmacharya* (I. 3), and also detailed instructions of the teacher to the pupil when the latter is going back to his home. "Say what is true; do thy duty; do not neglect the study of the Vedas. After having brought to thy teacher his proper fee, do not cut off the line of children. . . . Do not swerve from the truth. . . . Do not neglect the sacrificial works due to the gods

and manes. Let thy mother be to thee like unto a god, also thy father, thy teacher, and thy guest. Whatever actions are blameless, not others, shouldst thou perform. . . . Whatever thou givest, give with faith, with graciousness, with modesty, with respect, with kindness" (I. 11). *Brahmacharya* had prepared the young man to lead such a life of virtue in the world, and it was compulsory especially for the Brahmins. The *Chhāndogya Upanishad* (VI. 1. 1-2) states that Āruṇi asked his son Śvetaketu to take to *brahmacharya,* because no one of his family had ever neglected the study of the Vedas. Accordingly Śvetaketu went to the house of the teacher at the age of twelve and studied all the Vedas there till the age of twenty-four.

A slightly different meaning of the word '*brahmacharya*' is found in the *Brihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* (VI. 2.4), where it denotes not the first of the four *āśramas* in life, but the state of being a pupil only for a period. Gautama on learning from his son Śvetaketu that he had been asked some questions by king Pravāhaṇa Jaibali which neither the father nor the son could answer, determined to go to the king and live as his pupil for some time. Though an old man at the time, such was his hankering for knowledge that he became initiated as a pupil to a Kshatriya. In this case '*brahmacharya*' denotes not the study of the Vedas only, nor the making of a penance, nor the life of a student youth in the first *āśrama,* but the course of instruction in an unknown science from an expert.

There were people in society who thought that everything, including the knowledge of the Veda, could be acquired by means of penance, and that, therefore, spending long years to learn bit by bit from the teacher was not necessary. Manu mentions two kinds of *snātaka* (one who has taken the ceremonial bath on the completion of his period of studentship)—viz. *vidyāsnātaka* who has completed his studies at the house of the teacher, and *vratasnātaka* who has completed his course of instruction in various religious practices (IV. 31). Of these two the *vidyāsnātaka* is the more honourable, and the residence of a student in the house of his teacher for studying is regarded as essential for the acquirement of Vedic knowledge without which a Brahmin is not worth

the name. The story of Raibhya and Bharadvāja in the *Mahābhārata* (III. 125-138) describes how Raibhya and his sons who were regular scholars were held in greater esteem by the people than Bharadvāja and his son Yavakrīta who were devoted to penance only, and how the jealous Yavakrīta brought ruin upon himself and his father by his effort to acquire Vedic knowledge by penance only. The god Indra calls it *amārga*, i.e. wrong way, and likens it to the mad determination of an old, feeble man to construct a causeway across the rushing Ganges by throwing handfuls of sand in the water. When Yavakrīta was finally puzzled because of the uselessness of the Vedic knowledge which he had acquired by his penance, the gods pointed out that the knowledge of Raibhya was much better because it had been gained by immense pains and devoted service to the teacher! The short-cut method of passing examinations and acquiring knowledge is as fruitless today as it was in the past.

A fifth meaning is attached to the word '*brahmacharya*' as it occurs in Patañjali's *Yoga-Sūtra* (II. 30),[1] where the commentator explains it as *upastha-saṁyama* or control of the sexual organ. The *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* states, "To think of the opposite sex, to converse about their charms, to sport with them, to gaze covetously at them, to talk with them secretly, determination to win them, to take action for the purpose, and cohabitation—these eight are called *maithuna* by the wise men, and the converse is *brahmacharya*, which should be pursued for the increase of piety." It is in this sense that the word is more frequently used nowadays, but it is a secondary meaning, sexual desire being an obstacle in the path of a student as well as of an ascetic.

As the control of sexual desire is difficult without proper discipline of both body and mind, the rules prescribed for a student *brahmachārin* as regards his food, clothing, etc., are imposed also on those who are expected to remain in a state of purity and continence. Such *brahmacharya* is to be practised by a Hindu widow for life. Thus Manu says, "On the death of the husband the chaste wife should remain established in the rules of *brahmacharya*. Such a woman, even though childless, goes to

[1] Cf. *Yājñavalkya Saṁhitā*, III.312.

heaven as do the *brahmachārins.*" The *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* contains detailed instructions to regulate the life of a widow. Thus she is not to lie on a couch or to use a carriage; she is to avoid the use of scents, hair oil, fine cloth, garlands, sandal-wood paste, conch shell ornament, red vermillion, sweets, betel-leaf, mirror, the dressing of hair, and the rubbing of the body with oil. She should take one vegetarian meal only at the end of the day, and observe fast on the Ekādaśī day and also on days like Janmāshṭamī and Śivarātri. She ought not to see the face of a man other than a relative, and be present at a dance, musical entertainment, and feast.

Such *brahmacharya* for a short period is required to make a man pure and fit on such occasions as the offering of oblations to the manes, etc.[1]

Rules were carefully drawn up for the guidance of a student *brahmachārin's* life. The *Āpastamba Dharma-sūtra* (I. 1) states that " the initiation is the consecration in accordance with the texts of the Veda, of a male who is desirous of knowledge. . . . He from whom the pupil gathers true knowledge is called the *āchārya.* Him he should never offend. For he causes the pupil to be born a second time, and this second birth is better than the first birth. The father and the mother produce the body only. Let a *Brāhmaṇa* be initiated in spring, a *Kshatriya* in summer, a *Vaiśya* in autumn ; a *Brāhmaṇa* in the eighth year from his conception, a *Kshatriya* in the eleventh year, and a *Vaiśya* in the twelfth. . . . He who has been initiated shall dwell as a student in the house of his teacher for forty-eight years, or for thirty-six years, or for twenty-four years. Twelve years must be the shortest time for his residence with his teacher.

" He shall obey his teacher. He shall do what is serviceable to his teacher, he shall not contradict him. He shall always occupy a seat lower than that of his teacher. He shall not eat food offered at a funeral oblation or at a sacrifice, nor pungent condiments, salt, honey, or meat. He shall not sleep in the day-

[1] *Manu,* III.188-192; see *Pāraskara Grihya Sūtra,* I.8.21; *Aśvalāyana Grihya Sūtra,* I.8.10-12.

time. He shall not use perfumes. He shall preserve chastity. He shall not embellish himself by using ointments and the like. He shall not wash his body with hot water for pleasure. Let him not sport in the water whilst bathing. . . . Let him wear a skin only as his upper garment. Let him not look at dancing. Let him not go to gambling assemblies, nor to festive crowds. Let him not be addicted to gossiping. Let him be discreet. Let him not talk with women except for what is absolutely necessary. Let him be forgiving, untiring in fulfilling his duties, modest, possessed of self-command, energetic, free from anger, and free from envy.

" He shall go begging with a vessel in the morning and in the evening. Having taken alms he shall place them before his teacher and offer them to him. He may eat food after having been ordered to do so by his teacher. He shall not beg for his own sake alone. After he has eaten, he shall himself clean his dish. . . . In the evening and in the morning he shall fetch water in a vessel for the use of his teacher. Daily he shall fetch fuel from the forest and place it on the floor. After having kindled the fire, and having swept the ground around the altar, he shall place the sacred fuel on the fire every morning and evening.

" He shall be very attentive the whole day long, never allowing his mind to wander from the lesson during the time devoted to studying. And at other times he shall be attentive to the business of his teacher. And during the time for rest he shall give his mind to doubtful passages of the lesson learnt. . . Every day he shall put his teacher to bed after having washed his feet and after having rubbed them. He shall retire to rest after having received the teacher's permission. . . . He shall approach his teacher with the same reverence as a deity, without telling idle stories, attentive and listening eagerly to his words.

" He shall not pluck flowers or leaves in order to smell at them. He shall avoid the use of shoes, umbrellas, chariots, and the like luxuries. He shall not smile. If he smiles, he shall smile covering the mouth with his hand. He shall not bring his face near a woman in order to inhale the fragrance of her body; nor shall he desire a woman in his heart; nor shall he touch a

woman without a particular reason. . . . After having studied as many branches of learning as he can, he shall procure in a righteous manner the fee to be given to his teacher, according to his power. . . . Even after return home from the teacher's house the behaviour towards his teacher, as prescribed by those who know the law, must be observed by the pupil to the end."

According to the *Gautama Dharma-śāstra* (II. 13-50), " the pupil shall avoid honey, meat, perfumes, garlands, sleep in the daytime, ointments, collyrium, carriage, shoes, umbrella, love, anger, covetousness, garrulity, bathing for pleasure, playing musical instruments, cleaning the teeth, elation, dancing, singing, calumny, and fear. In the presence of his teacher he should not cover his throat, lean, stretch out his feet, spit, laugh, yawn, and crack finger-joints. To gaze at and touch women; gambling; taking things not offered; injuring animate beings; pronouncing the name of the teacher; making bitter speeches; and drinking spirituous liquor—these are forbidden. He shall occupy a seat lower than that of his teacher, shall get up from bed before him and retire to rest after him. . . . The teacher is chief among all *gurus*."

The *Yājñavalkya Saṁhitā* (ch. I) likewise urges the pupil to " abstain from honey, meat, ointments, substances turned sour, the company of women, injury to animals, vulgar words, and slandering," and remarks that " the twice-born *brahmachārin*, who studies daily, enjoys the fruit of bestowing the earth full of treasure and of the highest austerities."

" If a student eats meat, even though given by his teacher as leavings, he shall perform a *Krichchhra* penance of twelve days' duration and afterwards finish his vow" (*Vasishṭha Dharma-śāstra* XXIII. 11).

As the principal occupations of a good Brahmin were studying and teaching with occasional work at sacrifices, the life of a *brahmachārin* came to be regarded as an ideal even for ex-student householders. Besides, the influence of *brahmacharya* extending over a period of from twelve to forty-eight years could not but mould the character in a certain fashion, as the modern public school training, though for a much shorter period, does in England.

The rules guiding the life of a Brahmin householder show that there is not to be a sharp deviation from the manners and practices of a *brahmachārin*. A good Brahmin after marrying and becoming a householder should earn his livelihood by work which does not involve any injury to living beings. He should not try to earn more than what is absolutely necessary for living, and must on no account accept service. A Brahmin should maintain himself and his family by teaching, acting as priest at sacrifices, and accepting gifts, but, if possible, by teaching only. He must not do anything which may excite the passions, and which are against the precepts of the Śāstras. Every day he should study the Vedas, and other religious books, and offer sacrifices to gods and manes. His doors must remain always open to guests who should be fed and treated as gods, and he should never be sparing in his charities to deserving persons. These constitute the *Pañcha-yajña* the daily performance of which is necessary to cleanse a person of the sins which are incurred consciously and unconsciously in the act of living. A *snātaka* householder should have his hair, nails and beard attended to by a barber, wear white cloth, remain clean both externally and internally, patient and enduring, devoted to the study of the Veda, and temperate in habits. He should always be respectful to his teacher, father, mother, a Brahmin, cow and ascetic. He must not seek to punish anybody except his son and pupil. While observing the rites and vows of the Dharmaśāstras (*niyama*), he should at the same time cultivate the virtues known as *yama,* such as control of the sexual desire, philanthropy, forgiveness, speaking the truth, purity of mind, non-injury to animals, abstaining from stealing, and sweet temper. He should not eat meat except at sacrifices. (Manu, IV ; *Vyāsasaṁhitā*, III).

Such was the emphasis put upon the practice of *brahmacharya* and the unreality of the world and all worldly things in the Upanishads and later religious books that many of the student *brahmachārins* were reluctant to give up their *brahmacharya* and live a married life with wife and children. Who would then offer sacrifices to the gods and manes, which constitute the fundamental basis of the Vedic religion? The pendulum, therefore, had to be

pushed backward a little, and the virtues of the life of a householder began to be stressed. Thus the *Maitrāyaṇa-Brāhmaṇa Upanishad* declares that though " no one who is an ascetic brings his sacrificial works to perfection or obtains knowledge of the Highest Self," one must have passed through the different *āśramas* before one can become an ascetic (IV. 3). Manu warns that if a Brahmin becomes a *sannyāsin* or ascetic for attaining salvation without having studied the Vedas, produced sons, and performed sacrifices, he goes to hell (VI. 37), and remarks that of the four *āśramas* the life of the householder is the best (VI. 89). Lest anyone should argue that if *brahmacharya* was the noblest thing in creation without which true knowledge and salvation were unattainable and that, therefore, procreation of children should not be thought of, the law-givers were at pains to declare that the sexual intercourse between husband and wife at prescribed periods was not breach of *brahmacharya,* nay, the non-observance of marital duties was a sin leading to hell.

In spite of such injunctions there were some student *brahmachārins* who could not be induced to become householders, and their action evoked different opinions from different law-givers. Gautama, though declaring that the life of the householder is the source of the other *āśramas,* says that " according to some law-givers, a student *brahmachārin* after finishing his study of the Vedas may make his choice as to which of the orders he will enter next." (III. 1-3). This opinion is shared by Vasishṭha (VII. 3-4). Vyāsa, too, declares that nothing is more meritorious than the *gārhasthya āśrama* (IV. 2), yet acknowledges that he who observes *brahmacharya* from the day of initiation till death is a *naishṭhika brahmachārin* who attains union with Brahman, while he who observes it for a limited period as thirty-six years, is called an *upakurbānaka* (I. 40). The *Vishṇusmṛiti* also makes provision for *naishṭhika brahmacharya* (XXVIII. 46) and so also *Daksha-saṁhitā* (I. 8). The *Mahābhārata* states, "At the end of *brahmacharya a Brāhmaṇa* should in obedience to the order of his teacher take to one of the four *āśramas*. . . The *gārhasthya* is said to be the source of all merits" (XII. 233. 4-6). " One desirous of salvation acquires the right to enter the *bhaikshya āśrama* by

having performed the duties of a *brahmachārin*" (XII. 61. 7). The well-known story of Jaratkāru (I.13), on the other hand, gives a warning that a life-long *brahmachārin* does wrong both to himself and his fathers who are doomed to eternal sufferings because of the extinction of the family. The dispute between the respective claims of *gārhasthya* and *sannyāsa* was not, and could not, be finally settled.

I cannot conclude this subject without referring to the dialogue between Yudhishṭhira and Bhīshma in which the former asked if there was any common root and essence of the different religious doctrines and practices of the world. Bhīshma replied that everybody, irrespective of creed and denomination, should try to acquire *dama,* i.e. control of the senses, because *dama* is the highest virtue among men of all religions. A person possessed of *dama* is known by the following qualities—forgiveness, patience, non-injuring spirit, equal treatment to all, love of truth, sincerity, self-control, industry, sweetness, modesty, want of restlessness, generosity, want of anger, cheerfulness, want of jealousy, respectfulness to parents and teacher, and tenderness for all creatures (*Mahābhārata,* XII. 160). India, the land of *brahmacharya,* commends these words of the great celibate hero Bhīshma to this Parliament of Religions at the centenary of the great *brahmachārin* Sri Ramakrishna.

THOMAS PAINE AND THE RAMAKRISHNA CENTENARY

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The Sri Ramakrishna Centenary synchronizes with the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of the great Anerucab lover of truth and liberty, Thomas Paine (born January 29, 1737). While Paine is commonly considered an American, he was really a citizen of the world. Born in England, he played an important role in both American and French Revolutions. His *Rights of*

Man, published in London in 1791-2, was such a sensational success that it alarmed the British Government, which shortly outlawed the author and suppressed the book. While his earlier writings were on behalf of political liberty and equality and against the tyrannies and indiscriminations of the established political system, his *Age of Reason* was intended to clarify thought and strip off the pretences and superstitions of traditional religious belief. Curiously enough this book, so vehemently denounced in both France and America as a dastardly atheistic attack on all that was holy, was actually written in the midst of the French Revolution partly while its author was imprisoned in the Bastille, for the purpose of stemming the tide of vengeful hatred and utter unrighteousness which the revolutionaries had let loose. There can be little doubt that no book of modern times has been more widely read than the *Age of Reason*. It has been a potent factor in the revolution of religious thought. So far have the conceptions of the average man with respect to the Bible as a book of revelation been altered since Paine's day that his vigorous attack on the encrusted dogmas of the eighteenth century appears now, in many respects, as quaint and antiquated. Nevertheless, the great ideal of Paine set forth in his expressive declaration, " The world is my country, to do good is my religion," still largely represents the goal of much of the finest idealism of our own age.

Thomas Paine was thus one of the prophets of a true humanism. In our Western world at least (I pretend to no knowledge of the Eastern) the bedlam of contentious creeds has well-nigh disappeared. Less and less importance attaches to dogma and ceremony, and the basic realities of individual, and especially of social, life become more and more the concern of ethical leaders. Today we see that a just, humane and decent social medium is a prime essential for the rearing of just, humane and decent human beings.

But as one views the modern world scene, one realizes that the goal is still far away. One wonders sometimes whether we are advancing or receding. We seem to be caught in a hopeless dilemma: we can't have a better world until we rear a finer generation of men and women; and we can't rear that generation

until we get the better world in which alone they may develop. But man dare not lose faith in the ultimate achievement of the ideals of Paine, for man does not lose faith in himself. If he does that, he will surely sink back towards bestiality. Surely one of the strongest safeguards against such a final defeat and disaster is the world-wide participation of men of tolerance and goodwill in a congress designed to pool the wisdom and strengthen the purpose of aspiring humanity.

THE BHĀGAVATAS

A SEMASIOLOGICAL STUDY

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A green belt (Sanskrit *dvīpa*) with a genial climate girded the North Pole (*Meru*) in the Inter-glacial Age. Treasures (*vasu*, wealth, riches) of force and fecundity were scattered by the Aurora Borealis; the celestial luminary (*deva*, the shining one) energized (*vish*, to energize) the followers of Vishṇu-Vāsudeva after their long hibernation. Then came the last Ice Age with a cataclysmic reversal of atmospheric conditions; the Arctic nest snowed up and became unfit for human tenement. In rude dug-outs the heroic Vaishṇavas dared raging polar seas and after perilous adventures, stretching over unrecorded centuries, finally reached the Indian Midlands (*madhyadeśa*, midland). The Vaishṇava nobles to whom their feudal lords allotted (*bhāj*, to divide) large portions (*bhāga*, a portion) of land in the subjugated Midlands did homage and military service to the Bhāgavata, their leige-lord and land-donor. The Bhāgavata, a title given to Vishṇu-*śishya*, was exalted from an allotter of light and land to a disposer of fate and dispenser of destiny. A concept even more abstract is 'dispensation of Providence.' The Bhāgavatas, the ancient mariners from Meru's heights had long ceased to be rovers and raiders; they were settled on forms, and ploughed (*kṛish*, to plough) the land. Bhagavad-Vāsudeva was hymned

as Kṛishna, father and fount of the arable soil. A legend arose that prince Vasudeva, a staunch and loyal client of the Bhāgavata had from Śakti Devakī a Kshatriya son; Kṛishna-Vāsudeva, Devakī-*putra*, prince of the Outland, founded the Bhāgavata sect which rapidly conquered the midlands.

All we have, and all we are, is a free gift of the Giver, a *bhāga* of the Bhāgavata ; in inter-glacial language, the two words denote the northern light or Sun-god. Slavs are fatalists, and believe in an inscrutable, immutable destiny (*bhāga*); the Russian word for God is still *Bog*. Soviet Russia, with her anti-imperialistic policy of international fraternization (the sinister counterpart is world revolution) is writing the last chapter in the chequered Indo-European Chronicle.

Bhakti or love and devotion to the All-Giver originated among warrior-theists (*dvaitins*) rather than priestly monists (*advaitins*). The Bhāgavatas or the *bhakti*-nobility, love the Ever-Beautiful, manifest in transient beauty, and personified in the adorable Bhagavat-Kṛishṇa. *Bhakti-yoga* means self-realization through love. *Bhakti*-theism is dualistic (*dvaita*), whereas midland scholasticism raised Vedic polytheism to *advaita*—*"Ekaṁ Sad viprā bahudhā vadanti!"*

The Mahāyānists are Bhāgavatas ; they attacked the midland pantheon, and elaborated *Bhakti-yoga*. *Sāṁkhya-yoga* fortified these sturdy warrior-monotheists of old. In the fifth century B.C., Kṛishṇa-Vāsudeva was identified with Bhagavad-Vishṇu, the Sun-god. The midland hierarchy declared Bhagavad to be Brahman, the cream and essence or reality of the fugitive creation; Kṛishṇa and Rāma, the two favourite heroes of the Bhāgavata-Kshatriyas, were canonized as divine incarnations of Bhagavad-Brahman. Both heroes were glorified, beatified, in the revised version of the two epics. In honor of Kṛishṇa, the *Bhagavad-Gītā* or "Song of Destiny" and the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* were composed. The *Gītā* was first drafted in the second century B.C. and it came out in its present shape in the second century A.D. The song is a happy blend of psycho-analysis and sacrificial love, *sāṁkhya* and *bhakti*. " Devotion to Buddha " had grown stagnant and conventional; in the Mahāyāna schools the

Bhagavad-Gītā stimulated and revived *bhakti* for Buddha. The Brahmins, being scared by the wide spread of Buddhism, adopted *Bhakti-yoga,* and labelled the Buddhistic philosophy of love as orthodox. *Sāṁkhya-yoga,* the bedrock of Buddhism, had originated in the free-thinking atmosphere of the Outland where prince Kṛishṇa and his aristocratic household were leaders of the *bhakti* school. The first *bhaktas* were *rajarshis* or soldier-saints. King Janaka, one of these royal sages was averse to the plurality of Vedic Gods, and taught the proud Brahmins 'loyalty to the Lord' (*Īśvara-bhakti*) and self-realization (*ātma-buddhi*). The Vaishṇava vision of Śvetadvīpa, the lost paradise, emerged as the Bhāgavata religion, and won Madhyadeśa where the Sun-god Vishṇu lost his physical identity, and merged in Bhagavata. Vishṇuism, based on *Bhakti-yoga,* grips 150 million Hindus west of Benares.

Love intoxicates until the Lover and the Beloved are one. Śrī Kṛishṇa is the central sun round whom all other cherished *bhakti*-ideals pivot. His image, thrown on the mundane film, expresses infinitude imprinted on transient grandeur. Love is selfless, and casts out fear. Great lovers (*parā-bhaktas*) are dauntless cavaliers, and safe from evil. They must love the entire world. But their earthly yearnings are uplifted, as they contemplate Reality (Brahman) amidst the Vanity fair. Once *bhakti* is perfect (*parā*), *jñāna* goes along with it; Love and Wisdom meet and merge. "When I see my Beloved, I forget myself and everything in my soul-trance; I see only Infinite Unity, unconditioned by sound or shape, undifferentiated by *nāma-rūpa.*" As soon as Prahlāda realized his individuality, the universe stood before him and with it its celestial Builder with countless and glorious qualities. But in the *parā-bhakti* ecstasy, Prahlāda lost all consciousness of the cosmos and its architect. As long as the blessed Gopis lost sense of their personality, they were all Kṛishṇa their Beloved. But on remembering the one adorable Bhagavat they were Gopis again, and immediately appeared before them the Divine Shepherd-Boy, yellow-robed and fragrant-wreathed, with a smile on His lotus face like the radiant archer-God.

Sanskrit Semasiology, the evolution of culture by linguistic aid and evidence, is still a desideratum in Indian Colleges. A

tentative beginning has been made by the writer of these lines in *Indo-Iranian Philology* (published, Bombay, 1929). *Veda and Vedānta,* again approached on " biological " lines, will come out in Almora 1937.[1] Semasiology, the romance and life-side of words, is the Queen of philology, is the New philology.

ORDEAL BY POISON AMONG THE PRIMITIVE PEOPLE OF BELGIAN CONGO

THE NATIVE POINT OF VIEW

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I

It is customary to represent justice by a balance, of which the extended arms (the sections of the bar) firmly hold up the plates in exact equilibrium.

This emblem calls up various reflections.

Here I intend to institute a comparison which is perhaps quite original: the symbolic balance also represents the problems of colonization.

The principles of colonization (which nobody calls the bars!) are equally idealistic and rigid ; and practical experience shows that its " plates," by which I mean *the point of view of the natives* and *the point of view of the whites,* are mobile. Their equilibrium and their relative stability are desirable in the interest of sane colonization as in the exercise of justice.

The whole problem of an intelligent and far-sighted colonization consists essentially in this constant confrontation and in the search for this just reciprocal equilibrium.

Analogous cases are not at all rare.

As a homage to Sri Ramakrishna, the noble apostle of mutual

[1] Published by the Advaita Ashram, Mayavati, Almora, Himalayas, in November, 1937.—ED.

understanding and sympathy among peoples, I should like to attempt here, following the initial postulate, an analysis of a very characteristic institution of Belgian Congo—the ordeal by poison.

We shall study it here at first from the indigenous point of view, that is to say according to their conception of their law.

The institution selected offers various advantages of study. It is known in details and takes us deep into the sentiments and beliefs which the natives consider to be essential. Hence it is possible to examine and elucidate its form and foundation with precision.

II

The ordeal by poison among the Bwakas, an important Sudanese people of the District of Congo-Ubangi, is still in a pure state. It has not yet been contaminated by neighbouring indigenous influences, and it is not of foreign inspiration. This custom is derived from ancient times. Its purpose is to justify the native accused of sorcery, theft or misconduct, while its denegation is not admitted by the community. Exposed to public contempt and reprisals of the aggrieved party—or at least the party which considers itself to be aggrieved,—the accused absorbs the poison prescribed by custom and awakes its effects,—a decisive sentence. The innocence is demonstrated if he spontaneously throws out the poison. If on the other hand he retains it, and submits to its effects, his guilt is proved. The culprit is now to be punished unless the native society lets him go on payment of a pecuniary indemnity proportional to the injury caused and prescribed by customs.

These are clearly sacred rites developed according to a traditional sequence. Let us now analyse the constant features of this native law. At the foundation of this custom is the general faith in the justice of a Supreme Being, as well as in the teaching that He has created all human beings and He judges them. He exculpates the innocent and punishes the guilty. This faith is firmly established in the heart of the native. As the justice of man has not been able to solve the problem, the justice of God

will decide the issue. He is the Supreme Judge. His decision is accepted without reserve by the whole community.

A fundamental and general religious belief is, therefore, at the basis of the institution of ordeal by poison: it is indeed a true ordeal.

Just as the human being reaches the supreme court only through successive stages, in the same way does the native approach the Supreme Judge. The human cedes to the Divine. This method, considered to be just and decisive, is further implemented by the respect due to ancestors, for it is they who have transmitted this custom. This single fact on the other hand is sufficient to make them venerable.

This custom is thus venerable both from the point of view of human prescience and from that of religious reverence. It is solidly implanted on the two species of authority which are neither disputed nor disputable, and which are at the basis of normal indigenous society.

III

If we now proceed to study the procedure of this judicial institution, we shall discover that the accused possesses a whole series of safeguards. First and foremost, the greatest possible publicity. The accusation of sorcery, which is the most common cause of ordeal by poison, is public. It emanates from the community itself (relations, friends, clan-*confrères* of the native who is ill or dead) or from the Divine, the recognized intermediary qualified to formulate the action of occult forces, and consequently to determine the imputation. Its technique is considered to be normal, because people resort to it publicly and on a long tradition. If it was believed or even seriously suspected that the Divine was an impostor, the chief, the notables, the parties to the debate, the community living according to its beliefs and customs (that is to say in so far as they are uninfluenced by the whites) would protest against the procedures. But the normal indigenous society believes in sorcery and in its interpreter—the Divine. In the eyes of the natives an accusation emanating from

Him is not arbitrary. For even though the accusation normally fixes the imputation, it is not what decides the sentence.

In fact it is *not* the Divine Who chooses the poison for the ordeal. The choice is fixed by custom. It is the accused himself who gathers the poison. And it is again he who prepares it immediately before the ordeal, publicly and in conformity with the rules about its quality and quantity prescribed by custom. All the rites of absorption are public and traditional. The poison adopted for the ordeal is not mortal. After taking it the native invokes the justice of the Supreme Being by pronouncing sacred formula at the top of his voice. When he traverses the place of ordeal in the presence of all the villagers assembled, and when he proclaims his innocence by regularly and successively throwing on the ground the sticks of cerement which he carries in his hand, at every instance he expects a verdict which no longer depends on men. In the eyes of the natives it is only the Supreme Being Who decides the deliverance or the ruin of the accused. The accused submits to His will with the acquiescence of all.

The procedure is exactly the same when the accusation is one of theft or misconduct ; here too, the accused himself absorbs the poison and here too, one of his near relatives supplies him with it (if he is too young).

IV

It is clear from these data that the ordeal by poison among the Bwakas constitutes a regular judicial procedure. It is based on profound and sincere beliefs: the faith in the justice of the Supreme Being; the fear of sorcery; the desire for probity; the respect and desire for the chastity of women. This ordeal, traditionally handed down and recognized by everybody in normal indigenous society, bears the stamp of high morality. To proscribe it without further consideration is an error and a clumsiness at one and the same time.

However exceptional they may be, they are nevertheless not less opportune. It will be seemingly proper also to remember in this connction that the indegeneous societies had on their part

discovered the statute proper to their equilibrium only after centuries of research. Before deliberately closing up a past consecrated by so many traditions, it will be proper perhaps to weigh carefully in this symbolic balance, at the side of the point of view of the present occupant, the point of view of secular occupant. The harmony of their relations, their mutual comprehension and their useful and durable bearing on each other, will be benefited by it.

TWO INDIAN MODES OF REVELATION: THE UPANISHAD AND THE GĪTĀ

PROF. PAUL MASSON-OURSEL

University, Paris

The revelation inherent to the Vedic sounds heard by the great seers, the Ṛishis, is viewed as the substance of all orthodox revelation. Yet it is not the only revelation recognized by Brāhmaṇism.

After the revelation by 'word' or 'sound,' explained in the *Brāhmaṇa*, the *Upanishad* revelation appeared, which pertains to the 'significance.' To seek, and further—*a fortiori*—to elucidate the significance enclosed within the rite: this testified to a great audacity. Such a venture could only see the light of day in that millennium during which so many religions of salvation appeared,—from Egypt or Syria to the Punjab, in connection with Zoroastrianism,—all of them ministering to entirely different needs from those to which the former ritualistic religions ministered. The Upanishads are the mysteries of India; the initiations supplied by them regarding destiny after death are very secret, because they were not included within the traditional cult; therefore only those whose intelligence had been trained by a *guru* could have access to them. The revelation expressed therein is a metaphysical lucidity acquired by venerable sages, who do not even all belong to the Brahmin caste; it consists of a gnosis which coincides with the fundamental nature of Being.

From the time of the Epic period a new form of revelation appeared, expressing itself through the Gītā literature. While Bhagavān Śrī Kṛishṇa's *Gītā* is the most famous, it has had both precedents and imitations. In a Gītā, we meet with a revelation of the Absolute by Himself. This revelation is all at once lyrical, didactic and theophanic. A divinized and entirely superhuman Saviour proclaims Himself to be the very essence of Being, wherefrom originate all the forms of existence. He wishes to be revered in all things; consequently the motive of every action should never be interest, but sheer love for Him. Moreover, devotion is only rendered possible, thanks to the gift by which the Bhagavān condescends to confer His grace to men. Here, the quest of salvation has become a religion of *bhakti,* for the Absolute should fail to be recognized if He did not allow the devotee to participate in Him: knowledge alone would not ensure liberation.

Thus, the Upanishad and the Gītā became complementary revelations. That is why several Upanishads of the middle period have some *bhakti* contents and can be compared to the *Gītā,* while some Gītās propound Upanishadic ideas. On the one hand, the human intelligence attains the Absolute through its quest ; on the other hand, the Absolute manifests itself to man. By the Upanishad the Sages partly lift the veils which hide Being Itself in a direct manner, by a song pulsating with the very rhythm of Life.

THE THREE SOULS OF MAN IN DANTE'S HELL

ALFREDO NICEFORO

Professor, University of Rome

Most of the modern psychologists are of opinion that the self of every individual, i.e. the individual psyche, is the result of a series of psychic formations—some inferior and others superior—co-existing in the same individual: the inferior formations are those which we have inherited from our primitive and barbarian

discovered the statute proper to their equilibrium only after centuries of research. Before deliberately closing up a past consecrated by so many traditions, it will be proper perhaps to weigh carefully in this symbolic balance, at the side of the point of view of the present occupant, the point of view of secular occupant. The harmony of their relations, their mutual comprehension and their useful and durable bearing on each other, will be benefited by it.

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ancestors, whereas the middle and superior formations are those which have been created by evolution and which are still being created by education. This mode of envisaging the self is above all a creation of the Italian School of Criminology, also called the Italian School of Criminal Anthropology, which was founded by Cesare Lombroso with his work *L'uomo delinquente* of which the first edition appeared in 1776. This work already at that epoch considered certain criminals as men with psychically bestial and savage characters due to a *psychic atavism,* or again, to a phenomenon of arrested psychic development in the man, to psychically infantile formations which are on that account primitive and barbarous: and all this is due to the fact that the individual psychic evolution is the repetition (in accelerated rhythms) of the psychic evolution of the same order (Lombroso repeatedly says that the child is not an angel but a little savage and sometimes even a demon).

THE DOCTRINE OF DANTE AND SOME SCHOLARS OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

We now propose to indicate here in a few words that something analogous to the theory just mentioned had been presented by Dante already in the heart of the middle ages to the Italian readers of his *Convivio.* It is, moreover, this theory which enabled the poet to achieve the moving and living creation of some of the superb personages of his *Inferno.*

It is true that cultured men, scholars and humanists of all kinds are familiar not only with Dante's *Inferno* which along with *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso,* constitute a sort of familiar bible for all cultured men, but also the *Convivio* and the *Dialogues* and the *Arguments* of a Florentine author of the sixteenth century; yet, so far as I know, none of them has tried to show to what a degree these pages resemble the modern psychological theories of which we have spoken. Even the professional psychologists have not made this comparison. It will be therefore interesting to show that these ancient pages contain much that is modern, though hitherto ignored and unsuspected.

THE THREE SOULS OF DANTE: THE TRIANGLE, THE SQUARE AND THE PENTAGON

Dante said that three kinds of souls co-exist in every man: the vegetative soul, the sensitive soul and the intellective soul. Or rather three kinds of potences of which the sensitive potence is immediately above the vegetative, and the intellective potence immediately above the sensitive. As soon as the soul is delivered of the intellective potence, man will cease to be a human being and will become a mere sensitive creature—that is an animal and a brute. Dante repeatedly speaks of this trinity of the soul. He says for example, the three potences of human soul are to be found one above the other in the same fashion as a square is above the triangle and the pentagon above the square: each of these figures, i.e. of the three potences of human soul, contains something more than what is found below, and he further states that the man, if deprived of his rational soul, will become something like a pentagon of which one of the sides has been taken away. The pentagon is transformed into a square and the rational man is reduced to a mere sensitive creature. Now, are there in reality any men who are without this superior and rational soul? Then what is their conduct? They are not men, says the poet, they are dead ; they are dead as men, living only as beasts.

DIFFERENT SORTS OF MEN

It will not be difficult to collect from the work of the poet passages showing to what degree Dante's conception of the human soul approaches quite modern theories, as for example of the Italian School of Criminology. Regarding the different species of men, the poet says that they are born and live with souls which are more or less pure according to the quality of the seed and the field. This manner of looking at the thing cannot but be of great interest for the doctrine of the soul of three "stages" of which we have spoken above.

THE CRIMINALS AND DEGENERATES OF DANTE'S INFERNO

It will now be understood why and how Dante had been able to paint the criminals and degenerates with so much vigour and

clarity, and with such a profound sense of the truth: who could have been criminal or degenerate to the poet if not the man who lacks the rational and superior soul, and who therefore acts blindly, egotistically and nefariously with a material and brutal sensibility? Under the human physiognomy the man-brute at every instant appears as more or less human corresponding to the criminal and degenerate of Dante. This is most clearly indicated by the poet in his description of the assembled devils in diabolical company in the twenty-second canto of the *Inferno*. It will be necessary to remember in this connection the concept prevailing at that time of the beast and of animal psychology: was not the animal charged with the most abominable ignominies, cruelties and crimes? That was a psychology the traces of which are a living force even today—a psychology which, however, has to be subjected to a process of radical revision. But let us consider the theory just as it was then. It will reveal to us the mental mechanism which guided the poet when he created those unforgettable figures of the damned. Were not the criminals and degenerate persons those whose " psychic atavism " marked every gesture by the sign of a bestial inferiority? We shall of course use the modern terminology, particularly that of Lombroso, for explaining Dante's doctrine ; but the shock which the reader may receive from this anachronism will appear to be purely superficial if he reflects on the subject. Often people have criticized those who imagined to have discovered in Dante what existed only in their own minds, and presented the poet as the precursor of all that the following centuries have brought us. In this way Dante has been considered by turn as a doctor, botanist, physician, ethnographist, geologist, psychatrist or even as a penalist of the first order, an economist, philosopher of social life, etc., etc.—and all that, be it understood, in the modern sense of the word,—that is to say, that they believe to have been able to prove the most astonishing anticipations in the thoughts of the great Italian poet of the fourteenth century. It is true that these different modes of viewing and interpreting Dante have often been sharply criticized; but we do not believe that the same fate is in store for our observations too: we do not affirm that Dante was the precursor of the Italian School of Criminal Anthropology:

we shall only say that Dante's conception of human soul had led the poet to conceive the psychology of criminals in the manner in which it was conceived later by him who founded his interpretation of criminality on the doctrine of psychic atavism. Without making of Dante a precursor not only of Lombroso but also of Freud we may further add that Dante's conception of the human soul led the poet to see in the self of every man the coexistence of different selves—the inferior and the superior—in mighty struggle against each other.

ARISTOTLE

Aristotle too, has preached the same doctrine, and Dante himself was inspired by the naturalist Greek philosopher. Aristotle started with the principle that "every modification of the soul is accompanied by a corresponding modification of the body."..... Man has all the faculties of plants and animals, and he possesses, moreover, thought and intelligence and some other analogous faculties which may be even superior. In short the nutritive soul, the sensitive soul and the intellective soul form together the man proper in Aristotle's opinion. It is true that we do not find in Aristotle any indication as to the existence of men without any superior soul, or of the mechanism by which this superior soul can or cannot dominate the inferior souls which are the property of animals and the vegetable world. All this, however is mentioned by Dante on several occasions.

ANOTHER MASTER: PLATO

It is in fact necessary to go back to Plato for the doctrine of three souls, although it is found in the master of Aristotle in a form which is different from that of the doctrine of Aristotle and Dante. Had not Plato too taught: "The human soul is composed of three parts—the first is the part of reason, the second the excandescent part, and the third the affective part?" Did he not affirm at the same time that every creature enjoys health and is in possession of its forces and its beauty only so long as the part of reason governs the whole soul, and that so long as the two other secondary parts, choler and voluptuousness,

are in harmony with each other the soul remains in equilibrium? There will be weakness in the contrary case, when the part of reason, which should be the queen and mistress, allows itself to be subjugated by the despotism exercised by the two secondary souls.

The theory that the human conduct changes according as it is the superior or inferior soul which dominates it, has formed a basis of psychological theories on the structure of the soul and human conduct for many centuries. Yet there are on this subject pages which have been completely ignored by the psychologists and the investigators of the self. These pages were written in the sixteenth century at Florence and represent one of the jewels of the Italian literature. It is our intention to draw the attention of the readers to these forgotten pages and their significance for psychology. It is the *Dialogues and Reasons* of Giovanni Batlista Gelli, a Florentine of the sixteenth century. The author observes among other things that " the man obeying the most vegetative instincts will become like a plant ; if he lets himself to be seduced by the sensitive instincts he will resemble animals. He will become almost like the gods only if he raises his head to contemplate the sky." The men are of such different kinds and "some have so much talent and genius and others so little that one may say of them that they resemble the gods, whereas others have the appearance of veritable brutes, so that one may justly ask if they at all possess a rational soul."

The inferior soul, which renders us bestial, is full of horrors for our Florentine: for it is responsible for a large part of the "primitive tendencies" of the Italian School of Criminology and the "profound" instincts of the school of Freud. "Our insatiable desires naturally dispose us to be inimical to one another to the point of throwing poison mutually ; and each of us passes his life in searching for the manner in which he could enrich himself to the detriment of others." " We must do everything to have our sensitive part dominated by the rational ; it is the only way to live in peace with one's own self. Otherwise there will be continual war between the sensitive and the rational."

This Florentine writer of the sixteenth century was a veritable

psychologist, and a pessimistic psychologist, for the more one dives into the depths of the self of men the more one learns to disbelieve them and to look at them in a light which is not very favourable. The author says further: "It is of the nature of man that are born so much tumult, ambushes and nefarious manœuvres; and wherever you may go you will never find a place where there is not so much enmity as not to tempt you rather to live your life in solitude and deserts with the most cruel animals than live among the men of the best governed country that exists."

THREE STAGES OF SOUL AND CRIMINALITY

In connection with the co-existence in the self of every individual of lower, middle and higher psychic formations, and the biological and bio-pathological reasons which thrust forward the lower formations to the surface, thus rendering the man anti-social, it will not be out of place to refer the reader to certain of our publications, particularly *La transformacion del delito en la societad moderna.*[1] It is precisely by placing ourselves in the perspective of a self envisaged as a conglomerate of various psychological layers, that we discussed a *latent criminality* which is actively present in the heart of every man. Every one of us possesses in his heart the complete architecture of these successive constructions, and therefore in every one of us there exists at the very foundation of our being a latent criminality, and it is impossible to say when it will reveal itself in the light of day.

This profound and latent criminality comes to the surface also when the superior and social strata of the self have not been definitely constituted on account of the imperfection and inferior quality of the social and economic atmosphere in which the individual has been brought up. These external and mesological facts act with a force which is more than dynamic as their influence on individuals is marked even by some external signs of biological inferiority. Thirdly, these psychic crises may take place from time to time even in men in whom the formation of the self is complete and stabilized even in its most delicate forms—

[1] Madrid 1902, *Biblioteca de derecho y cencias sociales.*

the psychic crises which alter and even destroy for the moment the " superior " personality and bring to the surface, be it for a moment, the secret flame.

THREE STAGES OF THE SOUL AND THE SECRET FLAME

In a series of brief ethnographical studies under the title *" The Secret Flame "* and Carlyle's dictum, *" Under the bark of civilization there still burns the secret flame of barbarism "* as epigraph, we have passed under review a very large quantity of usages, customs and superstitions which, though characteristic of the masses of our country, prove at the same time that these masses always retain in the tenebrous regions of their heart a series of instincts, sentiments and beliefs belonging precisely to these inferior strata of the self of which we have spoken so far. The secret flame explains the incongruous usages and beliefs which are frequently found grafted on the magical and prelogical ideas in the primitive soul. For at the foundation of even the most civilized individual there are found in some obscure forms some psychical stages which, if one may say so, are at the same time ideas, instincts and sentiments, which dominate the sentimental and mental life of the primitives: these are the psychic states which have been called by some ethnographical schools magical or prelogical ideas.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THE CHAṆḌĪ

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The subject-matter of this short paper is very definite. The following four points only have been discussed here:—(1) What is the *Chaṇḍī*? (2) Its probable date. (3) The place of its origin. (4) Its traditional allegorical meaning.

(1) WHAT IS THE CHANDI?

Chapters 81—93 of the *Mākaṇḍeya Purāṇa* form the *Chaṇḍī* or the *Devīmāhātmya*, a glorification of the Goddess Durgā. The story of the *Chaṇḍī* was first narrated by the sage Medhas to Suratha and Samādhi. That was repeated by Mārkaṇḍeya to Bhāguri and the very same story was repeated by the birds to Jaimini and thus the story is known as 'the conversation of the six—*Shaḍ-Saṁvāda.*' As it contains seven hundred stanzas it is also known as the *Sapta-Śatī*. Two other books—the *Rudra Chaṇḍī* of the *Rudrayāmala Tantra* and the *Chaṇḍī-Śataka* of Bāṇa Bhaṭṭa are based on this poem. The holy poem *Chaṇḍī* is as sacred and popular as the *Gītā* itself. Almost the very same truths are enunciated in both the books. There are many parallel lines in these two books.[1] Both of them are designated as the *Sapta-Śatī*. The *Argala Stotra* says—'*Japet saptaśatīm chaṇḍīm.*' Nāgoji Bhaṭṭa records—'*Agnīsomādhyāyavatī Gītā saptaśatīmatā.* Like the *Gītā* the *Chaṇḍī* has many commentaries on its text. Ātmārāma Vyāsa, Ānanda Paṇḍita, Ekanātha Bhaṭṭa, Kāmadeva, Kāśīnātha, Gaṅgādhara Bhaṭṭāchāryya, Gopīnātha, Govindarāma, Gauḍapāda, Gourīvara Chakravarti, Jagaddhara, Jayanārāyaṇa, Jayarāma, Nārāyaṇa, Nṛisiṁha Chakravarti, Pītambara Miśra, Bhagīratha, Bhāskara Rāya, Bhīmasena, Raghunātha Maskarī, Ravīndra, Rāmākṛishṇa Śāstri, Rāmānanda Tīrtha, Vyāsāśrama, Vidyāvinoda Vṛindāvanaśukla, Virūpāksha, Śaṅkara Śarma, and Śivāchāryya have written commentaries on the text of the *Chaṇḍī* which are still available. Thus it appears that the *Chaṇḍī* is as popular in India, specially in Bengal, as the *Gītā*. The book is considered sacred not only by the Hindus but also by the Buddhists. A copy of the *Sapta-Śatī Chaṇḍī*, written by a Buddhist monk, of eight hundred years old, is found in Nepal.

(2) ITS DATE

(1) In 1172 A.D. Śaraṇadeva, a Bengalee scholar, quoted some

[1] Cf. "*Yadā yadāhi Dharmasya glānirbhavati Bhārata . . .*" (*Gītā*) and "*Ilham yadā yadā bādhā dānavothā bhavishyati . . .* (*Chaṇḍī*): "*yachchāpi sarvabhūtānām bījam tadahamarjuna . . .*" (*Gītā*) and "*Ekaivāham jagatyatra dvitīyā kā mamāparā . . .* (*Chaṇḍī*): "*Yomām paśyati sarvatra sarvaṁ cha mayi paśyati . . .*" (*Gītā*) and "*Nityevasā jaganmūrti tvayā sarvamidam tatam . . .*" (*Chaṇḍī*).

twelve passages from the *Chaṇḍī* of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* for grammatical discussion.

(2) M. M. Haraprasad Śāstri found a copy of the *Devī-māhātmya* in old Newari characters in the Royal Library in Nepal, and it is dated 998 A.D.

(3) In the Goth-Monglod inscription of 608 A.D., we find, says Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar, the following two lines of the *Chaṇḍī* quoted with slight variation:

Sarvamaṅgalamaṅgalye Śive sarvārtha sādha(i) ke
(Ś)araṇye trā(y) mbake Gourī Nārāyaṇī namo'stute

(4) Daṇḍin,[1] Bhavabhūti,[2] and Bāṇa Bhaṭṭa[3] have anticipated the existence of the *Chaṇḍī* in their respective works. The *Rudra Chaṇḍī* of the *Rudrayāmala Tantra*,[4] also does the same thing.

(5) The *Argala Stotra*, the *Vārāhī Tantra*;[5] the *Skanda Purāṇa*, the *Devīpurāṇa*, the *Devi Bhāgavata*, the *Kālikā Purāṇa*, the *Brihannandikesvara Purāṇa*, the *Vāmana Purāṇa*, and such other works, directly or indirectly anticipate the existence of the *Chaṇḍī*.

(6) Again, the sixth verse in chapter eight of the *Chaṇḍī* mentions the Mauryya soldiers. In the fifth and sixth verses of the first chapter the *Kolāvidhvaṁsi yavaṇas* are mentioned.

(7) Prof. F. Eden Pargiter, Boden Sanskrit scholar of Oxford, who has translated the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* into English maintains the view that some portions of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* were no doubt composed in the third century A.D. But the *Chaṇḍī* is a later interpolation. Prof. D. R. Bhandarkar does not agree with Prof. Pargiter on this point. Professor Bhandarkar says, 'The existence of the *Devīmāhātmya* as independent of the Purāṇa has not been proved. The *Chaṇḍī* may perhaps be not as well connected, as one might wish, with what precedes and follows it. But we must remember that we should not expect in a Purāṇa that

[1] *Ekam Chaṇḍikā mandiram prāgām, . . .*
[2] *Devi Chāmuṇḍe namaste . . .*
[3] *Achira mṛidita madhukaiṭabha rudirāruṇena . . .*
[4] *Paṭhedārabhya sāvarṇiḥ sūryatanaya āditaḥ . . .*
[5] *Stavānāmapi sarveshaṁ tathā suptaśatīstavaḥ.*
[6] *Māhātyam bhagavatyascha purāṇādishu kīrtitam.*

kind of co-ordination of its parts that we meet with in a novel or a drama.

From these and such other evidences it may be concluded that the *Chaṇḍī* was composed between the third and the sixth century A.D., and we regret that we cannot agree with Prof. Wilson, who says that it may be placed in the ninth or the tenth century A. D.

(3) THE PLACE OF ITS ORIGIN

Professor Pargiter asserts very emphatically that the *Chaṇḍī* did not originate in Bengal. The Goddess whom the poem glorifies is Śiva's consort. One would, therefore, look among the strongholds of Śiva worship for the birthplace of this poem. Of the great Liṅga shrines which are reckoned to be twelve, no less than six are situated in or near a certain region of Western India, viz. Oṁkāra at Mandhāta, Mahākāla at Ujjain, Tryambaka at Nāsik, Gṛineśvara at Illorā, Nāganātha in the east of Ahmednagar and Bhīmaśaṅkara at the sources of the river Bhīma. Mandhāta was on the south bank of the river there. According to Professor Pargiter, at none of them except at Oṁkāra was Śiva or Durgā worshipped with sanguinary rites. This region of the Narmadā valley was specially connected with demon-legends, such as the demon stronghold of Tripura and the demon Mahisha, after which the towns Tewar and Mahesar are said to have been named. Mandhāta with such associations would be the most probable birthplace of this poem. The only local allusion in the poem is that the goddess is 'Mahākālī at Mahākāla'[1] which is a shrine of Śiva at Ujjain. But this allusion is very brief and this brief allusion would be only a collateral one. It is hardly probable that if this poem originated at Ujjain, the goddess at the shrine of Mahākāla should be referred to in this manner. Hence this passage more probably conveys only a commendatory allusion; and it seems more natural and appropriate to connect the poem with Mandhāta. Even if the poem were composed at Ujjain, the conclusion would still remain good that the poem originated in a region of Western

[1] "*Mahākālī Mahākāle.*"

India. Anyhow it is certain that the poem did not originate in Bengal. This is the summary of the view of Prof. Pargiter.

It remains still obscure to us why this poem of the Goddess could not have originated in Bengal, Mithilā or Kāmarūpa.

(1) It is probable that the poem in glory of the Goddess originated in a *Pīṭha* or a place where some limb of the Goddess is supposed to have fallen, rather than in a shrine of Śiva. Most of the *Pīṭhas* are situated in Bengal and some of them are very old.

(2) Most parts of Bengal were, for a long time, covered with huge jungles. The aborigines of those forests were known as the Kirātas or the Śabaras. The *Daśakumāra Charita*, the *Kādambarī*, the *Harivaṁśa*, the *Bhavishyottara Purāṇa*, the *Kālikā Purāṇa* and such other works give evidence of the fact that the Goddess glorified in the *Chaṇḍī* is the deity of the Kirātas and the Śabaras. So it is more probable that the poem originated in a country which belonged to the Kirātas.

(3) The merit of reciting this poem, the rules of reciting it, the regulations of worshipping the Goddess *Chaṇḍī*, all these are described in the Tantras. The poem *Chaṇḍī*, though not a conversation between the God Śiva and the Goddess Pārvatī, contains the essence of the Tantras. Thus it appears that the *Chaṇḍī* is more a Tāntric work than a Paurāṇic which is Vedic. The *Rudra Chaṇḍī*, of the *Rudrayāmala Tantra* which refers directly to the *Chaṇḍī*, makes this point sufficiently clear. Scholars are almost unanimous regarding the view that most of the Tantra works were composed in Bengal.[1] If the *Chaṇḍī* be considered as a Tāntric work, then it is very probable that it originated in Bengal.

(4) In composing poems dedicated to the Mother Goddess, Bengal has superiority over all other countries. The Divine Mother first appears in and as the worshipper's earthly mother, then as his wife, thirdly as Kālikā. This idea of the Tantras is more fully developed in Bengal than in any other country. It may safely be stated, in this connection that the religion of the Bengalees is Tāntrikism. The main characteristic of the Tāntric

[1] *Gauḍe prakāśitā vidyā maithilaiḥ pravatīkṛitāḥ, kvachit kvachit mahārashtre gurjare pralayaṁgatāḥ.* In the *Varadā Tantra*, tenth *paṭala* the Bengali alphabet is described.

worship is the conception of the Motherhood of God and this characteristic is very prominently propounded in the *Chaṇḍī*.

(5) The King Suratha and the merchant Samādhi made an earthen image of the Goddess and worshipped Her with incense, flowers, fire and *homa*. This practice of worshipping the Goddess in an earthen image is rarely heard of outside Bengal, Mithilā and Kāmarūpa. This also goes in favour of the view that the poem originated in Bengal.

(6) Mother worship, if not originated, was developed in Bengal. The *Chaṇḍī* is a poem of the worship of Mother. So it is very likely that the book was composed in Bengal.

(7) The Bengalees have ever been very fond of using alliterations. The poet Jayadeva justifies this statement. In the poem *Chaṇḍī* too we find this special characteristic of the Bengalee poets. Moreover, the alliterations in the *Chaṇḍī* are of a special kind. We find in it, expressions like *duḥkhenakshayam, Chikshurākhyo tīkshṇaiḥ, khaḍgapātaiḥ, khurakhopaiḥ* and such others in which similar pronunciation between *kha* and *ksha* makes alliterations. If the latter is pronounced as *ksha* then the alliteration is lost. It is the special mode of pronunciation in Bengal that *ksha* is pronounced almost like *kha*. In no other part of India, so far as we know, such peculiar pronunciation, due most probably to the influence of Prākṛita prevails. Similar expressions are *Yaiḥ santajya, Jānato'pi yathā,* or *Yuddhe jayanti* and such others where *ja* and *ya* are expected to be pronounced in the same manner as *ja*. This peculiarity in pronunciation is also Bengal's own. This also lends support in favour of the view that the poem *Chaṇḍī* originated in Bengal, a Bengalee devotee of the Goddess being its author.

This being the case, we fail to understand why Professor Pargiter asserted that the poem did not originate in Bengal.

THE STORY IN SHORT

The King Suratha having lost everything and the merchant Samādhi, being driven by his wife and children, went into the deepest forest and reached the hermitage of the sage Medhas.

There, too, the mind of the merchant was full of love and anxiety for his wife and children and the mind of the King still drawn towards his subjects. Both of them went to the sage Medhas and asked him to tell why the King was being attracted and why the merchant was still full of affection for his wife and children, who had driven him away from home. The sage replied that by Mahāmāyā man is bound to the world. The King and the merchant asked who she was whom the sage was calling Mahāmāyā. The sage replied, 'She is eternal, She is manifested as the universe. She has no birth or death. But for the good of the universe She has a sort of appearances and these appearances are called Her births. Saying this the sage described one by one the destruction of Madhu and Kaiṭabha, the killing of the demon Mahishāsura, and the slaying of the demons Śumbha and Niśumbha.

After this the sage said—'That mighty Goddess is born, again and again, in order to protect the universe. She destroys the worlds and creates them again. She pervades all the world. She has no birth, no death. This Goddess has deluded both of you. This She has done in the past, is doing in the present and shall do in the future. If you please Her, She will give you wealth, heaven, and *moksha* or Liberation.' On hearing these words of the sage the king and the merchant bowed down their heads to him and in order to see the great Goddess Mahāmāyā sat down on the bank of a river and recited the *Devī-sūkta*. They made an earthen image of the Goddess and worshipped Her. They kept all their senses under control and concentrated their mind fully on the Goddess. They offered their own blood to Her as animal sacrifice. They did this for three years when the Goddess was much pleased with them and She appeared before them and asked them to pray for boons. On this the King prayed that he might be a ruler of the universe in the next birth. He also prayed for the recovery of his kingdom in this life. The wise merchant, his mind having been freed from worldly taints, prayed that he might be blessed with true knowledge. The Goddess, bestowing on them the boons as prayed for, disappeared. Having obtained the boon Samādhi became liberated and Suratha became the Manu named Sāvarṇi.

(4) ALLEGORICAL MEANING

It is traditionally believed that there are expressions in the *Chaṇḍī* which do not bear their surface meaning. Standing on this, some suggest the following allegorical meaning of the *Chaṇḍī*.

The sage Mārkaṇḍeya in order to give a very popular and interesting explanation of the philosophical question, 'What is the nature of the Supreme God?' relates a beautiful poem and that poem is the *Chaṇḍī*.

When the three forces—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*—remain in equilibrium, there is no creation. But as soon as this equilibrium is lost, the balance is disturbed and one of the three forces gets stronger than the others, then change and motion begin and evolution of all this goes on and the universe is created. When it quiets down, the universe still exists in a finer form. In the first chapter of the *Chaṇḍī* the sage Mārkaṇḍeya says that the Supreme God is in His quiet state. He is sleeping in the *Kāraṇavāri* or the Causal State. From this state by the disturbance of the three forces creation begins. Brahmā, the *rajas* force is the creating force. This truth is made clear by the sage in the story of the two demons—Madhu and Kaiṭabha, who are respectively the *sattva* or the protecting and the *tamas* or the destroying force of the Supreme God.

Unless they are subdued, *rajas* the creating force, cannot proceed with creation. The indescribable and unknowable power called Māyā of the Supreme God now roused His powers from the quiet state and thus *sattva* and *tamas* being subdued, creation began. Creation was not completed in a day or two. It took thousands of years. The battle of the sage also continued for thousands of years. Mahāmāyā subdued both *sattva* and *tamas*. The demons were killed on the thigh of *Brahman*. *Sattva* and *tamas* were subdued nowhere else but in Him and creation went on gradually evolving.

Sometimes the brutal propensities do take possession of us and make us mere human brutes, sometimes again, they are driven out by our divine propensities. The evil spirits in our hearts as well as in the outside world, are countless ; good spirits are also

countless. The sinful and vicious tendencies rise again when they are supposed to have been killed. They can be subdued with great difficulty. This truth is made clear by the sage in the story of 'the slaying of the demon Mahishāsura'—who is described as a human demon. He has taken possession of man, and all his godly propensities have been totally annihilated. All the celestial powers were required to be united to subdue the evil spirits of the earth. The Dānavas are but different bad passions such as anger, lust, etc. They are vice and sins taking forms. The Devas are the beneficial powers of nature. The united powers of all the gods created Chaṇḍikā. Men and gods were oppressed by the evil spirits, and She appeared to destroy them. The war of the Devas and the Dānavas is the struggle between the good and the evil. Good suppresses the evil. The demons Śumbha and Niśumbha are of the human shape but with a full demoniacal mind. These two demons with their countless hosts destroyed the sacrifices which produce virtue and righteousness by stealing libations for gods. They are the evil propensities. They destroyed virtue and righteousness in the world, they usurped the functions of the gods who are always engaged in doing good to the world and its creatures. But when these gods are defeated by the evil spirits, God in his great kindness towards man always destroys them and re-establishes the kingdom of righteousness. Such were Śrī Kṛishṇa, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed, Sri Ramakrishna and others.

Sin tempts virtue to marry her with all the treasures of the world. But virtue does not agree and she is never defeated by sin. She weds only the virtuous, and that too, when man overcomes her and possesses her with great devotion. This truth is taught in the story of the killing of Śumbha and Niśumbha. Dhūmralochana, Chaṇḍa and Muṇḍa are the representatives of evil spirits. They signify fearfulness. Sin and vice are fearful. God can destroy them only by becoming fearful. So Kālī the terrible Goddess issued forth from the forehead of the Great Mother Mahāmāyā or Chaṇḍikā in order to destroy the terrible demons. First, attempts should be made to drive away evil propensities by persuasion. When this fails, they must be

subdued by force. If sins and vices once take possession of the human heart, it is almost impossible to uproot them from it. One vice is removed and its place is at once occupied by another. So sin is Raktabīja. With great difficulty, the great force of the Supreme Lord eradicates sin from the universe. One sin is destroyed, thousand others are produced. It can only be destroyed by rooting out its very seeds. The so-called different Devas are but one. This truth is exhibited by the sage Mārkaṇḍeya in his lines like *Ekaivāhaṁ jagatyatra dvitīyā kā mamāparā.* 'In this universe I alone exist.'

The book begins with two characters—one a powerful king and the other a merchant. The king is named Suratha and the name of the merchant is Samādhi. *Suratha* means 'enjoyer of pleasure' and *Samādhi* means 'one with God.' At the close of the book, we meet the king and the merchant true to their names. The king gets back his lost kingdom and enjoys it in peace, and the merchant becomes one with God. A man who becomes capable of subduing his evil propensities can attain whatever he desires. Even *moksha* or eternal freedom is not unattainable to him.

This meaning is hinted by Editor of the sacred *Chaṇḍī.* The author of the Sādhana Sāṅgrāma edition of the *Chaṇḍī,* suggests a deeper meaning of the story. Whatever may be the value of such meanings it cannot be denied that the Purāṇas contain many allegorical stories. Even Śaṅkara has accepted this meaning of the war between the Devas and the Asuras in his commentary on the *Chhāndogya.* Even if the allegorical meaning is not accepted the *Chaṇḍī* has its literary merits. "Some of the hymns breathe deep religious feelings, express enthusiastic adoration and evince fervent spiritual meditation. The descriptions of the battles abound with wild and repulsive incidents, and revel in gross and amazing fancies."

In conclusion I adore the Goddess Chaṇḍī with the gods Indra, Agni and others in the words of the sage Mārkaṇḍeya—"O Goddess, all learning and knowledge are Thy forms, all the women of the world are Thy portions. Thou alone remainest filling all this,—what adoration can we then offer Thee! Thou art

beyond and above all adorations. We bow down our heads to thee, O Goddess Nārāyaṇī, Thou art the Good in all the good of all beings, Thou art the Beneficial—Thou art the maker of all success—Thou art the protectress of all—Thou art of the three eyes and Thou art Gourī the beautiful "—and I pray—" Destroy the sins of all the universe and remove from it the great dangers due to meteors and other misfortunes such as famine, plague, etc."

RELIGION AND RATIONALISM IN ANCIENT HINDU CULTURE

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Religion and science, the well-recognized foundation on which rationalism takes its stand, are often spoken of as being mutually negatory and repellent. Religion, according to this view, assumes a set of abstruse doctrines and irrational dogmas which it is the bounden duty of the faithful to believe in and uphold. To be a true follower of and a pious believer in religion, it is essential that one should never infringe the bounds of belief, ritual and conduct as set by good old tradition.

The priest is the recognized exponent of this ancient wisdom. He keeps the torch of the sacred lore ablaze. He best understands the mind of the ancient sages. Their utterances are always at the tip of his tongue. Their esoteric implications are patent to him. He is thoroughly initiated into the secrets of their heart. His interpretations are standard; his word is law. A custodian of the old order of things and an advocate of the traditional convention as he is, he does not evince the least interest in or welcome any new suggestion, change or reform. In fact, he is the first to smell danger when the least innovation is proposed. He recoils at the most insignificant liberty taken by the less scrupulous of his folk. He hardly ever stands in need of a notice. No

sooner do you prick him than you find him already afield with the whole array of conservatism marshalled at his service.

Science, on the other hand, is another name for knowledge which it literally signifies. It is always in quest of fresh fields of research and discovery. It is ever on the look-out for new avenues of invention. It cannot brook the least delimitation of its range of progress. From the known to the unknown is its watchword. It dismantles the old and builds anew. It has no scruples and hardly any fears. Forthwith, it launches out into the dark abyss of the unknown domains of nature and struggles hard to secure a footing and, then, works up its way to become clearly visible in its onward march. It abhors darkness and loves light. It announces the beginning of its operations and publishes the results of its attainments. It does not pin its faith on any kind of surreptitious achievement, nor any mysterious guidance. It rather depends upon hard labour carried on in broad day-light and takes its stand on the firm ground of its own past experience.

Curiosity and examination, doubt and investigation are its agents-in-chief. Ever anxious to enlarge its vision and over-ride its bounds, it has little in common with religion which dislikes all change and has a strong craving for the preservation of the fixed order of things. Science can sacrifice everything else for the sake of finding out and establishing bare, unsophisticated truth. Unlike religion, it is no respecter of personalities and has no soft corner for any so-called gospel truths. It shines forth when close observation and persevering application finally get transformed into clear analysis and direct experimentation. On the contrary, religion reaches the final stage of glorification when in the wake of gradually advancing tide of external absent-mindedness, there follows the rare boon of the inexpressible but incomparably enjoyable and blissful divine merger. Science comes forward and forward on the wings of self-assertion and proclamation of new finds and new plans, whereas religion is always after retiring into self-forgetfulness and, to all intents and purposes, utter negation. Science believes in the ground on which it daily treads, but religion rejoices in ignoring that which is in hand here and seeks the realization of the most intangible prospects of hereafter.

Religion that has had a strong and not unoften, dictatorial voice in guiding the destiny and moulding the character of man during the last five millenniums and more has usually been of a personal type with a very strong and distinctive impress of its own. It came to be preached as a result of personal inspiration of different individuals who by virtue of their highly developed magnetic personalities were able to fix an indelible stamp on the successive generations of their adherents. Not only their ideas and doctrines commanded popular acceptance but, in course of time, their very names assumed the magnitude of individual divinities and became special objects of worship. And, gradually, such of their disciples as presumed to be their most lineal and, in consequence, authentic interpreters and exponents, began to employ their already deified names as a readily accessible and very efficacious means to curb the erratic and undesirable habit of free thinking and unrestrained investigation, if found anywhere among the general body of their followers. Certain tenets would be taught as final truths and their attribution to those holy teachers and gradually to God would be forced upon the popular mind as the strongest argument for their correctness. None would be suffered to raise a voice against them, for what was found to be wanting in persuasion would be made up for by coercion. Thus every movement of free thought would invite persecution. And what an irony of fate that in the very name of those who would be proclaimed to have appeared on earth as heralds of freedom and agents of emancipation, a considerable section of society should be turned into a close, compact, hell-like prison-house where even the least liberty to think in one's own way should be against the prescribed rules of discipline and as such, punishable like the grossest and vilest moral transgression!

True, there have been people who while adhering to religion, were, at the same time, some of the best friends of letters that the world has seen in the past. But they have been like the oases in an extensive desert, only few and far between. This factor in itself doubly adds to the lustre of those genuine lovers of learning and they will always be remembered gratefully by the world. But, in general, religious fanaticism has not been able to recognize

that light of learning knows no bounds of caste, creed or colour, and that as such, no matter what source it emnates from, it ought to be bowed to and honoured by all.

No wonder that rationalism reads the past annals of religion only to be confirmed in its view that things being as they are, it must fight its old rival off. Inch by inch, it has secured a considerable footing and is now busy fast building up its majestic stronghold upon it. A result in order to be acceptable to the intelligentsia of today has to be established in accordance with the best methods of science. Every branch of human culture has of late been undergoing a process of pruning, sifting and consistent definition. And, this has in turn led to the formulation of huge array of sciences unheard of before. There is no art, no craft and for the matter of that, no subject of study worth the name but has been forced to evolve and present itself in the form of a science of its own. And, strange as it is, we have, through this process of relegating everything to the domain of science, come to possess the Science of Religion itself.

With the gradual advance of this wonderful suzerainty of science, religion, at least in its popular aspect, has been losing ground. It used to derive its authority from the so-called fact of its having been supernaturally inspired. When this basic factor was called into question, the whole fabric seemed to go off its ground and collapse. It was really a very vehement attack that Western rationalism, well equipped with the armoury of scientific revelations, launched against the ancient bulwark of religion with the characteristic fury of a new convert.

But now that this warfare has been raging for so many restless years, one thing seems to have become evident that religion, especially in the form in which it was originally visualized, has also its own place in human economy and as such, it is not possible or, even, desirable to annihilate or even oust it entirely. It is beginning to be realized that instead of discarding either of them, man requires both religion and rationalism in order that he may safely pass through the successive stages of his evolution and securely reach his final consummation. His real interests will be served if religion as it emerges from this life and death struggle,

confines itself to its proper activities and permits itself to be shorn of all those illegitimate accessories which hardly ever helped anybody to rise spiritually but did prove a source of unnecessary irritation to many and, eventually, lead to wide-spread suffering and disaster. It will mean a restatement of the functions and readjustment of the spheres of both of these old rivals so that instead of negating, they may supplement each other.

It is interesting to see that some of the ablest and most constructive brains of today are already afield to find out some way to achieve this end. The old fury and vehemence seems to have been spent up. Hot-headedness of, say, forty years ago, appears to have been replaced by mutual regard and general considerateness of temperament. This comparatively calm atmosphere must be congenial to an early settlement. Why should religion not invest science with real life and itself receive a new charm, a new strength and a new vindication from its close touch with the latter? Alongside of the Science of Religion, why should we not also have the Religion of Science which may be a signpost, always pointing to the boundless ocean of spiritual life that is within us but of which we ordinarily remain unaware? That may be the foundation of the rationalized religion of tomorrow which will start by taking its cue from the methodology of science and systematically help mankind in the evolution of a fuller, brighter and happier life characterized by the right type of discipline, development and dedication.

The history of Hindu Culture affords a very interesting study from this point of view of mutual adjustment of religion and rationalism. Religion has always been very popular with the Hindus. Their mind seems to possess a special aptitude for it. Their genius has found its natural expression in evolving a world of religion, all its own. From the Raja to the peasant, they evince keen interest in theological themes and, very often, a passion for them. Their monumental works of art are almost always symbolical of some religious aspect, idea or feeling. The religious vision of their sages was, however, marked by a living sense of harmony, balance and compatibility between the claims of the several aspects of human life. According to them, the flesh and

the spirit, worldly progress and renunciation and here and hereafter could be and should be treated as the fine strands of a string —taken singly, weak and useless but when worked into a beautiful whole, very strong and useful.

But strange though it may sound, the Hindus of yore could not really evolve anything which after the general credal pattern of religion might be designated as Hinduism. Certainly, they had a national system of life-conduct and social adjustment and we may use the word Hindu-dom for it. But this is very different from what Hinduism would ordinarily mean. Hindudom recognizes the need of a system of spiritual culture based on the right functioning of the head, the heart and the hand, that is, the intellectual, the emotional and the physical aspects of human activity. From times immemorial, people have differed as to what activity be right and what otherwise. Unlike the modern credal systems of organized churches, the Hindu system as a whole has invariably refused to identify itself with any one particular creed. Thousands upon thousands of creeds have appeared on the scene within the Hindu world. They have been and most of them still are organic parts of Hindudom inasmuch as their adherents are and do call themselves Hindus. But Hindudom is much more over and above them. Whereas it embraces and recognizes them as its own, it is not possible for them to encompass or circumscribe it. They are contained in it but it is not contained in them. A part is in the whole but the whole cannot be in a part.

And, so, ancient India of the Vedic sages went without a church of its own in the generally accepted sense of the term. A church cannot be built on the flowing waters of the Ganges. Besides the general ethical norm, it requires the adamantine rock of a fixed ritual of a uniform type and a set of unquestionably settled dogmas for its proper foundation. There was enough of ritual in India of those days but it was neither uniform nor uniformly obligatory. There were numerous priestly families and their colleges and they followed and taught more or less varying liturgical compilations. The Vedic ritual, however, was equally present in all of them by virtue of the presence therein of its

generic background. Thus, everywhere the sacred fire would be lighted ; Vedic verses would be recited and in accompaniment thereof, offerings made.

Moreover, this ritual had been made graded in order that it might suit the needs of different capacities of different individuals. In other words, it could vary from individual to individual. No one ceremony was binding on all without any exception. Differentiation proceeded as much on the basis of an individual's position and profession (*varṇa*) in society as on the particular stage of his personal life (*āśrama*). And, then, there was the recognized case of those who would not be bound down to any ceremonial. They would be either retired recluses or wandering monks whom neither the desire for offspring, nor wealth, nor fame, nor any transcendental gain could lure or keep attached to the usual ceremonial routine of family-life. It was no fault of the people that they could not adhere to any one uniform type of ritual or any ritual at all. . The Sacred Books themselves recognized the aforesaid gradation and varied application of ritual on the basis of different religious requirements of different individuals owing to the difference in their temperament, education, station in life and other environmental reactions and the consequent varying degrees of their development for the furtherance whereof, performance of every rite and ceremony was said to be prescribed.

Similarly, there was no dearth of serious thinking in ancient India. The Vedas combine richest poetical imagery and finest delicacies of literary style with highest flights of imagination, deepest notes of inner realization and clearest glimpses of intuitive vision. People were conversant with all sorts of dogmas and doctrines and they freely professed some and denied others. Thanks to the healthy mentality which recognized the limitations of the human intellect, free expression of opinion was the recognized birthright of every person in Hindudom. In fact, persecution for one's views seems to have always remained an unfamiliar phenomenon there.

Instead of gagging free expression, the cultural ideal of the Hindus has been to accord a place of honour to every new orientation of the ever-unsolved eternal problems and make an

earnest effort to assimilate it. There were thinkers even in the Vedic times whose views about the theory and practice of popular religion could in ecclesiastical parlance be described as having been heretic. But they did not make any distinction between what was to be considered as fundamental and therefore not to be questioned and what being of a subsidiary or secondary nature might be controverted. And, under those healthy conditions of fresh intellectuality, it could not be otherwise. What was solid foundation for one frame of mind might as well be only tentative starting point for another which, if in consonance with other data, would be adhered to and, if against the same, ignored and rejected. Thus there could be all sorts of different opinions on the so-called very vital matters. The names of some of the highest personages in the domains of Hindu ritual and philosophy have come down to us as having been associated with a great variety of views such as disbelief in the existence of gods, the utility of ritualistic observances, the existence of an eternal personal self, the Law of *Karma,* the cycle of re-births, the existence of a personal God, the theory of periodical creation and dissolution and the theory of phonetic eternity, to mention only a few typical cases. But in spite of these differences, they remained attached to the Hindu system. There has never been a single individual in the long history of Hindudom who might have had the temerity to stigmatize those illustrious leaders of thought and action as non-Hindus. On the other hand, they have been and are respected by every Hindu as great sages (*Ṛishis*) and teachers (*Āchāryas*) of his national culture.

From the outset, the Hindu mind seems to have been alive to the desirability of encouraging the growth of sound learning and all-round awakening. The most ancient treasures contain accounts of a considerable number of free discussions of deep, and knotty problems that confronted man's mind in those days. The rich and magnificent heritage of India's past may be regarded as an index to the friendly spirit and close association that must have been maintained through long ages between different types of intellectual workers on the one hand and the guardians of the priest-craft on the other. In sooth, the first inspiration towards

cultural progress came from the side of the Vedas themselves. They sang the sweetest songs in praise of cultured speech, developed intellect, profound learning and discriminating wisdom and raised these pillars of the strong edifice of rationalism to the position of gods to be hymned and worshipped. The ritualistic developments were also directly responsible for bringing into being a number of critical studies and observations. The exigencies of right pronunciation and comprehension of the ancient texts created a need for and gradually led to the brilliant development and formulation of the Sciences of Phonetics, Grammar and Philology. Similar circumstances were instrumental in directing the attention to the study and development of Metrics and Prosody. Ritualistic harmonization called forth the canons of textual criticism. The need of ensuring the efficacy of ritual performance by carrying it on at the right time combined with the love of the Vedic people for open-air life under the canopy of the heaven showed the way to their achievements in Astronomy. Their mathematical studies may also be traced back to the same source inasmuch as it was expected of the priest to be conversant with the mensuration as well as construction of multi-figured fire-altars and other structures connected therewith. Practice of medicine seems to have remained for long a part of the priestly profession. The Vedic lore, especially the *Atharva-Veda,* is full of useful references to herbs and drugs and their prescription in the cure of many diseases. The *Sāma-Veda* is the recognized fountain-head of Indian Music. This association of the ancient religious writings and their priestly custodians in contributing to the general cultural advancement is eloquent enough to show that religion and rationalism in the ancient Hindu society had admirably adjusted themselves with regard to each other's claims to, and domains of, activity and that both could equally feel proud of their respective contributions to the general cultural growth of their times. In fact, any indications of serious conflict between rationalists, scientists and philosophers as such on the one side and creed-bound, blind ritualists on the other are conspicuous by their absence in the Hindu tradition. In thousands of cases, priests themselves were the pioneers of their times in the fields of science and philosophy and in other innumerable cases, reputed scientists and philosophers

were born in well-known priestly families. This factor in itself shows that if there was any problem in the Hindu society as undoubtedly there was and still is, it was not in the form of a clash of two separate warring camps of rationalists and religionists but, on the other hand, it was in respect of the secularization and widened enfranchisement of learning so that the entire community should be in a position to taste its sweet fruit, instead of keeping it as the close preserve of the upper classes only. In other words, the problem that Hindudom has still to solve, has been a social and not a cultural one. As already indicated, Hindudom was originally conceived and developed as a system of individual life-conduct and social adjustment. It was based on the recognition of kinship born of community of race, language, country and general cultural traditions. It grew in extent from age to age through a characteristically original process of assimilation and accumulation. By virtue of this wonderful potentiality, it was able to absorb in and make one with itself all those innumerable nomadic tribes that crossed its north-western frontiers and settled down on its fertile plains like swarms of locusts. Many peoples entered India as conquerers, but the gradual working of this process left them here as equally faithful followers and co-partners of Hindudom. Religion had its prominent share in the application of this process. But, certainly, it was an entirely different thing from a mere religious conquest. It was a victory which reflected credit on the basic principles of entire Hindudom and not on religion alone which, in the sense of religiousness of the people, was an integral constituent of its composite conception but in the sense of one organized church for the entire people, it always remained foreign to its constitution.

It is the narrowing down of spiritual loyalties to the minimum number and what is even more potent in this respect than anything else, the presence of a personal factor that really gives the proper measure of strength to the organized establishment of a church. It may in course of time fall a victim to serious schisms and get ramified into a number of sects and sub-sects as has invariably and quite naturally happened in the history of every church, but the original stamp of loyalties and personal

factors sticks fast to all of them alike. It is on account of the indelibility of this impress, that howsoever divided among themselves they may be, sects of Christianity and Islam can be easily distinguished one from the other. For instance, there can be no Christian denomination without an implicit faith in the Bible as the Word of God and in Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of mankind. Similarly, every Muslim sect believes in the Koran as the embodiment of the Divine Dispensation and Mohammed as the last prophet of God. If faith in the existence of God were the real basis of religion and if the function of religion were to bind man to God as servant to his master or son to his father, and bind man to man as brother to brother, surely, both these great religions should long ago have recognized their mutual kinship inasmuch as the monotheistic concept of a personal God is common to them. Indeed, if God had been the determining factor, Islam would not have been distinguishable from Christianity and Christendom would not have entered upon the well-known Crusades against Islam for the recovery of the Holy Land. So it is not God that makes a Church ; it is the aforesaid personal factor coupled with the consolidation of loyalties around it that serves as the firm foundation on which the superstructure of an organized religion rears its majestic head. The standardized church mentality cannot recognize even its own professed God if He does not like to manifest Himself through its professed Prophet or Saviour and express Himself through its professed Holy Book.

While considering the secret of adaptability of the ancient Hindu culture to religion as well as rationalism, one is struck by the entire absence of the main factors that go to the making of an organized church-religion. The Hindudom of pre-Buddhistic days produced a great number of teachers and sages, but none of them was raised to the position of the one above all others. Every one of them was held in great esteem and his inspired words were listened to with rapt attention. In course of time, certain families came to specialize in the art of careful transmission and preservation of the wisdom of such sages of yore as were connected with them as their primary progenitors and later ancestors, respectively known as *Ṛishis* and *Pravaras*. This entire

accumulation went by the name of Veda which, by the way, is a philological cognate of the word *wisdom* itself. Originally every separate tribal unit had its own Veda but as those units gradually merged into one nation, so did their Vedas and their *Ṛishis* become the objects of common respect and regard. There was no idea that the line of *Ṛishis* had come to a stop and, so there could not be any ground for the corresponding idea of the textual finality of the Vedas. The result was that when after a long time, the Vedas as taught and learnt at different centres came to be put together, there appeared according to some, as many as eleven hundred and thirty-one recensions of the four main divisions, namely, the *Ṛig-Veda,* the *Sāma-Veda,* the *Yajur-Veda* and the *Atharva-Veda.* Most, if not all, of these recensions are supposed to have at one time independently possessed their own triple Vedic sets, namely, their Saṁhitās, Brāhmaṇas and Upanishads and, possibly, also their triple Kalpasūtras. In the presence of such a huge accumulation of the sacred literature which bore the stamp of successive generations of the primary sages who were characterized by original inspiration, of the secondary sages who explained those inspired outpourings and defined their application in respect of prevalent ritualistic routine, and of the tertiary sages who codified and aphoristically recorded the entire ancillary writings with a view to facilitating the study, comprehension and application of the Vedas, and which being a common, national heritage, was, generally speaking, held in uniform esteem, there could not arise at least for the whole community, any occasion of narrowing down of loyalties to any one personality of any one text. Whereas certain direct ancient priestly families continued to foster the study and application of their particular texts, there sprang up others who widened their scope and the words *'Dube,' 'Tiwari'* and *'Chobe'* as applied to their descendants are to this day reminiscent of them. Similarly, in the domain of speculative allegiances, members of one and the same family could hold any views and belong to any persuasion. So long as philosophers did not interfere with the priestly organization of ritual, they might and did say anything they liked and soar as high and dive as deep as they could. In this way,

philosophic groupings cut through ritualistic divisions and prevented the growth of well-defined credal systems on a religious basis. The first pre-requisite of such an organization, on the other hand, is that its members should adhere to one definite line of belief and accept one common course of ritual. But the result of the aforesaid tendencies of the Vedic age was practically that there were distinct groupings on the basis of Vedic texts and ritual on the one hand and metaphysical and philosophic theories on the other and that every individual was more or less bound to the first as inherited from his immediate forefathers but free to make his own choice of the other. And Vedic ritual being symbolical from the first, he would in this way be in a position to invest his ritualistic performances with his own new meanings to satisfy his inner cravings and develop his own centre of emotional inspiration. This would be his true religion and, under the circumstances, it would be nothing short of a purely private and independent functioning of his rational and emotional selves. This development and maintenance for a long period of this happy harmony between these two most important aspects of human life from the point of view of general culture, was a very remarkable achievement of the Vedic Hindudom.

In its chequered career through ages, Hindu culture has had to pass through many an ordeal but it has always tried to save this peculiar impress on it intact. When within its body-politic, Buddhism and Jainism grew up in the shape of strong religious organizations and threatened to undermine its foundations, it reacted with a wonderful bump and not only saved itself but ultimately succeeded in re-absorbing most of the rebellious elements. It was under the stress of this or some other similar juncture that the textualist philosophers (*mīmāṁsakas*) evolved as a result of their over-exercised ingenuity, their pet theories of the eternity of word and the impersonal character of the Vedas. According to these views, as men, beasts, brutes, and birds spring up and as plants, creepers, shrubs and trees grow up under naturally conditioned circumstances. so do the Vedas as the manifest symbols of the eternal word appear of themselves in the minds of the primary sages who could not and have not left any

personal mark on them. As such, they were immune from the effect of human propensity to err and, therefore, were the final arbiter in all dubious and conflicting situations in human conduct, especially in matters connected with the invisible and intangible hereafter.

This fortification, however justifiable on account of its immediate utility in successfully combating the rival theories of the omniscience of certain high personages, gradually seems to have proved too hot for the rationalistic genius of the Hindu culture which soon evolved another theory, apparently, as a safety-valve. It propounded that the eternal elements of sound which entered into the formation of the Vedas, have a sort of potential energy on the basis and as a result of which, they may denote a number of things according as the context is intended to be applied to the esoteric, the ritualistic or the materialistic domain of life. In other words, they would be said to possess a fluid denotation which would not let them be bound down to any one particular line of interpretation or domain of human activity. Owing to the desirable effect of this theory in letting free the pent up forces of rationalism, it proved a timely boon to the priest and the philosopher alike. It led the way to a system of evolutionary or progressive exposition of the ancient texts. The energies of the priest, instead of being consumed by constant warring against new ideas, could now be usefully devoted to the task of making the old Vedic Kine yield fresh milk. And, for his part, the philosopher also could go on adding to the universal fund of knowledge and never feel hampered at any step on account of the orthodoxy standing in his way.

Thus, in that period, due respect for the ancient writings could in a very beautiful manner be harmonized with the due demands of the progressive rationalistic mind. On the basis of the aforesaid theories, everybody was free to think in his own way and quote if he so desired, in support of his views the ancient texts which he could interpret according to his lights. His interpretations might be fanciful and untenable. Others might criticize and ridicule them, but there would not arise any exigency for the least manifestation of bitterness. It is only when a Church becomes as hard as rock as every organized, credal system of religion

is in course of time apt to, that its custodians not being able to appreciate the change that human mind gradually undergoes, show their real selves by unsheathing the sword of persecution and excommunication. If in India of the ancient Hindu cultural heyday, there prevailed an atmosphere in which religious devotion could travel hand in hand with intellectual development without the expression of the least feeling of dissatisfaction on the part of the one or the other, it must have been substantially attributable, first, to the absence of all personal element as well as dead fixity in the Vedic system and then, in later times, to the formulation and application of the theories of progressive interpretation of the Vedas of a highly inclusive type.

THE BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ AND THE TAO TE CHING

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" The nature of man is here clever and there stupid; and the one of these qualities may lie hidden in the other. The abuse of the nine apertures is chiefly in the three most important, which may be now in movement and now at rest. When fire arises in wood, the evil, having once begun, is sure to go on to the destruction of the wood. When calamity arises in a state, if thereafter movement ensue, it is sure to go to ruin.

" When one conducts the work of culture and refinement wisely we call him a Sage.....

" The blind hear well, and the deaf see well. To derive all that is advantageous from one source is ten times better than the employment of a host; to do this thrice in a day and night is a myriad times better.

" The mind is quickened by things, and dies through excessive pursuit of them. The spring of the mind's activity is in the eyes.....

" The method of spontaneity proceeds in stillness, and so it was that heaven, earth, and all things were produced. The method of heaven and earth proceeds gently and gradually, and thus it is that the Yin and Yang overcome each other by turns. The one takes the place of the other, and so change and transformation proceed accordingly.

" Therefore the sages, knowing that the method of spontaneity cannot be resisted, take action accordingly and regulate it for the purpose of culture."

One of the services which a Parliament of Religions such as this must render is to help men and women to learn to formulate for themselves a new definition of Religion. At present people talk of their own religion and of other people's religions and are unable to pierce the veil of *māyā* which surrounds them all. There is a false sense and there is a true one, in which our own and other people's religions can be described. In the world the false view in general prevails. One of the reasons, perhaps the main reason, for this dual *māyā* is people's failure to study even their own religion, let alone the religions of others. An important way by which people can pass from false to true concepts of *Dharma* is by the comparative study of religions and religious philosophies. We must raise religion from the plane of belief to the plane of thought and demand that men and women labour to possess Faith—Enlightened Faith. Then only they will be able to escape from the two hells which surround us on every side—the hell of religious bigotry and superstition and the other hell of materialistic disbelief and sensuality.

The study of religious philosophy purifies the mind. The metaphysical propositions free the mind, for a short time at least, from narrow, personal, mean and petty thoughts. Centred as men and women are in their egotistic (*ahaṁkāric*) self, any release therefrom comes only when a change of mental focus takes place. One cannot be both Universal and egotistic, Impersonal and personal, at one and the same moment. What motor-power effects that change in polarity? Philosophical thoughts, metaphysical concepts and their analogues in ethics and morality. Ethical instruction raises the mind and elevates it and thus energizes us to become better, nobler, kinder, more loving.

There is an additional factor; dwelling upon words and ideas which are universal and holy truths and which have been spoken once or otherwise recorded is a phenomenon of *Sat-saṅga*—Good Company. The student touches the mind and the heart of Kṛishṇa when he ponders over the *Gītā*, of Lao-Tzu when he dwells upon the *Tao Te Ching*.

To be in the company of the Immortals is to secure the gift of true vision, of pure clairvoyance and clairaudience—not seeing

invisible colours and hearing inaudible sounds, but understanding what we see and hear. In our world there is a craze for psychic phenomena, for abnormal and unusual experiences. A great deal of unconscious black magic and necromancy prevails, and as a protection against these the study of great books and the Company of the Immortals are necessary helps, enabling us not only to avoid the danger of falling into wrong practices, but also to learn the truth about them.

In our study of the two books, one Indian and the other Chinese, we need to say a few things about the *Tao Te Ching;* the magnificence of the *Gītā* is well known and to say anything about it to such an audience as this would be to waste its precious time.

A few words only are permissible about the *Tao Te Ching.* It is composed of 81 short chapters and some 5,000 Chinese characters; those who are interested in numeralogy may speculate about this number 81 and the 18 chapters of the *Gītā.* Unfortunately I do not know Chinese and what follows is based upon translations by eminent Sinologists. Different versions are used in this paper and in presenting each translation we have kept in mind the easy and ready comprehension of the text by the modern mind. But three authorities we must name,—James Legge, Lionel Giles, and Arthur Waley—who have revealed old China and Japan not only to the understanding of our minds, but also to the appreciation of our hearts.

The *Tao Te Ching* is *' The Book of Tao and Te '. ' Tao '* and *' Te '* are terms as untranslatable as our Sanskrit *Dharma, Karma, Nirvāṇa, Ātman,* and so forth. The concepts enshrined in these four Sanskrit words are enshrined also in these two Chinese terms. *' Tao '* has been translated as ' Path;' ' Reason;' ' Word or Verbum;' ' Harmony;' ' Living Nature;' ' Law;' ' Absolute;' ' Perpetual Motion.' Sanskrit equivalents spring easily to mind: *' Mārga,' ' Buddhi,' ' Om '* or *Praṇava; ' Ṛita;' 'Jīva;' ' Dharma;' ' Brahman '* and so forth. In his *Chinese Religion Through Hindu Eyes* Prof. Benoy Kumar Sarkar compares Tao to *Sanātana Dharma* and so the book may be said to represent the Religion of the Eternal Way. De Groot describes Tao as ' the Way in which the Universe moves.'

Similarly, the word '*Te*' has been translated as 'virtue;' 'action;' 'will.' Waley in examining the history of the word states that "it means something much more like the Indian *karma*." The Way of Action, whether will-action, mind-action, speech-action or body-action, is implied in the use of the word '*Te*' in different contexts.

The metaphysics, psychology and ethics of the *Tao Te Ching* were not invented by Lao-Tzu. They are ancient teachings, and Lao-Tzu like Śrī Kṛishṇa but communicated the old, old Wisdom (*Gītā*, iv. 1).

Comparable to Ikshvāku, Manu, Vivasvat, are Hwang-Ti and his instructor Kwang-Tzu, who, it is said, practised Tao for 1200 years. The Chinese legends give the date of Hwang-Ti as 2700 B.C. which is but the Chinese variant of the period when Śrī Kṛishṇa opened the Kali-Yuga some 5000 years ago.

Just as 600 B.C. was a period in which flowered Confucius and Lao-Tzu in China, Buddha and Mahāvīra in India, the last of the Zoroasters in Iran, and Ezekiel and Isaiah among the Jews, so also 3000 B.C. was an important epoch in the cycle of human evolution when Hwang-Ti in China revealed the mystery of the *Tao* and Lord Kṛishṇa in India that of the *Om*.

Again, as the *Gītā* speaks of the previous appearances of Kṛishṇa, so too there are references to Lao-Tzu's earlier incarnations. In the stone tablets of Hsiech Tao-Hang it is said that "from the time of Fu-Hsi down to that of the Chou dynasty, in uninterrupted succession of dynasty after dynasty, his person appeared but with changed names."

We are unwise if we undervalue the myths and legends of any country and especially those of our own India. It is the fashion nowadays to accept readily the views of Western Orientalists on philology, chronology and even on philosophy. But the myths and legends of the Purāṇas are not a farrago of nonsense; they may sound like fairy-tales but they are not meaningless. One of the achievements we are hoping for on the part of the Swamis of the Order of Ramakrishna is to justify the value of myth and legend and of the folk-lore of prehistoric India. The Purāṇas await a

reverent study of their contents. But this is a digression; let us return to the *Tao Te Ching.*

In the *Gītā* we hear of the cycle of *adharma* followed by that of *Dharma.* When *adharma* flourishes one of the circles of evolution has reached its nadir; then Kṛishṇa comes to establish *Dharma.* Similarly, the *Tao Te Ching* refers to two ages—the Vulgar-Age and the Virtue-Age. These alternate. How does the Vulgar-Age arise?

" When the Great *Tao* declined, benevolence and righteousness came into vogue, then appeared intelligence and shrewdness and then artifice and hypocrisy " (Chapter XVIII).

When *Dharma* flourishes, men and women are righteous *spontaneously;* there is no necessity for preaching. When people forget to live in the Spirit, then Spiritual Wisdom has to be preached.

Those who begin to preach to the Vulgar-Age of *adharma* are the *jñānins* of old who out of compassion incarnate to bring the world to Duty and to start the Virtue-Age once again.

H. P. Blavatsky, following the old Eastern teaching, mentions two types of God-like beings and classifies Lao-Tzu with Kṛishṇa, Buddha and Jesus. Lao-Tzu started a minor cycle of the Virtue-Age in China, but only a few were truly benefited. Degradation set in and a few centuries later the people made Taoism a religion of superstitions. Belief flourished, practice was neglected and so Wisdom disappeared. But the records which were made of the teachings survived and among them the priceless *Tao Te Ching.* To know Śrī Kṛishṇa one must go to the *Gītā;* to know the pure mind and the enlightened heart of Lao-Tzu one must go to the *Tao Te Ching.* But to understand the *Gītā* so that we may hear the Song of Life and feel the elevation of inner peace and bliss we must saturate ourselves with the sound and colour of the *Gītā;* there must be some *sādhanā* between ourselves and Śrī Kṛishṇa, and so also with Lao-Tzu. To the misfortune of our culture most of those who write and speak, who preach and sing, do so without any *sādhanā;* it is a feature of this dark and hard Kali-Yuga. But as far as the *Tao Te Ching* is concerned people may be assured

of the rich reward which awaits them if they go reverently to the book and read it, even in translation, with the mind of the heart rather than with the eye of the brain. Lao-Tzu says of himself:—

"Alas! the barrenness of the age has not yet reached its limit.

"All men are radiant with happiness, as if enjoying a great feast, as if mounted on a tower in spring. I, alone, am still, and give as yet no sign of joy. I am like an infant which has not yet smiled, forlorn as one who has nowhere to lay his head. Other men have plenty, while I, alone, seem to have lost all. I am a man foolish in heart, dull and confused. Other men are full of light; I, alone, seem to be in darkness. Other men are alert; I, alone, am listless. I am unsettled as the ocean, drifting as though I had no stopping-place. All men have their usefulness; I, alone, am stupid and clownish. Lonely though I am, and unlike other men, yet I revere the Foster-Mother, Tao.

"My words are very easy to understand, very easy to put into practice; yet the world can neither understand nor practise them.

"My words have a clue, my actions have an underlying principle. It is because men do not know the clue that they understand me not.

"Those who know me are but few, and on that account my honour is the greater.

"Thus the sage wears coarse garments, but carries a jewel in his bosom."

The *milieu* in which Lao-Tzu taught was different from that in which the Divine Kṛishṇa gave his message. The symbols and metaphors used are different. Lao-Tzu's field of *Dharma* was not Kurukshetra. This, however, should not be allowed to mislead us. If the *milieu* was different, the *métier* was similar. Lao-Tzu taught the doctrine of sacrifice and surrender, through the purification of the senses, the control of the wandering mind, the practice of *yoga*, the development of the Inner Supreme Spirit, or *Tao*. Lao-Tzu's words and symbols were more akin to those of the Buddha, his contemporary, and of the Christ who followed some

500 years after than to those of Lord Kṛishṇa. The *Gītā* teaching in XVIII. 60—

" Being bound by all past *karma* to thy natural duties, thou, O son of Kunti, wilt involuntarily do from necessity that which in thy folly thou wouldst not do."

and again in III. 33—

" But the wise man also seeketh for that which is homogeneous with his own nature. All creatures act according to their natures; what, then, will restraint effect?"

is reiterated in the *Tao Te Ching*. We might say that while the cry of the *Gītā* is " Stand up and fight!" the refrain of the *Tao Te Ching* is " Be spontaneous," yet both hold out the ideal of the right performance of Duty because of Īśvara, of the Tao. The interrelation between *svadharma* and *svabhāva* comes out in numerous places in the *Tao Te Ching*, not in the martial eloquence of Kurukshetra but in paradoxical aphorisms.

But we must not linger over the atmosphere of the book; let us go to its contents.

We need not dwell on the metaphysics of the *Tao Te Ching*. Both the *Gītā* and the *Tao Te Ching* treat of applied philosophy in which practical and ethical teachings are to the fore and metaphysical propositions as such are not discussed. Yet these form a very natural background to the *Tao Te Ching*, just as a whole metaphysical philosophy is the background to the stirring and elevating speeches of Kṛishṇa to Arjuna.

Thus, Tao as the Causeless Cause, the Nameless Absolute, *Para-Brahman*, designated as Tien Tao, the Tao Transcendent, is spoken of, and its relation to Īśvara, *Ādi-Purusha*, *Saguṇa-Brahman*, is referred to. Ti Tao is the manifested, the immanent Tao, but it must not be taken in the sense of a Personal God, creator of all things. Only two extracts need be cited:—

The *Tao Te Ching* opens with a grand but compact description (I. 1-4):—

" The Tao that can be spoken of is not the Changeless Tao. The Name that can be Named is not the Ineffable Name.

" The Nameless is the spring of Heaven and Earth. Named It is the Mother of all things.[1]

" Always without desire we must be found,
If its deep mystery we would sound;
But if desire always within us be,
Its outer fringe is all that we shall see.

" These two, the Nameless and the Named One, are identical in essence. This is the Mystery—Darker than any Mystery, the Doorway whence issue all Secret Essences."

The second extract which deals more specifically with these two, *Nirguṇa-* and *Saguṇa-Brahman,* or *Para-Brahman* and Īśvara, is from the fourth chapter of the *Tao Te Ching* (Verses 1 to 3):—

" The Tao is empty; yet it may be drawn from and need not be filled. Without a Source It is the eternal progenitor of all things.

" In It all sharpness is blunted, all tangles untied, all glare tempered, all dust smoothed. It is like a deep pool that never dries.

" Who gave It birth? We cannot tell. But as a substanceless image It existed even before the Ancestor of all—*Tao* before *Ti.*"

In the fortieth chapter we read that " though all creatures under heaven are the products of Being, Being itself is the product of Non-Being." The magnificent closing of the chapter on *Vibhūti-Yoga* may be compared to this:—

" I established this whole universe with a single portion of Myself and remain separate " (X. 42).

Tao, like Kṛishṇa, is omnipresent and immanent, and an especial aspect of It is in you and me and all men, and this aspect is referred to as *Jen Tao,* the *Tao* of Man. The cultivation of the *Tao* is the main purpose of existence:—

[1] The Feminine or Śakti aspect of Nature is much praised in the *Tao Te Ching.* " The Mother of all things " has just been mentioned. In Chapter VI we come across the expressions, "the Mystery of the Mother" or " the Female Mystery "—" the Doorway of the Mysterious Female is the base from which Heaven and Earth sprang."

" It is there within us all the while;
Draw upon it as you will, it never runs dry."
(*Chapter VI*)

But its light is obscured by desires and the objects of sense. In the third chapter we read:—

" If the people never see such things as excite desires, their hearts will remain placid and undisturbed."

And again in the forty-sixth chapter:—

" There is no lure greater than the lure of ambition ;
No disaster greater than discontent;
No evil greater than the wish to be getting."

One more quotation and we have done with *kāma* which " rageth like fire and is never to be appeased " (III. 39).

Listen to this from the *Tao Te Ching* (Chapter XLIV):—

" Or fame or Life,
Which do you hold more dear?
Or life or wealth,
To which would you adhere?
Keep life and lose those other things;
Keep them and lose your life:—which brings
Sorrow and pain more near?

" Thus we may see,
Who cleaves to fame
Rejects what is more great;
Who loves large stores
Gives up the richest state.

" Who is content
Need fear no shame.
Who knows to stop
Incurs no blame.
From danger free
Long live shall he."

Now the method by which *taṇhā* (*tṛishṇā*), *kāma*, can be overcome is once again the same in the *Gītā* as in the *Tao Te Ching*. It is to rise above the pairs of opposites, and learn the technique

of actionless action—*Wu Wei*. The simple life is the spontaneous life: the Sage radiates forth the Tao "conveying lessons without words" as does the *Guru* under the Banyan Tree:—

"Ah! the wonder of the Banyan Tree. There sits the *Guru-Deva*, a youth, and the disciples are elders; the teaching is silence, and still the disciples' doubts are dispelled."

As to the pairs of opposites:—

"It is because every one under Heaven recognizes beauty as beauty, that the idea of ugliness exists.
And equally if every one recognized virtue as virtue, this would merely create fresh conceptions of wickedness.
For truly Being and Not-being grow out of one another;
Difficult and easy complete one another.
Long and short test one another;
High and low determine one another.
The sounds of instrument and voice give harmony to one another.

Front and back give sequence to one another.
Therefore the Sage relies on actionless activity."

This is actionless action, the *nishkāma-karma* of the *Gītā*. And how is one to master the technique and attain the state?

"Give up thy life if thou wouldst live," says *The Voice of the Silence*. "To become full, be hollow," says the *Tao Te Ching* (Chapter XXII), and again (Chapter VII):—

"Heaven is eternal, the Earth everlasting.
How come they to be so? It is because they do not foster their own lives;
That is why they live so long.
Therefore the Sage
Puts himself in the background; but is always to the fore.
Remains outside; but is always there.
Is it not just because he does not strive for any personal end
That all his personal ends are fulfilled?"

Arjuna was the fighter, but Kṛishṇa was the Charioteer—putting Himself in the background He was to the fore—always

there. Here is a Chinese image of the Sage who has attained. Compare it with similar descriptions in the second and fourteenth chapters of the *Gītā*:—

" Of old those that were the best officers of Court
Had inner natures subtle, abstruse, mysterious, penetrating,
Too deep to be understood.
And because such men could not be understood
I can but tell of them as they appeared to the world:
Circumspect they seemed, like one who in winter crosses a stream,
Watchful, as one who must meet danger on every side.
Ceremonious, as one who pays a visit;
Yet yielding, as ice when it begins to melt.
Blank, as a piece of uncarved wood;
Yet receptive as a hollow in the hills.
Murky, as a troubled stream—
Which of you can assume such murkiness, to become in the end still and clear?
Which of you can make yourself inert, to become in the end full of life and stir?
Those who possess this Tao do not try to fill themselves to the brim,
And because they do not try to fill themselves to the brim
They are like a garment that endures all wear and need never be renewed."

Lao-Tzu did not teach the doctrine of inaction but the right performance of action. In the fourth chapter of the *Gītā* Krishṇa says (Verse 16):—

" Even sages have been deluded as to what is action and what inaction ; therefore I shall explain to those what is action, by a knowledge of which thou shalt be liberated from evil."

And in the following verses a masterly exposition is given. The meaning of sacrifice (*yajña*) and the value of different sacrifices are explained, and the sacrifice of wisdom (*jñāna-yajña*) is recommended. The nature and meaning of every ***karma*** already

done or to be done or now being done are comprehended in and by Wisdom of the Spirit and the superb culmination is an exhortation—who does not know it?—(IV. 42):

" Wherefore, O son of Bharata, having cut asunder with the sword of spiritual knowledge this doubt which existeth in thy heart, engage in the performance of action. Arise!"

But turn to the *Tao Te Ching* and let us see the famous doctrine of *Wu Wei*: to be active with the activity of the Inner Life.

We can cull out and marshal teachings to show that *karma, bhakti, jñāna, dhyāna,* and *abhyāsa mārgas* are expounded in the *Tao Te Ching*. The tendency to differentiate and distinguish between these Paths is overdone. It is as erroneous to assert as some do that the *Gītā* advocates *Karma-mārga* as for others to say that it stresses the Path of Devotion. The Path is One; on it knowledge, action, devotion, practice, meditation, are all necessary. The *Tao Te Ching* takes it for granted that for the all-round development of man as a compound unit every division of his complex constitution must be exercised. Actionless Action is to be performed by the body, by the mind, by the heart. Says our *Gītā* (V. 11):—

" For the purification of the self actions must be performed by the senses (*indriyas*), by the body (*kāya*), by the mind (*manas*), by the heart (*buddhi*), but without attachment." This is *Wu Wei*, one single process of development in which several ways or *mārgas* are used.

The great symbol of the process is Water. The doctrine of " Resist Not Evil,"—better expressed in its positive form of *Satyagraha*—is exquisitely described in Chapter LXXVIII:—

" Nothing under heaven is softer or more yielding than water; but when it attacks things hard and resistant there is not one of them that can prevail. For they can find no way of altering it. That the yielding conquers the resistant and the soft conquers the hard is a fact known by all men, yet utilized by none. Yet it is in reference to this that the Sage said ' Only he who has accepted the dirt of the country can be lord of its soil-shrines;

only he who takes upon himself the evils of the country can become a king among those that dwell under heaven.' Straight words seem crooked."

But how to proceed? What method or technique to adopt? Action must be comprehended in Wisdom and therefore our attitude to knowledge and to action is the starting-point—not what we know, but our attitude to what we know ; not what we do but our attitude to how we act. And so the *Tao Te Ching* says (Chapter LXXI):—

" To know and yet recognize that we are ignorant is a high achievement. Not to know and yet to affect knowledge is a vicious disease. Only he who recognizes this disease as a disease can cure himself.

" The Sage's way of curing disease consists in making people recognize their disease."

Once we have developed the Right Attitude by perceiving that the fight is in the mind where actions are determined and created, we are ready for the next step. Says Chapter XLVIII:—

" Increase knowledge by learning from day to day.

" Diminish doings by practising *Tao* from day to day. Diminish again and again and arrive at doing nothing.

" At this point of non-action there is nothing that cannot be done.

" By this very inactivity, everything can be activated."

This condition is not attainable save and except through strenuous persevering exercise—*abhyāsa.*

The control of the mind so that it is not caught up in the muddy torrents of *kāma* or desire, the right use of the senses and organs through the performance of actions which are duties is the first step. Says Chapter XII:—

" The five colours confuse the eye,
The five sounds dull the ear,
The five tastes spoil the palate.
Excess of hunting and chasing
Makes minds go mad.

Products that are hard to get
Impede their owner's movements.
Therefore the Sage
Considers the belly, not the eye.
Truly, ' he rejects that but takes this.' "

The fivefold assemblage of *skandhas,* to use the Buddhist term, or the fivefold assemblage of *saṁskāras* which develop through the five *tattvas*—Earth, Water, Fire, Air and *Ākāśa,* are here implied—part of the lower nature—*aparā-prakṛiti*—of the seventh chapter of the *Gītā* where three other factors are added—*manas, buddhi* and *ahaṁkāra.*

But in controlling the lower nature not the path of extreme asceticism, but that of moderation, is advocated. You will note, however, that the observance of the Golden Mean must be with the motive of the inner will which expresses detachment, *vairāgya,* of the actor in reference to his actions. Action without caring for the fruits of actions—*nishkāma-karma*—is presented, as we have already seen in the quotation from Chapter II which deals with the Pairs of Opposites. Here is the Path of Moderation just as taught in the *Gītā* (VI. 16-17):—

" Stretch a bow to the very full,
And you will wish you had stopped in time;
Temper a sword-edge to its very sharpest,
And you will find it soon grows dull.
When bronze and jade fill your hall
It can no longer be guarded.
Wealth and place breed insolence
That brings ruin in its train.
When your work is done, then withdraw!
Such is Heaven's Way."

The simple life and the Sage's Way are identical in the teachings of both the *Tao Te Ching* and the *Gītā.* But remember what has been said, that the *Tao Te Ching* is not spoken in martial eloquence, direct and compelling, but in paradoxes—here is the simple life described:—

" Banish wisdom, discard knowledge,
And the people will be benefited a hundredfold.
Banish human kindness, discard morality,
And the people will be dutiful and compassionate.
Banish skill, discard profit,
And thieves and robbers will disappear.
If when these three things are done they find life too plain and unadorned,
Then let them have accessories;
Give them Simplicity to look at, the Uncarved Block to hold,
Give them selflessness and fewness of desires."

But these paradoxes present in a still more direct fashion the doctrine of Passive Resistance:—

" The best charioteers do not rush ahead ;
The best fighters do not make displays of wrath.
The greatest conqueror wins without joining issue;
The best user of men acts as though he were their inferior.
This is called the power that comes of not contending,
Is called the capacity to use men,
The secret of being mated to heaven, to what was of old."

This method is called the Sage's Way and it is beautifully described:—

" True words are not fine-sounding;
Fine-sounding words are not true.
The good man does not prove by argument;
And he who proves by argument is not good.
True wisdom is different from much learning;
Much learning means little wisdom.
The Sage has no need to hoard;
When his own last scrap has been used up on behalf of others,
Lo, he has more than before!
When his own last scrap has been used up in giving to others,
Lo, his stock is even greater than before!

For Heaven's way is to sharpen without cutting,
And the Sage's way is to act without striving."

Many of our Christian brothers, in their ignorance no doubt but ignorance which they could dispel from their minds by study of other scriptures, contend that the return of love for hatred was first taught by Jesus. This is not so. The doctrine of "Resist Not Evil," was taught not only by Lao-Tzu, but also by the Great Buddha six hundred years before the era of Jesus. With what better or more practical teaching can we close this rough outline study of these great books than with the words of Lao-Tzu and those of the Buddha which, however grand, are themselves but the echoes of their Originals taught by the Divine Immortals, the Dwellers on Mount Meru? Says Lao-Tzu:—

"To those who are good to me, I am good; and to those who are not good to me, I am also good;—and thus all get to be good. To those who are sincere with me, I am sincere; and to those who are not sincere with me, I am also sincere;—and thus all get to be sincere."

And the words of the Tathāgata:—

"To the man that causelessly injures me, I will return the protection of my ungrudging love; the more evil comes from him, the more good shall flow from me" (*Udānavarga*, XIV. 3).

And going back in time we have a similar injunction in the *Sāma-Veda* (*Āraṇyagāna, Arha-parva,* 2nd *Praṕāṭhaka*).

ŚANKARĀCHĀRYA AND THOMAS AQUINAS

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Two thinkers, separated by a great distance of time and of space, have both uttered in their works so mighty a call to the intellect as the highest power of man, and have both so decisively acted upon the minds of their successors, that in spite of the most striking differences in the external conditions of their activity, we feel impelled to institute a comparison between them, should it

be only in order to pay once more the homage due to their genius. I will speak of Śaṅkarāchārya and Thomas Aquinas. The VIII century in India and the XIII century in Europe belong to those epochs of history, when the human mind seemed to go on a new flight in striving after the Divine. On one side we see research and scrutiny touching the fundamental questions; on the other side we are struck with wonder before the highest conceptions that have ever illuminated mankind.

It is no more necessary to say that this time of blossom had been prepared from long ago and that it was a splendid result of hidden labours. Nevertheless, rarely more definite traces have been left of the ways the human intellect has stepped upon, rarely the delineation of the mental areas has been more clearly made; rarely also the mind of the mankind has been so deeply impressed and stimulated. We know little of the circumstances by which the intellectual priority has passed again from the hands of the Buddhists to those of the Brahmins in India of the period from the VII to the VIII century. We are much better informed about Europe. The discovery of the metaphysical treatises of Aristotle at the beginning of the XIII century caused a ferment in the intellectual world. As a result of that, the great undertaking to harmonize the catholic doctrines with the Aristotelian philosophy has been successfully carried by Thomas Acquinas.

Contrary to the scarcity and uncertainty of the data handed down to us concerning Śaṅkarāchārya, we are provided with quite sure informations on the biography of St. Thomas. Moreover, we have for information many pictures, probably quite true portraits of the saint, because they repeat the same features. The memory of Thomas was still living a long time after his death, and in all probability there have existed contemporary drawings of him, able to serve the future artists. The oldest we know is the figure of the saint on a fresco of Tra Anglico in the Vatican. Some others, very characteristic because of the allegorical treatment of the subject, originated in that closing period of the middle ages, the XV century. So are the picture of Gozzoli in the Louvre and the altar in the church of Sta Catarina in Pisa. Much higher than both in respect of the artistic performance stands the paint-

ing of Zurbaran in the Museum of Berlin. We do not count the others. But the most interesting as a printed abridgement of biography are the pictures in Paris and in Pisa.

In the upper part of them we see Jesus Christ. "*Bene de me scripsisti, Thoma,*" says He on the picture of Paris. Rays of light proceed from His head (in the picture at Sta Catarina) to Moses, St. Paul and the Kneeling Evangelists, and, pervading the holy teachers join again in the head of St. Thomas who stands between Aristotle and Plato.

Such is the origin of the knowledge for Aquinas, God Himself and His words contained in the Scriptures. Such an authority has been the Śruti—its expression contained in the Vedas—for Śaṅkara.

Four books of the *Summa contra Gentiles* can be seen on the picture of St. Thomas. If the Indians possessed an image of Śaṅkarāchārya, they would probably put also upon his knees another kind of a *Summa contra Gentiles*—selected passages from his commentary, *Śārīraka-mīmāṁsā-bhāshya,* where he condemns the opinions of the Lokāyatikas and of the Schools of Nyāya, Sāṁkhya, Yoga, and especially of the Buddhists. He saw in these last the most hardened heretics. Their errors, as he believed, were the greatest hindrance to the expansion of true knowledge. The stubbornness and the narrow-mindedness of the Mohammedans and the Jews were the obstacles to their comprehension of the true faith in the eyes of St. Thomas.

Both Śaṅkara and St. Thomas have been theologians in their starting point and in their aims. The philosophy should be for these aims only an implement. But the qualities of the minds of the two thinkers made a whole masterpiece with the simple tool of reasoning.

Aristotle and Plato summarize the principles which have guided St. Thomas in his activity. He maintains after them and tries to expound with the utmost clearness that man's distinctive function is reasoning. It secures the control of our passions and of our desires; this control is the sole means to avoid mistakes. According to Śaṅkara reasoning alone can amend and correct the

false conclusions of our sensations. So intellect is the best part of us, and speculative wisdom the highest excellence. To attain to the wisdom a moral perfection is necessary (Upanishads; Śaṅkara; Aquinas). It enables us to feel happy and not disturbed in performing this highest function, viz. that of reasoning. The standpoint is clear and scarcely has been ever before so decidedly formulated. In the East it has originated from the speculative tendency of the Indian mind. In the West it started from Greece and became, thanks to St. Thomas, the training discipline for centuries.

Thomas was deeply acquainted with Aristotle's works. He persuaded one of his friends, a monk, to make for him a new and full translation of the Greek philosopher's works. Thus the text and some commentaries have been literally rendered and ready for the studies. Thomas knew his Plato much less; the generality of the schoolmen did not know the whole doctrine of this philosopher. The informations about him were rather gathered from St. Augustine, or from some Fathers of the Catholic Church, and finally from the Arabians. The figure of Plato on the side of St. Thomas has a mere symbolical meaning for indicating a close kinship of mind. Indeed, it is easy to recognize in the works of Thomas Aquinas the Platonic thesis that the universe may be conceived as the thoughts of a universal mind and that the plurality of things is the reflection of the plurality of ideas. Only these immutable unities have a real existence and deserve to be an object of meditation. The true knowledge consists in recognizing this highest unity ; and that unity is the universal mind.

We see here that the Western idealism is not far from the standpoint of Śaṅkarāchārya in his commentary on the Upanishads.

As Thomas Aquinas had been trained in Greek philosophy, and well-versed with the teachings of St. Augustine and other Catholic writers, so Śaṅkarāchārya also had been indebted to his predecessors. But in India the names of the old teachers were mostly forgotten and only their theories, like the rivers in the ocean, got mixed and lost in the general formation of a higher level of the public mind. We know, nevertheless, that Gauḍapāda, presumably in the VII century, has formulated in his *Kārikās*

the whole doctrine of *māyā*. And we cannot deny that this doctrine had been evidently influenced by *Śūnyavāda* of the Buddhists, so violently fought against a century later by Śaṅkarāchārya!

Śaṅkara calls himself 'Śrīmad Govinda-bhagavat-pūjya-pāda-śishya.' Thomas Aquinas, besides being indebted to the ancients had been the pupil of the famous master Albertus Magnus. The line of Indian teachers up from Govinda goes, as the tradition maintains it, back to the author of the *Brahma-Sūtras* and through him to the Upanishads and the Vedas. Albertus Magnus taught the doctrines of Latin Fathers and their comments on the Scriptures. To both Śaṅkara and Thomas the light came from a revealed truth. The fundamental influence to which the intellect of St. Thomas had submitted itself was the teaching of Christ and of the Bible; for Śaṅkara it was the Vedānta. Just as the Catholic painter from Pisa put in the hand of the saint a volume of the Sacred Scriptures opening with the words '*Veritatem meditabiturguttur meum* . . . .' so also it would be proper, if the Indians had painted a portrait of the Achārya and put in his hand the Upanishads opening on the words '*Tattvamasi*.' None of them has discovered a new truth; they have meditated on the truth which had been given already to the men, and they helped them to understand it by calling reasoning to the aid, without basing this reasoning on any physical theory.

St. Thomas has set the boundaries between the area of the rational and that of the revealed or super-rational, and has established a distinction between the natural and the revealed theology. Śaṅkara also distinguishes *Śabda* or *Śruti*, i.e. the revelation represented by the Saṁhitās, Brāhmaṇas and Upanishads, from the *anumāna* or the inference through reasoning which is subordinate to the principal source of knowledge and is in conformity with it. One may think, Śaṅkara neglects reasoning. It would be erroneous. On the contrary, he gives the first place to reason, but we must beware that our mind cannot reach the Absolute.

The chief aim of Thomas Aquinas was to convince the intellect of the Mohammedans and the Jews. Since they, the

" Gentiles," did not recognize the authority of the Church, the only way of persuading them was to have recourse to reason, the natural human faculty, although it is quite insufficient for divine realization or experience. That imperfect reason is the *avidyā* of Śaṅkara. As our " reasoning " is always mixed with *avidyā*, there is nothing astonishing that *anumāna* ought to be subordinated to *Śabda*. St. Thomas opposes the intellect to the will and sets the former on a higher level than the latter. For Śaṅkara all *kleśa*, product of the sentiment and will, is a very great obstacle on the path to Knowledge. Here, as in many other points, the Indian thinker goes farther than the European.

So also with nature. For the Catholics, the doctrine of Divine things was the possession of the Church; for the Indian, it was the possession of the Upanishads. But the European schoolman asked: Does the system of nature, when explored, show a Divine Being? The answer was in the affirmative. By the argument of the " first mover," of improvement of things, of their transformation, and of their impermanency, Thomas proved the existence of God. For Śaṅkara the observation of nature was rather an obstacle: his mind had not been trained by the study of the Greek philosophy. The natural phenomena according to Śaṅkara cannot prove or deny anything, because they are, themselves, not existing absolutely, but are a *mṛigatṛishṇikā*, the mirage.

Nevertheless, despite all his idealism, Śaṅkara seems to be obliged to admit the existence of the external world; he, however, calls it illusional or rather relative reality. He cannot escape counting with some reality as substratum, of our sensations. He only pushes the doubt to its extreme limit—to denial. Aquinas, more realistic and more moderate, does stop on the half-way: our senses are imperfect, but they are, besides the reason, our sole implement of recognition. The direct observation, rejected by Śaṅkara for the benefit of reasoning, is for Thomas the chief base of speculation.

Astonishing as it seems to be, Śaṅkara is nearer to Aristotle than St. Thomas, in one point, viz. the problem of maintenance of the world in actuality. Śaṅkara ascribes it to the *māyā*-power

of Brahman, as Aristotle ascribes it to an ever-existing property. Thomas, according to the Scriptures, sees there God's will. Both are real for him: the movement of the world and the origin of it. For Śaṅkara only the origin is real, the Brahman; the movement is seeming, a mere illusion of our senses.

The creation *ex nihilo*, taught by the Church, has been taken by Thomas as necessary to reasoning. In summary, Śaṅkara explains the successive displaying and absorbing of the worlds as the simple and continual display of the magical potency of Brahman.

God's will is the cause of the creation—teach us the Church and Thomas Aquinas; that cause is the *māyā*-power acting without any aim—says Śaṅkara. But the display of *māyā* implies, at any rate for our understanding, something as an act of will on the part of the *māyāvin*. Otherwise we would stand before the dilemma—*māyā* is an attribute of Brahman and thus Brahman would have attributes; or *māyā* is Brahman itself considered from the point of view of *sṛishṭi*.

The chief and highest quality of man is reasoning, the aim of which is the attaining of knowledge which contains in itself all particular truths. Such a knowledge, according to Thomas and to Śaṅkara is the knowledge of God the Absolute, the only one perennial Being. But the understanding of the truth revealed by the Scriptures and by the Upanishads and attainment of true knowledge is above the human intellect. Why this weakness of our mind? From the primordial sin—answers Thomas; from our innate *avidyā*—answers Śaṅkara. *Avidyā* seems to be without beginning, like *māyā*, but a life of purity can enable us to get rid of *avidyā;* a life of purity helps us to overcome the lasting sin and sharpens our mind for grasping the truth, says Thomas. The difference between these two theses lies in their starting point. Thomas, as a realist on the one hand and as a faithful Catholic on the other, admits a real cause existing at one moment in the past. Śaṅkara does not admit such a moment; he moves above time as above the phenomena.

The human reason is deceptive according to Śaṅkara, because it is based on illusionary perceptions. The natural reason cannot

be deceptive, says Thomas, as it is the impression of the Divine in man; it is only insufficient and must be perfected. This latter conclusion is common to both thinkers.

There is a fundamental difference in the means of perfecting our reason. According to Aquinas (i.e. to the Church) an aid is given to man not only by his good works, but also by the sacraments and mostly from the personal assistance of the Saviour. Śaṅkara leaves man without any aid from outside; he has to count upon himself. It is the striking feature of all Indian philosophy. Nevertheless the idea of the Indian sacrifice as magical power effecting its results in the human and the divine world approaches the conception of the sacrament.

The end of all things is God; the final bliss consists in the contemplation of Him, and to that eternal happiness we are directed again by God's will, says Thomas Aquinas. We are directing ourselves, according to Śaṅkara.

Thomas does not neglect the data of the senses: every cognition begins with them. The intellect grasps the substance of worldly things, being inadequate to grasp the Divine Substance. By means of reasoning it can be only ascertained that God does exist—does exist as a pure act.

And that He is only One Reality, adds Śaṅkara. Everything else is unreal, phenomenal, transient.

How is He, this God of Śaṅkara and of the Upanishads? He cannot be defined as He has no attributes. The one answer to all questions about Him is ' no '—' *neti.*' We cannot grasp Him.

But Thomas arrives finally at the same conclusion. There are gradations of understanding according to the scale of beings and of the excellence of their intelligence. An angel knows God by natural knowledge, higher than all power of human reasoning. The Divine intelligence adequate to grasp the Divine substance surpasses every possibility of comparison. The intelligence of the angels and God alone can understand himself. We can remember the motto which Anquetil Du perron has put at the beginning of his translation of the Upanishads: *Quisquis Deum intellegit,*

Deusfit." A man who could grasp with his intellect the *Ātman* of the Upanishads and of Śaṅkara, the Absolute Self which is *Sachchidānanda* without qualities, devoid of shape, free of every limitation, beyond conditions of space and time, this man himself would be the pure *Chaitanya*—he would be Absolute. In that case no separate personality can exist. " That same soul, which exists in all bodies, if considered apart from the limiting adjuncts, is nothing else but the highest Self " (Commentary on the *Vedānta-Sūtras,* transl. by Thibaut, I. P. 161). The subject is one with the object.

Aquinas says also explicitly (*Contra Gentiles* i.xxx) that we can rather say what God is not (He is not like this, like that etc.); we cannot define nor know what He is (cf. *neti* of the Upanishads). But as a means to express our desire, and nothing more than our desire, to catch some knowledge of God and to tell our striving to approach the Unapproachable One we make use of the names which design the properties of the things we know; we speak of God by way of metaphor. This is the same as *adhyāsa,* explained by Śaṅkara—the apparent presentation of the attributes of one thing in another. But we err if we take these metaphors literally. On every page of his works St. Thomas makes distinction between the Divine and the human ; he keeps a strong boundary. He never promises to man, in this life, a full understanding of hidden mysteries. The full intelligence is not accessible even for the angels, as the gods which Śaṅkara mentions don't approach the Absolute.

Aquinas maintains firmly the plurality and diverse categories of beings. Here, in this point is seated the chief opposition between the pluralistic system of the European thinker and the monistic philosophy of the Indian. If the essence of philosophic thought consists in proceeding from plurality to unity, one cannot go any farther than Śaṅkara.

Thomas, a realist and faithful Catholic, is more human in keeping to the personality of the creatures. He, however, knows that even the highest individuality is a weak reflection of the Divine Light. The soul in the theory of Aquinas seems to be parallel to the *jīva* of Śaṅkara hiding the divine qualities, such

as eternity, omniscience and omnipresence, in the individual in the same manner as fire is potentially hidden in the wood, because an absolute identity of substance does exist between cause and effect—*kāryakāraṇabheda*. Even before its production the effect is already existent in the cause. The individual *jīva* which only by knowledge can attain the deliverance and attain Brahman is Brahman itself.

Thomas sees a gulf between the potentiality and the act, between the cause and the effect, between the substance and the existence. In God alone they are one. Thus, man is no God, and that in spite of many divine possibilities in his nature.

It would be interesting to compare the chief points of two scholastics, Eastern and Western, as represented by the teachings of Śaṅkara and Thomas Aquinas. It can throw more light on the aims and the methods as on the conclusions stated by both.

The greatest hindrance on the way to knowledge is *avidyā* from which proceeds *adhyāsa* or false superimposition of attributes, says Śaṅkara.

It is the primordial sin which causes the weakness of human nature and the lack of the higher understanding, says Thomas.

Ruled by *avidyā* we are subjected to the *mṛigatṛishṇikā* or illusion, according to Śaṅkara.

We err, because of our weakness, and can avoid error only by the Divine help—according to Thomas.

Through *avidyā* we realize the *Nirguṇa-Brahman* as *Saguṇa* or bestowed with attributes (Śaṅkara).

In our weakness we cannot grasp God and are more or less satisfied with the metaphorical definitions of Him (Thomas).

For the everyday-life we have *Vyavahārārtha* and a *Vyāvahārika Brahman*—in our human life we have only human knowledge of God. But there exists another, deep and true, sense, *paramārtha* which grasps *Pāramārthika Brahman* (Śaṅkara).

The higher knowledge is possessed by angels; the Absolute,

unattainable for man, shall be attained in the heaven in the spiritual and complete union with God (Thomas).

Śaṅkara maintains that the ways to knowledge are *tarka* (reasoning) and *anubhava* (introspection). Thomas holds that the saints attain knowledge by their highly spiritual life.

In both the systems the best preparation for seeking knowledge is the ethical conduct.

The world has its origin in *māyā*, the power of illusion of Brahman; there is, so to say, a passive creation, according to Śaṅkara.

The world has been created by an active will of God. In the view of Thomas mere potentiality does not suffice for explaining the act.

The *Ātman* is impersonal, pure intellect ; in it after the final deliverance, we shall be lost in the All which is One and which is and has ever been our Self.

God is personal, not, however, in the human sense. Personal also are angels and men.

Śaṅkara, following the Upanishads, and Aquinas, following the Scriptures, both admit the intermediates between the Divine and the human: they are the Ṛishis and saints or angels. But for Śaṅkara, the mediator can only be necessary and possible between man and *Īśvara* or *Saguṇa-Brahman* realized by *jīva*, the individual soul. No need of mediator between the Self of man and the Universal Self, because they are one.

Both Śaṅkara and Thomas Aquinas have been the first to proclaim the autonomy of reason and have created a complete and new philosophical system without having recourse to an authority other than reasoning. Starting from the sensible world as the basis—secure for Thomas, false for Śaṅkara as conception but secure as something underlying it—they pass to the pure intellectualism which conducts them higher and higher. In order to attain the highest region unattainable through reasoning alone, the authority and a complete autonomy of revelation had to be proclaimed, and both the Indian and the European have not hesitated to do it. Thus the synthesis of the natural and the

supernatural order of things, of faith and reason has been made. As a result no real conflict can happen between reason and faith: their truth has its source in God. Each time when our reason seems to oppose its conclusions to the data of faith, our reason alone is at fault, because it cannot and does not grasp the truth.

In the details of their methods, Śaṅkara and Thomas Aquinas differ sometimes very strikingly. But the system nevertheless is solidly established and common to both. And that in spite of an apparent contrast in some fundamental principles. Śaṅkara means that there is no distinction between the potentiality and the act, especially as the latter is, philosophically speaking, non-existing. The Absolute changes not, and the act or acting is a changing of state. For Thomas, there is a real distinction between the act and the potentiality. Potentiality can never become the act unless reduced to the act by something which is already an act. This act-perfection is God.

Before the time of Śaṅkara, during the VIII century and perhaps even at an earlier date, as also before the time of St. Thomas, in the period between the XII and the XIII century special attempts had been made to synthesize human conceptions of God and of the world. But this task needed a perfect familiarity with all the problems, discussed by theology and philosophy, and a deep metaphysical sense.

Thomas Aquinas and Śaṅkarāchārya fortunately possessed these two supreme qualifications. One could set himself with enterprise to the task of the unification of the entire range of knowledge, and the other carry it to its utmost conclusions. In the work of Aquinas and that of Śaṅkara can be seen the beginning and the consummation of the same system.

CHAPTER VII

SECTION VIII

Religion and Current Problems

SOME OBSTACLES TO TOLERATION

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India has ever been the home of toleration and her ancient records are singularly free from those blots of religious persecution which disfigure the pages of history in many other lands. We have no means at our disposal to determine the exact way in which the Dravidians were pushed to the south by the advancing Aryans nor even how Buddhism disappeared from the land of its origin. There is indeed reference in the *Ṛig-Veda* to Indra's conquest and carnage in the land of the phallus-worshippers or epicures (*śiśnadevāḥ*); but the invocation to the same god to keep off the same people from the sacrifice shows that enmity between the Aryans and these people was more political than religious. The Aryan method of dealing with people professing other faiths and practising other rituals was to prohibit social intercourse with them—a method which has lasted down to recent times. Possibly in earlier times the difference between Aryan and other cultures (excluding the culture of Mahenjo Daro perhaps) was so great that towards the latter Aryan arrogance dictated an attitude of contempt and abhorrence. The Kolarians were, as a class, kept at a distance in spite of the fact that they slowly absorbed some elements of Aryan culture by imitation and the Aryans probably adopted partially their system of land-administration. Brāhmaṇism never forbade to others imitation of its own outward practices so long as the privilege of the sacerdotal class was not infringed. Possibly an inner and an outer circle of imitators were instituted early in deference to social needs just as in Judaism there was a distinction between the sojourners (*gérim*) and the non-sojourners or outsiders in respect of the performance of Jewish rites. Possibly the earliest reference to this distinction is to be found in the statement that the sacrificial fire belongs to the five peoples (*pañchajanāḥ*), which, in the opinion of Aupamanyava (as quoted by Yāska), are the Brāhmaṇas, the Kshatriyas, the Vaiśyas, the

Śūdras and the Nishādas, and the sacred stream Sarasvatī is supposed to make these five peoples flourish. Possibly the attitude towards the last two fluctuated according to circumstances: but there can be no doubt that necessity left no option in the matter and a section had to be tolerated at home and in society and allowed some of the privileges of the higher classes. A large mass of the indigenous population was not admitted to the privileges of the higher castes, and although it is not likely that the untouchables varied in composition in different times and in different places according to historic reasons the distinction between the touchables and the untouchables persisted all through the centuries. It was not obligatory on all peoples to accept the socio-religious practices of Brāhmaṇism and a good many of the primitive tribes remained outside the pale of Hinduism; but those who imitated those practices or were permitted to be called Hindus had to submit to the restrictions imposed on lower classes as a price of their inclusion within the Hindu fold. Possibly the principle 'Lesser rights, lesser obligations' worked well for some time as the absorbed races were unwilling to give up all their primitive habits on admission into the Hindu fold and the higher castes did not insist upon the fulfilment of all the obligations of Brāhmaṇism in order to be so admitted—in fact, the religious law could not permit all to be equally treated in sacerdotal matters, not even the higher castes themselves.

This Hindu attitude towards the absorbed races well illustrates the difference between religious equality and religious toleration. These races were not placed on the same level with the Aryans as regards religious rights—in fact, it may be said that inequality among the Aryans themselves became more pronounced as time rolled on, and castes and sub-castes that were evolved in later times enjoyed unequal privileges of different kinds and degrees. Practices that were prohibited to one caste were permitted to another caste so much so that non-performance of appointed caste-duties was looked upon with disfavour, and attempts to follow the practices of higher castes were socially and politically punished. That, in spite of injunctions and oppressions, violations of caste rules did take place is evident from the fact that the intercastes

increased in number to such an extent that today their number is very great in Hindu society and they live with insurmountable barriers in between so far as matrimony is concerned. But when the castes did evolve, specific duties were assigned to them and it was never expected that all castes would have the same rules or enjoy the same social privileges. Where social constitution is not homogeneous and difference in status means difference in social and religious duties, a certain amount of toleration of lower cults is inevitable. So long as one lives within the framework of Hindu society and admits its social stratification and its caste duties, one cannot be molested for not falling in line with the higher castes or not abjuring altogether rites, ceremonies and occupations which are forbidden to the latter. Gradation of social components is bound to bring toleration in its train; for once a distinction between higher and lower is admitted, provision has to be made for varying the standard of secular and religious occupation of the different classes. We need not discuss just now whether society should be homogeneous or heterogeneous and whether divergence of occupations should necessarily lead to difference in social status; we need only note that the zeal for uniformity is likely to abate with a recognition of the fact that all are not equally privileged and cannot therefore be subjected to the same rules of discipline.

Complications arise when society is defied; much of the religious persecution in history is due to the fact that rebellion against social beliefs and practices disturbs social equanimity and complacence. Possibly, if belief had not affected practice social friction would have been much less: for society cares more for conformity to its own outward conduct and custom than for agreement with its creed and conviction. This is why even philosophical atheism was tolerated in India when those who professed it did not disturb the socio-religious practices of the community to which they belonged. People devoted to the same god may come to blows over the question of method of worship, not to talk of monotheists who worship a unitary divinity under different names. Social habits and religious practices act as dividing gulfs between communities even when they agree about the essentials of faith. As every faith is born in a particular environment, the historical

and social setting has a profound influence upon its constitution and expression—it carries the local and the contemporaneous with it and when it extends to other realms it comes into conflict with the local methods of worship even though there may be no radical difference between its own contents and those of the beliefs of these other realms. Of course, absolute identity is not possible, but where the essentials are untouched there might conceivably have been some workable formula of conduct for the converts of other lands in keeping with their past practices. No conquering creed would, however, permit this latitude lest there be a relapse into the old faith, and so not only the beliefs but also the outward acts must conform to the standard fixed by a faith in the land of its origin. Religions go by the doctrine that those who act similarly think similarly and that in order to wean a person effectively from his old allegiance a break with his old traditions must be established. The conversion ceremonies of each religion are designed with a view to making the acceptance of the new faith as impressive as possible and the civil law of every advanced state tries to adjust legal rights to the faiths of its citizens and guarantee freedom of worship with due regard to communal harmony and social peace. Those who are conversant with the history of persecution in Christian countries know to what length intolerance can go: the persecution of the Roman Catholics by Protestant states and the oppression of the Protestants in Roman Catholic countries, both culminating in burning of the dissenters at the stake, were looked upon as nothing extraordinary or reprehensible in Christian Europe although it is the religion of Christ that both Protestants and Roman Catholics professed to follow. The fission of a church over details of worship is not a rare phenomenon and it is not often that the opponents part in peace or remain non-violent in speech and action. When any religion claims not only that it embodies the whole truth but also that it alone is in possession of the only right method of contemplating and worshipping God, it becomes intolerant of other creeds and their modes of devotion. That all must conform to a single mode of worship and that people should be dragged into the mosque or chapel or temple to join a public

worship even though they are inclined to private contemplation betray an intolerant attitude of the social mind.

But far more serious than differences of practice are differences of belief. Credal dissimilarity may assume a multitude of forms, beginning with the difference between polytheism and monotheism and ending with differences in the contents of the various monotheistic faiths. There is also the fundamental distinction between believers and non-believers in supernatural existence, including within non-believers atheists, sceptics and agnostics. It is rather curious that while society is generally tolerant of the individual non-believer and lets him alone, it does not allow such non-believers to form groups and spread their doctrines actively within the community. As is natural, the status of the individual dissenter determines the social attitude: while an insignificant person would be ignored, a prominent personality is a potential danger to the community by virtue of his eminence and ability and so his anti-social tendencies of thought and action are more closely watched and crushed before they threaten the solidarity of social belief and cause a division in the ranks. Persecution begins as soon as the person attempts to spread his doctrine and it becomes intensified with the increase in the number of his following in the community. The social persecution of the prophet of a new religion and the political persecution of his followers by the orthodox party in power are not infrequent events in history. Religious belief is such a cementing principle of social unity that defection in any form is unwelcome to the majority. When to this is added the fear of losing profitable business, the priestly class is naturally alarmed and annoyed and sets the law in motion against the daring dissenter and his followers ; their position and prestige in the community lend an additional authority to their words, and when they profess to speak in the name of their gods they inspire people with awe and prompt them to ready obedience.

At the root of all religious persecution lies the assumption that the dissenter is drifting away from truth ; but this assumption is not made in cold intellect and with a detached attitude. A criticism of one's philosophical position leads one furiously to

think and to attempt a removal of contradictions ; but a flouting of one's religious conviction leads one to act violently so long as one does not calmly sit down to ponder over the matter and to understand the critic's standpoint. This is the way with all emotion-tinged ideas, namely, that we are unable to contemplate the opposite with equanimity ; there is latent somewhere a tendency to resist all contradiction and this tendency manifests itself more violently or less violently according to culture, tradition and environment. A wounded religious feeling may seek consolation in isolation and repose ; it may pity the critic's ignorance and forgive his insolence ; it may seek the path of persuasion to turn the critic into a convert ; but it may also inflame passions and rouse fury and ultimately lead to violent acts. When religion is not a mere personal attitude towards the unseen but a phenomenon of the crowd or social mind, it easily begets heat on being defied and the religious crowd or community degenerates into a fanatical mob and, like all mobs, ceases to tolerate opposition and wreaks its savage wrath on the offending individual or group. We are more intolerant as communities than as individuals and the less the number of free-thinkers and the more the number of blind followers the more well-knit is the social group and the more intolerant is its attitude towards dissent. This will explain why Roman Catholicism and Mohammedanism, in which religious leadership is more undisputed, if not absolute, are less tolerant than Protestantism and Hinduism. Besides, in the former two the infallibility of the Pope or the Prophet in matters spiritual invests each religious tenet with an unalterable verity. By their presuppositions these communities are precluded from conceding that truth might conceivably belong to other religious organizations also. In fact, every revelational religion has a tendency to be intolerant ; for once it is accepted that God has revealed the right way of faith and conduct to a particular community or individual it cannot at the same time be conceded that there might be other ways of being religious or moral, unless one admits at the same time that God can lay down a multitude of contradictory disciplines for the guidance of mankind at one and the same time or prescribe different ways of

spiritual life at different times. Intolerance indirectly implies, therefore, that God is one and unchanging.

Ultimately the problem of religious toleration would be found identical with the problem of man's capacity to know the supernatural unto perfection. The admission that man's knowledge of God and His ways—and in fact, of the nature of God Himself—is from the finite standpoint extremely limited will permit the further admission that other people may also possess spiritual truths to a greater or less extent and also that standpoints make difference in the nature and apprehension of ultimate verities. All truths are revealed through a finite medium and the assumption that a prophet can wholly lay aside his finitude and become the transparent medium of divine revelations in their fulness will be found on last analysis to be gratuitous. The growth of human knowledge in different fields of experience raises rather the suspicion that all truths, including religious truths, are infected with a latent subjectivity or relativity and that although there may be religious geniuses who see deeper into the nature of spiritual truths, yet they too cannot altogether get rid of their finitude or temperamental limitations and it is only by comparing the insights of different religious geniuses that we can get an approximate idea of the vastness of the religious field and the infinite vistas that religious inspiration opens up. The Indian way of admitting that there may be various paths (*mārgas*) for the realization of God—that while some are temperamentally fitted for the path of knowledge (*jñāna*) others can serve God better through action (*karma*) or devotion (*bhakti*) and, in fact, there are no limits to the number of ways through which God can be approached (*nāsau muniryasya mataṁ na bhinnam*) and that for the ordinary person the following of a tradition established by a religious genius suffices for the guidance of life—is based on this aspect of the matter, and the motto of the sage of Dakshineswar, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, that the paths are as various as the prescriptions is therefore not a new message but a reiteration of the age-long conviction of India that religion is not an objective revelation thrust uniformly on all souls alike irrespective of their equipment but an assimilation of spiritual truths according to

temperament, tradition and training. The Indian philosophers admitted, however, that man does not always know the potentialities of his own soul and the traditional path, accepted without criticism as authoritative in the early years of life, may turn out to be not suitable later on and spiritual training may also entitle a religious aspirant to discard a lower form of worship in favour of one higher as soon as he discovers that his soul is capable of higher things and that reflection on the mysteries of existence has exposed the defects and difficulties of uncritical thought and traditional modes of conduct. Religion is a function of education and endowment combined and so long as these two factors will vary the kind of religion that is accepted with the willing consent of the soul will also differ from individual to individual. What communal religion attempts to achieve is external uniformity of practice for social purposes—it does not obviate the necessity of a private religion for each individual in consonance with his intellectual, moral and spiritual development. The recognition of this truth is the best preparation for an attitude of tolerance. This increases the task of the missionary and the teacher for they will have to plod the patient way of illuminating dark souls and preparing these for the inevitable alteration of religious ideas and ideals in keeping with their spiritual progress. When that path is abandoned in favour of forcible conversion or when advantage is taken of economic distress or physical infirmity to convert a person of an alien faith, the community is extended no doubt, but so long as the necessary background of culture is wanting the new religion becomes identical with external conformity to social practice. Missionary activity is good when it is prompted by the belief that the religion preached is essential for the safety of all souls, for without a genuine interest in the spiritual well-being of one's fellowmen one would not care to labour in the field of religion. It is bad when the motive behind is to swell the ranks of one's own community for material gain. It is misguided when it does not attempt to understand and appreciate the truth that other religions embody and it is mischievous when it exploits ignorance and poverty and inflames passion and prejudice.

A careful examination of facts connected with religious

intolerance will disclose what great part social practices play in communal quarrel. Every religious organization develops peculiar rites and ceremonials and practises taboos of different kinds. The consecrated food of one religion is a veritable anathema in another and the music that is pleasing to God in one religion is a disturbance of the soul in another. Tastes and fashions owe their origin to historical and geographical reasons ; but when a religious community spreads to other times and places it insists on retaining the prescriptions of its original home. This denationalizes converts of other lands and creates divisions and hostile modes of behaviour among the people at large. Social intercourse becomes restricted because different religions insist on different outward symbols of the creed. When religion is understood mainly in terms of its outward expression in the minute details of daily life and when, not being natural and spontaneous expressions of the religious life, these vary from community to community, the effort to grasp the basic identity of the spiritual life of people professing different faiths is relaxed or abandoned altogether. When religion is regarded as a right which the adherent intends to exercise against the whole world and when any concession towards the unrestricted exercise of religion by people professing other faiths is looked upon as weakness, toleration bids fair to depart ; and when each religion claims the first right of way in expressing itself in the society, friction is bound to occur. The matter becomes complicated when any particular religion claims that irrespective of social exigencies its appointed exercises must be permitted at fixed hours, whatever might be the country and the composition of the population where it happens to be ; and when these exercises are supposed to be divinely prescribed, conflict is inevitable if more than one creed hold any such belief. It must be remembered that many a scripture has professed to see in the details of devotion the prescription of God and have refused to admit that the modes of worship are human devices albeit in consonance with regional facilities and national practices. What makes any religion conservative is the anxiety to put into the mouth of God what is merely temporary, national and regional. That in every religion there is a mixture of the universal and the peculiar, the eternal and the evanescent, can hardly be doubted,

and yet this simple admission would have avoided many conflicts and misunderstandings. But the claim of monopoly of spiritual truths alone adds zest to missionary work and makes a religion worthy of serious consideration by all ; hence the temptation to belittle other faiths and the tendency to extol one's own are two aspects of one and the same thing. Toleration means doubt and doubt means disbelief and disbelief is sure damnation—this is how the intolerant mind works.

But when once conflict does occur it is likely to leave aftermaths that provide fresh sources of friction. No reformer gets an easy hearing, and when he does get together a following he is persecuted in different ways or social bans are placed on his supporters. If the original community still commands the allegiance of the majority, the reforming sect has a hard time of it ; and if the original religion claims divine inspiration for its scripture, then the matter becomes worse, for reform becomes identical with heresy and apostasy is synonymous with rebellion against God. History is replete with instances of opposition and persecution which reform movements have to feel at the hands of the conservative party in power. But the converse is also true, namely, that when the reformers gain the upper hand they wreak their vengeance on those who had at one time opposed them. Sects, like individuals, suffer from reminiscences and much of religious bitterness in the modern world is due to the fact that in some remote past the upholders of different religions had quarrelled and fought with one another. The Jew is despicable in Christian eyes because his forefather had crucified Christ and so his race must suffer unto eternity for the sins of his ancestors. Similarly, the Christian is hateful to the Jews because Christ had sown the seed of discord within the Jewish Church and brought a sect into being which preached the message of salvation to the hated Gentiles. The Mohammedan is an abomination to the Christian because he conquered the holy places of the latter and converted most of his churches into mosques. He is equally hated by the Hindus because he desecrated the temples of the latter when he conquered India and turned them into mosques in many

places. The Ahmadiya movement in so far as it admits the possibility of fresh inspiration even after the prophetic line had been closed by Mohammed is an object of contempt and hatred to the orthodox Mussulman. To resist innovation and to anathematize it when it succeeds are the ways in which communal displeasure expresses itself. The memory of old strifes rankles in the communal mind, and the different observances and social manners and customs serve to act as dividing gulfs between communities and cultures. Eclectic movements like Theosophy and synthetic cults like Sikhism only increase the number of creeds although their contribution to mutual understanding cannot be questioned. Profession of sympathy for the whole human race may not, however, always go with actual toleration—the persecution of the Christians under the Stoic emperors of Rome is an instance in point here. Periodical meetings of different religions on the same platform are likely to break down the barriers of ignorance and to convince the thinking portion that behind differences of custom and creed there is an abiding similarity of human attitude towards the unseen and that where differences are fundamental they have their origin in the diversities of human constitution and accidents of history and geography. But something more than an intellectual understanding of other faiths is necessary to bring about peace on earth and goodwill towards men. It is the practical recognition by all, both as individuals and as a community, that there is no statutory method of communing with God and that in religion what matters is not the content and method of worship but the cultivation of that cosmic sense which breaks down the insularities of personal and communal life. That in religion every soul is trying to fathom the mysteries of spiritual life and that the common endeavour of all truly religious men should be to make every one a better man or woman, are the mottos which the world needs most today to bring the kingdom of God nearer.

COMPLEXITY OF HINDU RELIGION (*DHARMA*)

PANDIT VISWANATH ATMARAM BORWANKER
Jhansi, U. P.

The condition of modern Hindu religion has become much deplorable. In olden times also numerous blows were aimed at Hindu religion, but it did not suffer much. Gautama Buddha was the first to assume a hostile attitude towards it. He rejected the authority of the Vedas and the exclusive claims of the Brahmins, abhorred bloody sacrifices and taught with insistence the doctrine of tender regard for every form of animal life ; but in course of time Hinduism absorbed much of Buddhist ideas and doctrines.

Jainism was like Buddhism in its attitude towards Hinduism. The Mohammedans also tried their best to exterminate Hinduism, but it proved itself a good match for Islam. This shows the wonderful assimilative power and superiority of Hinduism. And by the dint of that, it is still surviving. But its present condition is something different.

Day by day the religious problem for India is becoming more and more serious. Hinduism today is so complex that common people will surely be bewildered. It is because of its complexity, that nowadays different parties holding different views are seen among the Hindus. Those who belong to the first party, call themselves Sanātanists. They are of the opinion, that what is written in the Śruti and Smṛiti and Purāṇa is ever true, and we have no right to hold different opinions against the ordinances of the Śruti and Smṛiti.

The second party consists of revolutionists, who are against the Sanātanists. These people do not think there is any necessity of religion for social advance. Religion is luxury for them.

The third party is composed of those who are indifferent and say that whatever their efforts may be, they will not be of any use. What is to happen will happen. Consequently it is better for them to be indifferent. When God is pleased all will be right in no time.

Those who form the fourth party, are considerate people. They hold the opinion that as God has blessed them with intellect, they must use it. They are to modify their religion to suit the needs of the time ; to make their religion acceptable to all classes ; to make their religious system more popular and comprehensive ; to labour for the active propagation of Hinduism ; and lastly to stamp out the corruptions and points of confusion, that were introduced into it.

Religious unrest and rising of such parties are nothing but the outcome of the complexity of Hinduism. But the question that arises in a thoughtful mind is, why has Hindu religion become so complex? And in short its answer will be, because of egoism.

In the beginning Hinduism was not certainly so complex, but with the advance of time, the simple worship of the Vedic times began to be degenerated into a lifeless and mechanical system full of controversies.

One Ṛishi said one thing, while another said something different, and this difference of opinions is so much so, that even the definition of *Dharma* is not one. Vasishṭha has defined it in his *Dharma-sūtra* thus: "Actions, the fruit of which is unseen, are collectively called *Dharma.*" Jaimini defined it by saying, " The act of following the Vedas and of being strictly according to the Vedic ordinances is called *Dharma.*"

But Śrī Kṛishṇa has condemned both of them in these words, "Flowery speech is uttered by the foolish, rejoicing in the letter of the Vedas, O! Partha, saying: There is naught but this. With *karma* for self, with *svarga* for goal, they offer birth as the fruit of action, and prescribe many and various ceremonies for the attainment of pleasure and lordship. For them, who cling to pleasure and lordship, whose minds are captivated by such speech, is not designed this determinate reason, on contemplation steadily bent " (*Gītā*, Chap. ii. 43, 44, 45).

Further Śrī Kṛishna indirectly condemned the bewildering ideas that are contained in the Vedas or Śrutis, when Arjuna said in despondency—" By these caste-confusing misdeeds of the family slaughterers, the eternal caste *dharma* and family *dharma*

are abolished. Of the men whose family *dharma* is extinguished, O Janārdana, the abode is ever-lastingly in hell. Thus have we heard " (*Gītā* i. 43, 44). Śrī Kṛishṇa told him clearly that to depend too much on the Śruti would not do always, but it was thus in parliamentary language. " When *buddhi,* bewildered by the Śruti, shall stand immovable, fixed in contemplation, then shalt thou attain to *Yoga* " (ii. 53).

Not these only but there are many other confusing definitions of *Dharma,* and the peculiarity is, that all those definitoins differ from one another in one respect or another.

In the *Taittirīya Upanishad* and the *Mahābhārata Dharma* has been defined quite differently. In the *Mahābhārata* while answering Yaksha, Dharmarāja said, "If a person will consult the Śruti and the Smṛiti to know what is *Dharma,* he will surely be confused, because one *smṛitikāra* says one thing, while another holds the opinion quite opposite to the first. Therefore the best *Dharma* is to follow the wise." The same conclusion is drawn in the *Taittirīya Upanishad.* It is written therein as the definition of *Dharma,* "Whatsoever a great man doeth, that we also should do, the standard he setteth up, by that we should go, because the path of *Dharma* is intricate." Again in the *Mahābhārata* Veda-Vyāsa holds the opinion that the rules and regulations which can hold, cherish and elevate the society are collectively called by one name *Dharma.*

In the *Ṛig-Veda Dharma* means sacrifice only, because in the *Purushasūkta* it is said, "Gods sacrificed their all, and revered those, who performed sacrifice, and the same deeds helped the further growth of the universe. He only, who is great, goeth to heaven where those gods live." It shows that sacrifice was the *Dharma* in the Ṛig-Vedic age, because to reach the supreme Goal is the fruit of good religious conduct and that supreme Goal can be reached by performing sacrifices.

After the Vedas, the Brāhmaṇas were written, and *Dharma* is defined therein as right conduct, but the definition that is given in Vaiśeshika Darśana is rather much confusing, because to say, " that by which prosperity can be achieved, and we can

enter into the nature of Almighty God is *Dharma,*" is ambiguous when prosperity can be spiritual as well as material. Again a person is sure to be confused at this definition, as what those means are, is not clear.

According to Śrī Kṛishṇa *Dharma* means *varṇāśrama dharma* only, and in three *ślokas* he emphasized the same thing. In xviii. 47 of the *Gītā* he says, "Better is one's own *dharma,* though destitute of merits, than the well-executed *dharma* of another. He who doth the *karma* laid down by his own nature incurreth not sin."

When Arjuna sank down on the seat of the chariot, casting away his bow and arrow, Śrī Kṛishṇa exhorted him thus, "Further looking to thine own *dharma,* thou shouldst not tremble, for there is nothing more welcome to a Kshatriya than righteous war" (*Gītā,* ii. 37). While dealing with *Karma-Yoga* he said, "Better one's own *dharma,* though destitute of merit, than the *dharma* of another, well discharged. Better death in the discharge of one's own *dharma,* the *dharma* of another is full of danger" (*Gītā,* iii. 35).

Where there is so much difference of opinion about the proper definition of the term *Dharma* alone, it can be imagined easily, how complex the actual *Dharma* should be.

No doubt, Hindu *Dharma* was the simplest in its primary state, but that simplicity is now gone. However, we have to look into the causes which brought about the complexity into Hindu *Dharma.*

Hindu *Dharma* is comprehensive, but to say therefore it is complex is not justified, because it is as pure as it was in the Vedic times, and as simple as it could be. It may be asked, "If it is so, then why is so much confusion seen among the masses, why do religious desputes arise at all?"

The word *Dharma* has two meanings—one inclusive and the other exclusive. Whenever this word is used inclusively, it means religious system; while its exclusive use indicates Hindu religion. People generally take these two words for one, but there

is a marked difference between the two. Hindu religion is something different from Hinduism, and the ignorance of that difference is the cause of confusion. People in general do not see any difference between these two words, which have quite different meanings ; that is why they look upon Hindu *Dharma* as something complex.

The doctrines of Hindu philosophy are collectively called by one name "Hindu religion," whereas Hinduism means a religious system. The doctrines of Hindu philosophy are the same as they were, and will remain the same. On the basis of these doctrines various kinds of religious systems were based. Gautama Buddha built the structure of his religious system with equality and tender regard for animal life as its foundation. Mahāvīra founded his system on the doctrine of *ahiṁsā*.

The difficulty is, that no such distinction is made in our religious books, and it is we, who have realized the importance of differentiating these two words, because we see the people often committing the same mistake of regarding religion and religious system as one. No doubt a religious system is based on religion, but on a few of its doctrines, and not taking together all of those that comprise religion.

Firstly we discussed different definitions of *Dharma* and concluded thereby that where there is so much confusion in the definition of *Dharma,* the actual *Dharma* must be intricate. But it should be noted that those definitions have not defined the religion, but the religious systems that were prevalent at that time, and we shall deal with the complexity of Hindu religious system here.

So much is clear, that Hindu religion is different from Hinduism. The doctrines of Hindu religion can never be criticized. They are ever true, unaltered and unchangeable. In other words, they are perfect and complete in themselves, but Hinduism always has been subject to adaptation and changes, as it ought to be. Hinduism must always be commodious in order to adapt itself to the needs of the times. Because the scope of Hinduism is not limited to the collection of moral teaching, philosophical thoughts and doctrines only, that pave the path for salvation, but

more or less everything which is connected with a man's life falls within its scope.

As *"tem pora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis"* (times are changing and we with them), it is but natural for Hinduism to adapt itself to the needs of the times, in order to maintain, cherish and hold that changed constitution. It is to satisfy not only the spiritual cravings of the more ardent spirits, but the political, economical, physical, moral and educational cravings, and contribute to the peace and prosperity of the people. Hindu religion never asked you to have a crest or hair matted on your head, but it was Hinduism that laid down such rules according to the needs of the times.

But the complexity lies in the fact that Hindu religion and Hinduism are so closely connected that people often mistake one for the other, and call themselves orthodox Hindus, by condemning the adaptability. In our sacred works no such distinction is made, and prevalent customs, social rules and laws of different ages also are summed up as religion. But we should not be misguided by the word 'religion' only.

We should note that the religions of different ages were different. The religion of one age was not similar to that of another age. If somebody would follow the religious system, which was prevalent in the Vedic, Epic or Middle age, he is sure to be befooled by others, and he may even ruin himself. We shall see how Hinduism went on changing according to the needs of the times.

When for the first time, the Aryans found themselves in the plain of the Punjab, their religion was a form of nature workship, in which, the powers of heavens, the firmament and the earth were deified. Thus Indra was the god of thunder, Agni of fire and so forth. The gods are represented as great and powerful, disposed to do good to their worshippers, and engaged in unceasing conflict with the powers of evil. There is no indication of image-worship in the Ṛig-Vedic times. Gods were worshipped by means of sacrifices and prayers. The religion was not monotheistic, but there were passages in the hymns of the *Ṛig-Veda*, which

indicate that the unity of the Godhead was realized by the Indo-Aryans of the Ṛig-Vedic age.

This religion was in vogue in the Ṛig-Vedic age, but the religious conditions as reflected in the *Yajur-Veda* differ widely from those of the Ṛig-Vedic period. The old nature worship has been thrown into the background. Its place has been taken by a mechanical form of religion based on a complicated system of elaborate ceremonies requiring the services of highly skilled priests. That condition obtained up to the Epic period, because in the *Mahābhārata* we find Yudhishṭhira saying that the path of *Dharma* is much intricate. Again, we find that the doctrine of *'Ahiṁsā'* or non-injury to living creatures had gained wide currency and even got the better of the Vedic practice of animal sacrifice. The simple nature worship of the Vedic age had been to a great extent superseded by the cult of Brahmā, Vishṇu and Śiva. The Vedic deities had been relegated to a subordinate position, while many new gods and goddesses, unknown to the Veda, had arisen.

Varṇāshrama Dharma was the religion of that age ; now if somebody sticks to that religion, I doubt if it can prove him much better, because that religion was for that age only.

Although the doctrines upon which the building of that religion was raised will remain as our ground, the building itself will have another shape according to the fashion of the day. One asks to follow the religious system of the Vedic age, another of the Epic age, a third of the Middle age, and so forth. But they are not exactly right, and in a way they prove themselves as if wanting in something. Because of this, our Hindu religion (because people in general understand this term better, otherwise according to me it will be religious system) has become complex.

Secondly higher caste Hindus, who are responsible for the re-organization of the Hindu religious system, knowingly or unknowingly hold the doctrines that are contrary to the doctrines of Hindu religion. These doctrines were interpolated by the Brahmins of the Middle Age to maintain their position in the society, but on the basis of those doctrines, if we will construct our religious system, it will naturally prove dangerous.

From the Śruti and Smṛiti we gather such interpolated doctrines, which are quite against the doctrines of equality and social justice, dictated in Hindu religion.

The Brahmins had exclusive claims and supreme authority in the Middle Age. They enjoyed and abused the advantages of the highest position in the Hindu society. But the time came, when they appeared to lose their exclusive claims and supreme authority upon the masses. Tides of revolution came one after another continuously, which frightened them. But they were not willing to see the people of lower caste mixing with them on the basis of humanity and thereby of equality. The so-called priestly class had formed a kind of religious aristocracy, which it wanted to retain for all time to come.

They knew very well the hold of the religious books on the masses, so they interpolated such things in the *Śmṛiti* and other religious books, by which the people of the lower order could be kept in the same condition. In those days religious books were not available for all. To the greatest extent, only the Brahmins had those books, and they were the only masters of learning, consequently their policy of interpolating succeeded in carrying out their aim completely.

If anybody would have taken pains to find out the validity of what the Brahmins were teaching and opposed them, the people of lower status would have seen better days much before, and social injustice would have disappeared from Hinduism even before the twentieth century. But the difficulty was, that no one except the Brahmins could understand the Vedas. It was the condition since the Rajput period. It was the whole and sole cause, why the Hindu priests dared to interpolate even the contrary of Vedic dictates. They knew well that the low-caste people would surely question their supreme authority, if they would be rich and educated. It was better for them, if the lower caste people could be kept in abject poverty and ignorance, lest they think of questioning their unquestioned supremacy. As a consequence certain *ślokas* were interpolated in *Manu-Smṛiti*, the then authority on Hindu religion.

One of the *ślokas* meant, " Let not a person of lower status be rich, denude him of his wealth even by force, because he will trouble the Brahmins, the soul of religion, on being rich " (*Manu-Smṛiti,* ix. 129).

The wonder is, that this *śloka* is quite opposed to the teachings of the Veda. The Vedas say, "I (God) am not partial to a servant or master. None of these should plunder one another for wealth" (*Atharva-Veda* v. 3.11). "Be assiduous and try to live long" (*Yajur-Veda,* iv. 1).

The education of low caste people would have worked like poison to lessen the prestige of the Brahmins. So they inserted such *ślokas* which restricted education to higher class Hindus only. But the great wonder is, that whenever they would be asked the ground on which those orders should be obeyed, they would point towards the Vedas. Be sure, that such narrow-sightedness can never be seen in the Vedas, because they advise, " O, people, be united (earn together, go on a journey together, and gain knowledge together), speak in good wise, culture your *manas,* and worship that God of gods, who is worthy of worship " (*Ṛig-Veda,* viii. 8.49). The Vedas cannot be imagined even to hold such narrow-sighted views.

So far we have dealt with the causes which introduced intricacy into Hindu *Dharma,* and it is obvious why the hold of Hinduism on the masses is not satisfactory. If anybody would go through Hindu *Dharma* considerately, he would find the germs of universal religion in it, but to carry strong conviction to the common people, it is necessary to remove the disablities that have been introduced. This complexity of religious system has the effect of diminishing popular respect for Hinduism. A committee is needed now, which will try to stamp out all such interpolations and controversies, together with the separation of essentials from non-essentials, that will revivify Hinduism and satisfy the spiritual as well as material desires of the masses by offering them a religious law easy to understand and accessible to all, free from elaborate and costly ceremonial, raising the social status of the lower orders, giving them their spiritual freedom and making the life of the whole community healthier and happier.

PROFESSION AND REALIZATION AND PATH AND NO PATH

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When more than fifty years ago I came to Calcutta in the eighties of the last century to study in a college, the saint Sri Ramakrishna was still living and it was still possible to see him and hear his inspiring words from his own lips. But I was never so blessed as to come into contact with him. So I cannot say anything about him from direct personal knowledge. Nor am I qualified to discourse on any theological, philosophical or scriptural subject. But as my name has been included among the speakers this evening, I am constrained to say something. With great diffidence I propose to place before you briefly the result of self-examination caused by Sri Ramakrishna's teaching, *"yata mat tata path."* This saying of his has been variously translated, the meaning being, " As many faiths, doctrines, opinions or views, so many paths " to the goal of *moksha,* emancipation, liberation, salvation, God-vision or Self-realization.

As I never had the privilege to learn the exact interpretation of this teaching from him or from any of his direct disciples, I shall refrain from any exposition of it.

As the Supreme Spirit is infinite, and His truth is infinite, it is obvious that no man can thoroughly know Him and comprehend Him. There are countless aspects of Him and His truth, and, therefore, countless approaches, too, to Him and His truth. These are contained, though not exhaustively, in the scriptures of the various religions of the world and the sayings of its saints, sages, seers and prophets. The reference in Sri Ramakrishna's teaching, *" yata mat tata path,"* is to these. So the discovery of the paths implies serious study, meditation and spiritual discipline. Of course, if a man is himself an earnest *sādhaka,* he may also himself discover a path to the goal in the light vouchsafed to him

in response to his strenuous spiritual quest. Such quest also implies spiritual endeavour and discipline.

But if one takes the Paramahamsa's words light-heartedly, as many of us unhappily are apt to do, such light-heartedness must involve great moral and spiritual danger. Many of us appear to think that, as in the opinion of the Paramahamsa all religions are true, it is enough for a man's salvation to be merely born a Hindu, a Jaina, a Buddhist, a Zoroastrian, a Jew, a Confucian, a Taoist, a Shintoist, a Christian, a Mussulman, a Sikh, a Brahmo, a Bahai or an Arya-Samajist, or to be born a member of some other more recent religious community and simply profess to be one, to reach the goal of *moksha,* salvation or liberation. If that were so, why did even Sri Ramakrishna himself, blessed as he was from childhood with such a highly spiritual nature, go through such *sādhanā* and put himself to such severe self-discipline? It may be said indeed that, as he was born a Hindu but wanted to realize in full the truth of Christianity, Islam and some other faiths, it was necessary for him to undergo the requisite self-imposed discipline. But almost all the austerities he underwent and the very difficult courses of *sādhanā* which he went through were meant for the perfect realization of the ideal of Hinduism itself in which he was born. Pandit Sivanath Sastri, an *āchārya* or minister of the Brahmo Samaj, who knew and loved and revered him, has related in his work, *Men I have Seen,* some of the Paramahamsa's "extraordinary penances and austerities" by which, in the Pandit's opinion, the saint "had attained a state of perfection the like of which was seldom seen." The Pandit has also written of him: "The impression left in my mind, by intercourse with him, was, that I had seldom come across any other man in whom the hunger and thirst for spiritual life was so great and who had gone through so many privations and sufferings for the practice of religion. Secondly, I was convinced that he was no longer a *sādhaka* or a devotee under exercise, but was a *siddha purusha* or one who had attained direct vision of spiritual truth."

The example of Sri Ramakrishna shows that it is not enough to be born in any religious community and to pay lip homage to

its faith. It is necessary to realize its ideal or ideals by external and internal discipline, and also to realize the ideals of other religions by needful *sādhanā*—though for the generality of men it is not possible to do what he did. Therefore his saying, *"yata mat tata path,"* "as many faiths or opinions, so many paths" to the goal, was not meant to produce in us easy-going and smug self-satisfaction, the mother of intellectual and spiritual indolence and indifferentism. Whether one is a householder or a *sannyāsin,* one must undergo self-discipline.

Every freak of fancy, every aberration of the intellect and every perversion of some sacred doctrine is not entitled to the dignity of the name of *"mat"* in the sense of faith. Readers of the ennobling life-story of Sri Ramakrishna's helpmate, the Mother Sri Saradamani Devi, know the incident of her undertaking one of her two days' journeys on foot from her home at Jayarambati to Dakshineswar to meet her husband and, in its course, of her meeting a robber in the midst of an extensive lonesome tract of land where there was a " shrine " where, the story goes, murderous robbers used to offer human sacrifice and go forth in search of victims to plunder and slay. The robber and his wife came under the influence of the Mother and the Saint, ceased to be what they were before, and were spiritually re-born. We may take it that the erstwhile robber and his wife did not deceive themselves by thinking that the cult of human sacrifice and pillage was also a " faith " showing " a path " to the goal, though it was followed in all countries in some period of their history or other and is still practised on a large scale by civilized races in the form of aggressive warfare and prayers for success therein.

This is an extreme example. But I venture to think that many of the opinions by which we worldly men often support our conduct in some religious and other matters do not deserve to be called "faiths" indicating paths to the goal of Realization of the Self.

THE ESSENTIAL UNITY OF ALL RELIGIONS

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There has been, there is, there will be, always, only one problem besetting Humanity—the problem of Bread. How to provide a sufficiency of healthy wholesome Bread to each and every human being? "Give us this day, O Lord! our daily Bread!"; but Bread Spiritual as well as bread material ; for men do not, cannot, will not live by material bread alone. The hunger of the body is satisfied by material bread. But the far more poignant hunger of the heart, the hunger of the soul, can be assuaged only by the Bread of Life Divine, by assurance of the life beyond this life, and a life happier than is possible on this sphere of sorrows.

While we are painless, while we are thoughtless, while we have not stood helpless, despairing, face to face with agony and death, the agony and death of loved ones even more than our own—so long bread material suffices. "But when anguish wrings the brow ", when we know helpless hopeless misery and utter weakness, then are we perforce driven to seek out, and seek refuge in, and pray for hope and help from, that Ultimate Mystery which has created and which runs the Universe, from infinitesimal atom to infinite sidereal system, all equally ; which is tirelessly at work in the heart of insect, bird and beast, and man and angel, all alike ; and which is ever calling out to us, " Come unto Me all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give ye rest," the rest which comes only with the finding and the tasting of the Bread Spiritual.

And the marvel is that they who run after only the bread material do not find it at all, or if they find it, find that it tastes bitter and is unwholesome, nay, turns to ashes in the mouth ; whereas those who seek for and find the Bread Spiritual, find the other bread also, easily, in abundance, and in sweet and wholesome condition. " Achieve righteousness, achieve the kingdom

of heaven, first, and all things else shall be added unto you." And, on the other hand, " What shall it profit ye, if ye gain the whole world, but lose your own soul."

Dharmādarthaścha Kāmaścha,
Sa kimartham na sevyate. (*Mahābhārata*)

" From Dharma come both wealth and just Sense-Joys ;
Why strive ye not then for that Righteousness!"

Sarveshāmapi chaiteshām
Ātmajñānam param smṛitam,
Tadhyagryam sarvavidyānām,
Prāpyate hyamṛitam tataḥ. (*Manu*)

" Of all the gains that duteous conduct brings,
The best, the greatest, is the gain of Self ;
Of all true knowings 'tis most deep and True ;
The soul wins back thereby its deathlessness.

" Self-knowledge is the only pearl
In the Sea of Life ;
Like whirlpools round our-Self we whirl
In incessant strife." (Sūfī Hāfiz)

" Who knows his Self knows God." (*Qurān*)

Ye are the living temples of God. (*Bible*)

The commentary on these very simple, yet most profound, ever-repeated teachings of the Great Lovers of Mankind, is written by the " inveterately convolved " and complicated modern Western civilization. The mighty Titans of the ancient Indian and Grecian myths, reborn in the wonderful European and American countries, have conquered anew the gods of the earth, the ocean, the air, the thunder and lightning ; they have again enslaved, and chained to their chariots, and put to menial service in their homes, Kubera and Varuṇa and Vāyu and Indra himself ; they fly in the air, and rush beneath the oceans, and sweep along the earth, and create heat and light and wind and water at will, by touching buttons with their fingers. But they have

not conquered themselves, their lower selves, their base and evil natures ; they have not achieved the Vision of God, their own True Universal Self, their Highest Nature ; and, therefore, Europe, and, because of Europe, the rest of the human world also, has become one vast mad-house, full of maniacs, occupying the highest places of power in every country, and filled with the frenzies and manias that are identical with extreme excess of the cardinal sins, proclaimed as such by every great religion, the sins that are the true devils, the real and only great enemies of mankind, Lust and Hate, Greed and mutual Fear, Pride and Jealousy ; the sins which, by excess, in the individual, cause eroto-mania and cido-mania, avaritio-mania and phobo-mania, ego-mania and zelo-mania, and, in the mass, give rise to sensualism and militarism, capitalism and armamental terrorism, imperialism and diplomatism.

Kāma esha, Krodha esha . . .
Viddhyenamiha vairiṇam. (*Gītā*)

" Hatred and Lust are the two inner foes,
That twist man's eyes and make his vision false
And from the Straight Path lead his soul astray."
(Maulānā Rūm)

Alas and alas! the gods have been conquered anew, with weapons of hate, by, and made unwilling slaves to, the Beast in Man ; they have not been conquered, with the beauty of Love, by, and not made willing and eager servants to, the God in Man. And therefore are all the Nations terribly unhappy, all in perpetual fear of Armageddon, all talking of disarmament, all saying that madness lies behind the race in armament, yet all running that race, compelled by the doom laid upon them by the Satan to whom they have sold their souls, in return for money and power and sensuous pleasure.

What is the sole and single cause of all this frightful state of things? It is that the League of Nations is not what it ought to be, is not primarily a League of All Religions, for the supply of the Bread Spiritual to all Mankind, whence would flow unfailingly the supply of the bread material also to all, by one world-

wide loving and beneficent Organization for all-fostering all-nourishing Peace, instead of the many present frantic hateful maleficent nation-wide Organizations for internecine all-destroying War.

Neglect of the Spirit, the One True God, the *Viśvātma, Rūh-ul-kul,* Oversoul, *Anima Mundi,* the Total Mind, the Universal Self of all, Who lives and moves and has His Being in all things, and in Whom all things live and move and have their being, the One Supreme Principle of all Life and Consciousness and Sub-and-Supra-Consciousness (miscalled *Un*-consciousness by the new Western schools of Psycho-analysts, Analytic psychologists, and Individual psychologists)—neglect of this One most indefeasible Fact of all facts, and excessive worship of Matter, and of Matter's entourage of Mammon, Moloch, and Mephistos, of Comus, Momus, and Priapus—Matter, very useful when kept in due restraint as obedient servant, wholly destructive and despotic tyrant when raised to the status of master and placed on the throne of Spirit, the True God—such is the one sole simple secret of the present misery of Mankind.

"But God fulfils himself in many ways," "out of evil cometh good ;" " whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." (*Bible*)

Yasyānugrahamichchhāmi
tasya sarvam harāmyaham. (*Bhāgavata*)

Out of forests devastated by fire, a greener growth shall spring, soon or late. If the Titans, the fallen Archangels, the Daityas, the Asuras, prevail now, the turn of the Devas, the pure Archangels, the gods, the Christs, will come again, and the True God will again be enthroned in the heart of Man, and spread the Peace that passeth understanding, and Love Universal, and Blissful Happiness, through all his being.

Because the gods and titans are always running their eternal race, and striving against each other incessantly, to keep the Wheel of Ambivalent Dual Polar Life revolving in all ways, and neither can ever wholly destroy the other, therefore, out of the very heart of Greed and Hate, Fear and Distrust, Lust and War, springs ever newly, and in fresh form, the sprout of such great movements of

the Divine Spirit in Man as the World-Fellowship of Faiths, and the Parliament of Religions; and the Great Cry of Motherhood, the Holy of Holies, the Holy Ghost, resounds throughout the human world, that the children for whom the mothers have travailed, in every country, in every race, may not be poured into the horrid dragon-jaws of Moloch, because of the madness of a few men, who, in their megalomania, think they are twirling the universe round their fingers, but who are, in reality, only the puppets and catspaws of Satan.

The human being is not a body only; he is also a soul. He is not Matter only; he is also Spirit. God's Nature and Nature's God, both meet in their child, Man. *Purusha* and *Prakṛiti* unite in him, as "Thought and Sound unite in spoken language."

Nāma-rūpe Bhagavatī, pratyayaḥ Purushaḥ paraḥ.
(*Bhāgavata*)

" Nature is Name-and-Form ; the Thought behind,
Suspiring in that Name-and-Form, is God."

" I am none else than Thou, and thou than I,
I am Thy Body and Thou art My Soul ;
Let no one say hereafter that I am
Other than Thou or Thou other than I." (*Sufi Hymn*)

" The body is the soul made visible."

" We all are parts of One Stupendous Whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the Soul."

Because man is both matter and mind, both body and soul, because he is body in soul and soul in body, therefore he inevitably craves both life here and life hereafter, that life beyond this life which alone makes life here worth living at all, the assurance of which alone can sweeten the bitternesses of this life.

Therefore the holy Messiah prays, in the *Bible*, " Give us this day, O Lord! our daily bread," Bread Spiritual as well as bread material; and may "Thy will be done on earth," in the realm of the bread material, "as it is in heaven," in the realm of the Bread Spiritual; for so only can there be, shall there be, a sufficiency of bread for all.

The holy Prophet prays, in the *Qurān*,

" O God of all!
Bestow on us all blessings in this world,
As also in the other future world,
And save us from the fires of sin and hell,
From which thy blessings, and naught else, can save."

And the holy Ṛishi says, in the *Vedopāṅga Sūtras*:

Yato'bhyudaya-niḥśreyasa-siddhiḥ sa Dharmaḥ.
(*Vaiśeshika-Sūtra*)

"That which bringeth happiness here as well as happiness hereafter, that is true Religion, that is true Right-and-Duty, that is true Law."

And what is the quintessence of True Religion—the quintessence in which there are distilled into one all-embracing thought and sentence, the *Jñāna-kāṇḍa*, the *Bhakti-kāṇḍa*, and the *Karma-kāṇḍa* of *Vaidika Dharma*; the *Haqīqat*, the *Tarīqat*, and the *Sharīat* of Islam; the Gnosticism, the Mysticism, and the Energism and Pious Works of Christianity; the *Samyak-jñāna*, *Samyak-darśana*, and *Samyak-chāritra* of Jainism; the *Samyak-dṛishṭi*, *Samyak-saṅkalpa*, and *Samyak-vyāyāma* of Buddhism; the *Hummata*, *Hukhta*, and *Hu-varshta* of Iranian religion; the Right Thought, Right Desire, and Right Action, of all religions?

Listen to the quintessence, in the words of the Great Lovers of Mankind themselves, the saintly sages and seers, the messengers of the Divine, the sons of God, the prophets, the messiahs, the *avatāras* and *ṛishis*, the *nabis* and *rasūls*, the *insān-ul-kāmil*, *mazhar-i-atamm*, *pūrṇa-purushas*, 'perfected ones.'

The Prophet Mohammed says:

" Noblest religion this—that thou should like,
For others what thou likest for thyself,
And feel the pain of others as thine own."

The Christ Jesus says,

" Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; this is the whole of the law and the prophets."

When a disciple asked him, " Is there one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one's life?" the great Chinese Master Confucius said: " Reciprocity is the word: Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself."

Buddha's single word is " *samānātmatā,*" " same-as-yourself."

Kṛishṇa's word is *Ātmaupamyena* ":

Ātmaupamyena sarvatra
samam paśyati yo'rjuna!
Sukham vā yadi vā duḥkham,
sa yogī paramo mataḥ. (*Gītā*)

" He who can see and feel, same as his own,
The joys and sorrows of all, everywhere,
Who sees and feels all others as him-Self,
He is the highest ' *yogi,*' ' joined ' to all."

The Prophet Zoroaster says:

" Hold that as good and proper for yourself
Which you hold good and proper for all else."

The Primal Patriarch and great Law-giver Manu says:

Sarvabhūteshu chātmānam,
Sarvabhūtāni chātmani,
Samam paśyan Ātma-yājī,
Svārājyamadhigachchhati.

" Who sees all living beings in him-Self,
And sees him-Self in all the things that live,
And makes of all his acts, of all his life,
One constant sacrifice of his small self
Unto the service of that Self of All,
He wins Self-rule in this and in all worlds."

And, in this Manu but repeats the *Veda,* which has said:

Yastu sarvāṇi bhūtāni
Ātmanyevānupaśyati,

Sarvabhūteshu chātmānam,
Tato na vichikitsate,
Tato na vijugupsate. (*Īśa Up.*)

And the Brahmarshi Vyāsa says:—

Śrūyatām dharmasarvasvam,
Śrutvā chaivāvadhāryatām,
Ātmanaḥ pratikūlāni
pareshām na samācharet,
Yad yad Ātmani chechchheta
tat parasyāpi chintayet.
(*Mahābhārata, Śānti-parva*)

"Do not to others what ye do not wish
Done to yourself; and wish for others too
What ye desire and long for yourself
—This is the whole of *Dharma,* heed it well."

Dear Sisters and Brothers, heed it well; do not deceive yourselves, and be not deceived by any others, professing to be priests of any religion, who may tell you, that any one religion is true and all others false, or even that religions differ. The great Founders of Religions themselves all say that they are only re-proclaimers of eternal truths, and say nothing new. The Prophet Mohammed says: "God hath sent Teachers to all races; and what I am teaching you has all been taught by the preceding prophets." Jesus says: "I come not to destroy" any teachings of the older prophets, "but only to fulfil" and complete what they have said. In the scriptures of the *Sanātana Dharma,* the eternity of the basic truths is reiterated over and over again. I have repeated to you the very words of the greatest Teachers of East and West alike, and they all say exactly the same thing: "This is the noblest religion," "this is the whole of *Dharma,*" "this is the whole of the law and the prophets," that "ye should do unto others as ye would be done by, and not do unto others as ye would not have done unto you." And the very deep and yet also utterly plain and simple reason for the teaching is that One and the same Self, One and the Same Life of God, lives in all; and the sensing, the feeling, of this marvellous Fact is Love; and therefore Love is God,

and God is Love; and to him who has sensed this "mystic participation" of "all in the life of all," *Indirāj-i-kul-fil-kul,* as the Sūfis say, to him, that which is mystical and mysterious to others, becomes the plain sun-clear and most practical rule of daily life, the Golden Rule of Christ and of all the Great Lovers of Mankind.

It is true that a technique is needed, to apply the Golden Rule, discriminately, duly, correctly, in the different situations of the different lives of different persons, within each nation separately and all nations collectively, the lives of men and women, old and young and infant, healthy and sick, student and householder, educator and soldier, judge and policeman, tradesman and manual worker, artist and artisan and craftsman, bread-winner and ascetic, physical servant and spiritual 'servant,' state-'minister' and religious-'minister.'

This technique has been laid down by the Patriarch Manu in his Scheme of Social Organization, or *Varṇāśrama-vyavasthā,* as indispensable commentary on his statement of the Golden Rule.

It is for the World-Fellowship of faiths, and Parliaments of Religions like this, to proclaim once again, and again and again, the Essential Ultimate Truth, and the Essential Penultimate Truths, which are common to all Religions; to proclaim that Religions do not differ, and do not differentiate and separate man from man, but, instead, that all Religions are at heart one, and therefore unite man to man; and also to set before the human world, including all races and all nations, a rational reasonable Scheme of Social Organization suited to modern conditions, which will make co-operation between individuals, and between nations and races, possible and easy, and, by its very rationality and reasonableness, will compel and impel them to cease from organizing for War, and engage with all their heart in organizing for Peace.

The World-Fellowship of Faiths, which held its first convention in Chicago in 1933, was started expressly to promote sanity and world-peace amidst the nations, and to seek "Spiritual solutions of Man's present problems, such as War, Persecution,

Prejudice, Poverty-amidst-Plenty, Antagonistic Nationalism, Ignorance, Hatred, and Fear."[1]

That World-Fellowship is gradually establishing branches in all countries, to carry on its work, day after day, till the Insanity of the Nations is cured. This Parliament of Religions, held in connection with the centenary of Paramahamsa Ramakrishna, who belongs to the same Spiritual Race as all the Great Lovers of Mankind, is fitly helping in that very great work.

It is my great loss that I am prevented by causes beyond my control, especially the demands of other unavoidable public duties in the Legislative Assembly now in session in New Delhi, from attending personally, the Sessions of the Parliament of Religions, and seeing the kind faces of so many sisters and brothers, engaged with one heart and mind in such beneficent work, and bathing in the bright and life-giving sunshine of love radiating from them.

I have to content myself with contributing my humble mite to your work, vicariously, in the shape of this small basket of flowers picked from the wonderful gardens of the Great Lovers of humanity.

I pray that the work you have been doing here during this week, Dear Sisters and Brothers! may live; may grow and spread; may help to bring home to the Indian People and to all Peoples *"The Essential Unity of All Religions"*;[2] may place before them a Scheme of Spirituo-Material Solutions, by proper social organization and planning, of all the problems that are harassing and indeed dementing Humanity, and threatening to kill it, in soul first, and then in body afterwards; and that you may thereby bring to the homes of all in abundance, the Bread that we all crave, and without which we die, Bread Spiritual as well as Bread Material, the Bread of Life here and, even more, of the Life hereafter, the Bread that alone brings Everlasting Happiness.[3]

Om! *Āmiṅ*! Amen!

[1] Foreword to *The Proceedings of the World-Fellowship*, published in 1935.

[2] For further details of the thoughts of this paper, the reader may see my book of this name, and *The Science of Social Organisation* and other writings.

[3] Transliterations of the Arabic and Persian quotations of which the English renderings appear in this learned paper have been omitted.—ED.

THE PROBLEM OF WORLD-PEACE

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The most vital problem of the day that is engaging the serious attention of the sages, savants, philosophers and thinkers of the East and the West is undoubtedly that of World-Peace. Notwithstanding the much-vaunted Covenants, Pacts, and Sanctions of the League of Nations, and the high-sounding professions of faith and goodwill expressed by churchmen in the delivery of the Armistice Day orations for the prevention of war and establishment of peace, notwithstanding the holding of the sessions of International Peace Conferences, Disarmament Conferences and so on and so forth, the earth-grabbing propensities of the Western and Eastern nations have not abated in the least. Every nation strengthens and increases its war materials and seeks to grab its neighbours. The League of Nations with all its paraphernalia of pious declarations had not been able to recently prevent wanton aggression of Italian Fascist Government from making war upon the Abyssinians, the brutal conquest of the land in pursuit of its imperialistic policy and the enslavement of a free people in the teeth of their bold united stand, nor has it been able to check the recrudescence of inhuman destruction in Spain.

In spite of the impotency of the League in fulfilling the very object of its existence, some people cannot think of world-peace without the League. A striking plea to support the League was recently made by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, who declared in the last International Peace Conference that "the world without the League would be a nightmare of uncertainty, a nightmare of arms, rattling of steel and creaking of moving cannon." This enthusiastic sponsor of the League, and other people of his way of thinking must realize that unless people begin to be God-fearing, truth-loving and alive to the consciousness of the Self within, of the inherent divinity in man and woman, of spiritual solidarity, of universal service and brotherhood, and of international comradeship, world-peace sought to be established by a combination of world powers would be an illusion, an unpractical thing.

Wars must take place in the world so long as there is war in the soul of man himself, so long as man is selfish and brutal in nature. Every sincere peace-loving man must realize that a power deeper than political convention, a spiritual power, is needed to restrain wars and provide a true and lasting foundation for world-peace. If God's rule of righteousness, peace, justice, goodwill and solidarity among mankind is faithfully and sincerely adhered to, wars must cease and permanent peace and harmony shall prevail. People must seek first the Kingdom of God and put its rule above the sway of national ambitions and aggrandizements. Swami Vivekananda with his true prophetic vision sounded a note of warning to western nations against their plunging headlong into the feverish race for lust, gold and earth-grabbing. He declared most emphatically that in every nation he that feared God and worked righteously was accepted by God. He and his brother-disciples preached, and their faithful followers are preaching, in two hemispheres the spiritual messages of India, Ramakrishna's Gospel of love, faith, righteousness, peace, goodwill, universal acceptance of faiths and service. They are advocating in the strongest possible way the development of a spiritual power capable of establishing peace and concord among mankind. They are exhorting the people of the two hemispheres to *live* the life and realize the divinity in man and woman and the essential spirituality of life—the outstanding message of the Vedānta and of Sri Ramakrishna.

It is, therefore, of supreme importance that in these anxious times when nations are once more on war-path and are deliberately refusing to believe in the efficacy of spiritual power and are adhering to brute force to achieve their objectives, all must listen to the dynamic teachings of the Vedānta, the spiritual messages of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda for the establishment of the world-peace ; that is to say, all must have implicit faith in the power of the spirit, the inherent divinity in man and woman, the unity of soul, the common substance of humanity, the dominance of the spiritual over the material, and the deepening of the spirit of comradeship between man and man, nation and nation. All must fully realize that to hurt one's

brother is to hurt one's own self, that truth and mercy meet together, that righteousness and peace kiss each other and that righteousness exalteth a nation but sin is a reproach to any people. Proud and haughty people of the world must remember that better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right and that he that rules his spirit is better than he that takes a city.

Let Ramakrishna's Gospel of direct Realization and Experience, Synthesis and Harmony, Reconciliation and Acceptance *in toto*, Universal Love and Service, Peace and Righteousness inspire the distinguished gathering of this august Parliament and be echoed in the hearts of the Eastern and Western men and women alike. Let us be true to the spirit of the teachings of all the prophets and seers of the past and the present as well as of those that will come in future, for our permanent peace and happiness. Peace, Peace, Peace unto all!

ETHICO-RELIGIOUS EQUILIBRIUM OF GREAT CIVILIZATIONS

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Humanity is still far from being one complete whole formed by strong and close national or international bonds. We are menaced by fratricidal wars, and it is even in the middle of the most pretentious civilizations that are being manifested the forms of barbarity connected with bellicosity. In past ages, the most dissimilar civilizations were oftener brought into struggle with one another than into mutual combination. There were "ethnical civilizations" which divided one of the so-called "races" from another, which moreover were far from pure-blooded as they pretended to be. We are gradually advancing towards "ethical

civilizations " in which the confused and arbitrary conception of races does not play any prominent part, and in which it is the intellectual and moral principles, the most characteristic modes of psychological solidarity, which contribute to the continued co-operation of groups and peoples with a view to simultaneous progress in every domain (scientific, artistic, moral, religious, juridical, political, technical and economic). The " barbarism " may content itself with a scientific and technical progress and with accumulated power and wealth ; the highest " civilization " values above everything else the respect for moral personalities, and safeguards it by all individual and collective rights for the accomplishment of the human tasks favourable to the intensification of the will for peace and collective security uncircumscribed by time or space. All those who claim to be "civilized" today should exert themselves for the realization of this higher social order.

The chief of all the social energies susceptible of co-operating with or opposing one another, for or against the equilibrium of great unities, peoples or civilizations, are decidedly the ethico-religious forces, constituted by the "believers," more or less closely united, often forming hierarchically or federally organized groups. The past is full of their antagonisms and frequent atrocious struggles which they have caused by their mutual intolerance. It is the true essence of all moral or religious faith, and of all political and juridical conviction, and in the highest degree in the churches or communities of the faithful, to affirm one's faith with an energy which may appear to be indomitable, to incline towards martyrdom, and also towards persecution, or at least to an excessive proselytism, without any respect for the beliefs of others. Believing that the believers forming collective unities all on a sudden consider themselves to be in possession of "truth," some of them even feel to have experienced a revelation or an illumination which imposes on them, in their eyes, the obligation to work for the conversion of their less privileged brothers. The delirium of prophecy or evangelization may reach the highest degree of morbid systematization resulting in the dulling of the spirit and a blind exultation of the heart. The religious faith has always been something dramatic, precisely

because those who play the role corresponding to their mystic convictions are placed above the vulgar interests and consider themselves as participating in the most moving of all human tragedies, in the struggle for the welfare of the whole humanity or its most important part. Hence results a permanent possibility of mental and moral disequilibrium of exceptional seriousness: individual or collective mysticism may turn to contempt all the forms of natural and terrestrial life, which in its turn causes a disequilibrium from the point of view of social life which is closely connected with the nature and positive conditions of existence.

The exaggerations of asceticism which may go to the length of the monomania of depersonalization, mutilation, suicide, or martyrdom, are further joined by individual or collective deliriums with illusions, hallucinations, interpretations, impulsions and obsessions, which lead the groups or the crowds to irrational comportments in the most varied domains. Thus the absence of an effective counterpart of religious effervescence, the absence of intellectual and practical equilibrium in the domain of sentiments results in grave social psychoses of which the consequences may be fatal for peoples and civilizations. And as each ethnic evolution comports a close connection between the manifestations of the common temperament or character, of beliefs of all sorts, of the norms of public or private life, of the principles of morality and law, of the habits, customs, traditions, institutions, and of the religious faith (along with rites, its dogmas, the whole of its metaphysics, mythology and legends), it is inevitable that the civilizations based on the race or the ethnic solidarity of the different peoples which participate in them, should be radically opposed to one another and tempted to launch into mutual conflicts on every pretext when everyone would exaggerate for himself his own religious zeal.

The internal disequilibrium and the external disequilibrium of nations, national psychisms or national souls,—these are the general sources of fanaticism, particularly when "prophets," "inspired ones," leaders or "suggesters," particularly the talented ones, act to move the multitudes by their comportments, attitudes, gestures and speeches, and sometimes by their ecstatic states,

influence the masses incapable of critical deliberation, credulous, and carried away by their collective strength into enthusiasm in favour of the "marvellous". That is why reason and the positive science, the daughter of human intellect and the mother of technical progress, are so frequently opposed in the modern ethical civilizations to religiosity, diverted from its normal end and its truly human role.

And this is also why it is in the nature of these veritable "paints" of modern times to contribute with increasing insistence to the work of reconciling the ethico-religious faith with reason, positive science and technical perfection. This is what Sri Ramakrishna seems to have done in the last century in the midst of the noble Hindu nation which has conserved much more than the European peoples a profound religious sentiment attached to an ethnical tradition, but which is progressively inspired by a broad-minded humanitarianism.

Social equilibrium calls for the disappearance of fanaticism, intolerance, constraints and exclusive enthusiasms, intransigent dogmatism and individual or collective psychoses which may fit superstitious peoples but hardly any enlightened nation,—but not the disappearance of the religious sentiment or moral practices, the norms of healthy and happy life, which are susceptible of deviation from an ardent faith in the supremacy of spiritual values. The imminently "positive" character of our scientific knowledge, our sociology (deliberately subjected to the scientific methods of investigating and verifying the hypotheses by the confrontation of the ideas and the data of sensible experience), should not initiate an incomplete systematization to the exclusion of religion from the normal social life. A "Parliament of Religions," with a free tribune admitting all who adhere to the supreme principle not only of toleration but of profound respect for all moral convictions, may play an important part in re-establishing the mental equilibrium of the whole world: it goes without saying that it is not its duty to determine—as would be done by a council of some particular confession—the fundamental dogmas of something like an electic church, but incapable of becoming universal; if a parliament is called for the purpose of

legislating, it might include as many particular legislations as there are peoples with peculiar customs, traditions, aspirations, modes of thought and of feeling and acting. Political federalism may serve as a model to ethico-religious federalism: let us concede to each ethnic type the right of colouring in its own fashion its mystic sentiments regarding the beyond and the relations between the sensible life and the supra-sensible. Let us confine ourselves to ask of every honest man and all free believers and free thinkers, the respect for some essential rules without however wishing to impose upon anybody a definite form of thought and sentiment or of the attitude in regard to the "divine." What matters is confronting the proper aspirations to every people or every class of believers with the purpose of disengaging from them what unites them in a common opposition to the exclusivisms fatal for all ideals. Hinduism, Christianity, Islam and other religions which have historical antecedents and which are ceaselessly changing themselves without however departing from particular traditions, have found and will find their justification whatever might be the metaphysical "truth" (if ever it is possible for any person to recognize this truth for the purpose of judging, condemning or justifying the religions). In the eyes of the sociologists it is of little importance if some religious beliefs are founded on legend and mythology: "poetry is truer than history" every time the poetry has succeeded in creating a current of ideas, sentiment and collective comportments, which persists and develops and becomes a social reality, a social force—the source of action and collective life. It is in the spirit of the sociologist that it is necessary to examine the problem of all religions, and all the religious beliefs both orthodox and heretic.

Hence all the sects, all the churches, all the confessions, far from plunging themselves into reciprocal anathema, have but to occupy themselves with their essential social function which is to realize the "spiritual communion," the source of a mystic fraternity and the basis of a universal religious ethics. Between lay morality, which does not demand any metaphysical or theological postulate, and the religious morality which is not based on any particular confession the distance is not so great as people

are usually inclined to believe. The lay ideal, if it is conceived without any prejudices, is a social ideal, of which the empire is limited to the sensible world ; the religious ideal connects this social ideal with a transcended spirit, which for the believer in human reason is the course of providential inspirations and manifestations capable of guiding the man in his weakness through the way to improvement and progress the end of which is sainthood. There is none who does not feel happy to see the believers paying homage to a positive ethics, which sometimes requires almost superhuman courage, and see the resurgents of religious faith, thanks to which the effort for indefinite perfection in the human mind is more easy, more sustained, more effective, and is placed at the service of a much larger number of noble resolves.

Thus the religious faith considered independently of the appurtenance to some particular confession, appears to be capable of and destined to contribute, even in the contemporary societies which are hardest smitten by positive science and industrial technique, to the social equilibrium, as the result of the intensification which it effects in moral work which is the integral part of all the achievements of civilizations.

THE WORLD'S NEED OF RELIGIOUS UNITY

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In 1914 Mr. Frederic Harrison, leader of the English Positivists, remarked to me that present world conflicts would never be resolved until the religious problem was solved. I think that Mr. Harrison's remark still holds good, even in an intensified degree. Practically all who are thinking in world terms see the world's need of religious unity. There are many signs that movements are beginning, in all lands of advanced culture, in this direction. The purpose of this paper is to emphasize from the point of view of sociology the need of religious unity, if not among

all peoples, at least among the leading cultured peoples of the world. Either the world will have to find its way very shortly to some sort of religious unity or else religion will be discarded altogether, as it has been in Russia, and practically also in several other nations. It is to be taken for granted, of course, from a sociological point of view that such religious unity can be attained only through a synthesis of all the human eternal values in existing religions. To say this, however, is not in any way to solve the problem of religious unity, because it does not tell us which of these values are to be uppermost and to lead, or organize, the rest.

World religious unity cannot be attained on the basis of mere toleration, or an absolute tolerance of all systems of religious faith. I cannot agree, therefore, with the teachings of the Hindu saint, Ramakrishna, to the effect that "every faith is a path to God." On the contrary there are many faiths which are pathways to social disintegration and dissolution. Ramakrishna himself was nearer to a true perception when he said, "Truth! It is Truth alone that I want to realize," and when he added, "Knowledge leads to unity, and ignorance to diversity." Here indeed is the key to present religious disunity, at least so far as regards religious essentials. It is psychological, sociological, and philosophical ignorance which is at the bottom of the religious diversity of the advanced nations of mankind. A speaker at the Harvard Tercentenary, Dr. Etienne Gilson, of the College de France in Paris, came near to this perception when he said:

> " Our only hope is a widely spread revival of the Greek and medieval principle that truth, morality, social justice, and beauty are necessary and universal in their own right. Should philosophers, scientists, artists make up their minds to teach it, and if necessary to preach it, in time and out of time, it would become known again that there is a spiritual order of realities whose absolute right it is to judge even the state, and eventually to free us from its oppression."

It is evident that my assumption is that religion is a search for truth, especially regarding eternal values ; and that I further assume that there are such values that hold for man universally

I furthermore hold that any religion which is not in accord with universal truth will not stand. Religion like science demands objectivity, reality. If it does not represent objective reality, it cannot endure any more than science. It is time that all friends of religion should seek to exclude from religious faith mere wishful thinking. The question therefore arises, do we know enough about objective reality to build upon our knowledge a rational religious faith? Many religious leaders still say that this is impossible. If it is impossible, then religious unity is also impossible. With Mr. Gerald Heard in his *Social Substance of Religion,* I hold "There is a future for religion, not as an illusion, but as something which will have less and less illusion about it." Until the friends of religion come to this conclusion, there is no hope of reconstructing religion for the entire human world. If we continue to think that religion may safely play with illusion, the motto of Soviet Russia that "religion is the opium of the people" will have more and more widespread acceptance.

I tried to make this clear in my work on *The Reconstruction of Religion,* published in 1922. In that book, I said:

> "Science, then, no less than religion, is positive in its attitude toward experience. It does not proceed wholly by doubt, but affirms to be true what is tested by experience. Faith in the world of human experience, when taken as a whole and its errors allowed to cancel one another, is the supreme faith of science. Science rests upon this faith. *It is even so with sane religion.* It, too, builds itself up out of the experience of life. If it affirms to be true certain beliefs and values, it is because it finds these to be justified by their works in the lives of men and in the whole structure of human society. The chief difference is in their history, that science has kept the open mind and has revised its appraisals of truth as experience has widened; while religion, becoming enmeshed in traditionalism, has too often refused to do this; it has too often remained static while society has been evolving. It has too often failed to keep the open mind."

If religion is in any sense a search for truth, it is evident

that there should be no separation or divorcement between science and religion. As Ramakrishna said: "Knowledge leads to unity and ignorance to diversity." The modern world knows only one way of obtaining reliable knowledge and that is through experience. Science is, or should be, tested and organized experience. It should therefore furnish a basis for religious faith. It will not do to solve the problem of the relations of science and religion by saying that these two occupy different provinces of life; that science is limited to the quantitative, to what can be weighed and measured, while religion has to do with the qualities and values of life. No such division between science and religion can stand before critical intelligence. We need not use the word "science" if we do not wish to do so. Perhaps it would be better to substitute such a phrase as "tested knowledge." I shall use "science," however, as meaning "tested knowledge," and in this sense science is the first part, or section, of the pathway to all truth. It is, or should be, tested and organized human experience, not of course the experience of one man, or of any one group of men, but of all mankind or rather of the best minds among all mankind. Science in this sense is the most reliable knowledge which we have regarding our world and regarding mankind. It is, of course, also to be taken for granted that our knowledge of man, of human history, of collective human life, is more important as a basis for religious faith than our knowledge of physical nature, though the latter may also be of help. It is tested knowledge in this sense which will lead to religious unity among the more highly cultured nations of mankind. It is ignorance of man, of human society, and of the relations of man and nature which remains the source of religious disunity among cultured peoples.

We come then to this conception of the relations of science, in the broad sense in which I have defined it, to philosophy and to religion. Science in the sense of tested knowledge is the first part of our pathway to the perception of universal truth. It is limited, however, to what can be demonstrated by experience. Philosophy goes a step further, or rather several steps. It takes up the pathway of logical inferences from the demonstrated truths of science. It carries us as far as the intellectual perception even

of ultimate truth can go. But man cannot live simply by the intellectual perception of truth. He must in some way or other connect his perception of truth with his emotions and his will. Truth must be incarnated in life. Here religion steps in to complete the pathway to truth. It takes the wings of faith and carries us not only to the pure intellectual perception of truth, but to its emotional and practical appreciation. There is therefore no excuse for confusing religion with either science or philosophy. Religion is obviously in the realm of faith; but the faith which religion teaches us may be a rational or reasonable one, based upon knowledge and experience. Science, philosophy, and religion are therefore each, so to speak, a bridge to truth. But we are foolish when we try to pass over the last bridge without having first passed over the first two; for a rational religious faith must remain in harmony with sound science and sound philosophy. Until the teachers of religion see this, there will be no hope of unity in their teachings. Until religion becomes transfused with the spirit and transformed by the method of science, it will continue to be regarded by many emancipated minds as an illusion.

If religion is the summed-up meaning and purport of our whole consciousness of the possibilities of life and of the universe, if as such it should be transformed by the spirit of science in its search for truth to guide man, then the question still remains what facts of experience are of most importance for the religious consciousness. I have not denied that man's relation to nature is of the utmost importance for this consciousness. I would only affirm that man's relation to his fellow-men and to the destiny of his race is at all times of equal importance for the religious consciousness, and just at the present time of much greater importance. For man is threatened with the loss of his sense of eternal values through the conditions which he finds confronting him in the human world. Neither truth nor right *there* seems to possess the universal validity which religion would ascribe to them. If religion is not for the salvation of man in this world as well as in eternity, then the peoples of the world are bound to lose their faith in the efficacy of religion and to regard it as an illusion. If, moreover, religion is not for the redemption of our human

world as a unit, but only for the redemption of a few individuals, then again faith in religion is in danger of being lost. The present condition of the world permits of no doubt that the adjustment of men to one another, of classes, nations, and races to one another, is the primary task of religion if faith in the possibilities of human life is to be maintained. Professor Gaston Jeze says that the nations of Europe are in the midst of chaos because of the dreadful increase of immortality among them in international relations. Governments today, he says, deny solemn obligations if such happen to be against their momentary interest. They discuss matters with guns in their hands and threats on their lips. Honesty compels us to acknowledge that this statement is true more or less of all the nations of the world. Moreover, the relation of classes and races is not on an appreciably higher plane. If religion cannot bring some healing to the nations, history will become again synonymous with homicide, and all of our hopes for a civilization which will be built upon the perception of the higher values of life will be blasted.

A very slight perception and understanding of the facts and truths regarding human relations should teach us that there is only one way out of this situation; and that is through mankind accepting the principle which Novicow, the Russian sociologist, tried to teach nearly a generation ago; namely, that human beings, whether as individuals or as groups, live together successfully only through conferring mutual benefits upon one another and through mutual sacrifice for one another's welfare. In other words, Novicow tried to teach that human society and everything of value in it depended upon active goodwill and mutual aid ; and that just in proportion as this active goodwill and mutual aid was equalized among individuals, classes, and nations, in that proportion human society prospered.

With the active or latent enmity and hatred which we find now diffused through the whole complex of human relations, it may be asked, how such a scientific perception is anything more than the preaching of an impossible ideal. The reply was rendered centuries ago by Gautama Buddha when he said: "Hatred does not cease by hatred; hatred ceases only by love." Applying this

principle to the situation which exists among the warlike nations of the world, it becomes evident at once that the only pathway to peace is through a peace of reconciliation. Even a peace of justice is impossible, because no nation or class can agree with any other nation or class as to what justice is. Only a peace of reconciliation is possible, a peace of mutual forgiveness and mutual concessions.

Only a religion which teaches the duty of mutual love and mutual forgiveness can possibly save classes, nations, and races from the enmity which is their inevitable destruction. But we need more than a religion which will place mutual love and mutual forgiveness among the virtues of the religious life. They must be made *the supreme virtues* of the religious life, even to the extent that men are taught that their supreme duty is to love and forgive their enemies. The present situation of our human world brings to the fore, and even demonstrates to all minds which have not lost their common sense, the supremacy of goodwill and love in human relations. It does not matter whether these relations are those of the family, the community, the nation, or mankind. Of course, we are not speaking of natural affection. A limited goodwill and love cannot bring about the redemption of our human world, or the reconciliation which is needed among its warring elements. A religion which is adequate for the redemption of mankind must teach an inclusive love which extends even to enemies. This inclusive love or goodwill is, of course, but the conational and emotional side of the actual organic interdependence which sane social science finds to exist among all individuals, classes, nations, and races.

It may be said, of course, that this paper is but a plea for the recognition of the scientific character of the religion of Jesus. But it might well be replied that a religion of love and goodwill would not lose its scientific character even if no man's name were attached to it. Human beings, however, do follow personal leaders; and mere intellectual honesty should lead all students of religion to acknowledge that Jesus of Nazareth was the first to teach that the service of God was to be sought in the service of mankind, especially in the service of those most needing service.

In this teaching, he humanized religion. He taught, moreover, (and it was the most distinctive element in his teaching, and the one least lived up to by Christian nations), that we should love even our enemies. Finally, he taught that human society should become a realm or a Kingdom of God in which God's will was done, through men acknowledging their brotherhood and the supremacy of the Divine Will. This socialized conception of a redeemed humanity, as Dr. Stanley Jones has said, is unique among the religions of the world. It is hardly necessary to add that Jesus's teaching at this point has been with difficulty even perceived by his professed followers.

Of course, a religion which all mankind can accept must have in it all of the eternal values of all religions. But these are easily adjusted to the supremacy of the love principle in religion and ethics. A world religion needs, for example, the emphasis upon social righteousness and social justice so clearly indicated in Judaism. It needs the faith in the supremacy and oneness of God taught by Mohammedanism. It needs undoubtedly the purpose to put an end to human sorrow and suffering accentuated by Buddhism. It needs the filial reverence and piety of Confucianism. It needs the spirituality and the sense of kinship of man with nature of Hinduism at its best.

It is hardly necessary to add that all the great historical religions have failed mankind. All have failed to bring that redemption which mankind awaits. They have even failed to free us of the worst evils, such as war, fratricidal crime, and the destruction of human resources. All religions have therefore been tried before the judgment seat of history and been found wanting, though with charity toward all we must add that they have had as yet but a brief time to demonstrate their adequacy or inadequacy as redemptive forces in the human world. More and more, however, within the great religions of mankind are taking place movements toward a religion and ethics of universal love. This movement is exemplified not only by Bahaism among the Mohammedans, but by similar movements in Buddhism and Hinduism. It is still true, however, that the masses of mankind even among cultured nations are far from the practical acceptance

of such a religion. Dr. Stanley Jones has said: "Hinduism has failed at the point of brotherhood." But so have also historical Christianity and all the other great historical religions.

The question remains whether a love religion and a love ethics are in any sense practical for the masses of mankind. It may be admitted that they are not practical in our present low state of culture, in the present ignorance and degradation of our masses. Nevertheless, if they are not practical, the question confronts us as to what can take the place of a religion and ethics of universal love. I think that only one answer can be given to this question, if we view sanely and scientifically the facts of world-wide human relations; and that is, that there is no substitute which social scientific knowledge could possibly approve. We should be left to fall back upon the old historic divergent religious faiths, without any central principle of religious unity. This is the conclusion of the most penetrating writer on the sociology of religion which Western civilization has yet produced, namely, Mr. Gerald Heard, whose *Social Substance of Religion* is a most careful study of the world-wide religious problem. Mr. Heard calls the love religion "charitism," and concludes his book by saying: "There is only one problem before the world, but it is one which if unsolved humanity has failed: that is to create and sustain charitism." If this conclusion is correct, then an intelligent human world must acknowledge that Jesus of Nazareth, as the founder of the love religion, occupies a place in religion similar to that of Copernicus in astronomy. Just as Copernicus by marvellous intuition or insight revealed to us the true astronomical system, so the carpenter of Nazareth has revealed to us the true system of religion and ethics.

THE SOCIAL LAWS

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What is the matter with the world today? Why is it that we cannot all be happy and friendly in a world full of

beautiful and delightful things, and where friendship, kindness and love can be practised by everyone? How is it that while science has taught us to produce far more than ever before, yet production is restricted, or goods even destroyed when produced, while millions of people lack the prime necessities of life and health? Why do we spend fabulous sums on goods whose sole use is for the destruction of our fellow-men and their wealth, whilst the money is urgently needed for making life more tolerable for numbers more?

It would seem that the present moment of history is one of transition between two eras. In the West the past century has been a time of unparalleled growth in mastery of the physical world. In my own life-time the change is almost incredible—from oil lamps and horse-drawn vehicles to flight through the air, and the sound of the human voice carried instantaneously through the stratosphere from one corner of the earth to another. Science has gone forward by leaps and bounds—we reverence the marvellous world it shows to us, ruled by exact laws, which the skill and the devotion of men have enabled them to find out. We know, in our everyday lives, that these laws must be obeyed, for by no other means can the desired results be obtained.

But when we turn to the social life of man, we find no such devoted study of the underlying laws—in fact scarcely any belief in the existence of such laws. Rather do we find that men are anxious to harness each newly-found power given to them by science to the fulfilment of their own selfish desires or interests and cruel projects. We find them devoting their energies to breaking the social laws, that they may harm those to whom they have already done wrong. For they have not learnt, what the chaos of today should surely make clear to every one of us, that the laws of the moral world are as exact as those of the material, and that we can no more expect to be whole in our mind and soul if we do wrong than we can be well in body when we over-eat and over-drink. And not only individuals must follow these laws, but nations, for nations are as dependent on their fellow-nations,—their welfare and their prosperity,—as are individuals dependent on their families and towns-folk.

So the present position of the world cannot last, for today the nations are like angry beasts waiting to kill or torture anything that stands in the way of their selfish appetites. They *must* learn the law divine that they are all part of one great unity—the fellowship of mankind; they can only be bound to each other by the bonds of service for the good of all. Science, which has so far seemed apart from the moral world, must drive mankind to realize this law, for by its " magic " it has brought us all so near together that we cannot much longer believe in our separateness. The punishments too that it brings upon us for disobedience of the moral law will be so terrible that man will be driven to open his eyes to the truth. So Science, as Gerald Heard has said, will bring us back to the Sermon on the Mount of Jesus Christ.

The great truth that I am trying to emphasize was uttered long, long ago to the Jewish people by their great prophet Moses in these splendid words :—" It shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: and all these blessings shall come upon thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God. But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes, that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee.

"For this commandment which I command thee this day it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it. See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes, and His judgments,

that thou mayest live and multiply ; and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.

"But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them: I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey His voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto Him: for He is thy life, and the length of thy days."

But this is not all. We Christians believe that a still greater prophet "made all things new" and that His wisdom is as true and as urgently needed in the complicated tangle of today, as in the simpler days in Judea when Christ spoke to them.

In His words we have truths so great that we have not dared to believe them: He told us amongst many wise sayings the following: "Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you."

" The first (commandment) is . . . The Lord our God, the Lord is one: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.

" The second is this. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

But, alas! we have not kept these laws.

The Jewish prophet Esdras wrote: " When was it that they which dwell upon the earth have not sinned in Thy sight? Or what nation hath so kept Thy commandments? Thou shalt find that men of note have kept Thy precepts; but nations Thou shalt not find."

He was right, not only individuals but whole nations must keep these Laws; and surely we are beginning to understand that great fact today.

So I have a vision of the new world to which this cruel moment of transition should lead us. It should be a unity—a

family of nations, all co-operating to serve the needs of all, with free movement of peoples and materials. How ridiculous it is to try to keep men in separate cages, when they can soar up even into the stratosphere! And how ridiculous, too, to coerce men to think alike! For the great white light of Truth contains innumerable colours of different strands of thought, and we can ascend to unity by different paths.

Let us keep such a vision always before us and let us strive with all our powers for its attainment.

In the great words of Cicero writing a century before Christ:—

"And there will not be one law at Rome, and another at Athens, one law today, and another law tomorrow, but the same law, everlasting and unchangeable, will bind all nations at all times; and there will be one common Master, even God, the Framer, the Arbitrator, and the Proposer of this Law.

"And he who will not obey it, will be an exile from himself."

MORALITY AND POLITICAL POWER

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Nothing is more characteristic of present-day conditions than the growing divorce in every sphere between the dictates of traditional morality and the practice of the holders of political power. It is the most deplorable of the many unhappy legacies of the war period, when the stress of war conditions resulted in the wholesale acceptance by men, nurtured on, and hitherto adherents of, the traditional moral code, of the dangerous doctrine *salus reipublicae suprema lex*. The secret treaties of the war were justified in every country, not on the grounds of their intrinsic merit, but on the plea that any means must be resorted to in order to make certain the victory of the fatherland. In the same way the war settlements were carried through essentially in the spirit of national aggrandizement. When Turkey was deprived

of her outlying territories, claimants were easily found for all those territories which offered opportunities of successful exploitation, but singular unanimity was shown in declining the patent moral duty of protecting the unfortunate Armenians. Much had been hoped from the United States as less deeply involved in the current passions and exempt from the bitterness of wasted lands and losses by the million. But a final touch of tragedy was added in the surrender by the President of his ideals of a just peace, and the ultimate refusal of his country to take any responsibility for the post-war settlement or the future development of international relations under the aegis of the League of Nations, which duly supported might have offered the means of guiding the nations in peace, and of eliminating whatever was unjust in the terms imposed by victors whose judgment has been impaired by the unexpected rapidity of their extrication from an almost hopeless position.

It was inevitable that the decline of public morality should reveal itself in the embittered tone of domestic relations. In the United Kingdom relations between capital and labour, which had slowly been ameliorated in the years before the war, became at once bitterly hostile. The general strike of 1926 marked the furthest progress of the disintegration of society, when the organized workers deliberately planned to force the state to capitulate to exaggerated and unfair demands by withholding from the people the means of subsistence and locomotion and by depriving it of all information. Fortunately the very violence of the attack aroused the public conscience, and deprived the strikers of the moral support of many of their own members. Slowly but clearly, since then, the struggle between capital and labour has diminished. The Labour Party has returned to the tradition of respect for moral principles, and has disclaimed the use of force for the purpose of effecting its aim, the substitution of some socialistic system for capitalism, and revolutionary methods are advocated only by minor organizations such as the Communists, the Independent Labour Party and the Socialist Party, none of which command much popular support.

In Europe, however, the struggle between classes has had a

less happy outcome. In Germany, Italy, Russia in special the doctrine has prevailed that state interests are above common morality. Liberty is systematically denied ; all that is permitted is to accept the dogmas of a ruling junta, dogmas which may be varied at pleasure without affecting the paramount obligation of obedience without question. Methods differ in these three countries and in the other states which have imitated them ; but the fundamental principle is observed in all that the interests of the state as determined by a self-appointed group are paramount ; that the individual has no rights whatever inherent in him ; and that all his thoughts and actions must be made subservient to the interests of the state. It is hard in Britain or the Dominions or India to realize the all-embracing demand thus made by the state.

Nor has the Empire been spared grave conflicts. The civil war between the British and the Irish from 1919 to 1922 was followed by a conflict even more brutal between fellow Irishmen, in which both sides displayed complete oblivion of the elementary demands of the religion to which they loudly asserted their allegiance. In India neither the British nor the Indians can regard with pleasure the record of their mutual relations in the post-war years.

Not less deplorable has been the utter decline in international relations of respect for law and treaties. The high hopes set on the League of Nations were in 1936 most bitterly disappointed, when the powers without exception failed to carry out their elementary duty of safeguarding Ethiopia from the aggression of Italy. No excuse for this failure in duty, in which India was involved, can be pleaded. The obligations of Articles 10 and 16 of the Covenant were categorical ; the offence of Italy was established beyond doubt. Yet even in India excuses were invented, Italian trade was preferred to international obligation, and the Dominions in the main were as fully responsible for the repudiation of obligation as was the United Kingdom. New Zealand and the Union of South Africa stood out against surrender, but the value of the Union's protest was minimized by the fact that during the whole period of sanctions she bought off Italian resentment by continuing to pay a subsidy to Italian shipping firms. It is not surprising that the deliberate failure in duty of

the powers had a swift nemesis. Germany, recognizing that the regime of sanctions was dead, tore up those clauses of the treaty of peace which fettered her freedom of action, and since then the European world has been immersed in preparations for the war which seems the inevitable outcome of a situation in which treaties have lost all value as assurances of peace.

If Europe has thus failed in her duty, it is not surprising that Japan has encroached freely on Chinese territory, or that Japan and Germany have formed a league against Communism which may be regarded as destined to immobilize Russia in the event of further Japanese aggression on China. The morality of East and West alike has reduced itself to the rule of the stronger. Internationally co-operation is dominated by conceptions purely of self-interest, and in the economic and financial spheres each country is solely concerned with its own gains. The same phenomenon is to be noted in the relations between the several parts of the British Empire. Each unit in its trade concerns places first and last its own profits and refuses to take a wider view. Even within the federations the sense of unity has not prevailed to prevent efforts at secession on the part of Western Australia and bitter complaints from the Maritime provinces in Canada. Alberta, in the same spirit of selfish particularism, has adopted a social policy without the slightest regard to its effect on the credit and interests of the rest of Canada, just as in 1932 New South Wales endangered for purely selfish ends the stability of the whole system of Commonwealth finance.

How this state of affairs is to be remedied, it is extremely hard to say. It is as easy to destroy as it is difficult to build up, and in many countries morality of the traditional character has been desperately shaken. Something, however, may be gained from philosophy whether Eastern or Western, and a usfeul field lies open for the dissemination of philosophical doctrines. There are two main lines of thought in India as in Europe whence help may be derived. We may disregard the ascetic ideal which has so fascinated many minds in East and West alike. It is ultimately an essentially self-seeking ideal, however it may be philosophically grounded, and it cannot work for the good of mankind as a

whole, for it regards men as distinct atoms, without any real links of union one to another. But we have a very different ideal, prominent in Mahāyāna Buddhism and in Hinduism in the *Avatāra* and *bhakti* doctrines, and founded on a philosophy which recognizes not the separateness of individuals but their essential unity. The many Indian sages who have inculcated this doctrine include Sri Ramakrishna ; in various forms it is an essential strand of Indian thought, and, firmly grasped, it is utterly irreconcilable with those hatreds and that self-seeking which dominate society in so many regions of the world today. The belief in unity amid differences of appearance is a completely rational belief, which can be taught as pure philosophy or as associated with many systems of religion. Fearlessly posed it offers a real antidote to the particularism and negativism of the practical thought of the day.

From another point of view philosophy, both Eastern and Western, affords for certain classes of intellect conclusive motives for abating the feverish rivalries of the moment. Philosophers teach us to regard things *sub specie aeternitatis*, and to minimize the time element, the here and now considerations which dictate our actions in far too great a degree. Doubtless this point of view may be carried to excess. It is so carried when we are asked to believe in the unreality of the time process or to accept human misery as a necessary foil to the perfection of enlightened spirits. But within bounds it is well to be reminded of the comparative insignificance of the events of the moment, and to be warned not to mistake the part for the whole.

Were it only possible to apply these doctrines to the present civil strife in Spain, how great an amelioration of the situation would result. A more enlightened Christian spirit would induce those who claim to be acting in the name of the Church to remember that the enemy whom they seek to destroy are men like themselves, mistaken perhaps in their aims, but not outside the bounds of human charity. A wider survey might remind both sets of combatants, and the foreign auxiliaries who are perishing in hundreds around Madrid, that they exaggerate the issues at stake, that victory for neither side can finally determine anything,

and that the true aim is to find a solution which will allow adequate liberty of views and action, without demanding allegiance either to Fascism or Communism.

It is in truth the fundamental merit and duty of philosophy, one recognized by Ramakrishna no less than by other great minds of East and West, to mediate between extremes, to remind mankind of the unity of humanity, and to negative false claims of superiority and the selfish disregard for the interests of others which rest on the belief that certain men are naturally born to dominion over others. In the cases of some men their phenomenal success is due to the decline of the operation of reason in human affairs and the substitution therefore of irrational passions, against whose domination all thinkers must steadily and persistently strive in the assurance, *magna est veritaset prevalebit.* Of their line is Ramakrishna in whose honour this is written.

CROSS AND EAGLE

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It is not true that a change in the conception of what Christianity represents is equivalent to de-Christianization. On the contrary, a deeper understanding, in case religious and metaphysical experience remains what it was, would signify absolute progress. In this sense we are now in a position to understand better than ever before the deeper significance of the Cross. The symbol of the Cross cannot be comprehended in all its spiritual bearing if it is considered separated from that of the Eagle, under the triumphant sign of which it rose to the height of glory. Only two and no more creative attitudes of mind are possible in man with regard to reality: one is that of completely apprehending or conquering the objective world and the other of being completely apprehended or conquered by it—in other words, of complete emotional possessedness. We shall in the following name the two principles that of possession and that of possessedness. The first leads to self-control and mastery over the world. Every form of successful active life presupposes this attitude, its supreme

expression is the hero. But if the hero would alone directly transform the non-Ego in the widest sense and impress upon it his being and individuality, he would himself have little inner experience and would not change himself. His symbol would be therefore steel or granite. Steadfastness and constancy are his highest resort in inner life. This mode of being, which for the Western world has found its prototype in the antique hero, found its supreme national expression in ancient Romanism, which lived under the sign of the Eagle with an exclusiveness which has never been equalled either before or after.

Now, when this sign reached the zenith of the heaven of its significance and power, and when everything was being explained under its sign, then for the first time in history the symbol of the Cross not only beamed forth, but it did so with such immeasurable vehemence and intensity, that in course of a few centuries it conquered the whole empire of the Eagle from within. The significance of this inter-relation has been expressed by one word of Christ: "What would be the benefit of man if he wins the whole world but brings harm to his soul!" The pure eagle-man does not think of it at all ; his life is an altogether objective one,—work, efficiency, struggle, victory or defeat, death and the objective continuance of life and its continued effectiveness in memory as crystallized into fame, lend significance to his whole life ; he is not concerned with what he himself experiences therein or what would become of himself. Thus his sacrificing his life, for which he is ever prepared, signifies even more than it is: it signifies complete sacrifice of the subject himself. From this point of view it will be clear, in what sense the *exclusive* eagle-man represents the *evil* principle when judged spiritually. In the chapter " The Ethical Problem " of my *The Recovery of Truth* (London, Cape) it was shown that evil is a necessity in the living process, on the one hand as the destructive component in life which in every one of its moments is construction and destruction at the same time, and on the other, for the sake of creating frontiers and boundaries. It is not necessary therefore to revert to this theme here. But however necessary it might be for the living process, Evil still remains Evil ; he who denies that robs

the evil precisely of its positive meaning. And the more Evil becomes absolute, i.e. detaches itself from the connection with good, the more evil does it become in the generally accepted negative sense. Thus the pure eagle-man is actually that beast of prey, like what Oswald Spengler, who was absolutely blind spiritually, has described man in general. Beasts of prey, however, are enemies of all life which may serve them as food. Such were the Romans in their great days ; in order to know what they were essentially, it would not do to question them—the conquerors, but those who were conquered and ruled by them. And beasts of prey they were felt to be in those days by those who then stood for the future, i.e. the fathers of the Christian church. The exclusive eagle-man represents, when spiritually analysed, not the good but the evil principle, and there is nothing to modify or change this fact. The very fact that subjective life means nothing to the eagle-man is enough to prove this: in so far as he ignores the subjective in him he gives away what alone has intrinsic spiritual value. The external expression of this essentially evil quality is that the eagle-man, inasmuch as and in so far as he takes no account of his own self, is indifferent also towards others. Hence the horrible cruelty and hardness of all the peoples of European antiquity, particularly of the Jews who in their peculiar way stressed the eagle-principle with extreme one-sidedness. In their great days, everything was "objective" in their eyes: what mattered to them was fulfilment of law and not inner attitude. Judged from the point of view of posterity *they* are the true fathers of modern world—mastery in all non-military and non-political respects. How inevitably every exclusively ruling eagle-ethos leads to a supremacy of Evil is proved today symbolically by America, where everybody in smiling and friendly connivance claims for himself the basic right of throwing millions into misery and death for the sake of a favourable balance-sheet, and where the exclusive bent on success in the world thwarts the soul to such a degree as was perhaps never witnessed before.[1] And this is proved finally by the direct and conscious hostility against the soul of Bolshevism, murdering

[1] Cf. my analysis of the American soul in *America Set Free* (London, Jonathan Cape).

millions and persecuting every faith in things of higher value. It need not surprise my readers that I refer Americanism, Judaism and Bolshevism also to the eagle-principle: if the hero is the prototype of its principle and Romanism the highest expression it has hitherto ever achieved, there are yet innumerable inferior forms of appearance,—for instance the destroyers without any sense of purpose like the Mongolian Khans ; the adventurer who without any thought of benifiting himself or others again and again endangers his life ; the profiteer who tries to take advantage, equally superficially, of every possible chance conjuncture ; and the empty intellectual as violater of the world. But even the highest expressions of eagle-hood stand for the evil principle. The soldier however pure in mind has to kill and destroy and no interpretation can change the originally evil meaning of this activity. And if today, under the sign of a new orientation towards the pre-Christian hero-ethos, *every* kind of subjectivism is derided as clinging to the "narrow ego", and killing is felt to be a matter of course and the problem of immortality is no longer raised, this proves the same emphasis on hard and pitiless eagle-ship, thanks to whose unchallenged supremacy Christ's word on the loss of soul, which no earthly gain could compensate, could produce such tremendous effect.

At that time, in that Kairós, when the eagle was more omnipotent than ever, its absolute value and its birth-right to grow dawned for the first time on the spiritualized soul. This consciousness was of course awakened in the orient at a much earlier date, but still it is permissible to write "for the first time," because only in contrast to the triumphing Eagle the whole significance of the Cross could become clear with overwhelming force. Now it was felt by man: more important than ruling the world is to transform one's own self *in order to grow in spirit.* For that however is necessary an attitude of mind quite opposite to that of the eagle: the attitude of primary attention to one's own and other people's soul, recognizing as supreme value the *subject* within oneself and others which is ignored by the eagle. The way to one's own self however does not lie from conquest to conquest but from one complete emotional surrender to another.

In order to show how enormous is the orbit of this idea,—much wider than the compass of what has been hitherto associated with the symbol of the Cross, I reiterate here firstly what early in 1932 I wrote on the occasion of Leo Frobenius's "Schicksals-Kunde", for I can think of no better way of expressing, what is needful in this connection than by referring to Frobenius's discoveries in the field of cultural morphology. "According to Frobenius the true cultural history of mankind progresses not from concept to concept but rather from one emotional surrender to another in a ceaseless stream. Concepts, by means of which the world of actuality is mastered, are the last forms of expression of a pre-existing feeling of life ; everything that can be secondarily interpreted as a leading idea or a prominent principle, makes its appearance at first as involuntary and not-understood expression. Thus man has been ' possessed ' of this or that particular side of the total actuality in a sequence of single direction, as in the case of time, or periodically, or from one country to another. And the particular cultural structure then results *a posteriori* from the particular kind of emotional obsession. Thus at various times the symbol of the animal or the plant or the sun or the moon or the observed creative nature or a spiritual yonder world experienced as actuality got complete hold of the imagination of men. Once thus possessed, they were unable to experience anything in a different way than is determined by their pre-existing possessedness. However, as soon as the trance of the possessed people was broken, the individuality of the particular culture lost all of a sudden its vital roots. Similarly sharp and clear cut are the spatial frontiers which separate different feelings of life. Thus we know today that from paleolithic days an insurmountable boundary line separating different conceptions of life ran over the Vosges ridge. . . . The last possessedness of the Occidental man has been *through facts*. Facts in the modern sense were hardly noticed before the 18th century. But from the 19th they monopolized attention with an exclusiveness as in previous times only magical phenomena could impress consciousness. This fact of being possessed by facts alone—which possessedness is exactly of the same type as any other—and *not* any really achieved consoli-

dated intellectual progress, explains the gigantic dynamism of this technical age. But as soon as the trance of this possessedness shall cease—all the problems which were brought to the fore for the first time in the 18th century, would be done for."

The heathen Romans too were of course "possessed": namely by the pathos of devotion to the *res publica*. But as pure eagle-men they were possessed only "objectively", and moreover their main interest was politics and therewith the impersonal and blind world of Gana. For that reason the problem of personal possessedness presented itself to them perhaps less urgently than to any other people of historical importance. And precisely for that reason the Stoa could mean to them the last word of philosophy. As against this, the Christian impulse effected a sudden and equally exclusive accentuation of the pole exactly opposite to that of the Eagle: this is the pole of the Cross. But here it was not only a question of possessedness by something particular, the precondition not merely of all experience but also of all activity—without burning zeal for an object no one can devote his whole energy to it—*but the highest appreciation of the possessedness in itself under the sign of truthfulness.*

This sentence gives the kernel of Christianity. It proves at the same time finally that the Christus-impulse is indeed a decisive step forward in the process of the in-break of spirit, and that this is the essence of Christianity. The eagle-man wishes only to possess the world ; not only the question of personal possessedness, but, above all else, even that of truth has no significance for him, excepting in the sense that truth can be a means to attain and exercise power. That is why statesmen and generals lie and betray so naively whenever it may be of use to them. Now the *Spirit* can grow only under the sign of truth ;—its symbol is the beaming clear light. Spiritual truth however does not signify congruence of representation and being on the plane of projection of scientific knowledge, but truthfulness. That is why Christ for the first time in the Occident continually harped on the turn of speech that he himself was Truth. Therewith we have returned to the first proposition of this chapter about the significance of suffering and the Cross, and may now proceed further. We wrote:

"every man who is at all conscious of his own self is forced by his deep solitary being out of the fixations of the empirical plane. He feels: I ought to see life just as it actually is, for from the depth of my soul I wish it. I ought to find a new internal equilibrium in the sign of truthfulness, for otherwise I shall never find peace. Yet for the fulfilment of this mission even the deepest man in its entirety is not ripe at the beginning: only a complete metamorphosis can create in him the new inner state he aspires to. This process is however painful. And herein lies the whole of the deep sense of suffering." Christianity does not stop at suffering in itself. It requires acceptance of and consentment to suffering for the sake of truthfulness: Firstly in the sense that this life for the most part consists of painful experiences, and truthfulness requires it to be seen just as it is. Secondly—and this is most important—the growth of the spirit can be effected only by stressing truthfulness as such. The radical difference between Christ and Buddha may be perceived here, and it shows at the same time the former's greater spiritual depth. Buddha was spiritually more "awakened" than Christ, and he is therefore precisely at this day one of the guiding stars of the first magnitude for the whole of humanity.[1] Yet he did not preach acceptance of and consentment to suffering, but rather its elimination through a proper process of psycho-analysis. For that reason Buddhism in its own time could not initiate a historical progress. But precisely in this connection it becomes clear how absurd it is to make of Christ an "heroic" man as is done today by so many Germans. The courage of being possessed by all suffering and therewith of taking the Cross on oneself, is indeed courage of the highest order. But if it is the function of words to help man to discriminate, then Christ was no hero, but precisely his antipole: the sufferer, the man of pain endured. But he was this in the positive sense—not in the negative, as is considered by the spiritually blind people of today. He was no weakling, and none of those who are prone to avoid difficulties, and no seeker of peace at any price. But Christ was a sufferer also in quite a different sense than, for instance, the "divine sufferer" Odysseus.

[1] I have shown this at length in *Creative Understanding and the Recovery of Truth* (English Edition, London, Cape).

The latter had of course to pass through much that is unpleasant, he also complains against it, but it could not transform him and it was not even accepted in advance that there might be anything positive in his suffering. As regards suffering, issueless tragedy was the last word of the Greeks. As opposed to this Christian suffering signifies, again, acceptance of suffering under the sign of truth and truthfulness as the only way to creative internal metamorphosis.

This characteristic then distinguishes the Christus-mythos radically from all those numerous ones about the suffering and dying and resurrected gods. Of course the Christus-mythos has absorbed in itself all those older myths of this type which were current within its sphere of expansion, with the result that it has now become difficult to historical study and text-exegesis to draw exact boundaries. But, as we have said before, considerations of these disciplines are irrelevent to essential problems. The ancient myth of the martyred and dying god was interpreted by the Christians—but only by them—in the sense that the bad and the evil may prove to be such efficient instruments of self-realization that the Godhead himself did not disdain to suffer death in the most shameful way. The older suffering and dying gods were merely "divine sufferers;" they were tragic heroes of the kind of Christ as interpreted by the German-Christians, a latter-day German sect. In so far however as they were heroes, their existence too was impersonal and objective in the previously determined sense; i.e. not the personal and intimate experience with its personal results, but the objective historical situation with its externally comprehensible consequences was the main thing in it. Now it cannot be denied that not only Paul but also Jesus himself had thought in a similar way: i.e. to him too the thing of primary importance was the objectively planned redemption of mankind and its ultimate fulfilment. Yet precisely at this point it dawns upon us with perfect clarity, how little importance attaches to historical considerations in religious and metaphysical connections: what matters is spiritual *being*, and it is not necessary that its possessor should properly recognize it. For everyone, including the greatest and the freest of men, is bound by the tradition within

which he grew. Whatever not only Paul but even Jesus may have thought for themselves—the true, and in its deepest sense original and essential Christian "fact" was that which from century to century has affirmed its differential modality in ever greater relief. Today this cannot be said with too much emphasis, for the whole future of the achievements of the Christian era depends upon it: The soul of Christian truth does *not* depend upon the truth of Jewish or pre-Christian eschatology, and neither upon the conformity to reality of the ideas of expiation, redemption, hereditary sin, of sin in any one of its many Christian meanings, and not at all upon a particular dogmatism as such. All dogmas and doctrines are rather attempts to comprehend the fundamental experience of Christianity in a manner susceptible of transference by means of thought, which naturally was more difficult, the more the unconscious of the Christians was attached to pre-Christian ideas,—that is to say, it was most difficult at the beginning of our era. Moreover all particular teachings are but reading new meanings into old forms—a hitherto unused but important and necessary word, for an unusual quantity of spiritual facts are founded on it. Everybody knows that the dramatic poet requires a pre-existing theme, in which to plunge his whole mind, out of which at-onement there then emerges a creation so original that no one ever thinks of the alien element. Now the course of every man is the same as that of the dramatic artist, inasmuch as he endeavours to realize his own self. The spirit realizes itself always in projections; but it can project itself only on what is existing. The more it is possessed by it in the sense explained above, the more of his intrinsically own—not the more of what is alien to him—comes into existence. This is the explanation of the fact that ever again has mankind interpreted the whole universe into one particular book—I am thinking here not only of the sacred books, but also of the *Odyssey* which was regarded by the Greeks as a text-book of morals, of the *Divine Comedy*, of *Faust*, and even of Hitler's *My Struggle*—, and that on one and the same text, about the exact meaning of which much honest labour was lost, have been founded the most different and mutually antagonistic philosophies, theologies and theodecies.

From this it does not follow however that such practice should be condemned: but rather how necessary it is to most men to pay allegiance to certain adopted texts. Otherwise they cannot realize their own selves.

The differential significance of the symbol of the Cross as opposed to that of the Eagle, and therewith of Christianity as opposed to antique heathendom, is, if expressed in the language which is best understood today, that suffering accepted and borne and consented to in the spirit of truthfulness *changes* man and herewith advances the process of the inbreak of spirit. At least in one respect the Christian spirit is not only the opposite pole but also the exact opposite of the spirit of antique heathendom: while the latter forbids dwelling on suffering, the former rests solely and wholly on one's voluntarily confessing the suffering to one's own self. External victories may be the easiest to fight out, when personal experience is laughed away, but inner progress is completely dependent on surrender to the process of inner progress. And this and this alone was the original purpose of Christianity. More than any other religion of the world, Christianity subordinates everything to the growth of the spirit. Whatever facilitates this growth is good, whatever retards it is evil. This proves suffering to be better than triumph. For only he who completely confesses to himself what is going on in him, only he who deepens and accentuates his experience as much as possible through attentiveness to it,—only he achieves spiritualization deeper than from what he started. Such confession is however always without exception closely bound up with pain and suffering. Self-analysis, searching of conscience, internal struggle, conquest of one's own self, repentance—they are all processes of inner metabolism which give pain. And only those can achieve true progress who do not shun their pain, but who take upon themselves everything under the symbol of supreme truthfulness.

Thus it is that the Cross, the Cross which is voluntarily taken up and borne, is actually the only way to greater spiritualization. This paradox (from the standpoint of all occidental pre-Christian history) explains all the exaggerations of truth which were given

credence to in Europe time and again, such as the consentment to or even the glorification of dishonour, infamy, disgrace, contemptedness, and of misery, ugliness and disease. These exaggerations in their deepest sense do not mean reaction against or over-compensation of antique lordliness, but only an over-emphasis of the truth that intense possessedness in proper attitude conjures the greatest internal transformations leading to the greatest creativeness in the positive sense. Precisely this fact explains these epidemics of longing after suffering which have time and again raged within the sphere of Christianity, be it in the shape of self-flagellation or other kinds of mortification; and it also explains the astonishing popularity which has been always enjoyed by the preachers of hard penance also without the Christian cosmos. Even in the greatest artistic age of Florence no Florentine had enjoyed such popularity which fell to the share of Savonarola, whose request was precisely to sacrifice all that was beautiful. This is something quite different from the mortification of the flesh, the cult of which has been developed most by the Indians and the Tibetans. Such mortification attaches no value to suffering for its own sake ; it should only serve to steel the will, to liberate the spirit, and elevate the soul through established training. Both the *yogi* and the Jesuit lay as little emphasis on suffering as the sport-trainer. But in the case of the Christian, voluntary acceptance of the Cross accepted and emphasized suffering for its own sake means the way to salvation.

Now let us look back: has there ever been a thoughtful race of man which did not know this? Why have they never imagined the intellectually and spiritually great ones to be happy men? Why have they rather always demanded that they should be subjected to more ordeals than the lesser men? For the rest the world-process is full to overflowing of the required suffering. He who has meditated my *South American Meditations* knows how absolutely nature is contrary to all norms of the spirit which represents the true inner norm of man. The more a man grows greater and higher in spirit, the more deeply does he feel the conflict with the non-spiritual in him, which is yet a part of him, and which he is not able to modify according to his ideal. All

that is pure and noble and profound, however, cannot but provoke the hatred and mortal enmity of all that is ugly and lowly and superficial. There has never been as yet any notable exception to this rule.

This is the individual side of the kernel of Christianity in relation to Occidental history. The social side of it is represented by the fact that the stressing of one's own suffering induces the capacity for suffering with and for others, that is the capacity for sympathy, owing to which the voluntary acceptance of suffering awakens the desire to improve the world. One is gripped by horror when one realizes how natural was the conception of slavery even to such lofty spirits as Plato and Aristotle,—even though the slaves might have been princes even yesterday. They did not even raise the problem that slaves should not be treated in a manner unworthy of man. They absolutely lacked that imagination of the heart which is lacking even today in most Asiatics. This imagination awakened only through the voluntary acceptance and stressing of suffering. It is clearly possible, for all experience proves it to be so, that even men who are otherwise good and profound in mind maltreat other beings in the most cruel manner whom they consider to be of lower niveau, if they have never confessed to themselves their own suffering. If from this standpoint we consider the most normal phenomena not only of the pre-Christian, but of the Christian era, then it becomes clear to us, to what a degree the message of the Cross is of eternal actuality. Today particularly the small people, whose life is hard and who have to be hard against each other in order to be able to live at all are most pitiless towards their own class. Rarely do they concede to each other the right of falling sick, rarely do they spare each other, and rarely any sympathy is shown when one loses one's means of livelihood. Among peasants whose fundamental qualities for some undefined reasons seem to be parsimony and close-fistedness all over the world, are met with quite often even in present-day Germany conditions similar to those so powerfully described by Jeremias Gotthelf with reference to Switzerland: that the poor are as a matter of course despised and derided and treated as without any rights so far as it is permitted by law.

This hardness of small people is much harder than anything ever evinced by clan-arrogance, for even though the man of noble lineage or high position may not consider the common man to be of the same status as himself, yet he feels no envy towards him and usually does him good voluntarily as best as he understands it. Where however the upper classes are very hard and cruel to the common man, it is always of a piece with the obduracy which they bring to bear on their own selves. The most unchristian of all phenomena in this respect is the characteristic behaviour of the intellectuals towards each other. For reciprocal generosity of even the slightest degree is a rarity among them. Shamefully they envy each other in the acrimonious intent of mutual disservice, excepting when they belong to the same coterie or fight on the same front, in which case the mechanism of identification may deaden the envy and finally carry off the palm. From this point of view the position of the majority of German intellectuals is quite horrible since Nietzsche and his pupils furnished them with the weapons of psycho-analysis and characterology with which to supply an unconscious evil motive to every conscious thought or to interpret all that is noble in the light of baseness, and to contemplate all celestial phenomena in the perspective of the nether-world. But even these, which are perhaps the most repulsive of moral aberrations known in history, are in the first instance characterized by the fact that they do not confess to themselves their own essential being ; they transfer it to others and ab-react thereby, in the form of malicious joy, what they themselves had suffered and what could have ennobled them. The most harmless, but unfortunately the most frequent form at the same time of unchristian absence of imagination of the heart is the tacit approval of the suffering of those whom they recognize to be spiritually great: they do not take part in the suffering, which would be of benefit also to them, but harden their heart under the pretext that the suffering redounds to the benefit of those who suffer. Also those who thus refuse to suffer themselves are in truth being hard on their own selves ; for they miss the view of their own real condition and in this way conjure up horrible consequences in the form of disease, murder, starvation,

extermination, etc., so that they would have had to admit afterwards if they could have understood what they do: "We have been more pitiless to ourselves than others have ever been." Wherever people are thus hard on themselves, the ancient Roman proverb may be applied: *homo homini lupus.* And there is only one way to awaken heart's imagination and therewith sympathy: To confess to oneself one's own suffering.

Now, if this happens in the profundity of heart, then the hardness melts away in the long run of itself ; it then becomes physiologically incapable of further existence. This explains that the Christus-impulse, however hard Jesus might have been on all who did not belong to him, however loveless and cruel ideas are bound up, even to this day, due to the literal-minded belief in the texts derived from pre-Christian times, with the religion of love, has slowly but irresistibly effected progressive humanization, and on the other it also explains why this is true only of the Christus-impulse. Neither in Indian *bhakti,* nor in Buddhistic pity, and neither in the culture of the emotions of Confucianism, is there any stimulus to make life better and easier for all. The Indian thinks only of his own solitary self ; only for the sake of this self, and not for the sake of others, would he be good and charitable. The Chinese of the classical age was charitable only towards those with whom he stood in one of the recognized forms of relation. Unless touched by the Christus-impulse none can realize the Christian attitude to one's own suffering, thanks to which, in creative metamorphosis of the soul, suffering leads man to feel sympathy for all suffering and enables him to carry not only his own cross but also that of all others. Herein lies the *eternal* significance of the symbol of Christ's death for the deliverance of all. No other religion has produced such saints as Dostoievski's Starez Sossima who sincerely believed to be himself guilty of all the crimes of others. Thanks to the reception of the Christus-impulse, we Occidentals, originally hard-hearted and loveless compared with Oriental peoples, have drawn most of the practical consequences that can be derived from the power of sympathy. The Christian attitude awakens and fosters, shapes and intensifies precisely the imagination of the heart. The man in whom it is

very much alive, suffers in the most personal sense, not less from other people's sufferings than from his own. Rather he suffers more from them. Strictly speaking, almost every one can endure what befalls him personally. But only those who lack imagination can stand the suffering of others, for to the spirit which lives out his life in the form of images, representation is more important than actuality. The direction which the imagination would take with regard to the nearest depends on free stressing. It is the greatest social achievement of Christianity for the benefit of mankind to have initiated this new orientation.

THE NEED OF THE MODERN WORLD

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA

Ramakrishna Math and Mission Headquarters

Yesterday and today you have listened to beautiful speeches accentuating the unity that stands behind the multiplicity of the world. From time to time sages have appeared in different parts of the world, particularly in this land of ours, who have again and again brought before our gaze the underlying unity of the universe. But such is our proneness to evil, such is our forgetfulness, that we have not paid the necessary respect to these great teachings. You remember, as early as the days of the *Ṛig-Veda*, a great sage in the depths of his heart realized the eternal Truth and proclaimed in unequivocal language: "Truth is one, sages call it by various names." Now that is the Truth, and it could not be expressed more simply and more directly. But though the same Truth has been reiterated again and again in different lands in different languages in different ways, still we see the present state of things in the world. Buddha gave his wonderful life of purity and renunciation for this world, gave his sublime teachings for us all, and still we see that strife has not vanished from the world. Christ did the same thing. He also laid his life on the Cross, but his grave teachings have not been followed as they should have been. In the same way, other great Prophets and saints have expressed the Eternal Truth in beautiful words,

but still we see that this world is not a proper place for decent people to live in. Even before our eyes, in Europe, as you know, blood is being shed between brothers and brothers, and still we want to say, we are all living in a civilized world. It seems to me it is high time that each of us pays proper attention to those great Truths expressed by the different seers of the world in different ages and tries to see where the mistake lies ; because at no other time of the world's history was the need for unity, for peace and for concerted action towards general betterment greater than it is now, because now, in this twentieth century, our wants have multiplied, our desires have gone up by leaps and bounds and we are trying to exploit science for the satisfaction of our desires. But just as a powerful gun may protect people's lives against robbers, similarly in the hands of a person who is not of a good moral character, in the hands of a ruffian, for instance, that same gun may be a veritable engine of destruction. Therefore in proportion as science is giving us new discoveries, giving us better ways of adding to our comforts, we do not exactly know how we can make use of those advantages. Hence there is more need at the present time of looking over those ancient sayings of our Prophets, the Prophets of all countries, and we must try to see where the mistake lies.

In our age, Sri Ramakrishna, whose Centenary we are celebrating here, gave expression to those noble thoughts which were again and again repeated in this ancient land. This is the purpose for which great personages are incarnated in the world. They pick out from the traditional lore of spirituality those gems that are best suited to the requirements of modern times, to remove our obstacles and miseries and take us directly and in the most expeditious manner to Peace and Blessedness. Sri Ramakrishna was perfectly aware of the conditions in the midst of which he was born, and he has left for us all his beautiful message of the harmony of all faiths. Not only that, by his own glorious life of God-intoxication he has shown how every individual, be he a man or be she a woman, ought to live a life here in order to attain the maximum benefit from human existence. Creature-comforts can be had in any birth ; probably animals can enjoy

sense pleasures much more intensely than human beings can. So it is for man to know something higher, something nobler; something that will be really worth the name, and Sri Ramakrishna, like all the great predecessors of his, has pointedly drawn our attention to the fact that it is not by imitating animals, not by pandering to our propensities, that we are to rise in the scale of existence, but it is by self-abnegation, self-sacrifice, by living for others. In other words, it is not a life of the senses that we are to live, but a life of mergence in God for Peace, or at any rate, a life that will be in direct touch with some aspect of divinity. By this he was not saying anything new, because the Vedānta philosophy, which represents the quintessence of the Vedas and which was preached and promulgated in this land thousands of years ago, has been the groundwork, of which all the scriptures and teachings of different religions have been explanations, as it were. You remember the great words of Śrī Kṛishṇa, "Whenever irreligion prevails, I manifest Myself," and "Through whatsoever path man approaches Me, I reciprocate that devotion in that very way." In these words there has been laid for us a beautiful procedure by which we can terminate our miseries, and Sri Ramakrishna, instead of being book-bound—in fact he did not care for books at all,—by dint of direct realization exhorted us repeatedly not to care for things of the world, but to find out our relationship with God. He did not believe that man can achieve the highest by living a life of the senses ; rather it is by fleeing away from the senses and turning his gaze inwards, that he can see the Eternal Life shining.

The Vedānta philosophy, of which Sri Ramakrishna was the latest exponent, preaches the unity of all existence. No matter how clouded our vision is at the present moment, the Vedānta definitely says that there is no multiplicity of souls. There is but one Ātman, the all-pervading principle. Just as the same sun may be reflected in millions of little water-drops, and each of those reflections may appear to us as little suns, so the same infinite God, call Him Ātman, Brahman or what you will, is reflecting Himself through all this multiplicity of souls, but in reality it is the same one God. There are no two Gods in the universe, and whether we are aware of it or not, there is always

an essential union between us and God, because otherwise no power on earth could remove that state of separation—no power, no amount of knowledge would unite us with God again. The Vedānta, as you know, is a very scientific religion, taking its stand upon the bedrock of realization, the realization of different saints and sages. It has proclaimed that in every one of us there is the capacity to realize the Godhead. In other words, for material things, you may have to undergo much labour and exertion, and sometimes your labours end in vain, but in the matter of realization of God, in the long run we are bound to succeed, because it is something that is already in us. Just as in a room that is screened off there may be many things which we cannot see so long as the screen is there, but if there is a small aperture in the screen, we see part of the contents of the room, and if the aperture is larger, or if the screen is entirely removed, then we see those things exactly as they are, similarly with God-realization. In other words, all these blessed qualities for which we aspire—infinite life, infinite knowledge, infinite bliss—are in us already. Only we have forgotten all about them, and the remedy lies in bringing back the knowledge—de-hypnotizing ourselves, as it were. Hence I said, it entails much trouble to acquire things of the outside world, in which one may even fail at the end, but as regards internal realization, realizing our own nature, the result is certain to come. Therefore if we are really sensible of our miserable condition, if we are not satisfied with the present state of things in the world, if we really want to improve the existing conditions, it is up to us to reconsider our position thoroughly and see where we are wrong, and the Vedānta says that it is by separating things, by raising walls of division between one class and another class, between one race and another race, that we are suffering so much. Take the case of the Great War, for instance. What was it that caused it? The idea of separateness, which is the product of ignorance. Each nation thought that its existence was at stake—thought that without such and such a possession it could not live in the world. So this war came into the world, and the state of things has not changed an iota even now.

The Vedānta asks, where are you seeking eternal happiness, eternal peace, eternal knowledge outside of yourself? Even if you go on doing it, do you think you will get them at any time? Therefore for the attainment of real peace, the Vedānta asks us to turn our gaze inwards. Instead of frittering away our energies in trying to acquire riches which last for a few days only, or to get a little book-learning which will hardly add to our real knowledge, the Vedānta asks us to go within ourselves and try to see what is there. It says, just as the musk-deer roams about in search of the beautiful odour, but finds it nowhere because that odour emanates from the animal itself, so we are roaming about here and there in search of little pleasures pertaining to this sense or that sense, simply because we do not know the real source of the joy that drives us maddening onwards. Therefore the proper course of attaining peace, happiness, light and knowledge, is to turn our gaze inwards, to be introspective and to see what is already there. Sri Ramakrishna, in this materialistic age, proved by his wonderful life that the claims of the old religions are not false, rather they are literally true. Those of you who have read the wonderful life of Sri Ramakrishna know how through different paths of practice he came to the same truth, the unity of the Godhead, and how armed with that knowledge of realization, he proclaimed that Truth is one, though sages call it by various names. Therefore it is possible for us also, at least partly, to scale some of those heights that Sri Ramakrishna scaled completely in the course of two or three days. The first thing that is necessary is a great yearning for Truth, for real Bliss. At the present moment, we are also yearning for happiness, but not knowing the real source of it, we are seeking it in the outside world. Sri Ramakrishna, like the true seer that he was, pointed out that such happiness cannot last long, that death is the terminus where we must part with everything earthly, and unless we acquire here something which will enable us to overlook the claims of the outside world and will make us free, real happiness, real peace, real knowledge can never come to us.

Having got that yearning within us, we must have perfect sincerity. That is the chief condition. We may be born very

low in the social scale, we may not have any book-learning or material wealth, but if we have this true sincerity in us, if we have the real thirst for peace and happiness, it will come to us through the realization of God. In other words, it is by sincerely treading the path laid down by the great seers of the world that we can attain that Eternal Truth which they realized for themselves in times past. Another thing on which Sri Ramakrishna laid great stress as a means to realization is non-attachment, detachment from lust and possession. One of the Upanishads says, "Whatever there is in the world must be clothed with God." In other words, instead of seeing a diversity of creatures, only physical bodies separated by a thousand divisions, we must see the unity that is behind them all, the unity of the Godhead; and if we are really sincere, if we are really hankering and are not led away by our physical bonds and and cravings for things of the senses, God-realization will be an achieved fact for us. It may be even in the shortest possible time. One of the scriptures graphically says that it takes only so much time to realize God, as it would take a mustard-seed to drop from the horn of a cow. We may think that since even our ordinary pursuits demand so much of our time and energy, God-realization being the highest achievement must necessarily require a far greater amount of time and exertion; but Sri Ramakrishna in one of his beautiful similes says, "If a room has been dark for a thousand years, it does not require another thousand years to remove that darkness. All that we have to do is to strike a match and the darkness vanishes." Similarly, the eternal ignorance that has been keeping us in the dark, that has made us think that we are limited or powerless, can be removed in a moment if we can bring the light of true knowledge. By turning our gaze inwards and by praying to the Ātman sincerely, we can make the Almighty, powerful though He is, to reveal Himself in just that form which appeals to us. There is no hard and fast rule as to which way will suit us all. Sri Ramakrishna's advice is, "Choose your own path according to your inclination and capacity." Choose any path that you like and for which you deem yourself fit. If you persevere, if you are not distracted by mundane things, your search is bound to end in success and even in a

shorter time than you imagine. Sri Ramakrishna was an object-lesson of this great Truth. Time and again, while giving discourses on Divinity, he would be lost in a trance or *samādhi*, the highest state of concentration, when one forgets the world. As in a dreamless sleep you forget all about the world, so in that state of supreme absorption, he forgot all about the world ; and he declares that it is possible for us to realize that state, provided only we are willing. He says, God hears our prayers, no matter how silently they are uttered, and some day or other, He will reveal Himself to us in accordance with our earnestness and sincerity.

Thus he has given us a message of great hope and encouragement. We need not think that we are despicable or low. Banish those words from your dictionary. It is you yourselves who attach importance to sin. You are the children of God. You cannot be sinners. It is a sin to call yourselves sinners. That is the proper attitude according to the Vedānta, and if we really aspire after Truth we must take our stand upon the basic unity of God, and armed with that knowledge, we may go boldly into the outside world again, to serve mankind in different ways. That is the explanation of the great lives of personages like Christ and Buddha. Their humanity was entirely gone, only divinity remained. But that faculty of achieving union with God has not ended with them. In fact, our scriptures say that there will be more Incarnations. We can realize for ourselves the eternal oneness with God and translate the same to the service of mankind. This is the secret of the great power of the Christs and Buddhas of the world. How is it that an ordinary man can move even a mountain? This essential union with the Godhead is the secret of power. In the ocean there are little waves and each wave is different from the others ; but when the wave loses its identity in the ocean, merges itself in the ocean, it becomes the ocean ; similarly, we who consider ourselves as little souls, can melt our ego in the great Ocean of Divinity, a substratum that is always behind us, from which we can re-emerge possessed of superhuman power. At that time, even if we were ignorant before, we shall come out transfigured as sages. Then our words will

have power enough to move mountains. Therefore, no matter how unpropitious our present circumstances seem to be, let us never lose courage, let us always struggle on and on.

Those periods during which we strive for little things, without knowing the real source of peace, are lost to us, whereas even a little effort for the realization of our own nature is fraught with the greatest consequences to ourselves and others, for it helps thousands of weary souls to cross this ocean of misery. Therefore my prayer to you is,—have that knowledge which comes of the realization of your own self, and with that inspired vision of a Ṛishi come out into the world and try to remove the misery that you see everywhere. Through you wonderful things will then be done ; but till that blessed moment comes, let us not slacken our energies. Let us think within ourselves that others have finished their part in the world, and we alone are the persons that are yet to do their part in this great task. With that belief and a firm faith in ourselves that we are the children of the Almighty, that we are eternally one with Him, let us proceed for the amelioration of the condition of the world. Let us first realize God in our own selves, and out of that realization will come infinite power—power that will move the world. Then only will our eyes be illumined, and we shall see the greatness of all scriptures of all faiths, and understand that it was we ourselves who misinterpreted them. Therefore, while there is life in us, let us make a determined effort to realize the great God that is always united with us, that has never been away from us, and then coming out into the world, let us share the results, the successes, with every one that is on the face of the earth. Let us then be prepared like Buddha to lay down our lives for the sake of a little kid, for we shall feel no difference between ourselves and the kid. God will be both inside us and outside us. Even misery will vanish. It will all be a divine play in which we are to join. May God help us to achieve this in this very life, may He give us the necessary patience and perseverance, purity and determination to carry out this object. Through His grace may we be helpers in removing misery from the world in the best way possible, so that it will be not merely temporarily relieved, but gone for ever!

AN INCOHERENT CONTINENT

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On the whole it may be said that each of the five continents of our globe is more or less homogeneous specially from the point of view of ethnology and geography. Moreover all the beings living together finally begin to resemble one another. But there may be also another explanation—those who resemble one another assemble together. Thus Asia is the land of the yellow race, Africa of the black, Europe and America of the white. Moreover these continents have been in the past characterized by different particularisms.

But Europe perhaps represents a more pronounced unity both racially and geographically. The Europeans are probably descended from the Indo-European race, their three main European branches being the Latins, the Germans and the Slavs. Their languages although quite distinct from one another contain many words derived from the same roots which indicate their common linguistic source, the Sanskrit language, and they also prove that India was the cradle of the Indo-Europeans.

For many centuries Europe constituted a single unity, thanks to the power to say, " I am Europe." After the fall of the Empire, Europe owed her unity to the Christian Church which dominated all the states of Europe which were considered to be but a great Federation headed by the Pope of Rome. To what an extent the Christian Church had been a great power in those days is proved by the history of the Crusades. But the Christian Church began to lose its authority on the lay peoples and the state organizations primarily through the discussions between the Eastern and the Western Church: only one part of Europe has since then been under the authority of Rome, but this authority too was further diminished by the Protestant reform, which to the great detriment of Christianity provoked religious wars resulting in the weakening of Europe's influence on the rest of the world. In attacking the authority of the Pope and the Catholic Church in which was

incarnated the religious idea of God, Protestantism destroyed the idea of all authority: how could a terrestrial authority (man, group or state) impose on others the divine authority of God? On the other hand, since there arose struggles in the Christian Church itself its influence in the cause of peace was seriously diminished. People said with justice: how could the Christian Church preach for peace among peoples when the Church itself is ravaged by discussions?

The French Revolution further reduced the divine authority by straightaway rejecting every form of religion. Its effort to replace God by human Reason could not of course fill up the gap caused by the disappearance of divine authority which rather came to be represented by intellectual and social anarchy. In fact the authority of human Reason is the authority of man, but how could man have that authority if God, Who is above all men, could not exercise that power? But society exists on order, and order in its turn is based on the authority of an idea. When the revolutionary period was over and the empire came into being it was thought that the papacy will recover the prestige it had lost during the revolutionary regime in France and along with it the idea of a universal state in Europe supported by the Catholic Church. But nothing came of it. In fact, when on the occasion of Bonaparte's Coronation the Pope stretched his hand to place the crown on the head of Napoleon, the latter snatched it away from him and crowned himself with his own hands, declaring by this act that the French state was perfectly sovereign and did not in any way depend on the Church of Rome.

On the other hand, the French Revolution by proclaiming the principle of National liberty, i.e. of the sovereignty of peoples at the side of that of individual liberty, annihilated the idea of a united Europe: from now on the European states which were organized on the principle of nationalities departed more and more from the conception of a single community of the white race which, living in internal peace, would represent outside Europe a solid and predominant force. The whole of the 19th Century passed in Europe under the sign of a battle to create national states in the place of dynastic ones,—the states in which the

nationalities had no role to play but only the dynastic families which by aggrandizing the territory of their states aspired only to augment their own power: it was of little importance to them whether their states were nationally homogeneous or not. During their origin from the medieval idea of the serfdom of man to his master and to the soil to which he is attached, the dynastic principle was essentially based on the theory that the inhabitants were simply paid labourers on the soil belonging to the king. The monarch was the *master,* and the men attached to the soil were nothing but his *subjects.* The French Revolution profoundly changed the character of the state, the state (soil and the inhabitants) belonged henceforth to the *people,* to the *nation,*—the latter was no longer servant and subject but the real master, and the monarch merely an *institution.*

This new conception doubtless greatly contributed to the enhancing of the dignity of man and of letting him free to form his fortune, but at the same time it imported a new germ of war: in fact, however antiquated might be the idea of dynastic states, it was certainly more favourable to international peace than the conception of national states. For the European dynasties often related to one another, would not so readily make war among themselves and their particular family ambitions were as often held in check by the fear of risks associated with wars. In their calculations of conquests there was always a certain rational element which prevented them from exposing themselves to hazardous and dynastic combinations ; the national sentiment took up the reins in the direction of states ; there was initiated an epoch in which the states quite unrestrained in their elementary irrational forces and their desire for expansion and in their national megalomania struggled with economic imperialism for the first place. Like the spirits of Faust, which, once released from their phials, would not return to them but wreck the whole laboratory of the doctor, even so foreign domination or extension of power over other peoples: they could no longer conceive of any limits to their fanaticism. The small nations were the most enterprising: not having much to lose by a great European war, they too bore a great part of the responsibility for

the rivalry of great powers, which on their side utilized them for their own imperialistic policies. The small peoples, carried away by the ideas of liberty and of the sovereignty of their nations which came to them from the West, were truly a great hindrance to the peace of Europe in the 19th Century: culturally little advanced, and that precisely because of their subservience to foreign governments, they were capable only of bringing destruction to the great state-organisms of Europe, without being able to construct in their place anything better in solidity and durability: these were merely negative forces.

Doubtless these small ethnic groups could not have the power of endangering general peace if the great powers were inspired more by pacifistic sentiments than by their appetite for domination and prestige. Surely in this case they did not remain inactive in the face of the declarations of the representatives of the small nations: "We shall realize our unity by a great European war,"—declarations which reflected more or less also the sentiments of responsible factors. Thus in June, 1903, when a military conspiracy murdered the King of Serbia at Belgrade, the queen and the ministers as well as the great powers did nothing to prevent the distressing spectacle of the murderers monopolizing the whole power. On the contrary they thought it expedient to recognize the *fait accompli* and the new government in Serbia. England alone took up an attitude more in accord with the principle of legality of modern law and broke off diplomatic relations with Serbia, but she too did not go to the point of actively resisting the Serbian political methods, and she let herself be gradually assuaged by some concessions from the new Serbian government and at last consented to send her minister to Belgrade.

There is nothing surprising therefore that a final cataclysm should come. The murder of Arch-Duke Frantz Fardinand at Serajevo was not the cause of the Great War but only the occasion for it: the real genesis of the war has been explained by us above and war would have certainly broken out with fatal result some day or other on the pretext of some other occasion. The murder at Serajevo did but unleash the sinister forces. But what is most

remarkable here is that the great powers could not find any other mode of liquidating the affair of Serajevo than of aligning themselves in two opposite camps for and against a murder.

The war of 1914-1918 spelled the fall of Europe: cataclysms of similar nature were known also in previous history but none was so disastrous as this. Who knows if Europe will ever be able to recover from it? And to this cataclysm greatly contributed also another white continent—America, notably the United States. Thanks to the intervention of the latter the war was prolonged for two more years, for from the view-point of military and economic situation of the two belligerent groups in 1917, the war could not have been continued much longer, and it would have been possible perhaps to achieve a peace of *entente*. The United States, instead of aiding in it, rendered the war even greater and more atrocious by provoking in this way the Russian Revolution and with it the rise of Bolshevism. President Wilson will always be famous for his *volte-face*: before the presidential election of 1916 he appealed to the neutral powers to support him in his efforts to persuade the belligerent parties to launch peace negotiations, but he completely changed when elected president: now he invited the same neutral powers to take up arms against Germany, there was no denying this fact. The Lusitania incident could not excuse the behaviour of President Wilson: The question here is not whether the United States should have entered the war for this reason; the question is that President Wilson himself could not have declared the war. If he had considered the war to be inevitable, the Vice-President was there to decide the question (what is the use of institution of Vice-President, if it is not for cases like this?) and not the same man who had solemnly preached peace only a few months ago. The success of the Allied policy of exterminating the enemy took the place of accommodating peace which would have reconciled the old enemies after the peace. And it is this policy of extermination which still dominates the relations between the Europen powers, of which the result will be another explosion like that of 1914.

What is exactly the cause of the fall of Europe? It is the absolute lack of a fundamental and guiding ideology. Europe vaunts of being the pillar of Christianity, the three centres of the Christian Church—Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant—are in Europe and yet the peoples of this continent have for more than four years fought with one another in a war which is more cruel and inhuman than any known in history. On the one hand the Europeans are the recognized adherents of Him who had taught: " thou shalt not kill " (that is to say, not even in self-defence), and on the other hand they have attacked one another so ferociously that it may appear that their religion enjoins rather just the opposite—" thou shalt kill." There can thus be no ideology or logic in it. For if they are Christians they should never have fought and killed and if they really make war they should frankly admit that they are not Christians. One can be a partisan of Jesus or a partisan of Satan, but never both at one and the same time,—one can never follow the precepts both of Christ and of the devil, for in trying to follow both one would miss both. Europe is as much diabolical as Christian—it is therefore neither. It possesses two irreconcilable ideologies. The European continent is a world without system, its existence means chaos. But a chaos cannot pretend to have the right to govern the world and humanity as European always does. For the world is a *principle* and a *system*.

Europe did not prove itself to be less illogical at the time of the conclusion of the peace treaties (1919-1920) which should have terminated the great war. But Europe could not but be illogical. In fact those peoples among whom logic was completely at a discount, as proved by the war itself, were incapable of being consistent in their later action—the treaties. These treaties, results of conferences to which German delegates were not allowed excepting under military guards, represent a dictated peace. It is difficult to find even in the darkest period of ancient history examples of more humiliating brutality. And its authors were Christians! The ancient Romans when subjugating their enemies were at least consistent: in their eyes force was the guiding

principle in human society as in physical nature. The treaties of 1919-1920 were not at all conventions between independent contracting parties: they were simply judgments in which the judges imposed on the judged whatever they chose. They even imposed on the central powers the sole responsibility for provoking the war, implying that the judges were innocent victims.

The principle of nationalities for which it is said, the allied powers had made war, was treated in a peculiar way. It has surely to be recognized that the statute of present-day Europe has to show many ameliorations over conditions prevailing before the war, but it is no less true that new injustices have been committed. Millions of inhabitants have been subjected to foreign rule by these treaties. There is only one change in favour of the victors: it is now they who are occupying the place of the vanquished. For instance, formerly it was the Slavs who were under the rule of the Germans and the Hungarians, but now it is the latter who are governed by the Slavs. It is not in the scope of this article to give a complete list of the ideological inconsistencies of this Christian continent. But let us at least mention the greatest of all these inconsistencies, the league of nations. All the errors of this institution are derived from the impossibility of the desire of the pact, which created the Society, for achieving the solidarity and collaboration only of the victorious powers to the exclusion of the vanquished. Moreover it is well known that independent and sovereign states are absolutely elementary physical forces with a tendency to extend in time and space in all directions giving rise to unavoidable conflicts—the wars. How could it be conceived that such forces could be harnessed to a collaborating union? In consequence either a league of nations without independence and international sovereignty of its members (that is to say a unique federated state), or the latter but without a league of nations. One or the other but never both at the same time. We have therefore to choose between these two opposite terms: either independence and international sovereignty of the states with eternal wars, or peace—but that at the sacrifice of these two principles.

Also the colonial question, resuscitated above all by the Italo-Abyssinian war, has demonstrated the inconsequences and the lack of logic of the European powers. For it was particularly the powers possessing most colonies which raised objections against the Italian conquest of Etheopia and posed as champions of the liberty of the black peoples, although they hold millions of foreigners under subjection. In fact, we have to choose between these two things: either the league of nations should recognize the principle of equality of all colours and races and thus abjure all the colonies of all the European nations and not only of Italy ; or it should frankly place the white race above all other races, in which case also there should be an equitable distribution among the European states of the overseas colonies. But no, the league of the great victorious powers who are in a position to say, " We are the league," serve themselves with the formula: " All that is duty should be demanded of others,"—a formula which perfectly characterizes the mentality of modern Europeans. Nevertheless some justice should be done to France which of all the colonial powers was conscious of this paradoxical situation, whence her hesitations regarding the attitude towards the Abyssinian question.

The European peoples are trying to demonstrate their solidarity also by the principle of non-intervention: according to this principle the government of a country is absolutely free to be as reactionary and retrograde as possible and to prosecute, imprison and shoot down its adversaries without the least fear of intervention from foreign states. Such a law can never be a Christian law, for it bids us remain idle when our fellow-beings are being murdered. And the more the Spaniards are intensifying their brutalities, the more the great European powers, which are all Christians, are proclaiming their duty of not interfering in the affairs of Spain.

We have tried to trace here a picture of the European continent and although it is dark enough, yet it is below the actual reality which is still more sombre. The reality is that Europe is a hell. A hell has not the qualification to be the leader of the world, and in fact Europe is no longer the leader. Before the

great war the other races respected and feared the white peoples of Europe, but after the latter had appealed to them to help them in destroying themselves and after seeing the European at work in his own home, those races have no longer any respect for the Christian continents. Gone are the days when at the call of Emperor William II there appeared before Shanghai the united flotillas of the European powers to demand satisfaction of the Chinese for the murder of a European minister. On the contrary during the great war these flotillas destroyed themselves before the eyes of non-Europeans.

Can Europe still be saved? Yes, provided Europe becomes truly Christian, that is to say not only by the rites and the words but also in sentiments which would enable her to establish a truly Christian peace. Then Europe would again be able to control the world though on a different ethical basis from that of the past. But in order to be able to realize that ideal it is necessary to make of Europe a single state,—a federation which would begin its work by suppressing the international law which owes its existence only to war: in fact the basis of international law is the principle of the international independence and sovereignty of the states which is the germ, as shown above, of all these eternal wars among peoples.

The abolition of international law in Europe and its replacement by a European federation similar to the Swiss or the American one—this is the only way of salvation for Europe. But without a sincere reconciliation of the French with the Germans, who are the two greatest continental powers, there will never be a federation of European states, and, in consequence, there will be no peace in Europe. The leadership of the world will then pass over to some other continent, America, or Asia. We believe it will be rather Asia than America. *Light came from the East*: Jesus Christ was born on the soil of Asia, where He was preceded by the Buddha, the Apostle of equilibrium and peace of the soul. In other words the Apostle of peace should now take the place of our Faustian dynamism always agitated and out of equilibrium.

THE SHELL AND THE KERNEL OF RELIGION

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Several discourses have been delivered on this platform and elsewhere in connection with the celebrations of the Birth-Centenary of Sri Ramakrishna, on the incalculable value derived by humanity by the advent of this *Avatāra-purusha*. The course of the deluge of materialism is sought to be arrested; the liberation of the spirit from the thraldom of matter is being more assiduously advocated; the voice of the harbinger of peace and of the harmony of faiths has been heard; the gospel of self-confidence and aggressive service has been broadcasted; the possibility of the reconciliation of sects and creeds has been demonstrated beyond doubt; the problem of bringing into line the conservation of individual spiritual values with that of social values has been solved; the national ideals of renunciation and service are being proclaimed now more effectively; the day of persecution in the name of religion in a gross and coarse form is almost past, though in a subtler form it is still creeping and in some places would appear also to be making headway; freedom of conscience is trying to escape the grim grip of intolerance; that spiritual life is the only life worth living is being proclaimed throughout the Earth. Magnificent and wonderful have been the results in harnessing the secularist and the materialist; the need for reforming and refilling those who have come into the fold is none the less important and none the less urgent than that of bringing more recruits to the realm of the spirit. To conserve them and keep them against decay and resolve into sham is no mean service both to them and to humanity at large. The salvation of the world will be nearer at hand if only those who profess religion either momentarily or for a large part of their lives are really and significantly religious as Sri Ramakrishna was. Several things now pass for religion. To remind the forgetful world what religious life really imports, has been the main purpose of the *Avatāra*. No truer statement has been made on this platform

than that of Sir Brajendra Nath Seal that Sri Ramakrishna never sought only to take out the essence of religions, leaving behind the rituals and ceremonials that preserved it—never tried to pick out the diamond out of its setting, as others had done ; that he was a Hindu with the Hindus, a Christian with the Christians, and a Mussulman with the Mussulmans in their fully expressed lives. This is clearly indicative of what importance the saint attached to both the aspects which to Him were only complementary and not contradictory. For the growth and preservation of the whole cocoanut fruit, the rind and shell are absolutely necessary until the full growth is secured and the shell has served its purpose.

What do we find in India now? The south is more swayed by formalism and ceremonial, while the north is lacking it owing to various causes; the spirit is lamentably absent in several parts, while both the form and the spirit have been discarded in others. The educated man in his disdain for forms gloats over his confidence in retaining the spirit apart from form. In a short time he loses both. The unlettered orthodox man retains a dead form to the ridicule of the better-knowing and it serves him to eke out an ignominious life. I crave your indulgence for a few moments to illustrate the state of affairs by a short story. A *sādhu* was living in an *āśrama* in a forest with his disciples. A kitten somehow managed also to get into it and gradually became a pet of the *sādhu*. It took, however, greater freedom with him than it should have. It began to disturb him in his hours of meditation. To keep himself free from the disturbance of this pet, he used to tie it to a post when he contemplated to sit in meditation. This went on day after day. His disciples observed the *guru* tying a kitten to the post whenever he chose to meditate. They thought that tying the kitten was an essential preliminary to meditation. Within a few days each procured a kitten for himself and the *āśrama* became full of kittens. Observing this, the *guru* enquired of his disciples what the cause of the influx of such a large number of kittens was. They blatantly answered by another query, "Do we not require kittens for meditation?" The *guru* had to admonish them for their thoughtless action and explained to them why he himself had to tie the kitten. Several of our people are

in no better position than these disciples. Again, those who worship in temples are enjoined to sit down for meditation in temples after *darśana* of the Deity in the Shrine. The purpose of the sitting is now forgotten and you will be surprised to observe ladies or even grown-up men resting their body for a second or two on the threshold even without knowing why they do it. The important portion of temple worship is in its culmination in *dhyāna* and that is unfortunately left out.

Then again, during the initiation of a boy in *brahmacharya* and in his *upanayana* ceremony, grotesque caricatures are taking place and the boy who is asking for alms is receiving them in golden and silver plates, himself clad in rich silk and laced clothes. The *upadeśa* or initiation into the *mantra* occupies a less important place in the whole function. There are numerous other instances of our passing through lifeless formalism. We have not yet the courage to give it up altogether, nor earnestness enough to understand its significance and go through it with life and fervour, to the benefit of all. Rituals and ceremonials have a philosophical background. They successfully democratize religious truths which would otherwise be inaccessible to the masses. I have heard it said that Sri Ramakrishna could not bear to put on the *kāshāya* or ochre-coloured cloth of the *sannyāsin*, to wear which nobody had a greater claim, without going into *samādhi* at once, for to him the colour of the cloth indicated the union of the night and the day as typified by the brick-red sky of the evening. To him every outward suggestion must have its significant purpose fulfilled, as he was the embodiment of sincerity and truth. Cannot his life inspire us with the earnestness needed to infuse spirit and life into our rituals and ceremonials and make them effective and beneficial? Cannot our educated brothers abstain from discarding them and adopt them as their repository of religious truths until they have grown in spirit high enough not to need them? What we find among the Hindus obtains among the votaries of other religions also. To them also, the life of Sri Ramakrishna must be a beaconlight and help them to spiritualize their observances. One other observation, I crave permission to make. It has been said that Sri Ramakrishna, though he practised and

realized the ideal in other religions, was still a Hindu. One who has passed fully into the region of the spirit and has reached the highest watermark vouched to a *sādhaka* belongs to no one sect or creed; to him the path which has enabled him to reach the point is of no greater concern and no more his own, and other paths are as precious and valuable to him as the one by which he reached. He is in the position of one who has got into the terrace through one of the several staircases by which it is reached and in the position of one who is in the midst of a tank with several *ghats*. He owns no path as his own and all are his, those of the Hindu, the Mussulman, the Christian, etc.

Another stray thought strikes me and somewhat oppressively. It is about the co-operation and sympathy which the organization of a Parliament such as this has secured or rather failed to secure. While we rejoice that the active assistance of the more thoughtful and of the intellectual academicians has been secured for this undertaking (which is highly beneficial to humanity and to the spiritual advance of the world), would it not have been better if we had been able actively to persuade in a larger measure those engaged in the propagation of their religious doctrines to participate in and profit by the deliberations of this august assembly? We have been told that the purpose of the Parliament was to place before the assemblage the excellence of each religion or sect. It is not that other religions have not such excellences in them, but some have laid greater emphasis upon one aspect or another. The purpose of such declaration of excellence is, I take it, to enable the various religions to influence one another to facilitate their growth and for all of them to combine their efforts to combat successfully the demon of materialism. How could that co-operation and inter-influence be secured, unless each is imbued with the spirit of *live and let live,* and unless each gives up the attempt of adding to its fold from that of others? It is perhaps incompatible with the doctrines of a religion to recognize other paths as true and seek harmony in religious faith. The claim of exclusive perfection should naturally militate against the recognition of the harmony which it was the privilege of Sri Ramakrishna to proclaim to the world. Fancy an ecclesiastical

magnate patronizingly trying to appreciate only the humanitarian aspects of the Hindu religious sect and deigning to call it a lesser faith! This happens in the year 1937 and after several Parliaments of Religions have taken place! Without the co-operation and sympathy of such sects, which believe only in exclusiveness and mass and economic conversions at propitious times, the purpose of the Parliament will not be easily fulfilled. And may I say it will then be somewhat like the transaction of the League of Nations with Italy and Germany standing out? Will it be too much even for the great Ramakrishna who only wanted the Christian to be a better Christian, a Hindu to be a better Hindu, a Mussulman to be a better Mussulman, to turn their hearts also?

HINDUISM OF TOMORROW

SWAMI SAMBUDDHANANDA

Ramakrishna Mission

Hinduism, the religion of this sacred land of India, is the oldest of the faiths extant in the world. It reached the plenitude of its glory at a time when Egypt, Babylon, Assyria and Greece, the ancient seats of civilization, were only in their infancy. But the word 'Hinduism' is a misnomer, inasmuch as the actual word from which this appellation originated was 'Sindhu.' In ancient Persian (i.e. the language of the Parsees) the Sanskrit letter 'S' invariably changed into 'H,' and the Persians applied the word 'Hindu' to the river Sindhu. Thus 'Hinduism' became the name of the religion professed by the inhabitants living on ' the other side of the river Sindhu.' Subsequently, the Greeks finding it hard to pronounce the letter 'H' dropped it altogether and the Hindus came to be commonly designated as 'Indians.' Thus the name Hinduism has since then been used to signify the religion of the Indians as a whole. But under the present altered circumstances India is not the homeland of the Hindus alone, but of the Jains, Buddhists, Zoroastrians, Christians and Mohammedans as well, and the word 'Hinduism,' strictly speaking, cannot be applied as

a common name for the religion of all the Indians today. As a matter of fact, by Hinduism is meant the faith of those who hold the Vedas, the most ancient literature of the Indo-Aryans, as the supreme authority in all religious matters. Hinduism as such may, in all fairness, be called the religion of the Vedas or Vedāntism.

The Vedas are four in number, viz. the *Ṛig-Veda, Yajur-Veda, Sāma-Veda* and *Atharva-Veda*. Each of these Vedas has three main divisions, namely the Saṁhitās (Collections of hymns, sacrificial formulas and litanies), the Brāhmaṇas (prose texts containing theological matter, descriptions of sacrificial rites and modes of their performance), and the Āraṇyakas (forest books, i.e. that part of the Brāhmaṇas which was taught to those who observed particular vows on the occasion). The Upanishads are mostly different chapters of these Āraṇyakas excepting the *Īśa* which forms the fortieth and last chapter of the white *Yajur-Veda* (the *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā*). In fact the Vedas fall into two distinct classes (according to the nature of the themes treated therein), namely, the *Karma-kāṇḍa* and the *Jñāna-kāṇḍa*—the former dealing with the performance of rituals and the latter with knowledge. These Upanishads, otherwise called the Vedānta (the end of the Vedas), are said to be one hundred and eight in number. These not only are the store-house of the oldest Indian philosophy—the accumulated wisdom of the saints and sages, but contain a graphic account of the various forms of meditation (*upāsanā*) on God, soul and the universe.

With the march of time the different schools of priests and singers gave their own readings to their respective Vedas, and the Vedic literature, vast as it is, came to be divided into innumerable branches called *śākhās* (i.e. the slightly diverging recensions of one and the same *Saṁhitā*). Thus the *Ṛig-Veda* has 21 *śākhās*, *Yajur-Veda* 109 (and according to some, 100), *Sāma-Veda* 1000, and *Atharva-Veda* 15 (and according to some, 3); but ninety per cent. of these branches (*śākhās*) are now lost either owing to the cataclysm of the Buddhistic age or through the natural process of extinction of those Brahmin families who were the custodians of these sacred books.

Hinduism with all its sparkling variety of forms covers such a wide range of human thought that volumes can be written on the subject; but in view of the limited time at our disposal, only the striking peculiarities are presented in a nutshell for an easy comprehension of the central theme of this religion:—

(1) Hinduism is based on eternal principles which do not depend upon or originate from the life and teachings of any particular saint or seer. On the other hand, God-men and Prophets are born in this religion from time to time only to illustrate them in their own lives and thereby encourage a thousand others to follow in their footsteps. Thus the principles of Hinduism are eternal truths which reveal themselves to the spiritual vision of the blessed ones who hanker after God-realization.

(2) Its spirit of tolerance and universal acceptance of all faiths stand unparalleled in the history of mankind. Hinduism does not hold any truth to be the exclusive possession of any particular religion. It believes in the validity and usefulness of all existing faiths inasmuch as the same truth can be approached and realized in different ways through the medium of these divergent religions. Far from viewing other faiths with disdain and suspicion, Hinduism has respect for every system of thought and looks upon all as so many paths leading eventually to the realization of the supreme end of human existence. That the followers of this faith kept its door open to the various other religions that took shelter in this land from time to time, and allowed them full freedom for growth and expansion according to their distinctive traits and even encouraged mosques and churches to be built side by side with their own temples, speak highly of its wonderful spirit of tolerance and acceptance. Hinduism, in a word, means a living universal faith—a faith that accepts and tolerates all creeds and all systems of thought. But it would be a mistake to suppose that it is an artificial eclecticism. It is on the other hand a dynamic religion that sustains every faith with its life-giving principles, that never believes in proselytization but in vitalization of all beings without any distinction whatsoever.

(3) Unlike many other living religions of the world, Hinduism prescribes innumerable paths for men for the attainment of the highest goal of life. It holds that the means to the realization of the truth are as many as there are human beings. For, no two persons on earth can be found exactly alike in their make-up, intellectual, moral or spiritual. From Absolutism down to fetishism, from the highest philosophy of the *Advaita Vedānta* down to image-worship, each and all have, as such, a place, in Hinduism. There may be sects, but no canker of sectarianism in this religion, and, to say the least, fanaticism born of ignorance and crass superstition is outside the sacred pale of this universal faith of the Hindus.

(4) Whenever necessity arises, some seraphic souls are born in this religion to render inestimable service unto humanity by their marvellous life and teachings. The history of Hindu religion gives a graphic account of a splendid galaxy of saints and sages, seers and seekers after truth who were born on the soil of India in fulfilment of the imperious demands of the different ages.

The Hindu scriptures hold that a man is but an epitome of the universe. So, whatever is true of the macrocosm is also true of the microcosm, and as such the two contending forces of good and evil which are always found to be at work in these phenomena of nature are also to be found in man. In popular terms they are called love and hatred. Love is attraction and hatred is repulsion. When evil predominates and virtue subsides (in other words when good is overpowered by evil) we witness at the crest of humanity a superman standing in our midst with all the wealth of his spiritual realizations to re-adjust and re-establish the lost balance once more on the material and spiritual planes. It was in keeping with this universal law of nature that a little over a century ago, a saint of the first magnitude was born in the person of the poor Brahmin boy of Kamarpukur, who in the fullness of time came to be known as Sri Ramakrishna—the saint of Dakshineswar.

The history of Hindu religion of more than a hundred years back is the history of a period of threefold transition—social,

political and religious. The religious India of the early nineteenth century was torn with the doubts and disbeliefs of agnostics and sceptics. It was an age when the spirit of religion was almost stifled by the octopus of religious rites. Hinduism at this hour was ridden with priestcrafts and caste-prejudices. Sectarianism and fanaticism ran rampant in the land. Social disorder or *debacle* and political serfdom of those days conspired, as it were, to make the situation worse. The establishment of British rule wrought in its turn a radical change in the outlook of social and religious life of India. A few years of British rule were enough to capture the imagination of the leading sons of the soil. Influenced by the materialistic philosophy of the West they began to see things through the eyes of Europe. And very soon these neo-cultural forces began to fill the atmosphere of Indian life with the miasma of atheistic thoughts, mutual hatred and jealousy. To crown all, the Hindus lost all faith in the beauty and greatness of their cultural heritage, and their scriptures—the storehouse of the accumulated wisdom of the saints and seers—were looked upon by the reformed zealots as bundles of so many contradictions and meaningless practices. Indeed the life of India did never reach such a low level before ; never did it so seriously need the advent of mighty spiritual figures to restore it back to its pristine glory. To fulfil the crying need of the age a host of fiery personalities sprang up in the land, who tried their level best to stem the tide of this silent cultural conquest and thereby to avert the impending catastrophe in the collective life of the people.

But, of these builders of unity, none was so singularly successful in his attempts as the saint of Dakshineswar whose advent into the arena of Indian life was a veritable challenge to all that was alien to the spiritual genius of the people. His life from its start to finish was a life of intense *sādhanā* and splendid realizations. He went through all forms of religious practices enjoined in the sixty-four Tantras and other scriptures of the Hindus, and in an incredibly short period of time he was able to realize the supreme truths embodied therein. But this was not all. To realize the fundamental unity of all faiths he devoted himself to the practice of other religions—Islam and Christianity

in particular, and came to the conclusion that every faith is a path to the realization of the highest Reality—call it God or Brahman, Allah or Ahura Mazda, Jin or Jehova. The fire of Sri Ramakrishna's *sādhanā* not only brought back new life to the dead bones of Hinduism but threw a flood of new light upon all other existing faiths of the day. The tide of Indian life was thus changed, and Hinduism has since then been freed from the tentacles of modern pragmatic philosophy imported from the West. In short Ramakrishna's life of *sādhanā* has revivified the principles of Hinduism and established it once again on the *terra firma* of its majesty and glory.

The present is an echo of the past and a presage of the future. Hinduism of today which has brought a new hope, a new life and light to one and all irrespective of caste, creed or colour, promises a bright and glorious future. And it would not be an exaggeration to say that, in the light of the life and gospel of Sri Ramakrishna who was a symphony of a thousand faiths and voices of mankind and in whom Vedāntism found its highest and noblest fulfilment, Hinduism will serve as the solvent of the manifold problems of the day and bring eternal solace and comfort to the millions of souls thirsting for spiritual peace. Hinduism of tomorrow is therefore nothing short of a mighty confluence where the divergent streams of faiths bereft of all the turbid accretions of fanaticism, jealousy and narrowness of vision, will meet in sweet cordiality without even losing their distinctive ideal and identity, and would receive in their mutual commingling a fresh accession of strength and vigour for the betterment of human life and thought.

May the followers of this oldest of faiths be conscious of the sacred blood they inherit, the blood of the Aryans of the most ancient ages—the blood of the saints and seers which is still coursing through their veins. May their life like unto that of their glorious forbears, both individual and collective, be a sacrifice at the altar of the welfare of humanity.

Peace, Peace, Peace be unto all.

RELIGION, SOCIETY AND THE INDIVIDUAL

DR. GEOG. H. C. BENOY KUMAR SARKAR, M.A., *Vidyā-vaibhava*

Professor, Calcutta University

While discussing the problems and methods of futuristic reconstruction in the domain of religion it would be quite worth while to orient ourselves to some of the factual and objective realities in the modern religions of the world. The most outstanding fact of the present day is to be found in the remarkable progress of mankind in the religious consciousness. The growth and expansion of liberalism, toleration and wide-awakeness have to be recognized as some of the profoundest ingredients in the actual religious behaviour and sentiments of nations. Mankind is today more religious, more tolerant, more spiritual and more appreciative than it ever was.

Even half a century ago, say, about the time that the Parliament of Religions was convened at Chicago (1893), the Christian was exclusively a Christian and hardly anything else. During those days the Moslem was likewise merely a Moslem and a Moslem only. It was difficult, nay, impossible for him to be at the same time something other than Moslem. The psychological attitudes of the Hindu were similar. The Hindu was nothing but Hindu.

But in the course of the last fifty years the religious ideologies and orientations of men and women in the East and the West have undergone a considerable transformation. Today the Christian Bible is quoted in season and out of season by the Buddhists, the Zoroastrians, the Moslems and the Hindus. The Chinese *Taote-ching* and the Indian *Gītā*, on the other hand, constitute the daily food of hundreds of thousands of Germans, French, Italians, Englishmen and Americans. And the Hindus are likewise inclined to cite verses from the *Koran* in the interest of their day-to-day moral life. The appreciation of other peoples' faiths, sacred books and inspiring messages constitutes the most abiding fact in the psycho-social "*milieu*" of the last generation or so. The Hindu has grown into the Christian and the Moslem, just as the Christian

and the Moslem have grown into the Hindu. Without formal conversion or even consciousness as to the fact of the change the silent absorption of other faiths by men and women in the different corners of the globe is a stupendous reality of the modern religions.

The second great reality is to be observed in the methods by which this tremendous transformation—this mutual conversion on an international scale—has been consummated. The Christian has deliberately and self-consciously chosen to translate and assimilate the non-Christian texts for his own moral and spiritual expansion. The attempts of the Hindu to imbibe life-building forces from the non-Hindu world are no less deliberate and purposive. And so on with the Confucianists, Mussulmans, Buddhists, Zoroastrians and others.

The process seems to be confined formally to the literary, aesthetic, nay, archaeological, philological, and anthropological fields. But the impact of these innocent intellectual and scientific interests on the religious and deeply spiritual foundations of the investigators, researchers and scientists and on large groups of their countrymen has been revolutionary. The Christian has been trying in a conscious manner to change his tradition, modify his society and transform his past, and add something new to his inheritances. In the Hindu world also the efforts to improve upon the past, the society, and the tradition and to re-create the moral and social surroundings, are equally patent.

During all these years mankind has been functioning both in the East and in the West as the re-creator of its heritage. It is the purposive, goalful and self-determined initiative of individual men and women endowed as they are with creative intelligence and will that has been prominent in the psycho-social remakings of recent years. Man has been rising to the full stature of his spiritual being by refusing to allow the society and the tradition, embodying as they do the past, to shape the destiny of the present generation. On the other hand, man has been trying to demolish the tradition, the society and the past and shatter them to pieces or rather enrich them with the new creations of his self-conscious personality. The region, the climate, the race, the historic legacy,

the custom and the tradition have therefore been retiring more and more into the background of religious institutions and conduct and are being replaced by the experiments, assimilations, absorptions, discoveries and inventions of today. It is the enormous expansion of man's individuality and creativeness that is responsible for the transformation of the society and the tradition in Christendom as much as in Hindustan, China and the rest of the world. And in the interest of further progress in matters religious we should have to build on these demonstrable realities of the expansion in liberalism and toleration consummated up till now.

It is very necessary to be reassured of this triumph of the human spirit. The fact that even in the epoch of technocracy and industrialism mankind has known how to assert its creative might and rise above the region, the social bonds and the racial limitations should furnish us with tremendous incentives in regard to the socio-religious planning of the world and the spiritual remaking of humanity for today and tomorrow. The new forms that the human *psyche* has assumed in modern times entitle us to the hope that the world is now in for an epoch of rejuvenation.

CHRISTENDOM'S NEED OF CHRIST

PROF. GILBERT SLATER

Oxford University, England

Nineteen hundred years ago the Founder of the Christian religion was crucified as a criminal in Jerusalem, under the law of the Roman Empire. Within five centuries afterwards a religion which professed to be what the Christ had preached had prevailed against all opposition, triumphant over bitter persecution, so completely that the Emperor of the still united Empire was fain to become a convert in order to maintain his power, and to make " Christianity " the official religion of all the civilized countries west of Afghanistan.

But what is " Christianity "? Who was " Christ "? What did he preach?

With regard to the first question little is known beyond dispute. But it is reasonably certain that he came of peasant stock, and probable that he was the son or stepson of the carpenter of Nazareth, a large village in Galilee, the northern province of Palestine, a halting place for travellers from the Mediterranean shore to the upper Jordan valley. His name comes down to us as *Iesous* which is the Greek transliteration of an Aramaic name pronounced *Yeshua*, according to Hebrew scholars, and which is further altered to *Jesus* in English. It is also practically certain that his followers were convinced that he died on the Cross, and then miraculously came to life again to sit ever afterwards on a throne in the sky, as the supreme Lord of the universe, and that the explanation of his whole life and resurrection was that he was an incarnation of the Hebrew God Yahveh (Jahveh or Jehovah), as Kṛishṇa of Vishṇu. This belief was embodied in creeds which have remained up to the present day official statements of the doctrines of all the great organized Christian Churches, Greek, Roman, Syrian, Anglican, and Protestant. Whether it is true, or whether his supposed appearance to his followers as a living man were illusions, or whether he was taken down from the Cross while actually alive, are much disputed questions with which I am not here concerned. Whether the belief in Jesus' miraculous resurrection were true or mistaken, there can be no doubt that it generated the force that enabled Christianity, starting as a small Jewish sect, to spread and conquer, under the guidance of a succession of notable leaders.

Of these the first was St. Paul, previously Saul of Tarsus, probably a wealthy young man, since he inherited the status of a Roman citizen, who forsook his possessions to give his life to preaching his own particular version of Christian doctrine to non-Jewish people. His inference from the supposed fact of the Resurrection was that the faithful followers of Jesus would also ascend into heaven and lie in bliss for ever. In his time Christians confidently expected that Jesus would come back to judge all human beings alive or dead, while some at least of those who had known and followed him during his lifetime were still alive, and then the living would enter into bliss without ever dying,

and the remainder, with all other dead people, would rise from their tombs, and also enter into everlasting bliss. This was the faith that enabled them to defy the power of the State, so that the sufferings of the Christian martyrs became the seed of the Christian Church.

There was a critical time for the early Church when this expectation was visibly falsified by the course of events, but the danger was warded off by the timely appearance of the book known as the *Gospel according to St. John,* which developed and laid stress upon another early Christian belief, which I can only vaguely describe as a belief in the existence among Christians of a spiritual emanation from the Supreme Deity, termed the Holy Ghost, a guide, strengthener and consoler of all faithful Christians, who would be with them at all times, until the second coming of the Incarnate Deity in the person of the crucified Jesus of Nazareth. This doctrine was also accepted by the whole Church.

So much uniformity of belief did not, however, prevent violent quarrels among believers about minor matters of belief, prosecuted at times with savage cruelty—quarrels which could not be resolved, because they turned on questions on which nobody really knew or could know anything.

When we turn from the question "Who was Christ?" to the question "What did he preach?" the reliable information is sufficiently ample. His theology was simple. He believed in the existence of a Supreme Deity, the Creator of the Earth and its supposed subsidiary satellites, the Sun, Moon and Stars, fixed (i.e. true Stars), and wandering (i.e. planets). Living, as he did, in what was in his time a fertile and beautiful land, rich in wild flowers and vines, olives and figs, and other fruit trees of numerous varieties, he felt that the attributes of this unnamed deity were rightly indicated by the phrase "Our Father in Heaven," so that his theological doctrine is correctly described as a belief in the Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of Man. But he also believed in the existence of a hostile power, whom he termed "The Evil One," named Satan, perpetually at work endeavouring to thwart the goodness of God by corrupting the hearts of men. Exactly

what he believed about his own relationship with the Heavenly Father is a matter of dispute, but the balance of the available evidence is in favour of the opinion that he believed that he was not merely a son of God in the same sense as all other human beings, but also in some special sense, by virtue of which he was able, better than any other man, to realize his sonship, and interpret the will and nature of the Heavenly Father to his brethren, if any of them would listen to his teaching.

That teaching was only slightly and incidentally theological, it was mainly and emphatically ethical, and was embodied in what is known as the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord's Prayer, and certain parables, particularly those known as the parables of the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, and the Sheep and the Goats, which we have reason to believe have come down to us only inappreciably altered from his actual pronouncements, either because they were put on record by the hearers in the book known as 2, now lost but used as a source by Matthew and Luke, in the first and third gospels, or in the case of the parables, because their literary form and poetic quality made them live in men's memories.

The wonderful and unique fact about that teaching is that it is exactly the opposite of what one would infer from observing the practice of the great majority of those who profess themselves to be Christians. Gandhi has told us of his astonishment when, after having formed his ideas of the essential features of the Christian religion from his observation of Christians, he read the Sermon on the Mount, and discovered that its doctrine was in harmony with his own belief. Actually Gandhi though not a Christian is the foremost living exponent and exemplar of the religion taught by Jesus of Nazareth, and believers in re-incarnation might well believe that the soul of Jesus was reincarnated in him. Thus Gandhi's doctrine of *ahiṁsā* was preached by Jesus in such words as these—

"Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who use you despitefully—Give to everyone who asks of you—as you would that others should do to you give likewise to them."

He believed that it was his mission to establish on earth the "Kingdom of Heaven," that is a Brotherhood willing to welcome all men, women and children, loving one another, and endeavouring to act in accordance with the will of a Divine Father, Who regards all living beings as His children, and pities and cares for them without distinction. The prayer which he taught his disciples to address to their "Father in Heaven" set before them as their first aim in life the establishment of this great Brotherhood, in which men should meet injuries by forgiveness instead of by resentment, and for themselves ask for nothing beyond "daily bread." To those who desired riches, he said that such a wish was foolish ("Blessed are the poor, woe to you rich") and impious, "You cannot serve God and Mammon." To use a modern phrase, he preached voluntary communism, and after his crucifixion his disciples, while still under the sway of his intense personality, made voluntary communism the rule of the little communities which they established, first in Jerusalem, and later in many other cities. Though the rule of absolute community of goods was relaxed, these little communities (called "Churches") continued to be local organizations for mutual help among their own membership; each also ready to help other churches in time of distress. These rules of brotherhood and mutual help Jesus made absolute. "Not every one who says to me 'Lord, Lord' shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but he that does the will of my Father who is in Heaven." To those who do not, however active they might be in church affairs, he would say "Depart from me, I never knew you."

That the teaching of Jesus is little honoured in reality by so-called Christian nations, and even by the dignitaries of the great organized Christian Churches, is a glaring fact, so glaring, indeed, that many whose aims and lives have been most in accordance with his have repudiated Christianity and have been donounced as atheists.

But how did this lamentable divergence come about? It began about thirty years after the Crucifixion. In A. D. 64 there was a terrible fire in Rome, which destroyed great areas in that city where the fragile huts of the poorer classes were huddled

together, and no doubt, hundreds of houses of the well-to-do. It was probably accidental, so far as its immediate origin was concerned, but its anterior cause must have been the corruption of the elaborate system of city government under the influence of greatly augmented wealth and greed as the fortunes of the great merchants and money lenders assembled in the Imperial City were swollen by profits and interests flowing thither from all parts of the over-grown Empire. The populace, homeless and destitute, frantic and revengeful clamoured for victims. They were found in the new, but rapidly growing community of Christians, whose democratic and communist practices were obnoxious to the corrupt plutocracy. They were accused of having set the city on fire, and allowed no opportunity of defending themselves against the false charge, they were hunted out, and murdered in various ways, notably by being burnt alive, so as to suffer a similar fate to that which they were accused of inflicting on their fellow-citizens.

The reaction of this calamity was most disastrous to spirit of Christianity. Jesus meant his religion to be purely a religion of love ; actually, the pressure of this first persecution, followed in succeeding time by many more, converted Christianity into a religion of hate as well as of love, of love to all within its scanty membership, of hatred to hosts of those outside. Retaliation indeed was not possible, retaliation in thought was the more savage. Even if those who were burnt at the stake could bring themselves to forgive their torturers, their friends and relatives could not. They set their imagination to construct even worse tortures for " the wicked "—their immortal souls were to undergo those tortures with no remission, no place for repentance, for ever and ever. And it was the all-loving Heavenly Father Who as they believed created this hell, and inflicted those horrors, worse than ever man, the cruellest of all living creatures, had ever inflicted on his fellows. The cruelty of such a God generated similar cruelty in his worshippers. Worse was still to follow. When the Christian Church split into rival sections, disputing over insoluble questions of theology, each separate sect was ready to prophesy everlasting torment to the adherents of every other

sect, and to reserve the expectation of everlasting bliss exclusively for its own adherents. They alone were the elect, the chosen ones, who ultimately owed their Election to " Grace," that is to the special favouritism to them of the all-just, all-powerful, all-loving Father of all!

Under the influence of such teaching, the "Christian" nation of the West of Europe combined under the impulse of their priests to wage the savage Wars of the Crusades against the more civilized and humane Mohammedans, and later created an organization for searching out the "unbelievers," such as the Jews and Mohammedans, living in their midst, and also the "unorthodox," and put them to death by torture. Thus even in London in the sixteenth century Roman Catholics burnt Protestants at the stake as "heretics," and Protestants hanged Catholics, and tore out their entrails before they were quite dead, as "traitors."

Even now the doctrine of everlasting hell lingers on, poisoning the minds of all who submit to the teaching of the priests. A less rapid but equally disastrous decay ate into the vitality of the other great ethical doctrine taught by Jesus, that of the need of ceasing to desire superfluous riches, after the conversion of the Emperor Constantine and the establishment of Christianity as the official religion of the Empire. Then it paid to become a nominal Christian, and those who aimed at power and wealth rushed to become converts, and intrigued for advancement into positions of authority in the church organization. The Empire, under pressure of barbarian invaders, split into an Eastern Empire with Constantinople as its capital, which maintained its existence up to 1455 in which the Christian Church retained its material prosperity while becoming spiritually corrupt, and the Western Empire, where the old capital of Rome was captured and ravaged by the "heathen" a thousand years afterwards and the power of the Emperors dwindled away. There the Church, organized under the Pope of Rome, deemed the Vicar, or Viceroy, of Christ, took up the task of rescuing the remnants of the ancient civilization, and of exercising a spiritual domination over the minds and consciences of the northern invaders.

Here there was a partial and temporary return to the ethical

standards of the earliest Christians, and renewed attention was paid to the social teaching of Jesus. It was recognized that both slavery and private property in land were contrary to his spirit, but both had become so firmly rooted in the social structure that the Church had to compromise. It made increasing efforts to abolish chattel slavery, arguing that "those whom Christ had bought with his precious blood must not be bought and sold by other men," but permitted, and even made profit out of, the forced labours of poor peasants. It permitted the inequality of the rich and the poor, but preached the necessity of almsgiving, and insisted on demanding lives of self-sacrifice, at least to the extent of abstinence from marriage of its priests.

But in proportion as it succeeded in re-establishing the rule of law and order, and trade and manufacture, and profits of trade and manufacture, corruption and decay of spiritual life again made headway. The assumption of responsibility for the revival of civilization by the papacy, i.e. by the organized Christian clergy, gave it power and authority. That authority was supported by a new system of spiritual punishment supplementing the conception of hell, the threat of which could only be used in the most extreme cases. This was purgatory, a place of finely graded temporary torments, where every revolt in deed or thought was visited with its appropriate and severe penalty.

Purgatory, in the teaching of the Church, became increasingly horrible, but it was the only way to heaven for all but the saintliest Christians.

Responsibility thus brought power and the possession of power gave the control of wealth, as soon as there was a surplus over the bare necessities of life to be scrambled for. Wealth again produced luxury, and luxury greed. Papal Rome became, like Imperial Rome, the centre to which the tribute of all the nations that were under its sway was drawn by an elaborate system of clerical taxation; and Rome again a city where everything was for sale, including the remission of any number of years of purgatory.

Nemesis came at least. Men's consciences revolted against

the corruption of the Church, and their minds against its intellectual tyranny; while its wealth and luxury excited the envy and greed of landowning and mercantile magnates. North of the Alps the combination of these forces carried through the "Protestant Reformation," which became effective and permanent in establishing new religious organizations where it was supported by the princely governments. Horrible religious wars ensued, in which it is estimated that *two-thirds* of the population in Germany alone perished by slaughter, famine, and pestilence.

Whether these new "Protestant Churches" or the Roman "Catholic Church" approximated more in their practice to the teaching of Jesus, is a question which is hotly debated between their respective adherents, and one on which it is very difficult to form an impartial opinion. England was saved from the worst horrors of the conflict by the policy of Queen Elizabeth and the natural genius for compromise of the English people. The national Church was recognized on the basis of Royal supremacy, and on a blending of Catholic and Protestant creeds and ritual. Nevertheless civil war did ensue, in which the more extreme Protestants inspired a revolt of the mercantile classes against the monarchy on the ground that they must not be taxed, however moderately, without the consent of their representatives in Parliament. When the conflict ended at the close of the seventeenth century it became clear that (1) the "Christian" Established Church had become in effect a subordinate department of the Government, and (2) whatever that Government might be represented officially as being, or be in form or in popular belief, it was in reality the tool of the plutocracy. It was dominated right through the eighteenth century and the fresh half of the nineteenth by the wealthy parasitic landlord class, and later, to an increasing degree, by the chieftains of capitalism, manufacturers, traders, bankers, Company promoters, proprietors of newspapers, ship-builders, munitioners, and the like, supported by an ever-growing body of small and medium folk living, with little or no labour, on incomes derived from investments.

In consequence the nominal Christian Churches in England became in reality the servants of Mammon, and not of the

Heavenly Father. In words they declared that Jesus was the all-wise, all-good, and almighty God, but, in the mass, treated his recorded teaching as foolish and negligible, and altogether inapplicable to actual life, either public or private.

What is true of England in this respect is largely true of America, Germany, and Western Europe also ; with what horrible results became apparent in one war for markets and areas for capitalist expansion and exploitation after another, between "Christian" Powers, from the Anglo-French war at the beginning of the eighteenth century up to the " Great War" of the twentieth, which left behind a legacy of mutual hatred which daily becomes more intense and ominous, and now threatens Europe with a more horrible fate than ever experienced by humanity yet—its wealthy and crowded cities are in imminent danger of being destroyed by explosive and incendiary bombs, their inhabitants murdered wholesale by torturing and poisonous gases, their water supplies destroyed, their food supplies disorganized, so that those who escaped from one death would perish by millions from hunger and thirst.

All this danger would disappear, all this horrible prospect would be transformed into a future of unprecedented health, happiness and prosperity, if only professed Christians would obey the commands of Christ. These are now proved to be the dictates also of honest common sense. There is the easy possibility of plenty of every desirable commodity for everybody, if only we were all willing to demand no more than our fair share of the produce of industry in proportion to our needs, and to contribute our fair share of the necessary labour in proportion to our powers, living together, as Jesus would have us live, as brothers, helpful and sympathizing with one another in all fortune, good and bad.

That is Christendom's Need for Christ Today.

What hope is there that Christendom will recognize that need, and at long last follow the leadership of Jesus?

It looks but a slight hope at present, but we must not forget that among all Christian sects there have been men and women, mostly poor and obscure, who have been willing to devote their

lives to the pursuit of genuine Christian ideals, and others, also, outside those sects, who have fought with them for social justice and mercy, though they repudiated Christian theology. They refused to call Jesus "Lord, Lord," and are termed atheists and deemed wicked by those who are conspicuous in their attendance in the Churches, like the Pharisees of old, not realizing the application today of the parable of the sheep and the goats, in which Jesus declared that in the last day he would repudiate them, and welcome as comrades those "atheists" who, like Robert Owen a hundred years ago and certain of our fellow-citizens today, are striving to "cast down the mighty from their seats, and lift up them of low degree."

Our hope rests upon the fact that while the organized Churches, wealthy and endowed, and in alliance with nationalistic and plutocratic governments, have betrayed Christ, still hosts of the rank and file of professed Christians are still loyal to his teaching, particularly among the poor and simple. One poor woman who works as a domestic servant next door to me, said a day or two ago, "When I was a child, my mother taught us that religion was trying to help other people." That is true Christianity. The words of Jesus, and his example and personality, still find an echo in many—an echo in many Christian hearts, and still live as a fountain of neverceasing inspiration. Christendom needs the spirit of Christ, and now, when Archbishops and Bishops deplore what they regard as the decay of religion, it is beginning more fully to realize that need. Therein lies the only hope of its rescue from the perils which the Church's betrayal of Christ has brought upon "Christendom." It must return to Christ.

THE HUMAN FACTOR IN THE FORMATION OF CAPITAL

PRESIDENT F. ZAHN, LL.D., PH.D.

Statistical Institute, Bavaria

The people themselves with their capabilities for living and work form the most important productive factor of an economic

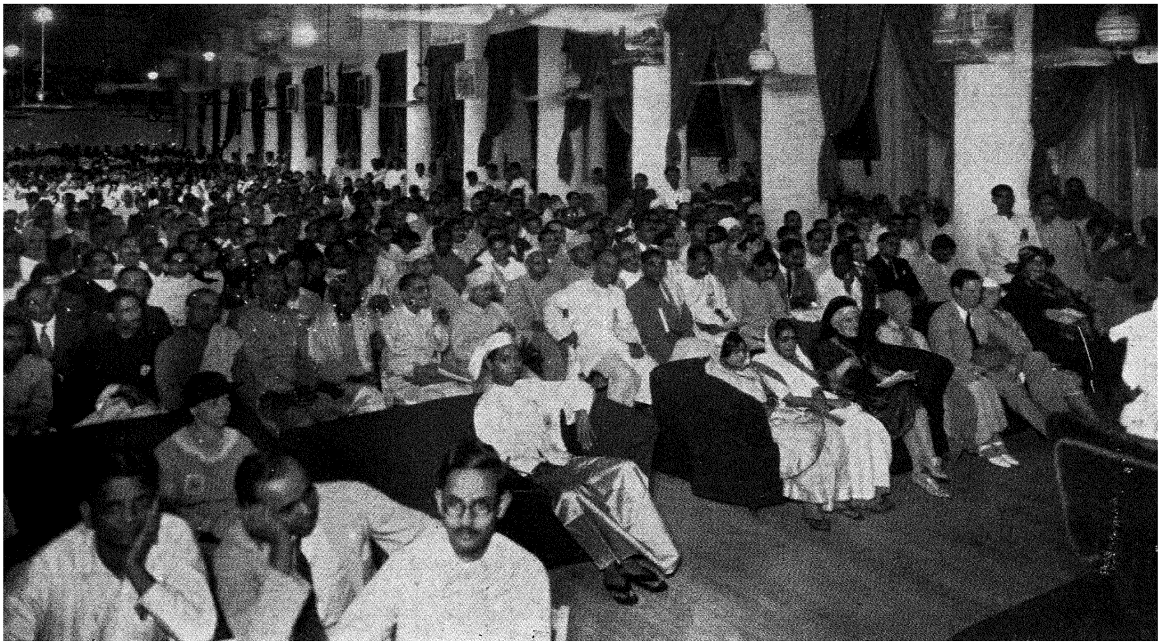
national unit. The capital expended by the people for training and education is three to four times as large as the dead capital. 80 to 90 per cent. of the total income of a nation is the direct production of human work; the rest is the interest on invested capital, rents and leases, all of which may also be considered the production of human work, as capital is only the crystallized work of former economic periods. For the economic maintenance of a nation each generation must pay back the capital in full including interest, which was used for training and education, by producing a new hereditarily healthy generation. The misdirection of living national capital is much more dangerous than the misdirection of a dead capital by over-rationalization, and this might be done by over-education. The economic importance of the age structure of a nation is to be seen best in social insurance. A successful hygienic campaign against infant mortality might save 10 billions in needless expenditure ; a decrease in the number of births for even one year as compared with the years before the war means a loss of 20 billions. Population policies must be made use of to protect the substance of the nation. (*Epitomized from the original in German.*)

Part V

OBSERVATIONS AND FAREWELL



View of the Dais during the afternoon session of the Parliament held at the Calcutta Town Hall on Thursday, March 4



The Gathering at the Calcutta Town Hall, March 4

CHAPTER VIII

OBSERVATIONS

MONDAY, THE 1ST MARCH, 1937, AFTERNOON

OPENING OF THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS
ELECTION OF GENERAL PRESIDENT

SIR BRAJENDRA LAL MITTER, *Member, Executive Council, Government of Bengal*:

I have the honour to move that Sir Brajendra Nath Seal be elected General President of the Parliament of Religions. In the world of letters and philosophy, Dr. Seal's name is so well known that very few words are necessary to introduce Dr. Seal to this distinguished gathering. I may, however, mention a matter of peculiar significance. This Parliament of Religions has been convened under the auspices of the Ramakrishna Centenary. Dr. Seal had personal contacts with the Saint of Dakshineswar and he was an intimate friend of Sri Ramakrishna's most distinguished disciple Swami Vivekananda. Dr. Seal has earned a very big name as the wise man of the East, and we may feel confident that under his guidance the deliberations of the Parliament will be conducted on a high spiritual level. I commend my motion to the acceptance of this conference.

HIRENDRA NATH DATTA, *Attorney-at-Law*:

I have much pleasure in seconding the motion that has been so eloquently moved by my distinguished friend Sir B. L. Mitter. Not many words are needed to commend this motion to your acceptance. It is in the fitness of things that Sir Brajendra Nath Seal, the *doyen* of Indian philosophers, who has made the whole range of knowledge his own and who moves daily among all the great religions of the world, should be the General President of this mammoth gathering. I commend the motion that has been so ably moved to your cordial and enthusiastic acceptance.

SIR BRAJENDRA NATH SEAL (rising amidst applause):

It is very unfortunate that I have been recently taking ill and I therefore request one of my friends to read out my address. (The printed address was then read.)

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TUESDAY, THE 2ND MARCH, 1937, MORNING

RELIGIOUS UNITY A CONTRADICTION IN TERMS

PROF. BENOY KUMAR SARKAR *of the Calcutta University* (while presenting his paper on " Religious Categories as Universal Expressions of Creative Personality "[1]):

Religious unity is a contradiction in terms. Unity is such a thing that it can never be approached by the path or paths of religion. On the other hand, religion is such a peculiar item of life that it can hardly ever lead to unity. In other words, religious unity is psychologically as inconceivable as a *sonār pātharer bāṭi* ('golden marble vessel'). It is certainly possible to analyze the religions of the world from the earliest times until today, and I can prove and many people can prove logically as well as psychologically that some of the texts, say, of the Koran are identical with some of the texts of Confucius. Further, some of the teachings of the Upanishads may be demonstrated to be identical with some of the teachings of the New Testament. But these individual phrases do not constitute the *Gestalt* (form-complex) of a religion. It is, however, the *Gestalt* that rules a man's life. Human life is not governed in a simple manner by just one principle or another. There are several principles that together constitute the springs of action. I will give you an illustration. It is possible, for instance, to discover the stones and the gems of the Taj Mahal in many buildings of the world, including, say, the Victoria Memorial of Calcutta. But the Taj Mahal of Agra, as a structural whole, is entirely different from the Victoria Memorial of Calcutta, although the gems, jewels, stones and all sorts of things that you can possibly imagine as necessary for edifices are individually perhaps identical in the two structures.

[1] See Vol. I, page 191.—ED.

Therefore the fundamental proposition for all of us is to accept the doctrine of "*Yata mat, tata path*" (as many faiths so many paths, every faith as a path to God) as the only possible pragmatic basis of inter-human relationships. Ramakrishna, when he declared the equality of paths and the equality of faiths, was voicing the same sentiments of democracy and republicanism to which we are used in the problems of civic welfare and political life. Equality in politics means nothing more than the simple respect for man as man. Nobody on earth can reasonably believe that all human beings were, are and can ever be equal in any significant sense. In the same manner when Ramakrishna declared that every faith is a path to God, he did not want us to understand that every faith is equal to every other faith but that each should be respected. Such a republic of world's religions, the democracy of the religions of man, was never propounded for mankind in this form before Ramakrishna, and we should therefore look upon this dictum as one of the most profound contributions to world peace, taking it for granted all the time that religious unity is a contradiction in terms."

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TUESDAY, THE 2ND MARCH, 1937, EVENING

THE INNER SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS

MADAME SOPHIA WADIA *of Bombay*:

Salutations to Sri Ramakrishna in whose name we have gathered today. I do not feel it will be an indiscretion to take you into my confidence, and state that I was not to speak this evening but was requested to say a few words to you after this afternoon's session had begun. It would have been ungracious and ungrateful not to submit and not to choose immediately some subject to consider for a few moments, and the subject which seemed to us of tremendous importance was the one of 'The Inner Significance of this World Parliament of Religions.' Its outer significance is known to all of us and is clear to us all. What its inner significance will be will depend upon our own

efforts and the change of hearts and the change of attitude which will become ours as we learn from each other and listen to each other, not only with the concentration of our minds but with the sympathy and the understanding of our hearts. One of the messages which was read last evening, the message from India's great leader, Gandhiji, gave us already the idea that each one of us will have to do something to make this Parliament of Religions not only an outer success that it is bound to be, but a true inner success. In sending his good wishes to all of us Gandhiji added, " May this Parliament achieve something constructive." Perhaps it seemed unnecessary to state that we should do something constructive and perhaps some may wonder what more constructive work could we achieve than the one which has already made it possible for all of us to come together on a common platform, to forget for a moment the prejudices and try to understand each other in a true spirit of universal brotherhood.

The inner significance has already been explained by the previous speakers, especially by the one who stated that we lived in this world and therefore identified ourselves with the illusions of the objective world, as also by the last speaker who gave us an exhortation to turn within and announced to us the necessity of understanding the inner side of all things, the inner significance of our own being to begin with. We judge of things or events and actions in terms of the externals. What is wrong with ourselves at the present moment? Why is it that we do not know ourselves as divine and immortal souls? Why do we claim that fraternity must be maintained, that peace must prevail while the world goes on? Because we ourselves evaluate our own duties, our own actions, our words, feelings and thoughts merely in terms of their objective values. To take some simple illustrations: Vain people, men or women, will examine the outward appearance of an individual at the sight of the dress he or she wears or the external appearance, and the same is true of themselves. They also think more of what they appear to others than what they are in reality within themselves. But the soul influence can only be realized, can only be contacted when we throw away the external valuation. What is it that is wrong? Religion today is

a disintegrating and destructive force whereas from time immemorial, as stated in the ancient *Mahābhārata, Dharma* or Religion is the unifying power which can link up the whole of the universe in sublime and magnificent unity. That which has happened to religion is what has happened to our own lives in our daily struggle. We think of the outward, and we have forgotten the inward. Religions have become a matter of external ritualistic practices, and the essence is forgotten. The great teachers have pointed out the way and what even the most exalted of saints and sages can do is to point out the way. This Parliament, if more than anything else, has the only purpose and the only objective, i.e. to try to awaken within our own consciousness the recognition that each one of us has to go the path of spiritual realization by his own effort, that we must rely upon ourselves, depend upon ourselves and that it is the earnestness, the purity, the sincerity of our motive in every case which will count. The great ones gave sublime teachings and wonderful inspiration in their own example, in the embodiment of the living truth, but each one of us must make that message in precept and in example part of his own being, must similarly show that living current of spiritual union which has existed and which will continue to exist. Let us therefore unite in the sincere wish to bring our own constructive contribution by our attitude, by our inner understanding, by our desire to learn from each other through this Parliament of Religions, so that its true importance may be increased a thousandfold by the inner change that will come into the lives of those who have participated in these deliberations, and in that task, those who will listen through silence, through their attention, can give us much and perhaps more than those of us who are coming to the platform to voice some feelings and express some sentiments. Let us remember that self-reliance is happiness, outward dependence is misery, and let us end by invoking upon all of us the blessings of the sages who have been and who will be, those great ones who are for us our spiritual fathers and mothers, more than our physical mother and physical father, those great Ṛishis who are more than wealth, more than possessions, and who are our true seers and our true Gods.

SRIMAT SWAMI BHAGAVATANANDAJI, *Kāvya-Sāṁkhya-Yoga-Nyāya-Veda-Vedānta-Tīrtha, Vedānta-Vāgīśa, Mīmāṁsā-Bhūshaṇa, Veda-ratna, Darśanāchārya, Maṇḍalīśvara, Benares*:

(Original in Sanskrit)

'यो भूतं च भव्यं च सर्वं यश्चाधितिष्ठति। स्वर्यस्य च केवलं तस्मै ज्येष्ठाय ब्रह्मणे नमः' (अथर्ववेद १०।८।१)।

आर्यसद्विचारचातुरीसमञ्चितचित्ताः सन्नार्य्यः सत्पुरुषाश्च !

अद्य महीयसो हर्षावेशस्यावसरो यद्वयं विभिन्नदेशनिवासिनो नानामतसिद्धान्त-निबद्धश्रद्धा अपि पारस्परिकप्रेमप्रसाराय स्वस्वहार्दप्रकाशाय च दूरतरदेशेभ्यो भूयसायासेन समागत्यास्यां सर्वधर्मपरिषदि देवाकृष्टहृदि अवतिष्ठामहे।

अयं स्पृहणीयः सदवसरस्तस्यैव परमश्रद्धेयस्य निजचरित्रपवित्रीकृतभारत-धरित्रीतलस्य समुद्यद्यशश्चन्द्रिकाधवलितदिक्चक्रवालस्य पारेसमुद्रं निवसतां वैदेशिक-विद्वद्वृन्दराजहंसानामपि मानससरोवरायमाणस्य श्रीमतः श्रीरामकृष्णपरमहंसस्यानु-कम्पयाऽलाभ्यस्माभिः। अनेन महात्मना लोकोद्धारचिकीर्षया मतवादपक्षपातग्रह-पङ्ककलङ्कातङ्कविधुराः सत्यसिद्धान्ताः प्राचारिषत।

'एकमेवाद्वितीयम्' (छा० उ० ६।२।१), 'ब्रह्मैवेदं विश्वम्' (मुण्ड० उ० २।२।११), 'ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वम्' (यजुर्वेद ४०।१०), 'अहं मनुरभवं सूर्यश्च' (ऋग्वेद ३।६।१५।१), इति वैदिकपद्धत्या जगतीतलगतं सर्वमपि ब्रह्मस्वरूपं पश्यतोऽस्य महापुरुषस्य सर्वेऽपि जनाः स्वीया एव 'वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्' इति न्यायेन च।

एवम्विधानां महामहिम्नामद्वेष्टृत्वादयो गुणाः स्वभावसिद्धा एव विलसन्ति, न तेषां कृते प्रयस्यन्ति महात्मानः। यथोक्तं सुरेश्वराचार्य्यैः—'उत्पन्नात्मावबोधस्य ह्यद्वेष्टृत्वादयो गुणाः। अयत्नतो भवन्यस्य नतु साधनरूपिणः' (नैष्कर्म्यसिद्धिः ४।६९), तथैव श्रीकृष्णेन भगवता च 'अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च' (गीता १२।१३), इति।

न वा महोदारस्य सर्वात्मदर्शिनः सङ्कुचितदर्शिपुरुषवत् कस्मिँश्चिदुपेक्षा घृणा वा सम्भवति, तदुक्तं श्रीमच्छङ्कराचार्य्यैः—'सर्वा हि घृणात्मनोऽन्यदृष्टं पश्यतो भवति' (ईशावास्योपनिषद्भाष्यं ६)

'उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत' (कठ० उ० १।३।१४), 'उत्तिष्ठतावपश्यत' (अथर्ववेद ७।७५।७),

इत्युद्बोधायितुम् 'एकं ज्योतिर्बहुधा विभाति' (अथर्ववेद १३।३।१७), 'एकं सन्तं बहुधा कल्पयन्ति' (ऋग्वेद १०।११४।५), इति सत्यतत्त्वं शिक्षयितुञ्चावतेरुस्ते।

तैरुपदिष्टं यन्न जातु चिदपि केनापि सह विरोद्धव्यम्। सर्वैः सह सद्भावेन भ्रातृभावेन वर्तितव्यमिति। यावन्ति सन्ति मतानि तानि सर्वाण्येव परमोन्नतये पर्याप्तानीति विश्वस्य शान्त्युन्नतिशिखरिशिखरं समारुरुक्षुभिस्तथैव जीवनं विधानीयम्।

निखिलनदनदीनां साक्षात्परम्परया वा समुद्र इव सर्वेषां प्राप्यः स एव जगन्नियन्ता जगदीश्वर एवेति परमोदारे विचारे जगतीतले जातप्रचुरप्रचारे सति को नामावसरः पारस्परिकमतवादकलहकोलाहलस्य।

कतिपयदिवसानन्तरं परस्परतो वियुज्य स्वस्वस्थानं गन्तास्मोऽत्रागता वयं सर्वेऽपि, परमयं वियोगोऽपि संयोग एव सम्पत्स्यते, अत्रत्यभाषणादिना परस्पर-सद्भावावबोधेन सञ्जातपरमप्रेमाणोऽभिन्नहृदयाः प्रेमसूत्रावबद्धहृदयतया मोमुद्यमान-मानसाः सन्तो यास्याम इति वियोगोऽपि न दुःखाकरो भवितेति।

नेदानीं विशिष्याभिज्ञानस्यावसर इति विरम्यते श्रीलरामकृष्णपरमहंसीयगुण-गणार्णववर्णनेन स्वीयवाक्सफल्यं विदधानेन 'वाग्जन्मवैफल्यमसह्यशल्यं गुणाद्भुते वस्तुनि मौनिता चेत्।' (नैषध० ८।३२।) इति श्रीहर्षोक्तिमनुसरता, "सङ्गच्छध्वं सम्वदध्वं सं वो मनांसि जानता" वैदिकीं शुभाशंसामाविष्कुर्वतेति इति।

(*Rendering in English*)

He Who is all that is in the past and will be in the future and on Whom is founded all that exists, to Whom alone belongs the heaven,—to Him, Brahman, the eldest of gods, my obeisance (*Atharva-Veda,* x. 8.1.).

Ye ladies and gentlemen inspired with the spirit of enquiry into the noble problems!

This is a day of great rejoicing that we, though of different countries and different faiths, have assembled together at this convention, even from distant countries, and at the cost of great exertions, in order to cultivate our love and friendship for one another.

This auspicious occasion we owe to the saint Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, who by his own personality has sanctified the land

of India, the rays of whose expanding glory have lighted up the whole horizon beyond the seas, and who, besides, is like unto the lake Mānasarovar (favourite resort) to the swans which the foreign scholars living beyond the seas resemble. This great soul, for the deliverance of mankind, preached the doctrines of truth which are absolutely free from all the venalities associated with partisan spirits.

" One without a second (is Brahman)" (*Chhā. Up.*, vi.2.1.); " The Universe is but Brahman " (*Muṇḍ. Up.*, ii.2.11); " All is informed with this spirit " (*Yajur-Veda* 40.10.); " I was Manu and Sun as well " (*Ṛig-Veda*, iii.6.15.1);—such are the Vedic dicta, following which the saint Ramakrishna realized that all in this universe is nothing but Brahman, and he also perceived that all men are kindred, for (to the generous) the earth is full of friends and friends alone.

As such great souls are free from all envy and rancour, such qualities are quite natural to them—without them they would not be great souls. As Sureśvarāchārya has observed: (The qualities like non-envy, etc.) belong only to those whose souls have been awakened, and not who concentrate merely on ascetic practices (*Naishkarmya-siddhi*, iv. 69). Lord Kṛishṇa has also said: "Inimical to none and full of charity and sympathy for all " (*Gītā*, xii. 13).

Nor is it possible for great generous-hearted men, feeling their own selves in all, to be indifferent or bear hatred towards any one as narrow-minded people are apt to do. As has said Śaṅkarāchārya: " Hatred is born in the minds of those only, who consider others to be vile " (*Īśopanishad-bhāshya*, 6).

The great souls were born on earth as incarnations of God to preach, " Awake and arise " (*Kaṭha Up.*, i. 3.14), " Awake and perceive " (*Atharva-Veda*, vii. 75.7), and to teach, " The one glory manifests itself in various forms " (*Ibid.*, xiii.3.17). "(The seers) imagine the One existent in various forms " (*Ṛig-Veda*, x. 114.).

They have taught that one should never bear enmity to any one, and that one should always live in harmonious and fraternal relations with all. However many the doctrines that are on earth,

they are all competent to lead us to the highest truth. Keeping this in mind we should try to mould our lives if we really wish to climb to the highest peak of universal peace.

If the noble truth is intensively preached and accepted on this earth, that all faiths directly or indirectly lead to God alone, like rills and rivers meeting ultimately in the ocean, would there be any more room for mutual enmity and recrimination over points of creed?

After a few days we shall again depart to our different places after taking leave of one another. Yet even this farewell will be the foundation of concord, and as the light of love will have been kindled in our hearts, and we shall depart greatly rejoicing over the ties of friendship woven by the addresses delivered here, calculated to promote mutual understanding, even this parting will not be a source of pain to us.

As this is no occasion to go into details, I desist after merely describing the ocean of virtues that is Sri Ramakrishna's, and thereby justifying my gift of speech, for, in the words of the poet Śrī Harsha, " the feeling of frustration would be unbearable indeed if, though endowed with the power of speech, one has to remain silent even when confronted with superhuman virtues" (*Naishadha*. viii. 32), and pronouncing at the same time the Vedic benediction—" Assemble in harmony, discuss in harmony, and may your minds be known in harmony."

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WEDNESDAY, THE 3RD MARCH, 1937, MORNING

SWAMI PARAMANANDA *of Boston (Mass.) and La Crescenta (Calif.), U. S. A.*:

For lack of any other expression I shall call you my spiritual kinsmen. I speak with absolute conviction because we have endeavoured to meet together from various approaches to find unity and find brotherhood; that unity to my mind seems to be the only thing which is practical—practical I say, not because men have tried to express theories or show how it may be worked out, but because I have experienced it. During my travels, specially

once through Austria, I found a man who could not speak to me and I could not speak to him, for we did not know each other's language. And the little French or German I knew did not suffice to communicate with the soul, but the soul did not require a language. And he entertained me as if I were his brother, and because of that, because it is a fact, I am entitled to address you as such. If it were not so, we could never have gathered here and remained here so steadfast. I have sat here in every session and the attention that we are giving to the proceedings proves this—that we are all trying to live the life of the ideal. I have heard many interesting, learned and scholarly expressions of thoughts. They all have expressed the unity of *Dharma*. May I point out that Sri Ramakrishna polished the mirror of his heart. He was seeing in himself the Divine beauty and enabled others to look into the mirror of their hearts. If we now find some blemish in our mirror, we shall take the hint from the practical side of Sri Ramakrishna's life and begin to polish the mirror of our heart and take out all blemishes, and then we shall see whether or not it is possible for us to find the synthesis, idealism, practical reality of which Christ, Buddha and Saint Francis and other great spiritual geniuses have spoken with the living of Truth, with the force of conviction. With this thought I am going to stop. I hope that this convention, this great Assembly which has met in the name of the sacred personage who is still spiritually living with us and whose presence we all feel and but for whom I do not think I would have undertaken a long journey of many many thousands of miles, will give us the spiritual consciousness, and I feel that that reality which Sri Ramakrishna inspired men to realize will be realized even here and now.

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WEDNESDAY, THE 3RD MARCH, 1937, EVENING

THANKS AND APPRECIATIONS

PROF. BENOY KUMAR SARKAR:

On behalf of Young India and on behalf of the Parliament of Religions I rise to say that Rabindranath, the beloved

Rabindranath of Young Bengal, is still young, and continues still to be a profound creator of values. God bless Young India! Rabindranath's address tonight is an immortal document. He has delivered to mankind through this audience a permanent charter of human liberty. It is destined to rank in the world of thought as an eternal manifesto for the enfranchisement of the spirit of man.

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THURSDAY, THE 4TH MARCH, 1937, EVENING

SWAMI VIJAYANANDA *of the Ramakrishna Ashram, Buenos Aires (Argentina, South America)*:

I have brought greetings to you from South America—from the Argentine Republic. I was sent there by the Ramakrishna Mission five years back. The result of what I was doing there in these five years was that I was sent back by those Argentine people to represent them in this wonderful Parliament of Religions. I was trying to love them; that is what I can tell you.

There is a great deal of difference between philosophical jargon and real religion. If real religion has any definition, that definition would be "realization." Without realization all religious talk is mere speculation. Whether God is or whether He is not, whether He can be attained or whether He is always beyond our gaze—all these are mere speculations. I ask you all: "Do you feel the necessity of thinking about God?" Whether he is a Christian God, Jewish God, Zoroastrian God, Hindu God or the *Nirvāṇa* of Buddha, do you feel the necessity from the bottom of your heart? If not, then all this is in vain. That was what Sri Ramakrishna tried to preach to the world. Whether we stand in the name of *Advaita Vedānta* or *Viśishṭādvaita Vedānta*, whether we are followers of Zoroaster or any other, if we do not realize, and first of all, if we do not feel the necessity of realizing, then my friends, we are all far away from the land where religion starts.

In Argentina, there was a tremendous opposition, an opposi-

tion that comes from some people who do not know anything but dogmas and creeds. "Do this and don't do this, do that and don't do that," is their cry. I carried Sri Ramakrishna's message of love. It was very difficult to say who he was, for only a man who can attain that same height of realization as Sri Ramakrishna, can claim to say that Sri Ramakrishna was such and such. I do not understand, so I never told them. But I have brought you their greetings of love.

LITANY ON SRI RAMAKRISHNA

SWAMI PARAMANANDA gave a short address and read out the following Litany of his composition:

O Thou, whose divine radiance kindles
out obscure mind with white light
of faith and hope—
Our homage to Thee a thousand times,
now, and for ever and ever more!

O Thou, whose smile of bliss shines forth
against this world's dark and despondent sky—
Our homage to Thee a thousand times,
now, and for ever and ever more!

Thy whole-souled love for Truth and Truth alone—
A chalice to mankind for ages to come!—
Our homage to Thee a thousand times,
now, and for ever and ever more!

O Thou Conqueror of lust and greed,
indifferent to all human desire!
Fame and shame are same to Thee—
Our homage to Thee a thousand times,
now, and for ever and ever more!

Renouncing Thy precious communion of Bliss,
Thou camest down to the plane of mortals,
so full of sordidness and sorrow,

To save, perchance, e'en a single soul from drowning—
Our homage to Thee a thousand times,
now, and for ever and ever more!

When our world-soaked thoughts throw their
weight upon our minds,
And our hearts are rent with despair,
Thou comest before us with Thy heavenly compassion—
Thou art grieved that we sorrow—
Our homage to Thee a thousand times,
now, and for ever and ever more!

"Know ye not that ye are children of All-Blissful Mother?
Grieve not, nor ever make your countenance sad!"—
Thus dost Thou remind us—
Our homage to Thee a thousand times,
now, and for ever and ever more!

Thou dost stand before us as an unfailing lamp,
To guide our steps from the world of men to the
World of God—
Our homage to Thee a thousand times,
now, and for ever and ever more!

Gently like a morning hymn sung by the heavenly choir
Thy face so full of tenderness,
Thy hand so full of saving grace,
Thy heart so full of unearthly love,
Call us forth from our slumber—
Our homage to Thee a thousand times,
now, and for ever and ever more!

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FRIDAY, THE 5TH MARCH, 1937, EVENING

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

SWAMI VIJAYANANDA:

Friends, Nārada was the most famous among the Ṛishis. One day, he was coming back to this mortal plane after visiting

the Lord. He saw three men sitting who asked Nārada what the Lord was doing. Nārada replied, "I saw him passing camels through the eye of a needle." One of them at once stood up and said: "Nonsense! Impossible!!" The other man said, "May be possible." But the third man did not say anything. These are the three types of religious men whom we find in the world. All three try to speak of the Lord. Whether Christian, or Mohammedan or Hindu, all of them say, "Our God is Omnipotent." And each of these three says that his God is the only Omnipotent God. But the first one never practises anything. He has little brain in him. With that he wanted to judge the Omnipotent and said, "Impossible"; for this man could not pass even a little thread through the eye of a needle. The second man who tried many times to practise, said, "May be possible." The third man was one with the Lord and could not say, "Yes" or "No." Friends, religion and philosophy are very close together. The Hindus have a fine word *darśana* for philosophy. *Darśana* is what we *visualize*. We do not speculate about God. We *see* him and our realization is passed on to others. Of course, realization is very difficult to be expressed. So the philosophy that follows the realization comes in a constructive form trying to express the Inexpressible. There is no such word as "impossible." A man who is trying to help his fellow-beings and who is happy in doing that, is a philosopher and religious. But if a man does not feel joy inside or outside a church, and at the same time if he quotes all the books inside the church supporting his view, and outside the church contradicting his views, he is not a religious man. But unfortunately all over the world we find a great majority of philosophers and religious men of this last category. I requested you yesterday and I repeat my request—whatever be the name of your church, whether it is an established church or not, whether it is your own church or not, *do* something and realize. Then you can have a solution of all the philosophies and know the religion.

AN ANNOUNCEMENT

ADVOCATE BEJOY KRISHNA BOSE, *Secretary, Centenary Executive*

Committee, made the following announcement regarding the *" Cultural Heritage of India."*

For the last two years and a half, the members of the Ramakrishna Mission and the Centenary Committee have been doing their best to bring about a monumental work, in commemoration of the Centenary,—a work unique in its kind and never attempted before in India,—a volume or a book of volumes in which would appear the writings of the greatest modern scholars of our land, called *The Cultural Heritage of India.* Just now from the press they have sent me these three volumes which have seen the light of day this morning, and I beg to announce to you that you will find in these three volumes the writings from just one hundred great Indian savants. That is a news which I want to communicate to you and it seems to me that the grace of God is upon us, for every item of whatever scheme we had drawn up a year and a half ago, is being fulfilled in the scheduled time.

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SATURDAY, THE 6TH MARCH, 1937, MORNING

A MESSAGE OF THE NEW ERA

PRAFULLA KUMAR SARKAR, M.A., B.T., DIP.ED. (EDIN. & DUB.), *Calcutta Training School, Calcutta*:

Nothing could be more proper than holding this world federation of faiths in connection with the Centenary of one who invoked the spirit of the New Era in his humble life of dedication, giving to the world an idea of universal religion in a working and up-to-date form.

It may not perhaps be out of place, if I attract your notice to a message for the New Era by Prabhu Jagatbandhu of Faridpur in Bengal.

A living dream in flesh and blood, Jagatbandhu remained unseen and silent for full seventeen years in his secluded retreat at Faridpur, praying and working for the good of the world. Once he declared that the best way of helping in the work of deliverance was to sing the glory of the Lord in congregation,

incessantly producing a peculiar harmony for the whole 'recreating' process.

Jagatbandhu passed away in 1921. But I believe that he is still working for the good of humanity.[1]

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SATURDAY, THE 6TH MARCH, 1937, EVENING

GREETINGS FROM THE CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY

RAI BAHADUR PROF. KHAGENDRANATH MITTER *of the Calcutta University*:

I am very grateful for the opportunity which has been given to me to express on behalf of the Calcutta University, which I have, this evening, the honour to represent, my most cordial greetings to you and particularly to the friends who have assembled here in this great city from different lands. Only recently, I had the opportunity of being present at another Congress of Faiths and I still remember the words that were spoken on that occasion by the representatives of different religions. I had no idea that so soon after that great event, I should have another opportunity of meeting the Assembly of different faiths in our own native land. The experience that I had on that occasion is still fresh in my mind and I think at no time has there ever been a greater need for a meeting of this kind than now, because in all the countries where I have been recently touring, I saw that religion was more dead than alive and there was no chance of infusing fresh blood into the religions which are in a decadent condition. I am confident—and I feel that you will share my opinion when I say—that India has now a message to give to the world, and that message is a message of peace and goodwill not merely in name, but in reality and in substance. Peace and goodwill are conspicuous by their absence in the world of today and there is no immediate prospect of reinstating them from the religions with which we are more or less acquainted. Of course, religion has been pushed to the background and people are trying for something else which is different from what we commonly

[1] This is the substance of a Parliament paper. See Programme, p. 29.

understand by religion. God has been removed from His altar, and other gods have been placed on that altar. What are we going to do to the world? As Indians, we feel that in our country there have been apostles and prophets, even today there may be in our country some saints and sages who are incarnations of God. There is no country where renunciation has been preached except in India. There is no country where sages and seers abound in such large numbers as they do in India. My friends, you will pardon me if I say, India will still live to give her message to the world.

SWAMI VIJAYANANDA:

I am going to tell you something of the spreading of the Vedānta and the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna in continental Europe. As you know, Vivekananda himself brought the message of Sri Ramakrishna to Europe and especially to France. He took the trouble to learn the language well enough to deliver a lecture in a similar Parliament of Religions in France. Many of the indologists at that time took a great interest in the message which the Swamiji was bringing from India, but at that time the teachings did not spread beyond a very limited circle of intellectuals. A few years later Swami Paramananda went to Europe and lectured and gave classes in a number of countries especially in Switzerland, but it was really Romain Rolland, one of the most generous hearts which the world has ever known, who really started to spread the message of the Saint of Dakshineswar. The volumes which Romain Rolland published met with tremendous success and were translated in many languages. I was privileged to read many enthusiastic letters which Romain Rolland received from all quarters of the globe after he had published the book. The interest is evinced by the great demand for the actual teachings of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Ramakrishna.

THANKS AND APPRECIATIONS

SWAMI VISHWANANDA *of the Ramakrishna Ashram, Bombay*:

As I have been watching the proceedings of the Parliament of Religions, I could not but admire the capacity of the Calcutta

public to listen patiently to speeches on theological subjects. We are met here and the Parliament has been convened to promote inter-communal amity and inter-racial unity. I do not know whether we shall achieve this ideal. An earnest man like Sir Francis Younghusband, who has devoted his whole attention, would feel disappointed if the result is otherwise. The Hindus think that the wisdom of God is confined in the four Vedas. Probably others think like this. I wish we were all Hindus, and I wish we were all Mussulmans. Then there could be no quarrelling. But there are other forces. Let us try to see the excellence in our neighbour's faith and in all faiths. Every religion has its point of excellence. The Christian Religion has its point of excellence in its ideal of service and prayer. Look at the grand monuments all over the world which the Apostle of Jesus has made for the suffering humanity. Islam has the ideal of democracy and brotherhood. No other religion has so strongly inculcated this idea. Amongst the Muslims you find the lowest and the highest can rise to the same level and to the same rungs of the ladder of life. The question of colour or race does not exist at all among them. I am not going to speak of my own religion lest I should err on the side of arrogance. May God give us sympathetic understanding and enlightenment, so that we may see the best points in our neighbours' faith and may live as members of the same family. Our salutations to all Prophets of the World!

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SUNDAY, THE 7TH MARCH, 1937, MORNING

PROF. BENOY KUMAR SARKAR in introducing Madame Adelina del Carril de Guiraldes of Buenos Aires (the Chairwoman of the session):

The Ramakrishna Parliament of Religions has brought far and near together. India has become the venue of cultured persons from the remotest corners of the world. Indians have thereby been enriched with friends of the most diverse nationalities. This morning our session is going to be presided over by a representative of the Republic of Argentina in South America.

The presence of Madame de Guiraldes in our midst is an event of extraordinary importance. For the first time in life many of the culture-bearers of modern India are in direct contact with a creative mind of South America. Argentina, as we all know, is virtually unknown in India in the line of material goods. Argentina touches just a few of India's exporters because she takes from us not very considerable quantities of jute, gunny cloth or gunny bags, raw jute and rice. And our imports of articles from Argentina are so few and far between that they may virtually be ignored. Commercial relations being what they are, the Republic of Argentina has not cared to get herself represented in India by a consul of the Argentinian nationality.

It is in the perspective of this absence of noteworthy intercourse between India and Argentina that we should envisage the significance of Madame de Guiraldes's visit to Calcutta as one of the Presidents of this International Congress. In and through her as ambassador Argentina has exported to India some spiritual goods, the value of which can be fully appreciated in years to come. In her personality we are coming into contact with the great Spanish civilization as naturalized and developed in the huge continent of what is known as Latin America. She is a story-writer and a poet. And it is but natural to expect that the messages of modern India will find in her a fine interpreter for the benefit of the great Spanish-speaking world in Eur-America.

I must not fail to observe that the possibilities of what is likely to be a far-reaching spiritual exchange between India and Argentina or rather the great Spanish civilization of modern times we owe to Swami Vijayananda of Ramakrishna Ashram, Buenos Aires. The sincere thanks of this Parliament of Religions are due to Swami Vijayananda for inspiring Madame de Guiraldes to take the trouble of coming all the way to Calcutta with the object exclusively of giving India and the world a message from the Argentinian people on the meaning of the Ramakrishna celebrations for mankind.

THANKS AND APPRECIATIONS

RAO BAHADUR C. RAMANUJACHARIAR, *Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Madras*:

The task of proposing the vote of thanks on this occasion has been assigned to me by the *sūtradhāra*[1] of the show. I feel very great pleasure and delight. He has told you at the outset with what amount of sacrifice and with what devotion, our President has come all the way from the Argentine Republic to preside over this function. Our indebtedness is therefore deep and inexpressible. The Ramakrishna spiritual empire is expanding and is all-including. It knows no geographical limitations, nor seeks limitations, and this participation of the President of this morning's function in the deliberations is a singular proof of this fact. Friends, Swami Vivekananda, whom I had known even before he went to the West, was asked why he went to America. He said that the appreciation, approbation and even the adoption of the Vedāntic principles by the West would open the eyes of our own people to the nobility, majesty and greatness of our Vedāntic literature. If 44 years after this was uttered, we find a lady of the Argentine Republic presiding over this function, will that not open our eyes wider, make us more earnest in our endeavour to reach the goal?

SWAMI SHARVANANDA *of the Ramakrishna Mission, Delhi and Karachi*:

It is one of the wisest sayings of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna: "The knowledge of unity is true knowledge, the knowledge of duality is ignorance." In these words, he has put in a nutshell the entire philosophy and faith of Hinduism. One of the greatest discoveries that the ancient sages as early as the Ṛig-Vedic Age made was when they declared—"The whole universe is an organic whole." This declaration of supreme unity of life and existence, in those pre-historic days, certainly made a land-mark, as it were, in the history of the spiritual awakening of mankind, and we find,

[1] Prof. Benoy Kumar Sarkar, a Secretary of the Parliament.

with the progress of time, as human knowledge began to unravel many a mystery of nature through science, through art and literature, and even through different avenues of religion all knowledge began to converge towards that unity. Today in the XX century we know this unity they are trying to find out through physics, chemistry, astronomy, biology, psychology and other branches, and particularly in religion,—the science of religion through a comparative study of religions,—we find that after all at the back-ground of these different expressions of religious faith, there is that one indescribable consciousness of spiritual unity. The spiritual unity was realized in the ancient times in India by the Vedic Rishis. This was declared in China when Lao-Tse spoke of it. This was realized in Athens through Plato and through Aristotle. In Christendom too we find this unity was expressed in the lives of some of the great mystics, and this unity was discovered also by the Sufi mystics. So you see this is a real experience that comes to man in some exalted state of consciousness ; and this unity is the back-ground of all life—this is the back-ground of the physical universe, and any action of ours which only tends to unify us with the Supreme Unity and Universal Life is spiritual, and any action of ours that takes us away from the spiritual unity is called irreligious or unspiritual.

One of the greatest ideals that the ancient sages discovered for the practical life was the ideal of *yajña*. The entire creation proceeded from the sacrifice of the Supreme *Purusha,* and so in the Vedic Ages, the sacrifice was the chief form of communion with the Supreme Being, and this *yajña* is being translated through every institution as domestic and social life of the Hindus—that is, sacrificing the individual or the narrow limited being for the attainment of the Universal Being. This is, in short, the keynote of Hindu civilization ; this is, in short, the key-note of the spiritual attainments of the Indo-Aryan race, and friends, this is going to be really the basis of religious realization, and when we understand the spirit, the spirit of sacrifice, greater would be the real advancement of unity in humanity in the path of civilization. We speak of love and service, but when we try to understand the fundamental philosophy, the ethical philosophy that lies behind

the spirit of love, we come to find the feeling of sacrifice and unity. So this is the *yajña* we have been performing in the form of the Parliament of Religions—to produce the spirit of harmony, to feel the spirit of unity that lies within all of us, i.e., that forms the inner core of our being like a big ocean in which are surging so many billions of waves and pebbles. So the unity of life and the divinity of man form the key-note of all religions, and if we realize this we would feel the doctrine of love and sacrifice truly explained, and its practice would be easier for us and would bring blessing and peace to humanity for which the whole world is hankering. So we should understand the spirit of *yajña* always as an offering on the Altar of Divinity, the *Virāṭ Purusha*.

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MONDAY, THE 8TH MARCH, MORNING

PROF. BENOY KUMAR SARKAR in introducing the Chairman of the session, Dr. F. V. Tousek, Consul for Czechoslovakia:

One of the first presidents of this Parliament was a scholar from China, Dr. C. L. Chen, Chinese Consul-General at Calcutta. As one of the last presidents we are going to have this morning Dr. F. V. Tousek, the Calcutta Consul for Czechoslovakia. Dr. Tousek is like Dr. Chen a student of law and is deeply interested in social and racial problems. In Dr. Tousek, we have, further, a European who knows his continent from the East to the West at first hand and can speak a number of European languages. The material and moral problems of the poorer classes in all countries have always commanded his attention and interest. This consciousness and sympathy have been an integral part of Dr. Tousek's liberalism and spiritual outfit.

There are special reasons for which the Ramakrishna Parliament of Religions is happy to have a representative of Czechoslovakia as one of the chairmen. Czechoslovakia is a country of small dimensions inhabited by some fourteen million people. It is the smaller countries of Eur-America that should attract the special attention of the Indian people. For, we ought to remember that India, a vast subcontinent as it is, happens in

reality to be a territory of small peoples or nations. The Bengalis, Assamese, Oriyas, Biharis, Punjabis, Marathas, Gujaratis, Andhras, Tamils and so forth of India have perhaps more to learn from the fortunes of lesser nationalities in the modern world than from those of the big nations and the great powers. The problems and achievements of the smaller states are likely to be more easily understood by the different peoples of India than those of large nations. It is not necessary to ignore the great powers but it ought to be a part of our national policy to cultivate contacts with the smaller peoples also in the interest of our cultural progress.

In the second place, the sturdy little republic of Czechoslovakia is a second Switzerland of Europe in technocracy, industrial achievements as well as provisions for social welfare. It is indeed the most modern and up-to-date of all the new states that came into existence about two decades ago.

The cultural and spiritual background of the people represented by Dr. Tousek is also remarkable. The Czechs have the credit and the glory of contributing one of the first great reformers of Christianity or rather one of the first great martyrs of the Reformation in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. That was Huss, the precursor of Luther. One of the greatest embodiments of the Renaissance was the Czech humanist, Comenius. In his pedagogics Europe learned to treat education as an instrument for the service of practical life. In the first half of the nineteenth century romantic enthusiasm in favour of the folk and the spirit of the people got a great fillip through the literary and historical works of Czech intellectuals like Palacky and Havlicek. And in our own times the nationality idea has found a noble and tenacious exponent in the father of Czechoslovakia, President Masaryk, the idealist transformed into the realist, whose *Making of a State* is well calculated to remain the Bible of patriots and publicists of India as of other countries in her condition for a long time to come. In welcoming Dr. Tousek to occupy the chair this morning the Ramakrishna Parliament of Religions is conscious that India is thereby being brought into living contact with a great tradition of soul-enfranchizing ideals

and spiritual activities with which the Czech people has been associated in a creative capacity for over five hundred years.

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MONDAY, THE 8TH MARCH, 1937, EVENING

SRIMAT SWAMI SUDDHANANDA, *Vice-President, Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Belur Math*:

Before I came to this august assembly, I had no idea that I should have to speak something on this occasion. But as I have been requested to speak, I say only a few words. You know on the opening day of this Parliament I came to this Town Hall and the one thing which I told a fellow-monk of ours was that Swami Vivekananda, my revered master, told the whole Calcutta public regarding Sri Ramakrishna: "Before this idea of Parliament of Religions was thought of, here lived a man whose very life was a Parliament of Religions as it should be." I do not wish to dilate on the great life of Sri Ramakrishna. Only let me pray that he may enlighten our hearts so that in the name of religions we may not make any mistakes in our intellectual discussions, but may realize the goal of religions: I believe, if every fellow-Hindu, Christian or Mohammedan or any one else tries to be true to the teachings of his religion and is sincere, he would realize the same Being, which is the Source of the whole world, Eternal Knowledge and Peace. So we need not convert a man of one religion to another religion. You must have conversion, our minds must be *converted*, but none need be converted from one faith to another. May I hope that this Parliament of Religions will usher in the day of peace and goodwill amongst the different religions of the world and enable us to try to realize the goal of religion.

MAHARAJADHIRAJ BAN BIHARI KAPUR BAHADUR *of Burdwan*:

I rather feel like an interloper at your great gathering this evening, because you are anxious to hear other speakers before you conclude your meeting. My mind flies back to Geneva and I think it was in the year 1925 when at the invitation of my friend, Sir Francis Younghusband, we gathered on a similar occasion.

The president this evening has very rightly remarked that if the League of Nations with its wonderful buildings on the banks of Lake Geneva had something more substantial behind it than the desire of trying to put down the weak and assert the rights of the stronger, then perhaps this Parliament of Religions might have had more effect in Europe which at the present moment is sadly in need of more brotherly feeling between nation and nation. I see over there a saying, "Blessed are they that are free from lust." This lust of greed, this lust of expanding territory by drowning poor nations still goes on unabated in the West from which we have copied or imitated many things.

Today it is a happy coincidence that you should be meeting here on the occasion of the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary and as I do not wish to detain you, ladies and gentlemen, I will conclude with just a saying, quoted by Sri Ramakrishna, on the basis of all religions:

কাল ধলো যতই বল,
পুরুষ মেয়ে সেই সকল।
অনেক বুলি বাজায় ঢুলি;
বাজে কিন্তু একই ঢোল॥

Call them black or white, if you will,
They are but men and women!
Many are the rhythms struck by the *dhuli* (drummer),
But it is the same *dhol* (drum) that sounds.

CHAPTER IX

FAREWELL ADDRESSES

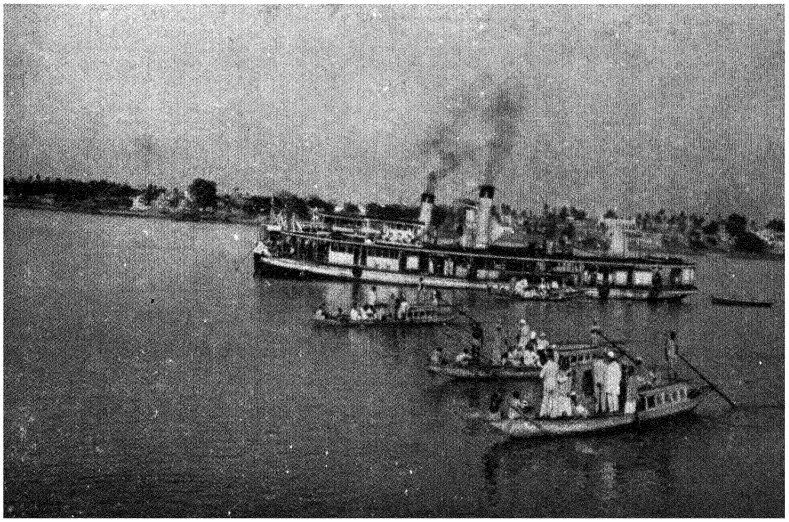
MONDAY, THE 8TH MARCH, 1937, EVENING

PROF. YUSUF AHMAD BAGDADI *of Bagdad*:

As our meetings have come to a conclusion, I feel that I must offer my thanks to the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Committee for holding the Parliament of Religions which peoples from all parts of the world attended to understand one another's religion and to establish unity between all communities for helping one another in overcoming the obstacles of daily life; and you all know I have really very little more to say except that I wish you all a very, very happy and prosperous future.

SISTER AMALA *of Boston, U. S. A.*:

It is indeed my holy privilege and joy to stand before you this memorable evening when we are drawn together by a great Cause, in commemoration of the one hundredth anniversary of the great Saint of Dakshineswar, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Deva. Since my early childhood God seemed to me to be embodied in all Nature and everything about me. To me He was the life-giving sun, the infinite sky, the myriad stars, the silver moon, the clouds, the thunder, the lightning, the storm,—the velvety grass, the flowers, the trees,—the bees, the butterflies, the birds, the insects,—the earth, the waters,—He was Everything that lived,—moved, or stood still! His was the life in man, regardless of the colour, religion, language or country. Thus my meditative hours wove themselves into a sort of philosophy which I earnestly strove to abide by, so that during the War of 1914, I remembered that God is Father to all,—even though man fought to conquer his brother—I could only hold aloft a white flag of peace, without the ordinary feelings of hatred or malice towards anyone.



Delegates landing on the grounds of the Belur Math, Monday, March 8



Delegates and other Guests at tea at the Belur Math, Monday, March 8



Delegates and other Guests at the Belur Math, Monday, March 8

Often I felt alone in my world—with God everywhere about me. No one quite understood my mood, bringing me more introspection until I found through the works of Doctor Rabindranath Tagore a companion to my thoughts. From a very tender age, India held for me my Spiritual Treasure. I had looked into Spiritualism, Christian Science, New Thought and Theosophy, but I could not wholly feel oneness with my inner ideal, until, in the spring of 1919 when I had the rare goood fortune of meeting Swami Paramanandaji (who you know is a direct disciple of Swami Vivekanandaji), who was lecturing on the Vedānta Philosophy in Los Angeles, California. Then, I stopped seeking, for I had found—found a fulfilment in completion with my childhood philosophy. My God was everywhere, embodied in all the Great Lights of the World! I could worship Him then, in the Christ, Mohammed, Buddha, Zoroaster, Śrī Kṛishṇa, Ramachandra, Confucius, the Prophets, Saints and Seers of both East and West ; in Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Deva—in you and in me! India's great spiritual heritage upheld my conviction of God in all, and all in God. Thus, spiritual companionship was mine from then on.

Just as in the flower garden we find many flowers of different shapes, sizes, colours, leaves and perfumes, yet, one thing they have in common, their roots are implanted in and obtain nourishment from the same source, the Mother Earth, similarly we, following different expressions and paths of religious thoughts and ideas, gather nutriment and sustenance from the same Source—God.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Deva through the spiritual practices and realizations of his holy life, has proved to the world that all this is true. He became not only a Hindu, but a Mohammedan, a Buddhist and a Christian. Through each Saviour he attained the self-same Goal—God, Whom he called, 'The Divine Mother of the Universe,' and proclaimed, 'Whatever path man travels wholeheartedly, he will attain unto God. The name does not matter, nor the approach, but the motive, the purity of purpose and the one-pointed devotion for the Ideal, regardless of name or form. This brings one to the culmination of oneness with That Source—the Eternal, Omnipotent and Unchanging One.'

So, let us not go away thinking that our way is the best and only way, but let us remember the flower-garden in which all of us are flowers with different shapes, forms, colours and perfumes, finding our common nourishment in the same soil of Mother Earth, or God. Let us think of one another after we have gone back to the countries where the physical part was born, and recall this Parliament of Religions where we have come together mingling our various perfumes, colours, shapes and forms into a harmonious and enriched blending of universal understanding and love.

SWAMI SHARVANANDA *of the Ramakrishna Mission, Delhi and Karachi*:

After going through eight days' sessions of the Parliament of Religions, I find the hall is filled with one spirit of harmony, and this experience of mine makes me bold to address you as friends, and I am sure this is the prevailing spirit of this assembly. One of the greatest saints of our Upanishads declared: From *Ānanda* the whole creation has come into being, from *Ānanda*, the Supreme Bliss ; in Bliss this creation exists ; and into Bliss again it enters. And this is the experience one finds while going through the different observations on different religions—that all the Prophets gave their religion in joy. They experienced the highest ecstasy; that the key-note of life is Supreme Bliss and this is God. In fact, with the Hindus it is a fundamental tenet that God is Bliss, and we find while listening to the representatives of different religions that God indeed is Bliss. Because when any religion is properly propounded in the words and spirit of its prophet, we do feel and even members belonging to other faiths feel a kind of joy within, and that the prophets preached in joy, and they maintained religion in joy. So, always the religion of the prophets, the religion of the saints and seers, is filled with joy. It gives joy to others, but in the religion of the church, religion of the priests, religion of the professional preachers, degenerating into doctrines, dogmas and crystallized form of faith, we find no joy. On the other hand, it crushes the humanity, the God in man, and Swami Vivekananda used to say it is good to be born in a church, but it is bad to die in it. We notice the religion of

the prophets, of the seers and saints, is deeply imbued with this spirit of *Ānanda* of the Land of Liberty. That joy, that *Ānanda,* is the essence of religion. That is God Himself and we all live in *Ānanda.* Not for a single second, without this *Ānanda* or the Supreme Bliss that God is, a single being can live. So friends, whether we be atheists or theists, whether we be believers in personal God or impersonal God, whether we believe in *Advaita* or *Viśishṭādvaita,* the whole humanity is hankering for one thing and that is Bliss or *Ānanda. Ānanda* is the pole-star of life and we are all proceeding towards it. *Ānanda* is the key-note of religion. And this Parliament of Religions also was conceived in *Ānanda,* in the bliss of the people's devotion to the Master of Harmony, and I pray to the Lord with the humble forces of the soul I possess that it may end in *Ānanda.* May it dissolve in bliss and leave behind the permanent mark in our heart that religion is Bliss, God is Bliss, Love is God, Love is Religion! May God bless us all!

MADAME PROF. WILLMAN-GRABOWSKA, *Krakow, Poland*:

We all desire to take rest. We have all seen the splendid success of the Ramakrishna Centenary Celebrations and the Parliament of Religions. I love you, my dear Indian friends. The Vice-Chancellor of my University said to me smiling, "You can find in India a splendid diamond." I did not find a diamond, perhaps I did not search for it carefully. Perhaps I could not discover even a diamond, not to speak of a splendid diamond. What is it I have found? It is pure love.

SIR FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND, *London*:

I desire on this the last occasion of having the honour to speak to you to express on behalf of the foreign delegates our profound admiration of the way in which this great Parliament of Religions has been organized, the good temper which has been preserved throughout and the unfailing courtesy which has been displayed to us all ; and these expressions of appreciation we have put in this little book with our signatures which we would desire to present to the organizers of this Parliament. (At this stage

Sir Francis presented to the Centenary Committee the autograph book containing the signatures of the foreign delegates.) Now I like to say one word on my own impression, and that is this. Speaking as a Christian, and a profoundly convinced Christian, I have been deeply moved by observing that here and there in one address or another there was just a little quotation from our Christian Scriptures, quotations such as " Love thy neighbour as thyself," " The Kingdom of God is within you," " Seek ye first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, and all else will follow," " In my father's house are many mansions." When I hear these little quotations, which to us Christians are deep in our constitution, they do arouse in me the deep feeling of gratitude that you of the other faiths so deeply appreciate my own and that leads me quite naturally to Ramakrishna's great principle that no religion should try to conquer the others, to impose itself on the others. But here is an example that though he did not try to capture, he has actually captivated men of another religion. We have been drawn to Hinduism by the appreciation of our own religion, in a way in which we might not have otherwise been. So I do desire most sincerely to thank you for your hospitality to us, for your gracious courtesy all through, and above all for the way in which you have proclaimed the spirit of your great Saint, the Saint of Dakshineswar. I shall go back to England with feelings of deep conviction in my heart and profound thankfulness.

JEAN HERBERT *of Paris*:

I came here with no mandate from anybody, but just as a private wanderer and as a friend of India. During the two months before this Congress, I had the privilege of seeing some of the spiritual beacons of India. I saw Sri Ramana Maharshi at Tiruvannamalai and received his blessings. I saw Mahatma Gandhi and his co-workers, and also Sri Aurobindo Ghosh. Having seen these great sages, I came here and I was impressed by the spirit of these young men, the volunteers, with a light of devotion and brilliance in their eyes, the spirit of self-sacrifice and of service of the highest qualities in man. Well, a country which has such teachers and such disciples can look into the future with

every confidence and this message I want to give to you, my friends of India. Do not be apologetic about your own country. When you take a foreign friend to your city, do not keep repeating to him that your streets are dirty. Your foreign friend has only to go a little interior into his own country to find a worse state of things. When you speak of the statues and images of the Deity you worship in your homes and in your temples, do not call them 'Idols,' for it is insulting them. Be proud of all the inspiration you are deriving from them, and above all of your own country.

SARDAR JAMAIT SINGH *of Calcutta*:

The first Parliament of Religions was held 44 years ago in a free country, America. Its people love freedom, its people worship freedom, and because of that Swami Vivekananda was able to give his message to the people of the United States. But this Parliament is being held, I may say, in a country which is not free, and with due respect to the speakers who have delivered lectures on this platform, I say that people who are not free have no religion. I am saying a few words to the foreign gentlemen who are sitting here, and I request them to convey this message to their people, that we in India are a very ancient race, and the foundation of all religions is in India. Ladies and gentlemen of the foreign countries, I tell you on behalf of the youth of India, whom I have the honour to represent, that if we had been able to grow as you grow, if we had been able to rise as you rise, even in the matter of religion, we by our spirituality would have revolutionized the world. Ladies and gentlemen, we know you Americans are great men, we know you Englishmen are great men: we Indians are not great in wealth, but we are great in spiritual strength. Therefore, I tell you that under the inspiration of a new Christ that is born,—I mean Mahatma Gandhi—India is going forward towards freedom, and when we have acquired freedom we shall again call you for a Parliament of Religions and then you will see what India is capable of as the land of the free. Then you will compare the Indians of today and the Indians of that day. I hope the day is not far off.

DR. DWARAKA NATH MITTER, *Ex-Justice, Calcutta High Court*:

As a Vice-President of the Ramakrishna Centenary Committee, I have been entrusted with a farewell message. As you all know, a farewell message has its melancholy reflections. It is always sorrowful to part. It was with very great enthusiasm that seven days ago, we welcomed the delegates from the different parts of the world, who at great personal sacrifice, accepted our invitation to attend the Parliament of Religions, and today the hour has arrived when we are to offer them our message of farewell. Our greatest thanks are due to the different delegates from the different parts of the world, who have come to attend the Parliament which is connected with the name of Sri Ramakrishna, the great Saint of modern times, the height and glory of Bengal. The reason why I say that great thanks are due to these delegates is that through them it has been possible to spread throughout the world, to the North and South, to the East and West, the teachings of the great saint Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. As you know, India is the land of the Ṛishis and the teachings of the Ṛishis have the effect of ennobling the mind of man to whichever part of the world he belongs. Of Sri Ramakrishna's teachings, it may justly be said that from his lips came the religion that spiritualizes philosophy, and it is in this respect that I shall only state to you the great trait in Sri Ramakrishna's character, the fundamental point in his teachings. As I read his teachings, I find in him the wonderful great cardinal doctrine which he preached, namely the unity of the universe, the unity amongst diversity, the oneness of life. If the implications of these teachings had been realized, you would not have seen the tragic spectacle in western Europe today. What is the implication of this teaching? It is that you ought to regard every other man as yourself. If you regard the neighbour as your own self, you would not think of injuring him. If this principle had been followed, the grim spectacle that is happening in Spain today would not have happened. It is this teaching not only of Sri Ramakrishna, but of the Ṛishis, which the Western nations really owe to India. It is no doubt true that the teaching of this great saint Sri Rama-

krishna has been spread in the most eminent degree by a great disciple of his,—Swami Vivekananda—and it is for this reason that we find men and women from America, China, England and the Continent have come here, and it is a delight to me to see them here. It is a great lesson to the Western nations that after all no nation can thrive on materialism, and ultimately this great truth will be found out, if not now, perhaps after another Great War, that India has stuck to the great truth and that today the nation has to be built on spirituality. I should thank Sir Francis Younghusband and other delegates for the very courteous words which they have expressed with regard to the management of this Parliament. We are conscious of our own limitations. We were not able to give them as much comfort as we wanted to. At the same time we have had the benefit and advantage of the ideas from each individual coming from different parts of the world. To them I say farewell, and we wish them the best of years of health and happiness in the years to come.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS AND THANKS

PROF. BENOY KUMAR SARKAR, one of the Secretaries of the Parliament, in bringing the proceedings to a close:

PROFESSOR DHRUVA, SWAMI BHAGAVATANANDAJI, SWAMIS OF THE RAMAKRISHNA ORDER, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

The most important feature of this International Parliament of Religions, organized by the Ramkrishna Centenary Committee, calls for a notice at the outset. The Congress has come into existence through the initiative of the people. From beginning to end it has been a function of the people and has been managed by the people's men. No official or semi-official individuals or institutions have had anything to do with the organization that brought it into being. Here is to be found one of the most characteristic differences between this International Parliament and the International Parliaments and Congresses convened in other countries of the world.

The success of a great function like this depends on the direct and indirect services, active as well as passive, of a large number of persons among the workers, participants, audience as well as invited guests. On behalf of the Ramakrishna Centenary Committee it is my pleasant duty to signalize the friendly assistance derived from each one of these groups. In the first place, the volunteers who have looked after the order and discipline of these meetings deserve our warmest congratulations. Secondly, the patience and the forbearance of the delegates and other participants many of whom have come from far-off places and also from across the seas are extraordinary and worthy of the highest recognition from the side of the organizers. I thank them for their kindness and sympathetic considerations.

In the third place, we cannot be too grateful to the newspapers of Calcutta. They have devoted their columns to the proceedings of the Parliament in quite a liberal manner. Undoubtedly they have appraised the work of this Assembly at its proper worth and understood its value for India and mankind.

Fourthly, the Corporation of Calcutta deserves the most heartfelt thanks of the Ramakrishna Centenary Committee for enabling the International Parliament of Religions to be held in the Town Hall, Calcutta, for over a week. We are indebted also to the University Institute authorities for arranging one venue of this Parliament in their spacious Hall.

The citizens of Calcutta and environs as well as of the districts in the neighbourhood are to be congratulated on the wonderful support they have extended to the Ramakrishna Centenary Committee by their friendly presence at these lectures for so many days. The manner in which they have followed the proceedings of this Parliament is an index to their enthusiasm in the cause of a world-wide symposium on the deepest problems of individual and social life. In this hall we have had at every session, morning and evening, representatives of all the provinces of India as well as of many different countries of the world. The patience and the pin-drop silence of the multi-racial and polyglot crowds that

have attended the fifteen meetings have proved in the most concrete manner conceivable that the mind of Calcutta, in spite of the hard and strenuous affairs of commercial and industrial life such as characterize this international city, is large and idealistic enough to take interest in the topics of moral and spiritual reconstruction. I offer my sincere appreciation and cordial thanks to the people of Calcutta, Bengalis and non-Bengalis alike, for their culture-mindedness, intellectual catholicity and cosmopolitan outlook.

Members of the audience have requested the Committee of this Parliament to extend the proceedings for another day of two sessions. We appreciate very much their enthusiasm and interest. But it has been felt that there must be an end to every good thing, and the Committee have decided to conclude the proceedings tonight as arranged in the programme.

Our sincere thanks are due to Lord Zetland, Secretary of State for India, and His Excellency Sir John Anderson, Governor of Bengal for their kind words of appreciation and sympathy. Although Mahatma Gandhi could not be present in person we were favoured with his telegram. And in one of our chairmen, Kaka Kalelkar of Maharastra, we had one of his message-bearers. We are grateful to him for this co-operation. His Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad wired us a fine message and we thank him for this consideration.

We regret very much that on account of unavoidable circumstances it was not possible for Sir Akbar Hydari of Hyderabad (Deccan), Sir T. Vijayaraghavachariar of Madras and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya of Benares to attend the Parliament as chairmen. But we are indebted to them for their friendly co-operation in diverse ways.

A great disappointment was caused by the inability of Sri Aurobindo Ghosh to participate in our Parliament. It was not possible for him under any circumstances to leave Pondicherry.

The audience has not had the occasion to hear or to see much of our General President, Dr. Sir Brajendra Nath Seal.

It is his intense love for us and our work that inspired him in spite of his ill health to come in person and open the proceedings. As long as he is alive he will be called upon by Young Bengal to initiate, except when it is utterly impossible, similar undertakings of a cultural and spiritual character. Brajendra Nath has been the *guru* of Young India for more than four decades. He is one of the architects of the Indian renaissance of the twentieth century, the renaissance that has commenced Indianizing the world in the diverse arts and sciences. We recall with pleasure that it was Brajendra Nath who was invited over a quarter of a century ago to open in 1911 the Universal Races Congress convened in London. Equally important to recall in this connection is the fact that he was a personal friend and intimate associate of Swami Vivekananda. I wish him sound health, strong physique, and above all, an active influence on the present generation for many many years.

In Swami Abhedananda's participation as one of our chairmen we had the privilege of guidance by a *guru-bhai* (spiritual comrade) of Swami Vivekananda. We are exceedingly grateful to him for the message that he delivered, for he is one of the last of those fortunates who got their inspiration direct from Sri Ramakrishna.

The address of Rabindranath Tagore as one of our chairmen is, as I have described on another occasion,[1] one of the greatest contributions of his life to the spiritual fund of mankind. In its emphasis on the sincerity of heart, personal devotion and individual spirituality as contrasted with institutional religiosity, organized rites and formal ceremonies it is destined to be as epoch-making as Erasmus the German humanist's *Handbook of the Christian Knight,* published on the eve of the Reformation.

It is necessary to stress that the association of Swami Bhagavatanandaji, Mandaliswara, of Benares, is one of the achievements of this Parliament. It has been proved thereby that Young India is continuing the creative endeavours of the past Indian tradition while promoting the spirituality of modern times. Swami Bhaga-

[1] See p. 1008

vatanandaji's message has indicated, besides, the alertness and elasticity of the brains nutured along the old channels of Indian culture.

It is worth while perhaps to call attention to the fact that we have had two ladies in our presidential *corps*. I have already referred to Mme de Guiraldes. It remains to say that the address of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu as chairwoman was one of her most creative messages to India.

We have pleasure in offering our greetings to the people of Iran from whom we have had able messengers in Professor Muhammad Ali Shirazi, one of our chairmen, and in Muhammad Hasan Kashani of Yezd as well as in Shaik Abu Nasr Gilani of Gilan. We are thankful also to Prof. P. V. Serebriakov-Elboursky, President of the *Academia Asiatica,* Teheran, for his co-operation.

Our greetings are likewise being offered to Iraq whose representative at our Parliament is Prof. Yusuf Ahmad Bagdadi of Bagdad. We are happy that our Parliament has been able to develop contacts with these two progressive Moslem states, Iran and Iraq.

Extra-Indian Islam was further represented at this Parliament by a paper from His Eminence the Grand Sheik Mohammed Mustapha El-Maraghy, President of Al-Azhar University at Cairo, Egypt. Our best wishes are being offered to the Egyptian people for this fraternal co-operation.

No Turks appear to have been present in this Hall. Indeed there is hardly any Turk in Calcutta. But a bit of the culture of New Turkey was revealed to us by the presence of a professor of the University of Ankara, Dr. W. Rubens, a German scholar. Through him we send our cordial greetings to the Turkish people.

The Chinese scholar, President Lim Boon Keng of Amoy University has sent to this Parliament a noble tribute to the spirit of Ramakrishna. Besides, China was represented by Dr. C. L. Chen, one of our chairmen, as well as by Prof. Tan Yun-Shan of Sino-Indian Cultural Federation, Nanking, now at Tagore's Viswa-Bharati, Bolpur. The friendship that these Chinese scholars have extended to us is to be interpreted as but a continuation of

the historic cultural alliance between India and China for ages. We are thankful to Dr. Chen and Prof. Tan Yun-Shan because they have enabled us to experience this age-long friendship with personal touches. I request them to carry with them back to the Chinese people India's hopes and wishes for China's material prosperity and moral welfare.

No Japanese scholar could be present at the Parliament. Until the last moment we believed that it would be possible for President Gaku Matsumoto of Nippon Cultural Federation, Member of the House of Peers, Tokyo, to come to Calcutta. We regret that it was not possible. We thank him for his goodwill and his message. The Parliament is, further, to be congratulated on the messages coming from the Buddhist Federation of Kumamoto, Buddhist Association of Kyoto, and Japan Cultural Federation, Tokyo, as well as from Prof. M. Ui of the Imperial University of Tokyo. The paper on Shinto Theology by Prof. M. Ishikawa of Tokyo has been an important item of our proceedings.

The presence of Mr. Ngak Chhen Rinpoche, Prime Minister to the Tashi Lama, and his greetings in Tibetan were appreciated by the audience. Our thanks are due to him and we offer our goodwill to the Tibetan people.

We have already expressed our appreciation of Czechoslovakia's participation in this Parliament.[1] Through Dr. Tousek, one of our chairmen, we send our greetings to his fatherland, which was also represented at this Parliament by a paper from the indologist Professor Winternitz.

We are thankful to Jugoslavia for her co-operation through a paper by Professor Peritch of Belgrade as well as to Rumania for messages from Professors Herseni and Vladesco-Racoassa of Bucharest and for a paper from Professor Narly of Cernauti.

We are indebted to the University of Krakow in Poland for granting Mme Professor Helene de Willman-Grabowska leave of absence in order to attend the Parliament. We appreciate her work and offer the people of Poland our salutations while thanking them at the same time for the papers by Professors Kochanowski

[1] See p. 1020.

and Schayer of Warsaw, as well as for the message from Rector Szafer of Krakow.

In Dr. G. H. Mees of Holland we have come across a fine scholar and a gentle spirit. We entrust him with our message of goodwill for the Dutch people from whom, besides, we have received co-operation in the form of appreciations from Professors S. R. Steinmetz (Amsterdam), J. J. von Schmid (Leyden) and others. It is to be observed that the paper and observations of Dr. Hermann Goetz who came, with Mrs. Goetz, as delegate from the Kern Institute of Leyden have been well appreciated.

A noteworthy discovery of this Parliament is Monsieur Jean Herbert of Paris. He is an acquisition for India. I have no doubt that he will function as a strong pillar of the Ramakrishna Empire—the modern world-republic of creative India—in Europe and will be a powerful instrument in the annexation of his *patrie,* France, as of other countries to the new system of moral and cultural values initiated by the Indian people. Our cordial thanks are due to his services, and through him as well as through Monsieur Paul Dubois, Consul-General for France at Calcutta, and Mme Dubois who have attended several sessions and social functions we have pleasure in sending the people of France friendly greetings from India.

Monsieur Romain Rolland has been an exponent of the Ramakrishna Empire of spiritual brotherhood and international goodwill for a long time. The mantle of Sister Nivedita may be said to have fallen on this great French *Ṛishi* as a lover of modern India and the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement. He was to have been present at Calcutta in person but health considerations have compelled him to remain content with a message. His letter is an inspiring document for which India and mankind will remain indebted to him.

France was further represented by messages from the Paris indologists, Professors Renou and Przyluski, as well as by papers from the sociologist, Professor Lasbax of Clermont-Ferrand, and the indologist, Professor Masson-Oursel of Paris. The wealth of this Parliament has been greatly enriched by these contributions as well as by the paper from Mlle M. Chovin of Toulouse.

This International Parliament of Religions is happy to enjoy the friendly alliance of the World Congress of Faiths convened last July (1936) in London. This useful *liaison* has been established in a very unobtrusive manner on account of the participation in our Parliament by the organizer of the World Congress, Sir Francis Younghusband. Let me commence by thanking him for presenting this Parliament with the very first copy of *Faiths and Fellowship,* being the Proceedings of the World-Congress. Many men and women among the audience have come into contact with this grand old man of England. Everybody has watched how punctual, regular and single-minded his attendance has been at our meetings. We have had the pleasure of hearing him in various connections and we have felt that his utterances were remarked by respect for all and sundry. This democratic appreciation of the diverse elements in this Congress is one of the important features with which Sir Francis has enriched the proceedings of the Parliament. He has thereby helped us to a considerable extent in giving shape to one of the great objectives of our Committee, namely, the realization, through this assembly, of Ramakrishna's fundamental teachings in regard to the freedom of the individual and the world-republic of religions. Those who have seen Sir Francis outside this Parliament addressing other audiences in Calcutta have been impressed by the fact that he has always made it a point to refer to Ramakrishna and bring in Ramakrishna's messages in some context or other, no matter what the particular topic of his discourse may have been. It is the call of Ramakrishna that brought him to Calcutta all the way from London, and in Calcutta he has served Ramakrishna and Ramakrishna alone.

I have pleasure in offering Sir Francis the sincere thanks of this International Parliament, of the city of Calcutta as well as of India for undertaking all the troubles of the journey as well as of the strenuous sojourn in our midst under conditions of "overwork and under-feeding." I am not without hopes, however, that we shall have to remain grateful to him in future also for all that he is sure to do for the thoughts and activities of the Indian people at home and abroad, when he is back to England and

placed in more congenial surroundings. Let me send through Sir Francis the greetings of Young India to Young England fully conscious that he has served England as much as he has served India by his short sojourn.

British co-operation with our Parliament deserves to be mentioned as an independent item. Papers have been received from Professors A. B. Keith of Edinburgh and G. Slater of Oxford, and Mrs. Ruth Fry of Thorpens (Suffolk). Messages have come from the Earl of Sandwich (by cable), Mrs. C. M. Beach of Surrey, Dr. J. C. Maxwell Garnett (League of Nations Union, London), Professor H. G. Wood of Birmingham and Miss Sharples of the Society for Promoting the Study of Religions, London.

We were informed by the *Deutsche Akademie* of Munich that the German Government had sanctioned the presence of German scholars at our Parliament. But regrettably enough, some personal difficulties stood in the way of the selected persons coming to Calcutta and participating in the proceedings. It is worth while to observe, however, that German religious thought has been well represented at this Parliament on account of the papers sent by Professor von Brockdorff (Kiel), Count Keyserling (Darmstadt), and Professors Thurnwald (Berlin), von Wiese (Cologne) and Zahn (Munich). The co-operation of German scholarship with the culture of Young India is an important matter of modern history.

It is to be noted with pleasure that Count von Podewils, Consul-General for Germany in Calcutta, and Countess von Podewils were present at several sessions and social functions of our Parliament.

On behalf of this Parliament as well as of the Indian people I offer my cordial thanks to the people of New Germany.

From Italy we were expecting Professor Giuseppe Tucci, Vice-President of the Royal Italian Academy and *Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente* (Rome) as one of our chairmen at the Parliament. But unfortunately, circumstances compelled him to put off his departure for India much to our

disappointment. We thank him, however, for his message. The messages from Professors Corrado Gini and Giorgio del Vecchio of Rome as well as Senator Achille Loria of Turin should however be singled out as important items. The papers from Professors Alfredo Niceforo and Mrs. Gisella Craig of Rome are likewise noteworthy. Our thanks are due to the Italian people for these friendly considerations. Let us send our greetings to the Italian people through Commendatore Camillo Giuriati, Consul-General for Italy in Calcutta, and Signora Giuriati, who attended several sessions and social functions.

We are very happy to observe that the Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order were conspicuous among the audience as well as among the speakers. They came from the different districts of Bengal as well as from distant Burma, Ceylon, Southern India, U. P., Bombay and Sind. Swami Paramananda, Head of the Boston Centre in the U. S. A., came from North America as one of our chairmen. We are happy that he came not merely to put in his presence but to actively participate in the proceedings. Swami Paramananda's voice was heard by us on a large number of occasions and every time it was appreciated. From South America came Swami Vijayananda, Head of the Centre at Buenos Aires in Argentina. The audience has followed his observations and lectures with great interest. His address in Bengali may be recalled in this connection. It is to Swami Vijayananda's influence in Argentina, let it be mentioned *en passant*, that we owe the presence, in our midst, of the gifted South American lady, Mme de Guiraldes, who was one of our presidents.

Through Swamis Paramananda and Vijayananda I am happy to send fraternal sentiments from the people of India to the peoples of the New Hemisphere. Let us also charge the Argentinian lady, Mme de Guiraldes, and Dr. Peter Boike of Cincinnati, Ohio, U.S.A., who has co-operated with us in several ways, as well as their peoples.

We have one great item of disappointment to note in connection with our expectations from the U. S. A. We had been almost sure that Rev. Dr. John Haynes Holmes of the Community Church of New York would come to Calcutta as one of our

chairmen. It was regrettably enough impossible for him to leave the States on account of other pressing engagements.

American thought has, however, enriched our proceedings in diverse ways. We have received messages from Professors Hocking and Sorokin of Harvard University, Reverend Fisher of Detroit (Michigan), Professors E. T. Williams of California and E. A. Ross of Wisconsin as well as papers from President F. B. Robinson of the College of the City of New York, Professors C. A. Ellwood of Duke University (North Carolina), E. Horrwitz of Hunter College (New York) and F. Hankins of Smith College (Northampton, Mass.).

The most genuine and heart-felt thanks of this Parliament as well of the Ramakrishna Centenary Committee are to be expressed to the silent and sincere Miss Josephine MacLeod (Stratford-on-Avon, England), the American lady. She has been a servant of India since the days of Swami Vivekananda who discovered in her a remarkable colleague and co-worker in the establishment of the Ramakrishna Empire. Her contributions to the cultural work of modern India are immense, and I offer her the profoundest gratitude of the Indian people for all her solicitude in regard to the cause that Vivekananda laid nearest to his heart.

Perhaps we should not fail to bring to the notice of the audience that among rare visitors we have had Col. and Mrs. Lindberg of the U. S. A. This happy phenomenon we owe to the friendly thoughts of Sir Francis Younghusband.

The rare visitors include also Professor and Mrs. Vicente Fatone of the University of Buenos Aires in Argentina (South America). They have attended all the sessions of the Parliament and followed our proceedings with keen interest. I thank them heartily for their eagerness and attention. Through them also I send our feelings of goodwill to the academic and cultural institutions of Latin America.

The presence of Miss Helen Boulnois, Johannesburg (South Africa) is an item which must not be overlooked. Her greetings had extraordinary importance in view of the fact that South Africa's attitude to India is, as a rule, not marked by desirable feelings.

Among the many friends whom this Parliament has discovered in the field of idealistic activities we may mention Sardar Jamait Singh of Calcutta. We thank him and his Sikh community for the wonderful spirit of fellowship they have exhibited in connection with the functioning of this Congress. The Mahabodhi Society of India, the Dev Samaj of Lahore, the Arya Samaj of Calcutta and the Punjab, the Jains of Calcutta, the Parsees of India, the Mussalmans of Bengal, the Jewish community, the National Council of the Young Men's Christian Associations in India, Burma and Ceylon, the Buddhists of Burma, the Theosophical Society of Calcutta, the Universities of Calcutta and Benares, are among our own people to whom thanks are due for their fine fellowship and cordial co-operation. We appreciate the greetings from these organized bodies as well as the papers from their representatives or the scholars interested in their thoughts and sentiments.

Finally, we should like to single out for our warm thanks Prof. Viscount Santa Clara of Spain (now at Calcutta University) who read a fine message before us, Prof. G. L. Duprat of Geneva, General Secretary of the International Federation of the Institutes of Sociology, who authorized the present speaker to represent the Federation at this Parliament, Dr. J. Leyder of Institut Solvay, Brussels (Belgium), Mr. Maung Aye Maung of Rangoon, as well as Lady Ezra of Calcutta, and the President of our Working Committee and Executive Committee, Sir Manmatha Nath Mukherjee.

The audience will have observed that for every session we had a large number of speakers. The topics for each session also were diverse. It was not in the plan to present the audience with a uniformity or monotony at any session. A delightful variety in personnel as well as in subject-matter was the end in view. This arrangement is not without its shortcomings. And perhaps the shortcomings were felt by the participants in a rather painful manner. No speaker could possibly have at his disposal more than a few minutes. In order to do justice to the cosmopolitan character of this assembly it was necessary to crowd very many, perhaps too many papers or speeches into each of the fifteen

sessions. But on the other hand, there was an attempt on the part of the organizers to enable the same person to speak on more than one occasion. We believed that this Congress would serve its purpose best by publishing the papers and speeches as fully as possible in the form of an extensive book. It was believed that the actual participants would be able to enlighten the audience with just a few words describing their most basic thoughts. As it was the intention, again, to serve large audiences it was decided to exclude debates and discussions altogether from the programme. For large audiences that the Committee had in view and that actually attended the Parliament, debates and discussions between specialists might not appear very illuminating or instructive. To what extent our exclusions and inclusions have served their purpose it is not for us to judge.

We are not unconscious of our shortcomings. But the shortcomings of today will serve to straighten us in regard to our eventual adventures of tomorrow. What is more, others will learn how to guard themselves against the defects and errors to which we were liable. I call upon Young India to organize in the near future under entirely non-official auspices an International Congress such as should be less marked by shortcomings and more perfect in equipment. Let me hope, at any rate, that when in 1962 the Birth-Centenary of Vivekananda comes to be celebrated Young India will have acquired such an extensive command over the *viśva-śakti* (world-forces) both at home and abroad that the International Parliament of Religions which is coming to a close tonight may pale into insignificance by the side of the undertakings of that day in methods, messages and solid effects.

My last prayer, then, on behalf of this Congress as well as of all the activities of Young India can but be the most profoundly human and melioristic prayer for all mankind that has been the eternal prayer of the Indian people since the days of the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad*, namely,

Asato mā sadgamaya
Tamaso mā jyotirgamaya
Mṛityor mā'mṛitam gamaya

Lead me from unreality to Reality,
Lead me from darkness to Light,
Lead me from death to Immortality.

It is the greater and greater doses of reality, light and immortality that I invite Young India to go on conquering and to conquer every day. The perpetual preparedness of the Indian people with a view to wrestle with the shortcomings, hindrances, difficulties, and weaknesses of the hour is the final message of the International Parliament of Religions that was called into being in order to celebrate the Birth-Centenary of the great apostle of spiritual struggle for human liberty, Sri Ramakrishna.

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