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# OF
# SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

VOLUME VII

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# ABOUT THIS COMPLETE WORKS

## SEVENTH VOLUME

We are now offer to the public the Seventh Volume of COMPLETE WORKS OF SWAMI ABHEDANANDA, published on the occasion of the Swami Abhedananda Centenary Celebration, 1967 This volume contains the Swami's lectures on 'Thoughts on Philosophy and Religion', 'Religion, Revelation and God', 'Presidential Address in Town Hall, Calcutta', 'Songs Divine' (original Sanskrit Stotras of Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sarada Devi and their English translations), 'Spiritual Teachings of Swami Abhedanada' and 'Abhedananda in India in 1906: Lectures and Addresses', which were delivered in America and India

All the lectures of this volume have been carefully and critically edited, and Prefaces, Notes and Glossaries have been added by the editor

SWAMI PRAJNANANANDA,
General Secretary,
Swami Abhedananda Centenary Celebration,
1966-67

Publication Department,
Ramakrishna Vedanta Math,
19B, Raja Rajkrishna Street,
Calcutta-6
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# THOUGHTS ON PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

# PREFACE

Swami Abhedananda says that, of the tree of knowledge and wisdom, philosophy is the flower and religion is the fruit, philosopphy is the theoretical side of religion and religion is philosophy in practice In India, philosophy means the science of realization or a divine awareness of the Absolute which transcends the categories of time, space and causation Philosophy may be called a spiritual process by means of which a man sees God face to face.

If we define the word 'philosophy' we find that *philos* means 'to love' and *sophia* means 'wisdom' and, therefore, philosophy means the 'love of wisdom'. In India, true love and highest wisdom are one and the same, and though philosophy generally implies the idea of generalized and speculative thoughts along with reason and intellect, yet, in truth, it signifies the highest intuitive perception (*anubhuti*) of the absolute Truth In India, we call philosophy as a *darsana* and that means to see or to appreciate God the Absolute. The word 'religion' implies the sense of a loving bond between God and man, between the Brahman and the individual soul. If we define the word 'religion' we find that *religio* means 'to bind' or to bind a man with the ultimate principle which is the Absolute Man is the highest and par-excellent object of evolution and he excels all the creatures in the universe in order and in merit The *Upanishad* says that it is man alone who can realize the Brahman and can go beyond the cycle of birth and rebirth and can break the chain of nescience (*ajnana*). The false knowledge (*mithya-jnana*) deludes us and so we shall have to shake the fetters of false knowledge by attaining right knowledge (*satya-jnana*).

This book, *Thoughts on Philosophy and Religion,* is a collection of thirteen lectures on analytical and intuitive discussions on philosophy and religion. Two appendices have been added, one, Dr. A. Kuenon's discussion on the worship of Jahveh in the form of a bull, and the other, Questions and Answers. These lectures were at first published in brochures in America and in India too, and thereafter those have been bunched together and published in book form

The fourteen chapters of this book cover the comparative and scientific studies on different aspects of philosophy and religion, along with their practical application in human life. Swami Abhedananda has discussed about unity and harmony, the cosmic evolution and its purpose, the development of Word and Cross in ancient India, philosophy of good and evil, religion of the Hindus, the Saviours of the souls, the Motherhood of God, the Divine communion, and the way to be blessed life—all in a very comprehensive manner. He has thrown new light on different theories and problems which he has taken for discussions, and has said that until and unless theories are brought into practice, so long intellectual discussions are meaningless. Higher intuitive perception of the Absolute is the aim of both philosophy and religion.

In the first chapter, Swami Abhedananda has discussed the main principles and problems of philosophy and religion. The Swami has said that by studying all sciences, philosophies and religions of the world we find that truht is absolute and one and the manifestations of truth appear as many The aims of both philosophy and religion are to discuss about the unchangeable truth and also to discover that truth which underlies all the phenomena In fact, philosophy determines both reality and unreality of everything of the universe and instructs men to accept reality and to abandon unreality. The Swami says that the work of religion is also to determine the method by which men can understand that they are the immortal Spirit and not the mortal body, and the moment they realize the nature of their being, they are able to separate the mortal body from the immortal *Atman*

The second chapter continues with the discussions on philosophy and religion. In this chapter, Swami Abhedananda has efficiently discussed the central philosophical thought of Spinoza, Berkeley, Hume, Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Schopenhaur and Herbert Spencer in one hand, and the speculative thoughts of the leading philosophers of India on the other and has shown that all of them have tried to discover the unchangeable essence of the world, whether that essence is known as the Unknown and Unknowable, the Will, the Absolute, God, or the Brahman. While comparing the system of philosophy of Kant with that of Advaita Vedanta,

Swami Abhedananda says that Vedanta philosophy is loftier than the Kantian system, because Vedanta philosophy shows the phenomenal nature of the Kantian ego which Kant realized as the source of truth, and the forms of intuition and vagary of thought have been placed with phenomena Besides, Vedanta philosophy has recognized the identity of the objective reality with the subjective reality, which Kant did not. The Swami has also refuted Herbert Spencer or the Spencerian school, because Spencer maintained that what cannot be perceived by senses and cannot be understood by intellect, will never be known. But the Swami says that the super-sensible and super-intellect Brahman can be known *i e* be realized by the Divine intuition In the *Adhyasa-bhashya,* Sankara has also admitted that the *Atman,* or the Brahman, is not altogether unknown (*avishaya*), but is known as an idea of "I" to our knowledge (*"aham-pratyaya-gocharatvat"*).

Swami Abhedananda views that true philosophy performs three functions. Firstly, it corresponds with the final results, arrived at by different branches of science and taking up these results, makes the wider generalization. Secondly, it must go into the realm of the phenomenal or the knowable, and must raise the soul up from the dark abyss of selfishness, ignorance and self-delusion. Thirdly, it makes it realize its divine and absolute nature Religion of Vedanta also teaches the alternative methods of the spiritual practices like the Karma Yoga, the Bhakti Yoga, the Raja Yoga and the Jnasa Yoga and says that these are the *alternative paths* to reach the same absolute Reality Ramakrishna Parahamsa also admits this view, and has preached that all the methods of spiritual practice lead to one and the same goal.

The third chapter deals with the main principles of Vedanta philosophy, and in the fourth chapter, Swami Abhedananda has discussed the universal teachings of Vedanta He says that the secret of work, the secret of devotion, and the secret of concentration and meditation—all disclose the truth which lead men to one and the same Reality Though there are three divisions in Vedanta philosophy according to the three viewpoints or schools, yet they have come to the same conclusion regarding the final goal of the human beings.

The fourth chapter deals with the sublime teachings of

Vedanta philosophy. The Swami says that Vedanta philosophy teaches that religion is science of the soul and gives a scientific and philosophical basis to religon It teaches the secrets of work (*karma*), devotion (*bhakti*), concentration (*dharma*), and meditation (*dhyana*), which disclose the mystery of the highest wisdom. The Swami further says that Vedanta philosophy is not pessimistic like Buddhism which teaches that the visible world is an illusion Specially the Madhyamika school of Buddhism teaches that reality or existence of the world is reduced to nothingness or void (*sunyata*) but the non-dualistic school of Vedanta teaches that the world is the product of nescience or *maya* and that means the world has a relative or conditional phenomenal existence (*vyavaharika satta*) and has no permanent existence (*paramarthika satta*) The real contention of the non-dualistic Vedanta philosophy is this that existence of the absolute Brahman is the only reality and other than the Brahman, everything is unreal

The fifth chapter deals with religion of Vedanta philosophy. The Swami deals in this chapter with the topics that religion is also included in the category of Vedanta, and of the same tree of knowledge, Vedanta philosophy is the flower and religion is the fruit Religion of Vedanta, therefore, is unique and universal and it supplies the spiritual needs of all classes of people in all climes and all ages. The one peculiarity of religion of Vedanta is that as on the one hand, it encourages those who do not care for any ritual, ceremonial, symbolic or any other external forms of worship, so on the other, it provides all forms, rituals, ceremonies, and, symbols for those who find them helpful at the time of devotional exercises. In fact, religion of Vedanta philosophy gives the real and inner meaning or significance of everything and says that means of attaining to supreme consciousness may be manifold, but end is one and the same, and so there remains no sectarian view regarding spiritual *sadhana* The means, or the symbols, are the steps towards perfection, and perfection or Godconsciousness is the real end.

The sixth chapter deals with religion of the Hindus. In this chapter, Swami Abhedananda has historically traced the origin of the word 'Hindu', and has defined it in an universal way. As the Hindus are the worshippers of eternal religion

(*Sanatana Dharma*), so their religion is universal, being not determined or limited by any caste, creed, and nationality. Religion of the Hindus does not believe in, or preach, the theory of sin or hell, but disclose the fact that all human beings are the children of the immortal bliss and they are, in essence, the changeless immortal Brahman. Religion of the Hindus recognizes the spiritual growth of the souls, and also describes different stages of spiritual development. There are men of different tastes, temperaments, and likings, and so religion of the Hindus is very liberal to prescribe different types of spiritual practice or *sadhana* that suit to different kinds of men.

The seventh chapter deals with the cosmic evolution and its purpose In this chapter, Swami Abhedananda deals critically and comparatively with philosophy and psychology of both the *Upanishads* and the *Sankhya* with a scientific outlook He describes first the Upanishadic process of evolution of the world-process and then the Sankhyan process of evolution from the *Prakriti,* and says that both the processes are compatible with the theory of evolution as laid down by modern science. The Swami says that after the Upanishadic interpretation of the theory of evolution (*cf.* the *Taittiriya Upanishad*) the Sankhyan one is more methodical, logical, and scientific. The *Sankhya* philosophy states that the nature of *Prakriti* "produces the environmental conditions first, and then brings out the invisible germs of life and gives them suitable forms, so that each one will manifest the powers which are latent in it". Prof. Hopkins is of the opinion that even Plato and the neo-Platonists were greatly influenced by the Sankhyan thought Before the 6th century B.C. all the religio-philosophical thoughts and ideas of Pythagoras were current in India (cf. Prof. L. Von. Schroeder: *Pythagoras*). Swami Abhedananda says that if there were but one or two of these cases, they might be set aside as accidental coincidences, but such coincidences are too numerous to be the result of chance Prof. Hopkins says that Prof Garbe similarly is of the opinion that the views of Plotinus are in perfect agreement with those of the *Sankhya* system. Prophyry and others were also influenced by the thoughts of the *Sankhya* and the *Patanjala* So it is found that not only the Greek thinkers, but also almost all the thinkers of the world more or less owed their debt to the *Sankhya* and also to the Yoga

psychology of Patanjali. The Swami further says that from the animal plane we are rising into the moral plane and from the moral plane to spiritual plane. The animal plane is the plane of a narrow and limited consciousness of the lower self, and when we recognize the self of others, seek their comfort, and help them, then we rise on the human plane Here begins the moral life of a man, and the spiritual life begins with the perfection of the moral life. In the real spiritual life we recognize our immortal nature of the soul.

The eighth chapter deals with the philosophy of good and evil. In this chapter, Swami Abhedananda says that, in reality, there is neither good, nor evil, but those are relative terms. What we call good, depends upon the existence of what we call evil, and evil exists only in relation to good Consequently, according to the Vedanta philosophers, the difference between good and evil is not one of kind, but of degree, like the difference between light and shade. Th same fire may be called a giver of life and comfort as well as the cause of death and suffering. So good and evil do not exist in reality, but they exist only in our mind, or in our conception. In fact, what fulfils our interest, is called good, and which brings misery unto us, is called evil. Similarly punishment and reward are the same relative things

The ninth chapter deals with the Word and the Cross in ancient India. While dealing with this chapter, Swami Abhedananda gives a historical account of the origin of the symbol of the Cross. The ancient Greeks had the idea of the Logos or Word and the Swami says that it was through Philo Judia that the Greek conception of the divine Word was introduced amongst the thoughtful class of the Jews then living in Alexandria which was the prominent seat of education, culture, commerce and trade. The Jewish, Greek, Hindu, and Buddhist philosophers used to meet and interchange their ideas in Alexandria. The librabry of Alexandria was also very famous It is said that the theory of Logos first originated with the Greek philosopher Heraclitas who lived from 500 to 440 B.C. The Stoic philosophers also incorporated the idea of the Logos or Word, and they called it the Supreme Reason or God. But Philo always used Logos or Word as the 'Thought of God'. The author of the Fourth Gospel identified the Logos or Word with Christ,

the perfect type of man which existed in the Divine mind from the beginning, and this idea of the author of the Fourth Gospel are similar to that of the Indian thoughts to some extent. Some are of the opinion that universal meaning of the Logos or Word, as given by Philo and neo-Platonists, was the outcome of the ideas of the Hindu philosophers who lived in Alexandria and Greece about the time of Alexander the Great in 333 B.C and their statement was supported by the writings of Eusebius, a famous historian. Eusebius stated that an Indian philosopher came to Athens and had a discussion with Socrates. It is stated that when Socrates told him that his philosophy consisted in inquiries about the life of man, the Indian philosopher smiled and replied that no one could understand things human who did not understand things divine. However, in this way, the Swami has shown that the Greek, Stoic, neo-Platonist and other philosophers were indebted to the Indian philosophers in the remote days in their thoughts and ideas of many things

Now it is found, Swami Abhedananda says, that the conception of the Word or Logos was rooted in the philosophical speculations of the Aryan mind who tried to bridge over the gulf that exists between the visible and the invisible, between the phenomenal and the noumenal The words, Logos, Thought, Idea and *Vak, Pranava* or *Omkara* are the symbols to signify the almighty God or the Absolute. Patanjali says that the *Pranava* is *vachaka,* or the symbol. The utility of a sign, or a symbol, is to signify an object for which it is used The indeterminate (*nirguna*) Brahman is devoid of any attribute (*veishesana*) or adjunct (*upadhi*) and so it has to be signified by a medium, possessed of an attribute or attributes and that medium is the *Pranava* (OM) This *Pranava* has been conceived as the determinate (*saguna*) Brahman, and through this medium of the determinate Brahman we realize the indeterminate Brahman which is nameless and formless All the nations of the world have adopted symbols or *pratika* from which the word *pratima* or idol or deity has been derived or conceived, and the importance of an idol or deity is to signify the reality behind it In ancient India, and also in other ancient countries, we find that the sacred Svastika has been adopted as the symbol of God, or of the Absolute. It is said

that the sacred Cross (and also the Tau-cross) of the Christians are derived from the Svastika of the Hindus The Svastika is of three kinds, *Dakshinavarta* (whose arms are extended towards south or to righthand directions), *Vamavarta* (whose arms are extended to lefthand direction) and *Nandyavarta* (whose arms are bent and directed towards the right side) The Hindus generally use the *Dakshinavarta* Svastika. Sometimes they use the *Vamavarta* or the *Nandyavarta* Svastika for special Vedic or Tantric uses Some scholars are of the opinion that the Christian Cross evolved from the wooden Cross-Bar (X), to which the Saviour, Jesus the Christ, was hanged and nailed. But that is not correct, as the Christian Cross evolved from the Hindu Svastika. It might be the fact that some of the Christians traditionally observed the Cross-Bar of Christ commemorate the incident of crucification. However, as the Svastika became the religious symbol of the Hindus and also of the Buddhists, so the Cross was the sacred symbol of the Christians and other Christian nations The archaeologists working in prehistoric field maintain that the Svastika or the Cross (Svastika-Cross) came to the Western countries from the East during the Bronze Age. But, whatever may be the controversy regarding the origin of the Word and the Cross, it is true that the signs or symbols are used in the religious practices of all nations of the world. Patanjali has described *Pranava* as the sign or symbol of the Brahman. *'tasya vachakah pranavah'*.

Now it is found that the ancient Egyptians used the Tau-Cross which is like the English letter 'T'. In the Egyptian hieroglyphics, the Cross has been interpreted in vairous ways. Sometimes it (the Cross) was with four equal arms, sometimes it was composed of two or four sceptres with a circle at the point of interception. Among the Egyptian deities, Amon-Ra or Ra had the sacred Tau-Cross in his hands. Again many ancient nations borrowed that Egyptian Tau-Cross and interpreted it as the sign or symbol of goodness. It has already been said that the Hindus used Cross or Svastika as a symbol of holiness. Prof. Wilson read a paper on Svastika before the Smithsonian Institute in U.S A. and proved that Swastika-Cross came in the Western country from India earlier than the 6th century B.C. Prof Lundy has supported this view of Prof. Wilson in his *Monumental Christianity*. Prof. Lundy quoted

from Prof Colebrooke and said that the students of the Vedic literature know well that the most ancient sacrificial posts were in the form of the Cross and on such posts the First-born Being was fastened like an animal of the sacrifice This allusion is no doubt figurative, but it is historically true that the Cross of the Western country evolved from the ancient Vedic Svastika of India.

The tenth chapter deals with who is the Saviour of the souls Swami Abedananda says that the Saviours are recognised as the Divine Incarnations of God. They are the men of Divine realization and so they have infinite power to rescue men from darkness of ignorance.

In this chapter, the Swami has refuted with strong arguments and logic the Christian notion of special creation of man. They are the men of at some particular time that this world was not created out of nothing and he said that it evolved from a primordial cause through the process of gradual evolution. The theory of evolution, as advanced by Kapila and also by the seers of the *Upanishads,* has also proved that the world with its beings and materials came out from the womb of the *Prakriti* and they will again return to it.

Swami Abhedananda has also refuted the idea of the fall of Adam from the Paradise and that of the vicarious atonement He says that none of the great spiritual teachers of the world taught the dogma that we are born in sin and are going to eternal perdition We are, in reality, the children of immortal Bliss and are pure and holy all the time When we are in delusion or *maya,* we think ourselves as entangled and limited, but when true knowledge of our immortal Soul dawns upon the horizon of our mind or intellect, we come to realize that we are not limited, but are free, boundless and blessed all the time. The Swami further says that sin is nothing but selfishness, and when the ego-centric idea predominates in us, then selfishness covers our shining consciousness of the Self But through discrimination, (*viveka* and *vichara*), concentration, and meditation (*dharna* and *dhyana*), or through right knowledge (*yathartha-jnana*), our veil of selfishness or nescience is removed and we realize that we are the *Atman,* or the Brahman. The Swami further says that the appearance of the *Atman* as the limited ego is sometimes described as the fall of the divine

Spirit with the limitation of the phenomenal existences This appearance of the Absolute as the relative individual ego through the power of ignorance is described in the Old Testament in a crude mythological way as the fall of Adam, which is the personified pure and perfect image of God. Ignorance is the Satan. Through the influence of the indescribable magic power of *avidya* or nescience, as it is called in Vedanta, the eye of *buddhi* or understanding is overcome. Then Adam, or the divine nature, or the *Atman,* through the association of intellect or imperfect understanding, falls from the Paradise and appears as an individual ego, losing for the time being the consciousness of the Absolute This, according to the teachings of Vedanta (Advaita Vedanta), is the spiritual meaning of the fall of man. The fallen ego will recover its absolute state and prestine glory with the help of the knowledge of the *Atman,* which is described as Christ. This is the whole secret of true Christianity. It appears that Swami Abhedananda has divided Christianity into two categories, Christianity (which he calls Churchianity) and true Christianity. Besides, the Swami has said in many of his lectures that most of the interpretors and commentators of Christianity have missed their real aim or insight and explained it in a quite different way. The Swami is of the opinion that the teachings of true Christianity are similar to those of the *Upanishad* or Vedanta of India, and so the teachings of Christ and those of Christianity should be interpreted in the light of Vedanta.

In the eleventh chapter, the Swami has dealt with God as the Eternal Mother (*Adya-Sakti*). He has discussed about the subject from various standpoints in a comparative manner and says that as the fire and its burning power or heat are inseparable, or as water and its waves are, in reality, non-different, or as the motionless serpent and the serpent in motion are one and the same, so the absolute Being and its energy are inseparable. In truth, both the masculine and the femine characters of personal God are one and the same, and so we call God as our Eternal Father or Eternal Mother

The twelvth chapter deals with divine communion. Swami Abhedananda says that divine communion comes at first like the reunion of two kindred spirits, united by the everlasting bond of love, but they are apparently separated by the delusive

power of the forgetfulness of the Absolute. But, in truth, this reunion leads men to a still higher realization of the spiritual oneness and at the same time helps the individual soul to regain its true glorious nature

The Swami says in this chapter that the readers of comparative history of religions know that the Encharist is one of the oldest rites of an antiquity The Greeks called it the Eleusinian mystery The Eleusinian mysteries, says Rev. Tylor, were the most august of all the pagan ceremonies celebrated especially by the Athenians every fifth year in honour of Ceres, the goddess of corn The corn goddess had given us her flesh to eat, just as Bacchus, the god of wine, in like sense, had given us his blood to drink It reminds us the offer of flesh and blood of Jesus the Christ in the Last Suffer and also reminds us the ancient customs of worship of the Greek by offering of bread as Demeter (Ceres) and wine as Dionysus (Bacchus) Swami Abhedananda says that the Eleusinian mysteries were accompanied by many other religious rites and ceremonies expressive of the purity and self-denial of the worshipper, and were considered to be an expiation of past sins The ancient Egyptians also observed annually the celebration of the resurrection of Osiris, commemorating his death in the Cross by eating bread and wine. The ancient Parsians also worshipped the Mithra or the Sun as their Saviour or Redeemer, taking the sacrament of bread and wine with the same belief that the Christians do today. The Swami says that all these offerings of bread and wine, or flesh and blood, remind us of the cake or *purodasa* and wine or *soma* juice in the Vedic sacrifices (*yajna*) In the Vedic period, the body of the Prajapati or the first-born Lord (*Brahma*) was considered to be the symbol (*pratika*) of good will. That is, the Prajapati sacrificed himself before creation for the good of all creatures In fact, all these instances of mythological allusions are the symbols or signs of divine communion Through divine communion God, or the absolute Brahman, appears as nearest and dearest one to the devotees and so they get chance to commune with God, or with the Absolute, and thus their real existence (*sätta*) is realized.

It should be mentioned in connection of this chapter that while discussing divine communion, Swami Abhedananda has

used 'Godconsciousness' (and he has also used this word in many of his writings) to mean the superconscious state or *samadhi*, which is the supreme achievement of the human life. It is to note that Swami Abhedananda and Swami Vivekananda too, have often used the word 'God' to mean either *Isvara*, the third Principle and the First-born Lord of the universe, or the *Hiranyagarbha-Isvara*, Brahma, the second Principle of the universe, and sometimes they also have used God in the sense of the indeterminate absolute Brahman, the fourth Principle or *Turiya-chaitanya*. But Swami Abhedananda has used in this chapter and in many other lectures the word Godconsciousness (or God-vision) so as to mean the absolute Brahman which transcends all categories of time, space and causation, and also transcends all adjunts (*upadhis*). Here the Swami says that divine communion brings the attainment of Godconsciousness, in which all other consciousness are merged. He states. " * * but Godconsciousness comes through the realization of our true nature which is eternally one with the pure, blissful and all-knowing divine Spirit". And when one attains to Godconsciousness, "all questions are solved, all doubts cease, all results of the past actions are annulled and all the knots of desire that rise in self-loving and self-seeking ignorant hearth, are torn asunder". From this it is clear that Swami Abhedananda has used 'Godconsciousness' to mean the absolute Brahman which is indeterminate (*nrguna*), immutable (*kutastha*) and transcends nescience (*maya* or *ajnana*).

The thirteenth chapter deals with the way to the blessed life. Swami Vivekananda and the German philosopher Johann Gottliela Fichte both have dealt with this subject in different ways. J G. Fichte delivered his lectures on the *Way towards the Blessed Life* in Berlin in 1806, and Swami Vivekananda delivered his lecture on the *Way to Blessedness* in New York in 1900. Swami Abhedananda is of the opinion that after Kant, the pro-Kantian philosophers like Fichte, Schelling and Hegel were the leading philosophers in the Western world. Now, it might be the fact that Swami Abhedananda delivered his lecture on the *'Way to the Blessed Life'* in America being inspired by the writings of both J. G. Fichte and Swami Vivekananda, though he has dealt with his own subject in a new and novel way Swami Abhedananda says in this beautiful lecture that

in the whole animal kingdom, man alone is capable of solving the problem of the mortal life. Our apparent earthly life is nothing but a symbol of the eternal life-principle The true life or being is Blessedness and is beyond the categories of time and space, which is known as nescience or *ajnana.* True life or being is not conditioned by any qualification or adjunct. The philosopher Fichte said that our life is itself Blessedness, and it cannot be otherwise; for life is love and the whole form and power of life consist in love and spring from love (Fichte has used love as 'Love' i e Divine Love). "Blessedness is Life and Love and Life and Love are one and the same as Blessedness". Similarly Swami Abhedananda has said: "True life loves nothing but one unchangeable Reality, while the apparent life loves the changeable personality which is identified with the non-eternal form" The Swami further says that unblessedness consists in the idea of separateness of the part from the Whole, and Blessedness is the Whole and is perfect. The moment we realize our relation to the Whole, we are no longer bound by any conditions of selfishness, but are free. We have come to this world to gain experience. By 'experience we mean the manifestation of latent powers and knowledge of of the results. Now when we experience or immediately become aware that knowledge of true life which is the first thing necessary for the attainment of Blessedness, then our apparent or unblessed life is changed into divine and immortal one, and when the fountain of Blessedness is once opened, all the blessed qualities flow through a man and the apparent or common man is turned or transformed into a divine and real man Vedanta says that the blessed life is attained with the realization of the absolute Brahman which is the fountainhead of infinite existence, knowledge and bliss

SWAMI PRAJNANANANDA

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## CHAPTER I

# PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

### I

"May we hear that which enlightens our minds, may we see Divinity everywhere, may we feel the presence of the Almighty within us and all the actions of our bodies and minds be in the service of that almighty Being; may we have peace unending".

It is very difficult for me to give you an idea of philosophy and religion of Vedanta. It is so vast that it takes a long time to go into detail touching all points that would be interesting to us all In fact, it is the philosophy which solves the problem of life and death. The Vedanta philosophy is the oldest philosophy in the world, and it is not a new philosophy as it is sometimes improperly called. You have heard about the New Thought movement in this country (America). This is nothing new, although it is called by that name, but, in reality, it is the religion which teaches that we have existed before.

Jesus the Christ said in his teachings. "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free".[1] In this teaching we find two words truth and free. Now, what is truth and what is freedom? These questions often arise in our minds. Everybody tries to explain truth from his own standpoint. All the various teachers of sciences, philosophies, and religions are advocating and trying to explain what truth is. No movement has ever been started to explain falsehood or untruth. All religions, whether Mohammedan, Buddhist, Jain, Hindu, or Christian, or any other *ism* in the world, whether they teach God personally or not, have tried to show the universal truth. In fact, worship of God means the worship of eternal truth. The worship of the absolute truth brings freedom But in what way does the worship of eternal truth bring freedom? That is a point which very few people do understand Freedom is a goal, and it is not the freedom of the body. Anything mortal or contingent cannot enjoy absolute freedom, because it is not eternal and,

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[1] St. John, VIII, 32.

therefore, is subject to limitation The soul which is eternal and separate from the body, attains to freedom from the bondage of limitation and that freedom is the freedom of the soul The freedom of the soul is the absolute freedom It is the state where divinity and humanity become one Jesus the Christ said: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven, is perfect."[2] That perfection means being and becoming Divine, and it comes from the knowledge of Truth Without the knowledge of Truth that perfection cannot be reached So, first of all try to know what the Truth is, and then know methods by which freedom and perfection can be acquired.

Truth is one; it cannot be many. By studying all sciences, philosophies, and religions of the world you will find that truth is absolute and one, and the manifestations of truth are multiform, but beyond them all the reality is one, and through whatever manifestations we try to reach the truth we attain to the same goal in the end. We must march towards the one God, the eternal Truth God is universal whether you may call Him Allah, or Christ, or Buddha, or Brahman, but truth is one just as the substance water may be called by various names by different peoples. In England they call it 'water', in Germany 'wasser' in France they call it 'eau', etc, but when speaking in these different languages the calling it by different names does not change the substance. Similarly, the same eternal unchangable Being, worshipped under various names by different nations, is one although through ignorance we may not understand the essence or the spirit that is referred to by these various names Truth is one and that one Truth must be worshipped in spirit and by the spirit. Falsehood cannot be worshipped as truth, because falsehood does not exist in reality. Anything unreal or untrue cannot know or see the truth Truth can only see the truth face to face That which is unreal, is like darkness. It vanishes when it touches the light of truth So the body cannot be worshipped as truth It is the soul that can be worshipped as truth, because the soul is eternal and divine.

We do not understand what the soul is, but our religion

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[2] St Matthew, V, 48

teaches the method by which we can understand that we are the souls, or the spirits and not the mortal bodies. The identity of the soul with the body prevails from ignorance i e. from ignorance of our true Self. The moment we can understand that we are souls we become free from the bondage of the flesh and of ignorance, and all passions and desires of the flesh and everything immoral vanish and we realize the state which cannot be described in words, but the best word we can use to describe it, is the state of Godconsciousness. Reaching this supreme state you will feel a perfect communion with the Divinity in and through all actions of your daily life Every act of your daily life will then become an act of worship, whether it is cooking a meal, or sweeping the floor In fact, these are no less acts of worship than to give your brain and mind to God for a few hours sitting in a quiet place Your body and mind will be then the playground of the Almighty and you will then realize that supersensible state of Godconsciousness You will then say as St Paul said: "We live and move and have our being in God". There is no exaggeration in saying that the presence of the Divinity is in man when he is in the state of Godconsciousness. It is not a myth ; it is not a miracle, it is not a wonder, but it is a fact and a reality. It is a reality to those who have been fortunate to attain to such a blissful and divine state. Some will laugh and others will deny it, but such a state can be reached even in this life. Our salvation does not begin after we have passed into the grave, but it begins in this life The attainment of Godconsciousness must be in this life when we are in flesh and blood. Those who have a kind of belief that we may live in any way in this world, whether moral or immoral and that if we take the name of the Lord we will be saved, will produce no good unless they actually become conscious of the Divinity within themselves.

Whatever we do and think in this life, will produce results and these results will come back to us again. Our present life, as we know from our everyday experiences, is the result of the past. So our future is the effect of our present works We make our future by our own thoughts and deeds. What we will do tomorrow, we make today. So the present is the result of the past, and the future will be the result of the present. If we live a moral life, we shall be happy, but if we live a wicked

life, we shall be punished. God does not punish the wicked, nor reward the virtuous, but we punish ourselves and reward ourselves by the law of action and reaction. All acts produce results. If we are wicked, we suffer ; if we are virtuous. we are happy, and these are the unavoidable results of the law of action and reaction. Temptations are not sent to us by Satan, nor are punishments sent by God, but are the results of our own acts We cannot blame Satan, nor we can blame God, but we ought to blame ourselves, and if we wish we can live better lives. We will find that various troubles that come upon us, will be a thing of the past and our lives will be full of sunshine and happiness and we will feel radiant with joy and divine glory. The various religions of the world have taught that there is heaven and hell, but all these are only the mental conditions. We can enjoy heavenly pleasure in this life and can endure sufferings of the darkest hell also in this life, but these are the mental states, just as when we have nightmare, we get frightened and see all kinds of horrible things. Similarly, we can have that state of nightmare or hell in this life and then we should know that we are going through the sufferings of hell.

Here I like to repeat it again that there are no such places as heaven and hell. They are very attractive to those who believe in those things, but others would not care for any such conception. We create our own heaven and hell according to our own thoughts and deeds. God is not responsible for all these We have come to this world to fulfil the purpose of life and we ought to understand what that purpose is. No one is sent, but everyone has come to this world, because he had a desire to come and fulfils certain desires which can only be fulfilled on this human plane and, therefore, he has taken on the frail human body. So everyone is responsible for his own coming and also good or bad results of his own deeds. In truth, we are beyond this mortal body and the body cannot limit the immortal soul. When we realize that our souls are separate from the body, then we know ourselves, then we know the true nature of our being. Then we understand really the aim and object of philosophy and religion which explain the eternal Soul or the infinite Being that forms the background of our apparant life.

## CHAPTER II

# PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

### II

The old prejudice that the Hindus were idolatrous heathens, that they had neither religion nor philosophy, is gradually vanishing even from the minds of the orthodox Christians. The Christians have learnt today that India is the land of mysteries and of religion and philosophy. Among many of the Oriental scholars in the West we find men like Prof. Max Muller, Paul Deussen, and other persons of advanced thought who have already come to the knowledge that from ancient times India has produced a nation of philosophers and there is to be seen almost all the phases from the lowest to the highest and of philosophy and religion that are to be found anywhere, either in the ancient, or the modern world

Well has it been said by Victor Cousin, the great French philosopher, whose knowledge of the history of European philosophy was unrivalled: "India contains the whole history of philosophy in a nutshell". Again he says: "When we read with attention the poetical and philosophical monuments of the East, above all those of India, which are beginning to spread in Europe, we discover there many a truth so profound and which make such a contrast with the meanness of the results at which the European genius has sometimes stopped, that we are constrained to bend the knee before the philosophy of the East and to see in this cradle of the human race the native land of the highest philosophy". Prof Max Müller said: "No phase of religion, from the grossest superstition to the most sublime enlightenment, is unrepresented in that country" You will hardly find any other country in the world where, from prehistoric times down to the present day, religion and philosophy have played such an important part in forming the character of a nation as it has in India. Indeed, the students of various systems of philosophy of ancient and modern India find in them the rational solutions of vital problems concerning the origin and source of the universe, the cause of all phenomena, the

real nature of the soul and its relation to the eternal Being. They also realize that in these solutions the ancient vedic seers of Truth (*Rishis*) anticipated as though the final conclusions of a Plato, a Spinoza. a Berkeley, a Hume, a Kant, a Hegel, a Schopenhauer, a Spencer, a Darwin, or a Haeckel, even centuries before their existence. In fact, the natural tendency of the Hindu mind from the very beginning, has been to search after the unchangeable Reality of the universe, to trace the cause of the world of phenomena, to solve the problems of life and death, to understand the purpose of our earthly existence, and above all to know the true relation of man to God as well as to all the organic and inorganic objects of the world

Animated by intense search after Truth and guided by their unswerving love for it, the Hindu thinkers discovered many laws of nature and described them in scientific terms without fearing any persecution from any source They understood the process of cosmic evolution and its purpose so clearly that even Professor Huxley could not help admitting it when he said: "To say nothing of the Hindu sages, to whom evolution was a familiar notion long before Paul of Tarsus was born". Referring to this point Sir Monier Monier Williams says: "Indeed, if I may be allowed the anachronism, the Hindus were Spinozites more than two thousand years before the existence of Spinoza, and Darwinians many centuries before Darwin, and evolutionists many centuries before the doctrine of evolution had been accepted by the scientists of our time, and before any word like 'evolution' existed in any language of the world".[1] This statement is absolutely true, as we find the theory of evolution was described in the Rig Veda, the most ancient scriptures of the world. And upon this doctrine of evolution the whole philosophy and religion of Vedanta are based.

Vedanta philosophy is one of the oldest systems of philosophy in India and it harmonizes with the ultimate conclusions of modern science in describing the process of cosmic evolution from one primordial substance into the existing variety of the universe. This process, according to Vedanta, must have taken millions of years to give our planet the suitable conditions for human life as we see today around us.

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[1] Sir Monier Monier Williams. *Hinduism and Brahminism,* p. 12.

Vedanta philosophy teaches that there is one reality, one life, one spirit, one intelligence, and one mind in the universe, of which the individuals are nothing but so many manifestations in time and space. This one Reality has been called by different names by different philosophers and mystics. It is named Brahman in Vedanta. The same Reality which is one without a second (*'ekamevadvitiyam'*) is called Jehovah by the Jews, the Father in Heaven by the Christians, Allah by the Mohammedans and Buddha by the Buddhists The names vary, but the essence or substance is ever the same To understand this unity of Being, under a variety of names and forms, has always been the highest ideal of the philosophies and religions of the world. But history of different nations shows that no other philosophy has ever succeeded in demonstrating this oneness clearly as it has been done by Vedanta It also explains through this spiritual oneness the true basis of higher ethics Christ said. "Love thy neighbour as thyself,"[1] but he did not give the reason why should we love our neighbour as our self The answer was given in Vedanta, because, in spirit we are already one with our neighbour.

Wherever the higher ethics of Vedanta is taught and practised, there cannot prevail war, quarrel, fight, and inharmony, but, on the contrary, there exists the kingdom of Heaven spreading the benign rays of harmony, divine love, brotherhood and everlasting peace. About two thousand years before the birth of Christ, philosophical conventions, public demonstrations and religious congress were held in India under the auspices of the reigning monarchs, and in these congresses of philosophical and religious discussions, parts were taken by the Kings the Emperors, the warriors, the merchants the peasants, the toilers, as well as by the lower classes As early as the vedic period, there have been recorded some of the most difficult problems and questions which were asked by these ancient seekers after Truth and these questions have been handed down to us in their original form They asked. "When death swallows the whole world, what Deity shall swallow that?" "What part of mine exists after death?" "What becomes of the vital forces when a man dies?" "What is the nature of

[1] St Matthew, XXII, 39.

the soul?" "What is the essence of our being?" "What is the foundation and support of the phenomenal universe?" "What is that which is everywhere, yet is independent of everything?" In trying to answer all these sublime questions and to solve difficult problems, the ancient seekers after Truth discovered the laws of thought and traced the causes of physical events step by step, applying the laws of logic and reason. This was the beginning of philosophy in India. The minds of the ancient seekers after Truth were free from the limitations of prejudices, doctrines, dogmas, religious creeds or beliefs. They never asked such questions as "What is your belief?, What is your faith? Do you believe in a personal God or not?" That was not the question, but the burning question of those days was how to know the Reality of the universe, how to trace the cause of all phenomena and that was the point and the chief aim. The ancient seekers after Truth did not care for anything which was related to our earthly existence or mundane affairs.

About that time the philosophical and religious problems began to ferment in the atmosphere as strongly and universally as it is in Europe and America at the present time. Some of the answers which were given to those difficult problems by the unbiased thinkers of those days are still standing, as though they anticipated the conclusions of Plato, Berkeley, Spinoza, Kant, Haeckel, even centuries before their names were heard of In the Buddhist period, nearly 600 years before the birth of Christ, we find in India that there arose different systems of thought, dualistic, atheistic, monotheistic which we find in the Western countries nowadays. The natural tendency of the Hindu mind was, from the beginning, to know the source of the phenomena, to understand the problem of life, and to solve the purpose of our existence on this plane, to trace the cause of the universe, and to know the true relation that exists between the individual soul and the supreme Being, which is the sole object of our worship. Imbibed by that one motive, they searched after Truth, and guided by unswerving love for Truth, those ancient thinkers discovered many laws and established them logically and scientifically.

Toleration regarding religious belief that has been shown in India, is greater than that known in any other part of the world No persecution has ever happened there on account of

religious belief. If we read the accounts of the Emperor Asoka the Great who reigned from 273 to 232 B C., we will find in his different Inscriptions what great toleration was shown. There it was mentioned that no one should ever interfere with, or persecute, another on account of one's religious belief, and such was India's toleration. During that time the Hindus discovered the process of cosmic evolution. They understood that process and explained it through logic and reason. In their attempts to solve the mysteries of the phenomenal universe, the ancient seers developed six schools of philosophy, (*sad-darshana*), each having several branches of its own. One school of philosophy (*Vaishesika*) explained the phenomena of the universe by the atomic theory. It says that the combination of atoms and molecules are the cause matter, and explained the mechanical process of formation of the universe. Another school (*Sankhya*) explained the phenomena by the doctrine of evolution and answered all the questions aroused by the atheistic thinkers of those days. Among those schools was found one philosophy which has reached the highest climax of philosophic thought that the human mind can possibly reach and that is known as the Vedanta philosophy.

A careful comparative study of these different systems of philosophy will show that they contain all the truths known by the Greek philosophers of ancient times. Prof. E. W. Hopkins says in his *Religions of India*: "Both Thales and Parmenides were indeed anticipated by the Hindu sages, and the Eleatic school seems to be but a reflection of the *Upanishads*. The doctrines of Anaximander and Heraclitus were perhaps not known first in Greece". Frederic Schelegel said: "The divine origin of man as taught by the Vedanta philosophy is continually inculcated to stimulate his efforts to return, to animate him in the struggle and to incite him to consider a reunion and reincorporation with the Divinity as the one primary object of every action and reaction Even the loftiest philosophy of the Europeans, the idealism of reason as it is, set forth by the Greek philosophers, appears in comparison with the abundant light and vigour of Oriental idealism like of feeble Promethean spark in the full flood of the heavenly glory of the noonday sun, faltering and feeble and ever ready to be extinguished".[1] It

[1] Frederic Schlegel, *Indian Language, Literature and Philosophy*, p. 471.

is true that there have been many systems of philosophy, and the philosophers have tried their best to give a philosophical foundation to religion, but almost all of them have failed in their efforts to harmonize all different systems of philosophy that we find in Europe, and they have been classified as materialistic or agnostic, atheistic or idealistic. Materialism traces the origin of the soul in insentient matter. It teaches that what we call intelligence, soul, or consciousness, is the result of the combination of matter and forces, hence there is no creator. Consequently, in materialism, there is neither need of any form of religion, nor necessity for the worship of God, nor is there any need of a belief in any kind of scriptures or personality The explanation which materialists give, is one-sided and incorrect, because it tries to deduce a cognizing subject from that which exists in and for its cognition It is foolish to attempt to explain in that way. We are known to ourselves more than we know anything else and if we try to explain ourselves by that which is less known to us, it will be simply abused. Others, on the other hand, try to deduce the object or matter from the subject or the conscious ego. This explanation is also one-sided and unsatisfactory. Many of the idealistic thinkers like Berkeley and Hume have tried their best to show that material objects were produced by th subject or ego, but none of these, however, have succeeded in showing the true harmony between philosophy and religion. Kant's great contribution to philosophy is the supposition of phenomena from the things-in-themselves. We see a chair, but is there anything in itself behind that which we see or feel? According to Kant, the universe in space and time is a mere representation possessing no independent reality and it exists only when perceived, as long as we perceive a thing, it is there and when we do not perceive it, it does not exist, and that perception is an act or creation of ether-force phenomenal. Kant said: "As force, it has sound and substance, but there must be a background or noumenon upon which all these pictures are placed". The post- Kantian philosophers like Hegel, Fichte and Schelling holding to the spontaniety of the conscious self, developed their systems of philosophy which are known as speculative idealism. But did their explanations satisfy the minds of all thinkers? No, they cannot satisfy After them came Schopenhauer. He upset the whole

theory of idealism by his own theory. He called that transcendental thing-in-itself by the word *Will*. This *Will* is not conscious and personal will, but it is the unconcious and universal force and this *Will* is the cause of the universe, the cause of the mind and the matter, the subject and the object He said that everything is but the philosophy of the unconscious' and is ended in materialism. Amongst all the German speculative philosophies a reaction came and from that reaction the agnostic philosophy of Spinoza came up Spinoza said that the realm of our senses is the knowable realm and that which is beyond it and cannot be perceived, is the unknowable He therefore drew a sharp line of demarcation between the knowable and the unknowable and said that beyond the Absolute there is no truth.

Herbert Spencer explained philosophy in a different way. He meant by philosophy the natural science, or knowable or general science of phenomena. His definition of philosophy was: "Science means knowledge partially unified, while philosophy means knowledge completely unified". Having made this distinction, Spencer limited the principles of philosophy to the phenomenal cosmos He said. "Beyond the knowable is the unknowable, but in that realm of the unknowable remains the solution of all the principles regarding the nature of the soul, of the heavens, of God, and of everything". According to Spencerian school, that which cannot be perceived by our senses, that which cannot be understood by the intellect, will never be known Consequently, his solution of the problem regarding soul, or life, or God, or he ultimate Truth of the universe, will always remain unknowable. The students of this school of philosophy have thrown overboard all the aspirations of the human souls, the attempt to know the true nature of the soul has been given up, the worship of God has been discarded from the routine of everyday life and the study of ethics has taken its place, their ground for ethics has been given importance and that is the utilitarian ground which states that we must be moral and virtuous for posterity and for society, that we know that the aim of nature is the preservation of species, and that we must have a large number of posterity and must lead a virtuous life for their sake

But a student of Vedanta does not remain contented with

these utilitarian schemes of a moral and ethical life. He will say: Why should we remain moral if nothing remains of us after death; why should we not do all wicked deeds if by doing that we gain pleasure in this life, and why should we not teach our children to do the same? Really the utilitarian schemes do not satisfy the aspirations of the human souls. Vedanta, on the contrary, gives a better explanation which we will see later on. The study of Vedanta is the search after spiritual Truth and the Reality of the universe as well as the laws which lead us from the realm of the unknowable to that of the knowable, and also shows what relation the soul bears to the absolute Reality of the unknowable. Its chief aim is to go to the unknowable first and then finds a solution of everything there, because all the solutions of all the difficult problems of life and death cannot be found in the realm of phenomena. For that reason we will have to go above this and that is the peculiarity in the system of Vedanta. The system of Vedanta teaches that there is one absolute Being and that absolute Being is the real substance of the universe. It is not an unconscious something, but the source of knowledge and the basis of consciousness. It is one and not many. It is beginningless and endless, and is beyond time and space. It is the same as the Good of Plato, the transcendental Thing-in-itself (*Ding-an-Sich*) of Kant, Divine Essence or Father in Heaven of the Christians, the Allah of the Mohammedans and the True Nature of the Buddhists. It is all-pervading and is beyond the categories of subject and object.

The Vedanta philosophy is loftier than the Kantian system, because it shows the phenomenal nature of the ego which Kant realized as the source of truth, and the forms of intuition and vagary of thought have been placed with phenomena Vedanta is more sublime than the philosophy of Kant, because it has recognized the identity of the objective reality with the subjective reality, which Kant did not. There have been many systems of philosophy in Europe which denied the existence of the phenomenal world as presented to us, but none except the Vedanta philosophy has ventured to deny the existence of the apparent ego, as known to us, and in this respect Vedanta has its unique position in the history of philosophy in the world. It has revealed and lifted the true nature

of the ego from the body at death and united it with the absolute Divine Being, which is immortal, unchangeable, pure and perfect

Having united heaven and earth and man and God, Vedanta has not destroyed anything of the life of the phenomena. It has given us God for worship, who is the same as the Father in heaven, or the Father of the universe. It says that the Brahman is both the efficient and material cause of the universe It has accepted all ultimate conclusions of modern science, but at the same time it says that the aim of true philosophy is not merely to ascertain the conjunction of events which constitute the order of the universe, or to record the phenomena exhibited to our observation and refer them to the general laws. But its duty is to lead the individual mind through the realm of the knowable to the realm of the unknowable or the Absolute, to bring it face to face with the Absolute, and to show the proper solution of the true principle of life No other system of philosophy, whether that of Plato, or Kant or Hegel or Schopenhauer, has even reached this height of the philosophic thought. True philosophy must give a theory which will be simplest in its nature and at the same time will explain all the principles which are left as insoluble by science. It will at the same time harmonize the ultimate conclusion of science with that of philosophy and will establish a religion which is universal and is not limited by the doctrines or dogmas.

True philosophy performs three functions. first, it corresponds with the final results arrived at by the different branches of science and taking up these results, makes wider generalization Second, it must go into the realm of knowledge and trace its source Where do we get this knowledge? We know this thing and that thing, but we cannot trace it beyond the realm of our senses This is the function of philosophy When it performs this function it is called *darshana* It is sometimes called metaphysics. It is true philosophy, because it deals with beings or things going beyond mere existence and traces their relation to the facts of knowing. Its theory of knowledge must explain everything. When we try to explain a thing, first of all we must know that it exists, whether outside of us, or in relation to our knowledge, or in relation to ourselves That function must be

performed by philosophy. True philosophy also performs a third function i e. it leads the individual mind beyond the realm of the phenomenal or the knowable, and it must raise up the soul from the dark abyss of selfishness, ignorance, and self-delusion, and makes it realize its divine and absolute nature. Religion which cannot perfom or make us feel what we truly are, is not worthy of its name A philosophy which does not bring us within close communion with the ultimate Truth which is divine and absolute, has not performed its third function.

Of the tree of knowledge, philosophy is the flower and religion is the fruit ; philosophy is the theoretical side of religion and religion is philosophy in practice. In fact, philosophy and religion must be always in perfect harmony, because both deal with the highest Being There is no other system of philosophy in the world which performs the function of synthesis so satisfactorily as does the Vedanta philosophy. It is, therefore, all-inclusive. It includes science and metaphysics as well as the highest form of monistic religion, the religion which underlies all dualistic and special form of religions of the world. That is why Prof. Max Muller has said· "Vedanta is a philosophy as well as a religion".

The fundamental principle of Vedanta philosophy is its realization of oneness. I have already said: "True philosophy must form a theory simple in its nature and explain everything". There cannot be anything simpler than Vedanta, and it does succeed wonderfully by the theory of oneness that true nature of soul and God are one The soul is divine and perfect. It is not the result of the combination of matter and forces, but is the source of intelligence and existence, and the basis of consciousness. It is indestructible, beginningless and endless. It has not been created by any extra-cosmic Being, but existed in the beginningless past and will exist for ever. "Fire cannot burn it, air cannot dry it, water cannot moisten it, swords cannot cut it, it is above all changes, beyond good and evil "[1] Good and evil cannot touch the true nature of our Soul, it is undisturbed by evil and its results We are not born in sin and iniquity, but we are children of that absolute and

[1] Cf. *Bhagavad Gita,* II, 23

immortal bliss We must know it by realizing our true nature. We should realize God and also know everything of the universe. because whatever is in the microcosm, is also in the macrocosm. First know yourself, because it solves the old problem asked by Socrates of the Delphic oracle: "What is the highest knowledge?" "Know thyself" was the answer, and that answer will also be found in Vedanta.[2]

At the same time, we find that the laws of nature are uniform. As regards ethics, why should we be ethical and why should we not commit wicked acts? Because of oneness Jesus the Christ taught his disciples that they should love their neighbour as themselves, and here the word 'self' is meant by him as the true Self Why should we love our neighbour as ourselves and not as our enemies? Vedanta gives the answer. Vedanta says that because we are one with our neighbour in spirit and injuring him we injure ourselves Love the neighbour, not because of his beauty or form or virtuous deeds or merits, but because of the soul We must realize that oneness in the soul and that will be the foundation of ethics. Whatever you do not wish to do against your self you should not do against another, that gives a more solid foundation and a better explanation than the golden rule

According to Vedanta, the soul is deathless Death means change of forms or bodies. It is not true that after death we shall have to suffer in purgatory until the last day of Judgment, when we shall be called by some voice ; but after death the individual soul will continue to exist reaping the results of the actions either in this realm or in some other. That is more comfortable The dreary and gloomy nature of death appears brightly illumined when the light of Vedanta shines upon it ; the sting of death becomes pleasant when clad in the armour of knowledge worn by the true Self of the student of Vedanta In this life he enjoys happiness and peace, and conquers death Almost all religions of the dualistic nature have their foundation on fear of death and punishment after death, but that cannot be the true foundation, because there is no such thing as death that destroys everything The soul is

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[2] Cf The *Upanishads*

deathless Consequently, there is no scheme of salvation from eternal perdition in the religion of Vedanta

Religion of Vedanta makes us free from all bondages. There is another peculiarity that it recognizes different tendencies of people and leads every individual to the highest degree of God-consciousness by different paths which are suited to each. It classifies human nature under four great divisions, and the subdivisions of these four cover almost all mental conditions of all classes of people, and then it directs them through these different paths to reach the goal. They will all reach perfection sooner or later, even in this life. We know that the ultimate reality is the universal Spirit It is the infinite ocean of wisdom As rivers running across thousands of miles ultimately end in the ocean, so the rivers of relative knowledge flowing through the various stages of the phenomenal universe, ultimately end in the infinite ocean of existence, intelligence, bliss, and love.

To realize this unity must be the aim of all true religion. But the religious history of the world shows that no other nation has ever at any period understood it so clearly, or preached it so boldly, as did the sages among the ancient Aryans who inhabited India. For nearly five thousand years indeed, India has held in her bosom the sublime idea "Truth is one, but the means of attaining it are many" In the Rig Veda, the most ancient of all known scriptures, we read: "*ekam sad vipra vahudha vadanti*"; i e , "that which exists is one, men call it by various names" The Jews call it Jehovah ; the Christians, God or Father in Heaven, the Mohammedans worship it as Allah, the Buddhists, as Buddha ; the Jains, as Jina , while the Hindus call it the Brahman.

Now, upon this fundamental Truth rests the whole structure of the Vedanta teaching and students of comparative religions recognize that, because more than any other religion or philosophy of the world, it insists upon this doctrine of unity of existence under a variety of names, and it offers, as can no other, an adequate foundation for all the different phases of dualistic, qualified non-dualistic, and monistic systems of religious thought Vedanta may be said to establish a universal religion, which embraces all the special religions of the world This uniquely universal character, moreover, is still

further emphasized by the fact that it is not built round any particular personality. Any religion or philosophy that depends for its authority on a specific personality, can never satisfy the demands of a universal religion To make a system of philosophy or religion universal, the first thing necessary is that it be absolutely impersonal So long as there is a founder of a religion, so long is it limited by the personality of founder, it cannot be universal, as we find in special religions like Christianity, Mohammedanism, Buddhism, and other kindred faiths The followers of each of these great religions, forgetting the principles, become attached to the personality of the founder and refuse to recognize any other This results in the discord, conflict, and persecution with which the pages of religious history are filled.

The system of Vedanta has many phases. The dualistic phase includes the fundamental principles of all the dualistic or monotheistic systems, such as Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and all systems that advocate the worship of the personal God, or devotion to any divine ideal. The qualified non-dualistic phase embraces all the systems which teach the immanency and transcendency of God It includes all such ideas as 'God dwells in us as well as in the universe'; 'We live and move and have our being in God', 'He is the soul of our souls'; 'We are parts of one stupendous whole'; 'We are the sons of God, the children of immortal Bliss', etc. But the monistic phase of Vedanta is most sublime of all. Very few thinkers can appreciate the grandeur of spiritual oneness Yet herein lies the solution of the deepest problems of science, philosophy, and metaphysics, and the final goal of all religions It alone explains how it is possible for one to say: I and my Father are one.

Vedanta is a system of religion as well as a system of philosophy. There are, it is true, many systems of philosophy in Greece and Germany, but none of them has succeeded in harmonizing itself with the religious ideals of the human mind, or has shown the path by which man may attain to Godconsciousness and emancipation from the bondages of ignorance, selfishness, and all other imperfections, in so rational a way as has the Vedanta philosophy in India. It does not ask anybody to accept or believe anything which does not appeal to reason,

or which is not in harmony with the laws of science, philosophy, and logic. But, in India, it must be remembered, religion has never been separated from science, logic, or philosophy. As a consequence, Vedanta, ancient as it is, is none the less in strict accord with the ultimate conclusions of modern science, preaches the doctrine of evolution, and still has room left for all truths which may be discovered in future. Another notable feature of Vedanta is that it does not prescribe to all one special path to reach the ultimate goal of every religion On the contrary, it recognizes the varying tendencies of different minds, and guides each along the way best suited to it It classifies human tendencies into four grand divisions, which, together with their subdivisions, cover almost all classes of people, and then it sets forth the methods which may be helpful to every one. Each of these methods is called in Sanskrit Yoga

First is Karma Yoga. It is for the active man, or for those who like to work and are always ready to do something for the help of others. In short, it is for the busy, everyday working man or woman Karma Yoga teaches the secret of work, and tells us how we can turn our daily tasks into acts of worship, and thus reach perfection in this life through work and work alone. It is essentially practical and absolutely necessary for those who prefer an active career, for it teaches them how to accomplish a maximum of labour with a minimum loss of energy. The larger part of mental energy of the majority of people in this country is needlessly wasted by the constant rush of their daily lives, which is merely the result of lack of self-control. Did they know the secret of work they would not only avoid this waste, which is the cause of many nervous disorders, to which they are at present subject, but would actually lengthen their days. Karma Yoga reveals this secret, and opens the way to complete self-mastery The next method is Bhakti Yoga It is for such as are of an emotional nature. It teaches how the ordinary emotions can bring forth spiritual unfoldment of the highest kind and lead to the realization of the ultimate ideal of all religions. In a word, it is the path of devotion and love It explains the nature of divine love and shows us how to turn human love into divine one, and thus fulfil the purpose of life both here and hereafter The third is Raja Yoga or the path of concentration and meditation. The field

of Raja Yoga is very vast It covers the whole psychic plane and describes the processes by which the psychic powers are developed, such as thought-reading, clairvoyance, clairaudience, the evolving of finer perceptions, the going out of the body, the curing of disease through mental power, and the performing of all such acts as are ordinarily called miracles All the psychic powers which were displayed by Jesus of Nazareth and his followers, and which are used today by the Christian Scientists, mental healers, faith-healers, divine healers, and the various other kinds of healers, have been displayed from ancient times by the Yogis in India

In fact, Raja Yoga takes these psychic powers and phenomena, classifies them and makes a science out of them. It also teaches the science of breathing The wonderful effects of breathing exercise on mind and body are not unknown to the mental healers of the West. If, however, Raja Yoga deals scientifically with the psychic powers, it does not cease to warn its students that the attainment of any of these powers is not a sign of spirituality This is a great lesson which the mental healers and the Christian Scientists of this country (America) will have to learn from the Yogis of India. Little brains and weak intellects easily turn away from the path of spiritual truth when some psychic power begins to manifest itself and they think that they have reached the highest state of spirituality, because they have the power to cure headache or heartache. Raja Yoga, however, teaches that the exercise of psychic power and the making a profession of it are great obstacles in the path of spiritual advancement or spiritual enlightenment. Its principal aim, on the contrary, is to lead the student of Yoga through concentration and mediation to the highest state of superconsciousness where the individual soul communes with the universal Soul and realizes the unity of existence, eternal peace, and happiness.

Jnana Yoga is the fourth method It is the path of right knowledge and right discrimination (*yatharta jnana* and *samyag vichara*) This is for those who are intellectual, discriminative, and of a philosophical nature. Thus we can see in some slight degree how universal is the scope of Vedanta It also explains the fundamental principles of spiritualism. It tells us how the soul exists after death and under what conditions it exists, what

kind of souls can communicate with us, and what becomes of them afterwards; how the earth-bound souls being subject to the law of karma reincarnate on this earth and take the human form again and again It explains the science of the soul, and expound the law of correspondences ages before Swedenborg was born

Religion of Vedanta also accepts the teachings of all the great spiritual teachers of the world, recognizes them as incarnations of the Divine Spirit, and leaves room for those who are yet to come for the good of humanity Vedanta explains also the basis of ethics. Vedanta puts the question as to why should we be moral and also clarifies that not because some one has said this or that, not because it is written in a certain chapter of a certain scripture, but because of the spiritual oneness of the *Atman* with the universe. If you injure another, you injure yourself If you are wicked, you not only do harm to yourself, but also to others. It also explains through this spiritual oneness that we love our neighbour as ourselves, because in spirit we are already one with that neighbour. The ethics of Vedanta, therefore, bring peace and harmony to the world Wherever Vedanta reigns, religious toleration and co-operation among all sects prevail and religious persecution ceases for ever. So a student of Vedanta does not belong to any sect, creed, or denomination He is neither a Christian, nor a Mohammedan, nor a Buddhist, nor a Jain, nor a Hindu, yet in principles, he is one with all He can go to a church or a mosque or a temple. He is a follower of that nameless and formless eternal religion which underlies all the special religions of the world, and as he grows into a deeper and deeper understanding of this universal religion, he cannot but declare: "Vedanta has room for almost every religion, nay, it embraces them all". Its whole teaching is based on those all-inclusive words of the blessed Lord Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita*. "Whosoever comes to me through whatsoever path, I reach him, all men are struggling in the paths which ultimately lead to me to the eternal Truth".

## CHAPTER IV

# TEACHINGS OF VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY

Now it is necsessary to mention some of the fundamental principles of Vedanta philosophy Some people may think that, like all sectarian philosophies, Vedanta philosophy also limits the scope of human knowledge by asserting that there is an actual 'end' and no one can go beyond it But this philosophy never means that, rather it tells us to realize the eternal Truth of the universe and to become one therewith It teaches that revelation is not given once and then left to stand for all time, but that it dwells eternally in the heart of man, being ever from within and never from without It teaches that science, philosophy, and logic must not be separated from religion, and that what is unscientific, unphilosophic, or illogical, cannot be truly religious

Vedanta philosophy teaches that religion does not mean a belief in this creed or that dogma, in this book or that person, but it teaches that religion is the science of the soul It gives a scientific and philosophical basis to religion. It says that every soul is divine and is a child of the immortal Bliss, that we must become conscious of our Divine nature and become perfect in this life, manifesting divinity in and through all the actions of our everyday life It points out the various methods by which we can unfold our higher nature and mould our conduct of life in the highest form It teaches the secret of work, the secret of *devotion,* the secret of *concentration* and *meditation,* as well as the secret of the *highest wisdom* It explains the purpose of life and the method by which it can be fulfilled. It is based upon the doctrine of evolution, and teaches that through the natural process of evolution each soul is bound to attain to the highest stage of spiritual development and become perfect sooner or later It recognizes different stages of spiritual evolution of the individual soul: spiritual childhood, youth and maturity, and explains scientifically the immortality of the individual soul. It teaches that the soul of man existed in the past, exists in the present, and will exist in the future, and con-

tinue to exist after death, manifesting again according to its desire, tendency, and powers, either on this earth, or on some other planet Vedanta philosophy holds that our present is the resultant of our past and that our future will be the result of our present It maintains that we ourselves are responsible for all pleasure and pain, happiness and misery of our present life. It asserts that we create our own destiny and shape our future by our thoughts and deeds It teaches that we are at present bound by the law of action and reaction, of cause and sequence but we can go beyond this law by our spiritual *sadhana* Vedanta philosophy also says that God does not reward the virtuous, nor does He punish the wicked but reward and punishment are the reactions or results of our own actions.

It has already been said that Vedanta philosophy has three grand divisions: first, the dualistic (*dvaita*), second, the qualified non-dualistic (*vishistadvaita*), and third, the non-dualistic (*advaita*). By these three divisions it includes within its all-embracing arms various systems of religion that exist in the world, together with all their creeds, sects, and denominations. So it has no quarrel with any system of philosophy or religion It believes in an intra-cosmic eternal Being who is personal and also impersonal. The personal aspect of that Being is called *Isvara,* the Creator (i.e., the Projector) of the universe, who is worshipped by all nations under different names Some worship Him as the Father in heaven; some as Divine Mother; some as God; others as Jehovah, Allah, Hari, Buddha, or Lord. The impersonal aspect is called the Brahman by the Hindus, 'Will' by Schopenhauer, 'The Unknown and Unknowable' by Herbert Spencer, 'Substantia' by Spinoza, 'Oversoul' by Emerson, 'The Good' by Plato, and 'The Absolute' and 'Noumenon' by others.

Vedanta philosophy is not pessimistic like Buddhism. It does not teach that the whole visible universe is an illusion, as the Madhyamika school of the Buddhists misunderstands the spirit of this philosophy not knowing the real meaning of the word *maya.* Its true meaning is relative, conditional, or phenomenal existence, and not illusion. Vedanta says that the world is not illusion, but is delution Delusion asserts that the world of appearance has a relative existence, Prof.

Max Muller understood this when he said: "For all practical purposes, the Vedantist would hold that the whole phenomenal world, both in its subjective and objective characters, should be accepted as real It is as real as anything can be to the ordinary mind It is not mere emptiness void, as the Buddhists maintain And thus Vedanta philosophy leaves to every man a wide sphere of real usefulness and places him under a law as strict and binding as anything can be in this transitory life. It leaves him a diety to worship as omnipotent and majestic as the deities of any other religions. It has room for almost every religion, nay, it embraces them all".

Vedanta philosophy does not recognize caste, creed, colour or sex in the soul of a man. It teaches the equality of the true nature of all human beings The one peculiarity of the teachings of Vedanta philosophy lies in the universal toleration for active co-operation with, and acceptance of all the various phases of, religious thoughts in the world It says that there is one universal religion in the world, which can neither be confined by any name or authority, nor by any personality or book Christianity, Judaism, Mohammedanism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Jainism, Hinduism, and all other 'isms' are but the partial expressions of that one underlying universal religion. It teaches that all such 'isms' are but so many paths leading to one and the same goal. It teaches: "As rivers rising from different mountains run, crooked or straight, toward one ocean, so all these various creeds, sects, and religions, starting from different points of view run crooked or straight toward one infinite ocean of Truth which we call God or the Brahman [1]

Vedanta philosophy is not built around any particular person or special revelation. Its ethics includes all the ethical laws discovered by all the great Prophets and religious teachers like Christ, Confucius, Zoroaster, Buddha and others. Moreover, it gives a rational explanation of the moral nature of man, as distinguished from his true spiritual nature and life or explains the moral and spiritual laws that govern the life or destiny of each individual soul

[1] *Yathadriprabhava nadyah parjanyapurita prabho, vishanti sarvatoh sindhum sadvatvam gatayo'ntatah.*"—Bhagavatam, X, 40, 5

## CHAPTER V

# RELIGION OF VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY

Vedanta is a philosophy and a religion. As a philosophy Vedanta inculcates the highest truths that have been discovered by the greatest philosophers and the most advanced thinkers of all ages and all countries. From the time of Socrates and Plato down to the time of Kant, Schopenhauer and Ralph Waldo Emerson the history of Western philosophy has not given to the world any truth or principle higher, more universal or more practical than those, which we find in the teachings of Vedanta. The principle of this philosophy can be carried into practice in the daily life of every individual. Unlike other philosophies, Vedanta does not deal with mere speculations It is the best friend in time of distress. It is most comforting in sorrow and uplifts the soul above all the trouble, anxiety, and worry which may arise from failure in business, or from other causes There is no other philosophy in the world which teaches so perfect a method to gain self-control, peace, and happiness as Vedanta. The earnest and sincere students have verified this in their daily lives. It may, therefore, be said that as a philosophy the teachings of Vedanta are most practical and helpful as well as sublime.

As a religion, again, Vedanta is unique and universal. It claims to supply the spiritual needs of all classes of people in all climes and all ages. Although it is not confined by any particular creed or sectarian doctrine, still it never denounces the creed of any religion and never destroys the faith of any sectarian Nor does it prescribe one particular form of worship, ritual, or ceremony for all classes of people It gives absolute freedom to its students to choose any path, whether dualistic, ritualistic, qualified non-dualistic or monistic, with all their phases and differences The one peculiarity of religion of Vedanta is that as, on the one hand, it encourages those who do not care for any ritual, ceremonial, symbolic or other external forms, of worship, so on the other, it provides all forms, rituals,

ceremonies, and symbols for those who need them and find them helpful at the time of devotional exercises. If a devotee gains help through prayers, Vedanta tells him to pray, yet at the same time it does not maintain that prayer is the only form of worship for all If any student finds help from such symbols as altar, incense, candles flowers, etc Vedanta does not discourage him, but, on the contrary, it explains the spiritual meaning of such symbols, tells him how to use them, and shows him the way to reach the ultimate goal of all religions by the path of devotion and love.

Some cannot concentrate their minds upon abstract ideals and cannot worship the absolute Spirit except through concrete forms and symbols It is perfectly natural, because our minds receive deeper impressions from concrete tangible objects Any system of religion which discourages this class of people, is as one-sided and imperfect as that religion which forces everybody to accept one set of rituals, symbols, or one particular form of worship, or devotional exercise. Religion of Vedanta strikes the happy medium by dividing the devotees according to their tendencies, powers, and capacities, and also by giving to each what is especially helpful for him in the path of spiritual progress. Those who have strong dislike for rituals and symbols, can belong to religion of Vedanta just in the same manner as those who accept rituals and perform devotional exercises. Those who are purely intellectual and philanthropic, can, through the teachings of Vedanta purify their intellect and devote their whole life to doing good to humanity. Those who are ritualistic, will find in the universal religion of Vedanta ample opportunity to perform rituals and ceremonies, to use external symbols and different forms of worship to suit their natural tendencies A true follower of this universal religion does not denounce any creed or sect and does not find fault with sectarian doctrines and dogmas, but tolerates and accepts all forms of worship and of devotional exercises He does not criticise others, but understands that what may be good for him, may not be good for another, and what is helpful for others, may not be helpful for him. The Vedantic religion stands like the house-mother of several children, each of whom she feeds with that kind of food which he can easily digest, its fundamental principle being the universal acceptance of all

sectarian and doctrinal varieties Therefore it is ever ready to give to each of its followers the spiritual food suited to his tendency, power, taste, and capacity.

Vedanta philosophy explains the spiritual meaning of various symbols that are used at the time of worship. The altar, for instance, stands for the altar of the heart. This altar should be dedicated to the supreme Spirit which is the Soul of our souls and whose nature is absolute existence, intelligence and bliss. To whom is the altar of the universal religion of Vedanta dedicated? It is dedicated to the self-effulgent and self-revealing light of the sun of infinite wisdom which dispels the darkness of ignorance in the human heart and whose name is the eternal word OUM It is not meant for any individual person, but for the infinite Spirit which is the source of all personal manifestations and divine incarnation. A worshipper of Christ should think of Christ upon this altar, and a worshipper of Buddha, Krishna, Siva, Vishnu, Jehova, or Allah should think of his divine ideal as seated upon this symbolic altar of the heart. In the same manner, the worshipper of Sri Ramakrishna, or of the Divine Mother, or of the Supreme Spirit under any other name, should place Him or Her upon the same altar. In every case, however, it should always be remembered that this altar stands as the symbol of the heart of the worshipper, or the devotee. Here it may be asked, will this not create confusion? The answer according to Vedanta is in negative. Because Vedanta teaches unity of the Divinity under variety of names and forms The same eternal One is worshipped as Jehovah or Father in heaven, as Ahura Mazda or Divine Mother, as Christ or Buddha, as Allah or Vishnu, as Krishna or Ramakrishna. These names and forms are merely the manifestations of the one nameless and and formless infinite Being, to whom the Vedanta altar is dedicated The Vedanta altar is absolutely unsectarian and universal. It is one, yet it stands for many and for every individual heart.

The light of the candle which are offered to the infinite Being, is the symbol of the light of intellect. It is the light of the pure intellect that reveals the Spirit seated upon the altar of the heart. Purified heart and intellect must be united before spiritual realization is attained. The flowers are symbolic of the good thoughts and pure feelings which should be offered

to the supreme Spirit. When fruits are offered, they stand for the fruits of our works

Now it can be asked as to what is the process of worship. First sit in silence before the altar until you realize the spiritual meaning of the symbols; then place the flowers, light the candles, burn the incense, and sit in meditation closing your eyes. Think of the altar of the heart, dedicate it to the supreme Spirit under any name or form which appeals to you, offer the flowers of good thoughts and pure feelings to your chosen divine ideal, and concentrating your mind upon that form, repeat the name mentally and commune in Spirit with the divine ideal through meditation This is the pure and simple form of worship which the universal religion of Vedanta offers to all devotees of all sects and creeds Here is the common and universal background of all forms of worship, whether the devotee is Christian, or Mohammedan, or Hindu, or Buddhist.

It is true that there are some Protestant, Mohammedan and Hindu sects who object to external symbols, but they all accept the spiritual meaning of the symbols No one has ever denied the worship of the almighty Spirit upon the altar of the pure heart All external worship is only preparatory to the internal worship by meditation, which, in turn, cluminates in Divine communion and Godconsciousness. Those who cannot meditate, will find great help by starting with the beautiful symbol of the altar of the universal religion of Vedanta philosophy But meditation is the most important step in the path of spiritual progress In this age of commercialism and materialism, when everybody is mad after worldly pleasures and material prosperity, the followers of Vedanta should make it a point to spend at least half an hour every day in feeding the soul with the nectar of Divine communion which can be acquired through meditation No spiritual enlightenment or realization has ever come to anyone without meditation All the great spiritual leaders like Christ, Buddha, Krishna, Chaitanya, or Ramakrishna advocated and practised meditation. In fact, through meditation they reached Divine communion or Godconsciousness Therefore, in the religion of Vedanta, meditation is so strongly emphasised. The worship of the supreme Spirit is impossible without meditation But

the method of meditation may vary according to the nature and tendency of the individual, and it must be remembered that before meditation, concentration is necessary, as concentration or *dharana* prepares the ground of meditation or *dhyana*.

Meditation should be practised daily in a quiet place which is kept free from all worldly thoughts and gossips, and where there are such pictures as will rouse the devotional feelings in the heart of the devotee. Those who can afford it, should set apart a room in their home for this purpose and should never allow the atmosphere of the room to be impressed by impure thoughts or worldly ideas. It should be considered as a private household chapel. Then the effect of meditation in such a room will be wonderfully uplifting. However, when the mind is disturbed by passion, anxiety, worry or worldly trouble or sorrow, if the devotee go and sit there for a few minutes, he will surely obtain peace, comfort, happiness and also the blessing of the omnipresent Divinity.

## CHAPTER VI

# RELIGION OF THE HINDUS

The religion of the Hindus is as old as the first appearance of the Aryans on the fertile country of north-western India. It is the unanimous opinion of all the Oriental scholars that the forefathers of the Aryans who inhabited India, were in prehistoric times, the common ancestors of the Persians, Greeks, Romans, Germans, Anglo-Saxons, and all of those who are now known as the descendants of the Aryan family.[1] A modern orthodox Hindu, who lives on the bank of the Ganges and dislikes even to associate with a European calling him a *mlechha,* does not know that the socalled *mlechha* has only a more distant blood-relationship to him than his own brother or sister, and that he differs from him only in manners, customs, and modes of living. The same Aryan blood flows today in the veins of a full-blooded German, Frenchman, Anglo-Saxon; or an American, who despises a Hindu because of his brown skin, or of his religious beliefs, and calls him a heathen, not knowing that the socalled heathen is of his own race and that he still upholds the unparalleled religious ideas of his ancient Aryan forefathers. An educated German, or a liberal-minded American, of the present day more closely resembles in his mode of thinking, intellectual pursuits freedom of thought, and spiritual ideals like an educated Hindu of the present time, than a Jew, or any other descendant of the Semitic race However, a Hindu may appear as different to an American externally, but it should be remembered that both the Hindus and the Americans are the descendants of the common Aryan stock.

The word Hindu is of comparatively later origin in the history of the Aryan family. It was at first used by the Persian invaders of India, but it has never been adopted by the Indo-Aryans themselves. The proper name of the nation which inhabits India is Aryan. Even to-day, the socalled Hindus call themselves Aryans. Their religion is neither Hinduism, nor

[1] Now this fact has been historically proved by the discoveries of the prehistoric sites or mounds of Mohenjo-daro, Chance-dars, and Haruppa.

Brahmanism; and these names do not mean anything to the Hinduism, as they are given by the foreigners, not by natives of India. They call their religion *Arya-dharma,* that is Aryan religion, or the religion of the ancient Aryans, or the *Sanatana Dharma,* the eternal religion. When the Persian invaders came to the north-west of India, they found the river Indus (in Sanskrit Sindhu) and called that river Hindu instead, and those who inhabited the east side of that river, Hindus. Afterwards their religion was called Hinduism by the Mohammedan and Christian invaders. The word Brahmanism is of a still later origin, being an invention of the Christian Missionaries. It is the general belief in the West that the ancient Hindus, or rather the Indo-Aryans, were uncivilized people and they had no religion of any kind, but the students of the Rig Veda which is now considered by scholars as the oldest revealed scripture of the world, are well aware of the fact that the Indo-Aryans of the vedic period of at least 3000 B.C. were highly civilized and most advanced in the understanding of the spiritual, moral, and physical laws which governed the phenomenal world.

The ancient Vedic *Rishis,* or the seers of absolute Truth, described their knowledge of those laws in a simple and poetical language which is inspiring to the readers in all ages. They described what they understood and those descriptions show how vast was their wisdom, how deep was their insight in spiritual perception, how sublime was their conception of God, and how grand was their idea of human immortality. Those impersonal descriptions of the laws which they discovered, were handed down from generation to generation by memory long before the art of writing was known to the world. They are, therefore, called in Sanskrit *Shruti,* meaning 'that which is heard'. Later on, when they were collected together, they were also called Veda, which means 'wisdom' The word Veda was not, therefore, meant any written book, but the collected wisdom of the ancient seers of Truth, and as their religion stands upon the Veda, or the collected wisdom of the past ages, it is called vedic religion, more properly the Vedanta religion.

These vedic seers were great intuitive philosophers. They discovered and understood the law of evolution in this universe at a period when the Aryans of the West were dwelling in caves, painting their bodies in lieu of clothing. They discovered also

the moral and spiritual laws which govern the higher life of the soul. When the Hindus use the word *seer of Truth*, they do not mean any seer of visions, or dreamer of dreams, but they mean those great philosophers and saints who realized the highest truth by superconscious perception. The prophets, or the seers of the Old Testament, were rarely philosophers, nor did they discover any higher law, rather they were the ethical teachers in degenerate times, pointing out the errors of their countrymen and warning them to cease from evil ways under penalty of punishment by Jehovah They predicted events and were regarded as the Prophets if the things came to pass As Vedanta, or the religion of the Indo-Aryans, is based upon the spiritual laws discovered by the ancient seers of Truth, it is absolutely impersonal. There was no founder of the religion of the Hindus as it existed from time immemorial. But all other religions like Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, Mohammedanism had their founders and were built around the personality of those founders The religion of the Hindus is not limited by any book, nor by the existence or non-existence of any particular personage. If we study the words of the *Rishi*, or the vedic seer of Truth, even there we find that he alludes to others as having seen similar truths before himself It is for this reason that the religion of the Indo-Aryans never had any particular creed or dogma or theology as its guide. Everything that harmonized with the eternal laws described by the ancient seers of Truth, was recognized and accepted by them as true From the very beginning this religion has been as free as the air which we breathe As air touches all flowers and carries their fragrance along with it, wherever it blows, so this religion takes in all that is true and beneficial to mankind Like the sky overhead, it embraces the spiritual atmosphere around all nations and all countries. It is a well-known fact that the Vedantic religion of the Hindus surpasses Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, or Mohammedanism in its antiquity, grandeur, sublimity and also in its philosophy, and above all, in its grand conception of God God of the Hindus has been described as omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, all-merciful, and impersonally personal He is not like the extra-cosmic Creator as described in the Genesis, but is immanent and resident in nature. He is more merciful, more impartial, more just and more com-

passionate than Elohim Jahveh, the tribal god of the sons of Israel. God of the Aryan religion is more benevolent and unlimited in power and majesty than the Ahura Mazda of the Zoroastrians

As early as 1,500 years before the Christian era, when the sons of Israel were worshipping their tribal god, Jahveh in the form of a bull[1] or calf and were appeasing his wrath by bloody sacrifices, nay, by shedding human blood upon his altar and were gradually out-growing the sun-worship, Kewan or Saturn-worship, tree, and serpent-worship and also were struggling for a monotheistic conception of one moral ruler of nature, at that early date the Aryans of India realized the all-pervading supreme Spirit as the Creator, Preserver, and the moral Ruler of all animate and inanimate objects of the universe When Zoroaster in Persia was preaching the dualistic conception of two spirits, the creator of good and the creator of evil as two separate beings, the Aryan sages in India were proclaiming before the world that there were not two creators, but one who was above both good and evil. 'That which exists is one ; wise men call it by various names says the Rik Veda.

In the fourteenth century B C., when Moses was reforming the immortal, lawless and nomadic tribes of Israel by giving them the ten commandments in the name of Jahveh, at that ancient time the ethical teachings of the vedic sages were already perfected and almost all their followers were well-established in the practice of moral and spiritual principles of the Vedas It was at that time that the sublime teachings of the immortal *Bhagavad Gita,* or the *Song Celestial* as Sir Edwin Arnold calls it, were proclaimed by Krishna, the Christ of India[2]

At a period when thinkers among the Semitic tribes were trying to explain the origin of the human race as well as that of the universe and were collecting the fragments of the mythological stories of creation which were scattered among the Chaldeans, the Phœnicians, the Babylonians, and the Persians, the minds of the Aryan philosophers of India were firmly established in the doctrine of the evolution of the universe out of

[1] Vide *Appendix,* I

[2] Cf J M. Robertson *Christianity and Mythology* (1936)· Christ and Krishna

one eternal energy, called in Sanskrit *Prakriti*, and thus the evolution of man from lower animals was taught for the first time in India. Prof. Huxley admits this when he says: "To say nothing of Indian sages, to whom evolution was a familiar notion ages before Paul of Tarsus was born". Again we find that when the worshippers of Jahveh had no conception of any existence after death, nor of the existence of soul as separate from and independent of body, nor of immortality, the Aryan philosophers were fully established in their belief that the soul was separate from the body and they were giving philosophical demonstrations and rational explations of the nature of the human soul, preaching before the masses that the soul was beginningless and endless and that it was indestructible The Vedas assert: "That (the human soul) the fire cannot burn, nor water moisten, the air cannot dry, nor the sword pierce" In the *Katha Upanishad* and the *Bhagavad Gita* these ideas are evident. During the Babylonian captivity, which took place between 586 and 536 B.C, when the sons of the house of Israel were borrowing from the Parsees their ideas of heaven and hell and were modifying their imperfect monotheistic conception of Jahveh from a tribal god into a god of the universe by giving him the attributes of Ahura Mazda, when they were adopting the Persian conception of angels, archangels and a host of intermediate celestial beings, and when they were beginning to accept the Persian idea of the resurrection after death, the glory of the Aryan religion was established and shown to the world by the advent of Buddha, the greatest religious reformer that the world has ever known Buddha also taught that heaven and hell existed only in our minds, the worship of an extra-cosmic personal god was not the highest form of belief, and the belief in angels and archangels was a kind of superstition Again about the time when the Pharisees among the Jews were beginning to believe in a heaven and were thinking that the highest ideal of life was to go there and enjoy the pleasures of life eternally, Buddha was preaching in India the doctrine of reincarnation and the law of *karma* and was giving the most rational arguments against the desire for the enjoyment of pleasures in heaven, showing that these pleasures were ephemoral and non-eternal and that the goal of man was perfection which is attainment of Godconsciousness Buddha also

taught the way of attaining perfection through the emancipation of the soul from the bonds of self-delusion. The ultimate idea, according to the Vedanta, is also not to go to some particular place of enjoyment, or not to go before the throne of a personal god, but to attain to knowledge of the true spiritual nature and to get freedom from the bondages of ignorance and selfishness and all other imperfections. Without fulfilling this highest ideal, our earthly existence is no better than that of animals, nay, it is not worth-living.

There is one peculiarity in the religion of the Indo-Aryans that it has never been separate from logic, science, and philosophy. It stands like a huge banyan tree whose branches, spreading out in all directions, cover a large area of space. It has room for all phases of religious thought and all systems of philosophy, from the highest flights of a Kant or a Hegel, from the idealism of Bishop Berkeley and of Spinoza, from the loftiest pinnacles of the Platonic system and the ultimate conclusions of modern agnosticism, to the lowest form of ceremonial and ritualistic worship, worship of symbols, or hero-worship, or any other phases of religious thought which human minds have ever conceived All these have place within the all-embracing fold of religion of the Hindus, because they alone recognize the necessity for different planes of religious expression in a world which is in different stages of human evolution. Victor Cousin has said· "The history of Indian philosophy is the abridged history of the philosophy of the world". It is for this reason that very few can correctly describe religion of this mighty nation of the philosophers, or indicate exactly what it teaches Here you may ask: "If there be so much diversity of opinion, how can there be any harmony?" But this was answered by the ancient Vedanta philosophers who taught that there was unity under the variety of religious thoughts, and in this unity lay the harmony between these apparently contradictory beliefs. The religion of the Indo-Aryans cannot be judged from outside When a foreigner goes to India and looks about, he finds statues of some great sage, or finds symbolic figures in temples that he does not understand and so he instantly jumps to a conclusion that the Hindus have no religion and they are the idolators and worshippers of false gods. Imbued with the idea that the tribal god of the house of Israel

was the only true God and being brought up in a school where fanaticism and bigotry are the criteria of spiritual culture, unless they are unusually free from such narrowness and prejudice, these foreigners are very apt to fall into entire misconception of the Hindu life and ideals Especially this is often true of the Christian Missionaries who are frequently persons of strongly bigoted views that unfit them to be fair and impartial observers. They can only look at things from one narrow standpoint and so fail to see truly and correctly.

Now it is a fact that when the Missionaries first came to India, they tried to make converts by force. Those who read the history of India, know how the Portuguese Missionaries preached the Bible by holding swords and guns in their hands. We can only pity such fanatics who in the name of religion, sow the seeds of discord and quarrel wherever they go and who in this age of enlightenment believe that those who do not worship Jahveh, the tribal god of the house of Israel and accept Christ as the only Saviour of mankind, will all go to perdition. We are sorry for those who waste their wealth and energy by supporting institution which breed fanaticism What evidence is there that the worship of Elohim Jahveh should be the worship of the one true God, and why should the supreme Being of the universe be called a false god when worshipped under any other name? Religion of the Hindus is not the worship of a false god. It is not also idolatry, because the Hindus never worship the idols. Did you ever hear a Hindu explaining his own religion as sectarian? You have heard what the Missionaries have said, but why do you not ask a Hindu what kind of a god he worships? Why do you judge him *ex parte,* before hearing the Hindu's side of the question? Just remember that Truth is the standard of a Hindu, the worship of Truth is his religion, and the attainment of Truth is his ideal Truth is that which is not confined by any name or form Here I wish to make clear whether or not the Hindus are idolators. There is no such thing as idol-worship among the Hindus. When you visit a temple in India there you may see a priest sitting before a statue of Krishna or Buddha or Rama or of some great Incarnation, or Prophet, or Teacher. The socalled idols are either such statues, or else are merely the symbols They are understood as such by every Hindu. Do you know what they

represent? They are the symbols of the Divine Energy, or of the attributes of God, or of the abstract ideas, hard to grasp without some outward form The priest who sits before the statues of those who were living beings at one time, shows his reverence to these great spiritual Masters. If you go to this priest and ask him of his conception of God, you will hear him say "God is omnipotent and infinite. His spirit pervades the whole universe He is beyond all forms and names He is the Soul of our souls, in Him we live, through Him we exist, and without Him there cannot be anything". Is this idolatory? What kind of idolatry is this? It is very easy for anybody to say that it is worship of a false god or of an idol, but if a person looks beneath the surface and enquires of the Hindus themselves, they can easily discover how mistaken are such assertions. If the Hindus are idol-worshippers, because they show respect to their spiritual Masters like Krishna or Buddha, why should not the Christians be called the idolators when they show respect to Christ, kneeling down before his statue or picture? If the Hindu is idolatrous, because he concentrates his mind upon some religious symbol like the Cross, or the triangle, or the circle, why should not the same term be applied to the Christian when he thinks of the crucifix, or keeps it on the altar? Did the Hindus get the Cross or triangle from the Christians? History affirms that the Cross existed in India as a religious symbol centuries before Christ was born, but a Hindu neither denounces any other religion, nor finds fault with any other form of worship, or conception of God, however childish or anthropomorphic it may be.

True religion, according to the Hindus, does not consist in the belief in a certain set of dogmas or creeds, but it believes in the attainment of Godconsciousness through spiritual unfoldment It is being and becoming God It is being and becoming the absolute Brahman. It is the subjugation of selfish love and desire for self-aggrandizement along with the expression of Divine love, truthfulness, and kindness to all. The object of such a religion is the freedom of the soul from the bondages of the world You have been told that the Hindus are immoral, or they are the most immoral nation on earth, and I am ashamed to say that some of my countrymen and women, having enlisted themselves as the Christian converts, have told

you that the Hindus were immoral and had no ethics and religion Being hypnotized, as it were, by their propagandistic zeal, they have forgotten the facts But, if the religion of the Hindus has done nothing else, it has done this much that many of the worst vices that exist today among the Christian nations, do not exist in India. The crimes and vices with which the daily papers of America are filled, are very rare in India It has been said again and again that Christianity alone can make men and women moral The Hindus ask "Why has it not made men and women of the Western countries more moral than they are today?" Think of the most diabolical crimes committed all over the United States by the socalled Christians and daily chronicled by the press! Your prisons and asylums are filled to their utmost capacity with criminals and lunatics Will you therefore call Christianity a failure? Will you dare to claim that of all religions in the world it alone can make men good? The Buddhists, Hindus, Mohammedans, and even large sections of the Chinese abstain entirely from intoxicating liquors, and the low percentage of brutality, crimes of violence, and cruelty to animals arises from the fact that they do not inflame their passions by alcoholic stimulants Everywhere in this world there is wickedness and human failure, but if all things be taken into consideration, it will be found that there is neither preponderance of vice among the heathen, nor of virtue among the Christians. Human nature varies in its expression, but is much the same in itself all over the earth

The annual increase of the criminals and lunatics in a nation not even 200 years old is perfectly appalling In the whole of the United States, 10,000 murders are committed every year[1] Hundreds of dead babies of illegitimate birth are found in vacant plots, in ash-barrels, in the rivers, and on the roadsides What has Christianity done to stop such crimes and vices? The words of Christ to those who see the mole in their brother's eye, but cannot discern the beam in their own eyes, should be remembered today. It is wise to let reforms begin at home, and that Christian nations should amend themselves before criticising the faults and failings of heathen lands.

Dr. J H. Barrows who was the secretary of the Parliament

[1] This lecture was delivered in 1907—1912

of Religions in Chicago, after visiting India for three months, returned to New York and gave a course of lectures. In one lecture I heard him say "The Hindus have no ethics, no morality, no science, no philosophy and no religion and whatever they have got, they have learned from the Christian Missionaries". On the contrary, any fair-minded student of the Hindu thought will notice at the outset that philosophy and religion of the Hindus are based entirely upon the highest standard of ethics and morality. Prof. Max Müller said: " We find ethics in the beginning, ethics in the middle, and ethics in the end". No human being can become truly spiritual unless he or she reaches moral perfection. Moral perfection is the beginning of spiritual life, or spiritual evolution, and spiritual perfection consists in the manifestation of divinity and the emancipation of the soul from the bondages of ignorance and selfishness which are the causes of sin and wickedness A truly spiritual man is the master of himself, and possesses perfect control over his animal nature No man who is a slave to his passions, desires, and animal propensities, however highly ethical he may appear in society can be called truly moral, not to mention spiritual. Having these high ideals, Hindu religion does not encourage any of the vices, and especially inculcates an avoidance of drunkenness, which prevents its victims from gaining self-control. Hindu religion has no need of any help from temperance-unions, or the societies for the prevention of cruelty to women and children, or of cruelty to animals. Such societies are quite unknown among the Hindus. Their religion itself has made the Hindus kind toward the animals, and has taught them to revere every woman as a representative of the Divine Mother on earth. Some of the Christian converts, in their zeal for eradicating certain social evils which have crept into Hindu society, have falsely attributed the causes of these evils to the religious ideas of the Hindus. Many of you have been told that Hindu religion teaches that women have no souls Such an absurd idea can only be accepted by those who do not study and investigate for themselves. No Hindu ever imagined anything so crude. We do not find any such idea in the Aryan religion, but we can perhaps trace its source to the Semitic conception of creation of woman out of a man's rib, the lofty concept of the origin of woman that still stands in the Chris-

tian Bible. A Hindu knows that the soul is sexless and only manifests on the physical plane either as man or woman to fulfil a certain purpose in life. Some of you perhaps have the wrong impression that according to the Hindu faith, a woman cannot reach salvation, but if you read a little of the *Bhagavad Gita,* you will find there: "All men and women, whether they believe in a God or not, are bound to reach perfection sooner or later".

As Christian civilization has been founded upon commercialism and has kept the ethical standard in the background so Aryan civilization in India has been based upon ethical standards, and commercialism was set aside and almost ignored. As a result the Christian nations have commercial prosperity, while the Hindus as a nation have lived for centuries exemplary moral lives and have become the spiritual teachers of the world. Read the accounts of the Greek and Chinese travellers who visited India both before and after the Christian era. Read Prof. Max Muller's celebrated works *India, What Can It Teach Us?"* and *Life and Sayings of Ramakrishna,* and learn the truth for yourselves. You should remember that Hindu religion still produces men like Buddha, Christ and Ramakrishna and women like Sarada Devi even in this age of commercialism and selfishness. How can a religion which has no foundation upon the highest ideals of morality and ethics, produce such men and women? The lives and characters of some of them have already within the last ten years become ideals for the masses. "A tree is known by its fruits", said Jesus, and he spoke truly. The characters of such men and women are the embodiments of ethics and the personifications of moral and spiritual perfection Therefore when persons bring false charges against religion of the Hindus, you should remember that they do it either through ignorance or through a feverish zeal for evangelizing India and converting it to the Christian ideals. They feel it necessary to save the souls of the socalled heathen from eternal perdition.

Religion of Vedanta does not teach that we are born in sin and conceived in iniquity nor does it say that we have inherited as a birth-right the sins of some fallen man who was tempted by an evil spirit called Satan On the contrary, it tells us that all men and women, irrespective of their caste,

creed and colour or religious beliefs, are children of immortal bliss. It teaches that we are not the helpless victims of our parents' sins, but that our present condition is the resultant of our past deeds and our future state will be the result of our present actions Parents do not create the souls of their children, they are but the channels or instruments through which the individual souls incarnate or manifest themselves on the physical plane. This idea is popularly known as the law of *karma* and reincarnation, which means the remanifestation on this earth of the individual soul, or the germ of life, according to its desires and tendencies which will determine the conditions of its existence.

Religion of Vedanta may be called the science of the soul As modern science does not deal with dogmas and does not insist upon belief in the authority of any person or book, but depends entirely upon correct observation and experience of the facts of nature to discover the laws which govern the phenomena of the universe, so Vedanta, or the science of the soul, does not deal with dogmas or creeds, but explains through logic and reason the spiritual nature of man, or the true nature of the soul It describes the origin, growth, and process of its gradual evolution from the minutest germ of life upto the highest spiritual man, as Christ, or Buddha, or Ramakrishna, points out the purpose and ultimate goal of such evolution. This science of the soul discusses such questions as: whether or not the soul can exist independently of the body; whether or not it existed before the present birth; whether or not it was created by any being? Vedanta enquires: 'Does the soul exist after death? Does it retain its individuality? If it be free or bound? If bound, can it ever become free? etc.' In attempting to solve such questions of vital importance, the Vedanta philosophers did not speculate like the Greek or German philosophers, but explained through logic and scientific method the spiritual laws which they discovered in their superconscious state. Those spiritual laws gave a foundation of their religious system. The spiritual laws being eternal, the religion which was based upon them is called eternal religion.

In India, religion and philosophy are one It has already been said that religion is the practical side of philosophy and the philosophy is the rational side of religion. They are in-

separably connected. Therefore, when we speak of the Vedanta philosophy, we mean both religion and philosophy at the same time. Although there have been many other philosophies in India, still Vedanta includes the fundamental principles of all of them. The ancient thinkers in India, after studying the phenomena of the universe, started many theories to explain the origin of the phenomenal world, of which the atomic theory of Kanada and the evolution theory of Kapila still remain unsurpassed by similar scientific theories of the nineteenth century. Nearly four thousand years ago the Hindu philosophers came to understand that the world was not created out of nothing, but was the result of evolution of one eternal Energy which is called the *Prakriti,* (in Latin, *Procreatrix*) In one of the *Upanishads* we read of a sage who was explaining the mystery of creation to his son. He said. "My dear child, some people say that this world has come out of nothing, but how can something come out of nothing?" It has often been said that the doctrine of evolution is the marvel of modern times and it was unknown in the past ages; but those who have studied more closely, are aware that it was well-known to the Hindus. We also get clear evidences of it among the Greeks Well has it been said by Sir Monier Monier Williams: "The Hindus were Spinozites more than 2,000 years before Darwin, and evolutionists many centuries before the doctrine of evolution had been accepted by the scientists of our time and before any word like evolution existed in any language of the world". Standing upon the firm rock of the evolution theory, the Hindus explained the mysteries of the universe, solved the problems of life, and arrived at a conclusion which has not yet been reached by the scientists of the present day The evolutionists of ancient India did not arrive at the fatalistic conclusions of many of the modern evolutionists of the West On the contrary, they maintained that the individual soul is not brought into evolution by any cosmic force, or by any extra-cosmic Being, but that it creates its own destiny and moulds its own fate by its own desires, tendencies, and actions It is free to act in accordance with its desire Each individual soul is a storehouse of infinite powers, and possesses unlimited possibilities The souls were not created out of nothing, nor by the will of any being, but are eternal, beginningless, and endless. At present they appear-

as subject to the law of causation. The Hindus applied the law of causation to the moral and spiritual nature of the individuals. In Sanskrit, it is called the law of *karma* By this law they explained why one man is born with good tendencies and another with evil ones.

The Hindus do not believe that God creates one man to enjoy and another to suffer, nor do they believe that He punishes the wicked and rewards the virtuous. Punishment and reward are but the reactions of our own actions. Each individual soul reaps the fruits of its own acts, either here or in some other existence. Religion of Vedanta does not teach the worship of many gods, but of one God who is called by many names and appears in any form in accordance with the desires of the worshippers. God of the Hindus has no particular name and form. Thousands of names are given to that supreme Being who is nameless and formless. He is not extra-cosmic, but is intra-cosmic, and is immanent as well as tanscendent. He appears as with form to a dualist and without form to a non-dualist He is one, yet His aspects are many. He is personal, impersonal, and beyond both. He appears as personal to a dualistic or monotheistic worshipper and as impersonal to a qualified non-dualistic believer, or to one who believes in the immanency and transcendency of God ; while to a pure non-dualist, He is the one eternal infinite ocean of absolute existence, intelligence, and bliss (*sacchidananda*).

Religion of the Hindus recognizes the spiritual growth of the soul and describes different stages of spiritual development of it. In the first stage, God appears as extra-cosmic, as the Creator, or as the Father of the universe, who dwells outside of ourselves and of the world. This is the dualistic conception of God. Some people say that the Hindus got the idea of the Fatherhood of God from the Christian sources. But those who have read the Vedic literature or even the *Bhagavad Gita*, have found therein many passages where God is addressed as the Father of the universe. It is said: "O Lord, Thou art the Father of the universe both animate and inanimate. Thou art worshipped by all. None is equal to Thee in the three worlds. Who then can excel Thee, O thou of power incomparable?"[1] In the second stage, God appears as immanent in

[1] Cf Rig Veda, I, 164, 46

the universe as the one stupendous whole, of which we are but the parts Then He is the Mother of the universe as well as the Father; or, in other words, He is the material and efficient cause of all the phenomena But the idea of the Fatherhood of God is not considered by the Hindus to be the highest, because it makes Him extra-cosmic, or outside of the world and as efficient cause only In this conception, nature co-exists with God as the material cause of the universe But when we comprehend that nature is nothing but the Divine Energy and inseparable from the supreme Being, becomes the Mother of the universe as well as the Father This is called qualified non-dualistic conception. Thirdly, there is a still higher conception than this: the conception of unity of the essential nature of man with the universal Spirit or Reality of the universe. From this point of view Christ said: "I and my Father are one" The Hindu says. "I am He, I am that one eternal Being. This union on the spiritual plane is the highest ideal of all religions.

The Hindus say that the dualistic belief in a personal God with a human form and attributes is the expression of the spiritual childhood of the soul From dualism the soul rises through qualified non-dualism to monism. Each of these stages of spiritual development is true in itself and is necessary as are childhood, youth, and maturity in the physical body It is good to be born and brought up within the limits of a church creed as a dualist, but it is not good to remain there all through life, and he who does so, has failed to outgrow the stage of spiritual childhood Growth is life and stagnation is death Therefore, Vedanta recognizes the importance of spiritual growth in religion.

What we believe today, may not be necessary for us tomorrow Let us be ever ready to face the necessity of growth. But we must not go backward, we must move onward until the ideal is realized Arise, awake, seek the company of the wise, and stop not until the goal is reached—until you see God everywhere and become one with Him This has been the cry of the spiritual teachers of India There is no other religion in the world which emphasizes the attainment of Godconsiousness in this life, so much as the Vedantic religion of the Hindus. The paths which lead to this goal of all religions, should vary according to the tendency, capacity, and spiritual development

of the individual. Therefore Vedanta prescribes no set of path, but offers many paths to suit different minds, such as the path of right knowledge and right discrimination (Jnana Yoga), of concentration and meditation (Raja Yoga); of work for work's sake (Karma Yoga) and lastly, of devotion and worship (Bhakti Yoga) Each of these paths has various branches As one coat does not fit all bodies, so one path does not suit all minds.

Religion of the Hindus has made them peace-loving and humane, and it is because of their religious ideas that the Hindus have never invaded any other country They are not afflicted with the insatiable greed for power, wealth, and territorial possession, which is so strong among the Christian nations. The Hindus practise non-resistance of evil, which was taught by Vedanta, by Buddha, and afterwards by Christ, but which is neither yet understood, nor practised, by many of the followers of Christianity Vedanta has made the Hindus realize that all the various religious sects and creeds of the world are but the partial expressions of one underlying religion which is nameless and universal The knower of that underlying religion does not need any creed, or any denominational name, or any particular church The worship of truth is his creed and denomination, and the human body is the holy temple wherein dwells the eternal spirit The result of this grand idea is that there has been very little religious persecution in the whole religious history of India.

It matters not to what sect, creed, or denomination we may belong. Our first duty should be to see how far we have advanced in spiritual life, how near we have approached God-consciousness, and how much of the mastery over our animal nature we have acquired Knowing these to be the essential of true religion, a follower of the teachings of Vedanta never fights for a doctrine or a belief, and never denounces the religious ideas of others and never says that his religion is true and yours is false He never preaches that his God is the only true one, all others are false, and never persecutes another for differing from himself, but always thinks that God of all religions of all nations is one and the same.

## CHAPTER VII

# COSMIC EVOLUTION AND ITS PURPOSE

"The evolution of the cosmos begins when I reflect my intelligence on the eternal Energy."—*Bhagavad Gita, xiv, 3.*

"The attainment of the imperishable One is the highest goal of evolution Having realized this, the wise return not to the world, but enjoy eternal life in my supreme abode "—*Bhagavad Gita, viii, 21.*

All the scriptures of the world bear testimony to the fact that from very ancient times various attempts have been made by human mind to understand the laws that govern the phenomena of the universe and to explain the process which nature adopts in producing these phenomena. The Old Testament, the Zend Avesta, and the Vedas, are the scriptures which record such attempts made by the thinkers amongst three great nations, the Hebrews, the Parsees or Iranians, and the Hindus or the Aryans. Chronologically speaking, the Vedas are the oldest of the three. The Old Testament and the Zend Avesta, believing in the extra-cosmic personal God, describe the special creation of the universe out of nothing at a definite time. We are all familiar with the legendary account of creation given in the Genesis. The Lord finished the creation of the world in six days, gave it the sun, moon, and stars, the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night, and He clothed the earth with verdure, grass, herbs, trees, peopled it with all kinds of animals, breathed life into man's nostrils and gave all to him, who was the crown of creation. In the Zend Avesta we find a similar account of the special creation of the universe by the extra-cosmic personal God, Ahura Mazda. But we search in vain for any such account of ceration in the Vedas, the most ancient scriptural writings of the Aryans who inhabited India. Those who have studied carefully the monumental works and voluminous writings of the *Rishis,* or the seers of Truth in ancient India, are quite amazed in not finding anywhere an account of the special creation of the universe out of nothing.

The poetic and truth-seeking minds of the Vedic seers soared high above the clouds of ignorance and superstition in

the infinite space of eternal Truth, when they asked and answered such questions as "Who has seen the First-born? Where was the life, the blood and the soul of the universe? Who can declare whence this creation? The gods (*devas*) cannot, as they came later. Who can know what its source is and whether created or not?"[1] Those questions were not an outcome of uncultivated minds They were not the results of ignorant and superstitious minds which cannot grasp ideas and conceptions of God higher than a block of stone or wood How many people of today ask such questions, and how many can solve such problems? Can a mind which believes in the multiplicity of gods as the highest idea, ask: "Who can declare whence this creation? The gods cannot, because they came later". Can an idolatrous person who bows down with awe and reverence before an idol and worships it as the God of the universe ask such a question as: "Who knows whether this universe was created or not? He who rules it in the highest heavens knows, or perhaps He knows not" These questions were asked by the Vedic sages who lived in prehistoric times, when the other nations were in their infancy, when reading and writing were unknown to all, and when schools and colleges of the present day were not thought of and the various instruments which we find today in the laboratory of a scientist and consider as an indispensable means for acquiring knowledge, were never dreamt of These doubts were raised at an age when education consisted in the sudden flashes of light that came spontaneously in simple and truth-seeking minds. At such a time the ancient thinkers in India asked these questions. Did they answer them? In one of the hymns of the Rig Veda, which dates back perhaps 5,000 year before Christ, we find the answers to these questions "Before the manifestation of the phenomenal universe there was neither non-entity, nor entity, neither atmosphere, nor sky beyond Death was not, nor, therefore, immortality ; nor day and night. That One breathed breathless. by itself in essence. There was nothing different from it nor beyond it. From this germ burst forth mighty productive powers, nature below and energy above".[2] Elsewhere in the *Upanishad,* it is said. "From this undifferentiated absolute

[1] Cf Rig Veda, X, 129
[2] Cf. Rig Veda, X, 129.

Being evolved gradually the vital force, mind and all sense-powers, ether, heat, and all that is gaseous, liquid and solid."[3] It is indeed startling to scholars to find that in such an ancient age the thinkers and philosophers in India discovered that mind, thought, intellect and ether are the results of the evolution of one undifferentiated causal energy In another *Upanishad* it is said: "The whole universe, before the evolution of name and form began, remained potentially in that unmanifested causal state." This causal energy is called by various names by different philosophers, as *Avyakta, Prakriti,* or *Prajna,* which is known as the undifferentiated causal energy.

As regards the process of the cosmic evolution of the phenomenal universe, we find such descriptions as· "From the undifferentiated primordial Energy evolved ether". Then the ethereal particles or atoms began to vibrate, and that vibratory state of the etheral ocean is described as *yayu,* or that which vibrates, or moves, or blows It is the state of extreme heat, caused by attraction and aggregation of matter On account of high temperature it is sometimes described as the gaseous state of the material world Therefore, the production of heat, in Sanskrit *agni,* and in Latin *ignis,* is described as the third stage of the cosmic evolution When that extreme heat begins to radiate and the ocean of gaseous matter cools off, the gaseous condition is charged into liquid; in Sanskrit it is called *apah,* which means liquid The liquid state being further cooled off by the radiation of heat into space, the particles of matter appear in the form of a solid mass which is called in Sanskrit *prithivi* or solid Thus, when the solid mass is yet more cooled off, the germs of life began to manifest on the physical plane, first in the form of vegetables, then as animals, and lastly, as man.[4]

This is the first description of the principal stages of the cosmic evolution that we find in the Vedic literature It is the corner-stone upon which the huge superstructure of the doctrine of evolution was built through rigorous processes of science and logic by the later philosophers. Amongst the six principal schools of philosophy in India, the *Sankhya* system of Kapila is devoted entirely to the systematic, logical, and scientific

[3] Cf *Mundaka Upanishad,* II, 1, 3
[4] Cf. *Taittiriya Upanishad,* II, 1

explanation of the process of cosmic evolution. Kapila is supposed by Oriental scholars to have lived as early as the seventh century B C. He may be called the father of the evolution theory in India. His cosmology spread far and wide all over India, and those who came in contact with the ancient Aryans, were more or less influenced by it. There is no ancient philosophy in the Western world which is not indebted to the *Sankhya* system of Kapila. The idea of evolution which the ancient Greek philosophers and the Neo-Platonists had, can be traced back to the influence of this *Sankhya* school of philosophy. Prof. E. W. Hopkins says in his *Religions of India*: "Plato is full of Sankhyan thought, worked out by him, out taken from Pythagoras. Before the sixth century B C. all the religio-philosophical ideas of Pythagoras were current in India (L von Schroeder, *Pythagoras*) If there were but one or two of these cases, they might be set aside as accidental coincidence, but such coincidences are too numerous to be the result of chance.[5] Again, he says: "Neo-Platonism and Christian Gnosticism owe much to India. The Gnostic ideas in regard to a plurality of heavens and spiritual worlds go back directly to the Hindu sources. Soul and light are one in the *Sankhya* system Before they became so in Greece and when they appear united in Greece it was by means of the thought which was borrowed from India. The famous three qualities of the *Sankhya* reappear as the Gnostic 'three classes.' "[6] In regard to Neo-Platonism, Prof. Garbe says: "The views of Plotinus are in perfect agreement with those of the *Sankhya* system. Porphyry, the disciple of Plotinus, has the Yoga doctrine of immediate perception of truth leading to union with the deity. As is well-known and undisputed, Porphvry copies this directly from the treatise of Bardesanes, which contains an account of the Brahmans, while in many instances he simply repeats the facts of the *Sankhya* philosophy". It is said and generally believed that Pythagoras came to India and learnt the principles of this philosophy and afterwards promulgated it in Greece and Alexandria. Greek legend is full of Samian's travels to Egypt, Chaldea, Phoenecia, and India. Prof Hopkins says: "After a careful review of the points

[5] Cf Hopkins *Religions of India*, p. 559
[6] *Ibid.*, *Religions of India*, p. 561.

of contact and weighing as dispassionately as possible the historical evidence for and against the originality of Pythagoras, we are unable to come to any other conclusion than that the Greek philosopher took his whole system indirectly from India."[7]

In the *Sankhya* system, it is most startling to find that its ultimate conclusions harmonize and coincide with those of modern science. It says: Firstly, something cannot come out of nothing. Secondly, the effect lies in the cause ; that is, the effect is the cause reproduced, or in other words, cause is the potential or unmanifested state, and when it is manifested it is called effect. Thirdly, destruction means the reversion of an effect to its causal state.[8] Until lately this truth was denied by many of the Western scientists. Fourthly, the laws of nature are uniform and regular throughout That which is in the microcosm, is also in the macrocosm. Fifthly, the building up of the cosmos is the result of the evolution of the cosmic energy, which is called the *Prakriti*. These are some of the principal conclusions which Kapila arrived at through observation, experiment and strict rules of inductive logic. Kapila understood the law of attraction and repulsion when he described the famous aphorism, which means 'the appearance of phenomena is due to the process of *raga* or attraction, and *viraga* or repulsion."[9] According to Kapila, the *Prakriti* or the undifferentiated causal Energy is uncreated and eternal. It is the state of equilibrium (*samyavastha*) of all forces which are co-related to one another and are its expression. Here we find the first idea of the co-relation of forces which manifest in both the subjective and objective world. In that state, there is no creation and no phenomea. When the balance (*samyavastha*) of these forces is disturbed, then begins the process of evolution. This process continues for millions of years, and afterwards begins the cosmic involution or dissolution The process of involution is only the reverse process of evolution. Evolution is followed by involution, and involution is again followed by evolution The chain of evolution, involution and again evolution, is a circle. It is beginningless and

[7] *Ibid*, p. 559.
[8] *"Nashah karana-layah"*—Sankhyasutra, I, 119
[9] *'Raga-viragayoryogah sristih.'*—Sankhya-sutra, II, 9

endless. The period of cosmic evolution is called in Sanskrit a *kalpa,* or a cycle, and the period of involution is another cycle. At the end of one cycle of cosmic dissolution the phenomenal world returns to its causal state. Kapila describes the process how and through what power the state of equilibrium of the *Prakriti* is disturbed, how spiritual influx of the *Purusha* or the absolute Spirit illumines the *Prakriti* and generates the activity to evolve. He then describes how the *Prakriti* being illumined by the *Purusha* or Spirit evolves first into cosmic intelligence (*mahat*) then into the cosmic ego. This is the state when subject and object are differentiated. The first stage of evolution of the cosmic energy into the objective phenomena is *akasa* or ether The modern scientists are not quite sure regarding the state prior to ether. When the ethereal particles begin to vibrate and move, the result is light, heat, and gaseous state of matter, and then gradually liquid and solid i e. first the subtle forms, atoms and molecules (*tanmatras*) and then the gross elements. Out of these subtle particles of matter, says Kapila, evolve the mind or internal organ, sense organs and sense instruments of organic animals Starting from the gross elements, Kapila analyzes the objects of perception, and says that every gross object is composed of a combination of finer forms of matter which are atoms and molecules (*anu* and *dayanu*). He traces the atoms back to their causal state of the *Prakriti* or eternal energy and calls them the force centres. Thus we see that in about seventh century B.C the great thinkers in India discovered the same truth which modern scientists have recently discovered. If we examine the theories of evolution of the cosmos according to modern evolutionists and astronomers, we find that they have arrived at similar conclusions. Prof W. Le Conte Stevens says that if we accept the nebular hypothesis, we can understand that evolution of the earth and other planets has taken place through ages from the primordial nebulous matter diffused in space at a temperature as low as that now pervading interplanetary space, several hundred degrees lower than that of our coldest winter weather In this ocean of nebulous matter, if a single point is denser than the surrounding matter, then it becomes the centre of attraction [10] The

[10] This reminds us one of the *Sankhya* theory that evolution begins when the balance of the properties of matter is disturbed on account of the unequal density in some part of the *Prakriti.*

aggregation of matter involves the arrest of motion, for particles moving toward the centre, are there stopped, but their energy is not destroyd The mass motion is changed into that motion of molecules which is manifested as temperature.

Dr. Janes said. "The greater the aggregation, the higher is the resulting temperature Radiation also begins as soon as temperature is raised, but the rates of increase and loss of heat are not necessarily the same. The ill-defined mass of gas would gradually become viscous, until a condition of solidity would be reached, most probably at the centre. We have thus great central density with intense heat Around this the solid passes by insensible gradations into a viscous, tarry envelope, almost equally hot; this in turn as we pass outward becomes less viscous, until a condition is reached like the average of what we now call liquids; but differing in this respect that at first there is no well-defined boundary between it and the densely gaseous materials which surround it" [11] As the temperature falls by the radiation of heat, the gaseous state changes into liquid Through the loss of heat and chemical association liquid gradually changes into solid.[12] Thus we see how closely Prof Stevens' theory coincides with the theory of evolution as described by the Hindu philosophers. These ancient evolutionists of India applied the doctrine of evolution to every phenomenon, and explained how, from a minute germ of life, a human being is evolved. They understood that difference between man and lower animals is only one of degree, and not of kind They said that each germ of life is indestructible like matter and force, and before it appears as a man, it passes through all the various stages of evolution of the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdom. It is for this reason the Hindus object to the killing of animals for food or pleasure. The Hindu evolutionists differ from the modern scientists in their belief in the continuity of each germ of life from lower to higher But the tendency of modern science is to find out whether the continuity of the germ of life is a fact Thus having explained the process of the cosmic evolution, they

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[11] Cf. Dr. Lewis G. Janes: *Evolution of the Earth*, p. 105

[12] Consult Dr Jeaus: *The Universe Around Us*, (1933), p. 349; *The Stars in Their Courses*, p 133.

wanted to know whether or not the process of evolution has any purpose behind it. Before referring to the answer which the philosophers in India gave to that question, let us see whether a similar problem has arisen in the minds of modern evolutionists and what they say about it It is a question of vital importance. In the solution of this problem depends the explanation of the purpose of our earthly existence and also the the foundation of ethics and religion If we are mere freaks of nature and have come into existence by chance or accident, then there is no necessity for acquiring knowledge, there is no need of ethical or religious life, and there is no utility in virtue. If we are led by the blind forces of environments to struggle for our bare existence which at the highest, can last only a few score of years, why should not we destroy everything, if by so doing we can live comfortably and obtain pleasure and happiness? If there be no purpose behind the process of evolution, why is there so much variety in the manifestations, and why should there be any such thing as evolution in the cosmic process of phenomena? An agnostic will answer by saying: 'I do not know'. Can a real seeker of Truth be contented with such an answer and enjoy life like an ignorant child? Under the present conditions of our mind and understanding we do not know many things. Shall we, therefore, deny the existence of such objects? If we ask a child about the law of gravitation, it will answer, 'I do not know'. Will anybody take it for granted that there is no such thing as the law of gravitation, because the child does not know it or understand it? Certainly not. If we ask an uncultivated man or an orthodox believer in the creation story of the Genesis whether he understands or believes in the cosmic process of evolution, he will answer, 'no'. Will it not be simply an expression of his ignorance? Similarly if an agnostic says, 'I do not know whether there is any purpose at the back of the cosmic evolution', we shall place him on the same level with an ignorant child or with an uncultivated orthodox believer in a dogma. He may be cultivated in many ways, but as regards our problem he is no more than a child in search after truth.

Leaving the unsatisfactory answers of agnostics, let us see what the best thinkers of the present day say about the purpose of evolution. Most of the modern evolutionists believe that

the struggle for existence, natural selection, and the survival of the fittest are the principal agencies in the process of evolution. John Fiske, one of the foremost evolutionists that America has produced, says: "In the cosmic process of evolution, whereof our individual lives are part and parcel, there are other agencies at work besides natural selection, and the story of the struggle for existence is far from being the whole story". "I think it can be shown that the principles of morality have their roots in the deepest foundations of the universe, that the cosmic process is ethical in the profoundest sense".[13] "Again", he says, "the ethical process is not only part and parcel of the cosmic process, but it is its crown and consummation".[14] Toward the spiritual perfection of humanity the stupendous momentum of the cosmic process has all along been tending. That spiritual perfection is the true goal of evolution and it is the divine end that was involved in the beginning. When Huxley asks us to believe that 'the cosmic process has no sort of relation to moral ends', I feel like replying with the question: 'Does not the cosmic process exist purely for the sake of moral ends?' Subtract from the universe its ethical meaning and nothing remains but an unreal phantom, the figment of false metaphysics". Thus we see that the ultimate goal and purpose of evolution, according to John Fiske, is the perfection of the ethical and spiritual nature of man. What does this writer mean by spiritual perfection? He says: "The ultimate goal of the ethical process is the perfection of human character".[15] Again, he says: "Thus while the earth spirit goes on, unhasting, yet unresting, weaving in the loom of time, the visible garments of God, we begin to see that even what look like failures and blemishes have been from the outset involved in that accomplishment of the all wise and all holy purpose, the perfecting of the spiritual man in the likeness of his heavenly Father".[16]

Now let us see what the Hindu philosophers say regarding the purpose of evolution. According to them, the purpose of

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[13] John Fiske; *Through Nature to God,* pp 79, 80.
[14] *Ibid,* p. 113.
[15] Cf. J Fiske *Through Nature to God,* p 114
[16] *Ibid*, p. 115

the cosmic evolution of the *Prakriti* is the final liberation of the *Purusha* or the real spirit of man from the bondages of ignorance, imperfection, and selfishness, and there comes perfect freedom which is another word for perfection As long as we are bound by certain conditions, whether mental or physical, we are not free.

If we study closely the process of evolution, we find that there is an expression of this purpose in the evolution of the animal form It attains to perfection on this earth under present conditions when the human form is produced. The evolution of the animal form fulfils its purpose when it reaches the human form. There cannot be any form higher than human on this earth under existing environments. If conditions change, the human form will also change If the temperature of the earth be higher or lower than it now is, it will be impossible for human beings to live But some other animals, suited for that higher or lower temperature, will be able to exist We need a particular kind of temperature for our existence, in which the human form can thrive Nature produces the environmental conditions first and then brings out the invisible germs of life and gives them suitable forms so that each one will manifest the powers which are latent in it. In animals we do not find expressions of that moral and spiritual power, which the human organism is alone fitted to express. The human form and organism is the only one suitable for the manifestation of higher love, self-sacrifice and self-control The animal nature can be controlled by man alone. If the human body be the perfection of animal form and if the laws of nature be uniform, can we not say that perfection is the goal of evolution? Has not the evolution of animal form stopped after producing human form? The purpose of evolution of form is fulfilled by the production of the perfected organism of man, which is the highest of the animal kingdom The germ of life has had to struggle hard in order to manifest as human being. This has been described in the very common saying in Sanskrit: "It is extremely hard for lower animals to be born as a human being". Because nature takes a long time in evoluting the higher and most complicated organism of man. Man alone is entitled to be called an ethical or moral or spiritual animal From the animal plane we are rising on the

moral plane and from the moral plane we are rising on the spiritual plane. The animal plane is that of a narrow and limited consciousness of the lower self, where the animal identifies himself with his body and thinks of himself as exclusive of others. From the animal plane we are evoluting through moral into the spiritual plane The less the expression of the lower self there is, the higher we rise above the animal plane. When we recognize the self of others, seek their comfort, and help them, then we are on the plane called human This is the beginning of the moral life Then we recognize the rights of others as we do for our own. This is expressed by the golden rule: "Do unto others as you would like that they should do unto you". The best expression of this moral law we find in the saying of Jesus the Christ: "Love thy neighbour as thyself". When we begin to love others as we love our own Self, we are truly ethical Then we do not think that we have fulfilled the highest end and aim of life by eating, drinking, and begetting children like the lower animals, but that the fulfilment of the purpose of life consists in loving others as we love our own self. Then we obtain true freedom from the bondage of selfishness That freedom can be acquired through a higher form of love of the real Self of others. Again that real unselfish love is possible when we realize our true nature and it depends upon knowledge of our true nature. Each individual soul, according to the Hindu philosophers, is bound to become perfect, free, and unselfish The soul then reaches the plane of spirituality. A man may be moral without being spiritual, but a spiritual man can never be immoral. Some people say that moral life is not necessary for spirituality. They are mistaken. They, perhaps, mean by spirituality something different from what the great spiritual teachers of the world meant. Spirituality consists in the perfection of morality. So each individual soul must attain moral perfection before it is called spiritual The Hindu philosophers do not believe that one should be moral for fear of eternal punishment, but they progress through the natural process of evolution When spirituality is perfectly acquired, the soul realizes its divine nature and manifests divinity at every moment of its earthly existence. Then and then alone the purpose of evolution is fulfilled. Now we are all bound to reach that stage of spiritual perfec-

tion which is the ultimate goal of evolution. Therefore it is said in the *Bhagavad Gita*: "He who realizes his divine nature, conquers all stages of evolution, acquires all happiness which can be obtained in the highest heaven, becomes free from all imperfections, and enjoy eternal bliss in this life".

## CHAPTER VIII

# THE PHILOSOPHY OF GOOD AND EVIL

"Good and evil of this world of duality are unreal, are spoken of by words, and exist only in the mind."

—*Bhagavatam, XI, ch. XXII.*

Whosoever has made a careful study of the phenomena of the universe, has noticed that nature is bisected, as it were, by the inevitable dualism dual aspect of her opposing forces. The world of phenomena bears testimony to the constant fight of these two sets of contrasting forces, which have a multitude of designations, such as, good and evil, virtue and vice, knowledge and ignorance, light and darkness, heat and cold, attraction and repulsion, love and hatred, pleasure and pain, health and disease, and life and death. On the one side, we see about us the signs of goodness, virtue, knowledge, love self-sacrifice, health, and all that makes life sweet and worth living, and on the other side, we find the expressions of evil, vice, ignorance, hatred, selfishness, murder, pestilence, disease, plague, earthquake, and all that makes life bitter, unhappy, and miserable. Nature stands before us, as it were, with a benign and loving expression, ever ready to pour on our heads the blessings and comforts, which she holds in one hand, while at the same time she affrights us by showing the sharp and shining edge of the drawn sword of destruction and evil, which she holds in her other hand. This dual aspect in nature cannot be denied, and we are all bound to experience one or the other of these two sides at every moment of our earthly existence. Whenever we experience the the good side of nature, we rejoice and feel ourselves extremely happy, but our heart trembles and breath stops, when we are face to face with the other aspect. Nature has ever been expressing herself in these two ways. What we see today, was seen thousands of years ago, and will be seen thousands of years hence. Centuries have gone by, nation after nation has passed away, but has nature ever ceased to follow her course? No, her laws are perennial

and her course is eternal If we read the histories of the ancient nations, we will find these two aspects of nature were as clearly manifested in the past as they are now. Constant attempts have been made to trace the causes of these contrasting forces and contradictory events of he phenomenal world. The best thinkers and philosophers of every age and clime have devoted their energies most earnestly and enthusiastically to the solution of the mystery of the good and evil aspects of nature, and have traced how this dualism began and what was its cause All the religious systems and philosophies of the world are but so many attempts of the human mind to reach the proper solution of this problem of good and evil and also discover why such a thing as evil exists, why there is so much misery, suffering, crime and vice about us, and how these can be annihilated.

All such attempts ad explanations can be classified under three names: first, optimistic , secondly, pessimistic ; and thirdly, monistic We find the most ancient of the optimistic explanations of the dual aspect of nature in the Zend Avesta the scriptures of the ancient Persians, or the Iranians. These ancient Persian optimists looked at the good and evil forces of nature as two entities eternally separate from each other, and believed that they were created by two distinct beings or spirits. The one was called Ahura Mazda, the creator of all good that exists in the universe. The other was called Ahriman, the creator of all evil The one half of the universe was created by the good God Ahura Mazda, who is omniscient, all-powerful, and governor of all good thoughts and ideas, and of everything that is good in the universe, while the other half and all that is evil, was created by Ahriman, the evil spirit. At first these two spirits were friendly and lived together, but afterwards Ahriman separated from Ahura Mazda, rebelled against him, and acted as his constant adversary. When the good God, Ahura Mazda, created the world and made it good in every way, the malicious Ahriman who is described as a wily serpent, showed his power and tricks by sowing the seeds of sin and evil in the beautiful creation of Ahura Mazda Although he was punished by Ahura Mazda, he did not stop fighting with his most powerful enemy This fight will continue until the day of judgment and the renovation of the world, and when the victory of good over evil will be completed, then Ahura Mazda will create another and better world

free from sin and evil. Ahura Mazda has several good spirits or angels under his command Ahriman also has many evil spirits as his attendants. Both are working through their attendants. Such is the explanation of the cause of good and evil in the Persian scriptures, the Zend Avesta.

This Persian idea of the two separate creators of good and evil was adopted by the ancient Jews during the Babylonian Captivity, which lasted from 526 to 333 B C The Persian paradise, Aryana Vaejo, became the Garden of Eden in the Old Testament and Elohim Yahveh, the tribal god of the house of Israel, became the creator of good and of the universe, while Satan, the old time servant of Yahveh, was endowed with the wicked and malicious spirit of Ahriman and afterwards became the devil in the New Testament. It was at this time that the ancient Hebrews received from the Persians the ideas of heaven and hell and of angels and bright spirits They accepted the Persian belief in punishment after death and in the resurrection of the spiritual body and also in the supernatural Saviour of the world Thus we can trace the origin of the mythological explanation regarding the cause of good and evil as described in the scriptures of the Hebrews, Christians, and Mahommedans The same ideas of reward and punishment and also of good and evil, prevail amongst the Mahommedans who believe in the Old Testament as much as do the Christians and the Hebrews. The idea that good and evil are the results of two distinct and eternally separate causes pervades many of the sayings of Jesus the Christ As, for instance, a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit."[1] By this simile Jesus the Christ not only separated the cause of good from that of evil, but also indicated that evil can neither produce good, nor evil He also described the punishment of evil when he said: "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire".[2]

According to the synoptic gospels, as they have been handed down to us, Jesus believed that the punishment of evil is the casting of the evil-doer into fire. This idea gradually developed into the hell-fire doctrine of Christian theology Jesus aslo believed in the devils, when he cast them out. He also believed

[1] Vide Mathu, VII, 18
[2] *Ibid.*, VII, 19.

in Satan, the creator of all evils, and in Beelzebub, the prince of the devils, and also in their attendants.[3] Moreover, he believed that he cast out the devils by the spirit of God, thus proclaiming that God, who is all-good, can never produce any evil. According to the New Testament, all diseases, sorrows, suffering, misery, crime, sin and all that is evil, are the works of the Satan, or the evil spirit. The Satan, in the New Testament, is a personage of great importance, as he is the cause of the numberless and immeasurable evils that exist in the world. He is the prince, or ruler, of this world[4] In short, he is the pillar of the systems of Mazdaism, Judaism, Christianity and Mahommedanism. If that prominent pillar were taken away, the whole world of evil would remain causeless and unaccounted for. Although, ever since the beginning of the Christian era, the Biblical explanation of the cause of good and evil has been accepted and preached by the priests and the theologians of Christiandom, yet the majority of minds have never stopped to ask the question as why does the good God who is the Creator of the world, at once omnipotent, omniscient and all-merciful, permit the Satan to tempt mankind, to bring evil into the world and to spoil the goodness and purity of His beautiful creation? That question, however, is of vital importance. The solution of this problem has been sought for again and again, and the Christian theologians, up to this day, have failed to give any satisfactory answer. All their attempts have ended in making the good God either limited in power, partial, unjust, or cruel. Some of the Hebrew Prophets, however, believed that God was the creator of evil and of good "I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things".[5] Again Nehemiah said: "Did not our God bring all this evil upon us?"[6]

This idea was afterwards accepted by the Calvinists of the seventeenth century. They believed that God was responsible for good and evil of the world, otherwise he would be limited in power. By attempting to solve the problem in this way they left God partial and unjust. St. Augustine tried to solve the

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[3] *Ibid.*, XII, 26, 27.
[4] *John*, XII, 31.
[5] Isaiah, XLV, 6, 7
[6] *Nehemiah*, XIII, 18

question of good and evil by formulating the dogma of predestination and grace. This was no better than the solution offered later by Calvin Instead of tracing the cause of good and evil, it made the great God unjust and merciless in relation to the suffering humanity. Why should one man be predestined to suffer and another to enjoy? The doctrine of predestination does not give us any reason or reasonable explanation. Such explanations have rather made many a thinker an unbeliever in God and pessimistic in his views. Many a soul, sadden by the spectacle of wickedness and suffering in the world, has cried aloud in despair: "There is no God who can be called merciful, just and loving".

From the time of the Gnostics of the Middle Ages, who believed that this world was originally created not by the good God, but by a devil, and that it is to be slowly and gradually purified by the power of the merciful God through Jesus the Christ down to the present day, there have been many free-thinkers who have held that the creator of the world is not an all-merciful and just God, but a being with a diabolical nature. August Comte, the most prominent of the modern free-thinkers, after seeing the imperfection of this world, regretted, like Alfonso, the King of Castile, that he had not been present at the time of the creation, as he could have given such excellent advice to the creator. Another class of the optimists say it is true that this world is full of sorrow, suffering, and misery, but yet it is the best world that God could create. Let us shut our eyes to evil which can never be avoided as long as the present conditions exist and make the best use of our time, because matter, by its inherent nature, possesses a diabolical character of its own. A similar opinion was held by Plato, Leibnitz, Dr. Martineau, and other optimists of this class. There are other optimistic thinkers who deny the existence of evil in the creation of a just, merciful, and good God. They say that it is all good, and there cannot be any evil They try to see good everywhere and in every act, and declare that all sufferings, misery, and hardships are for our good. If any blow comes to us, it is for our good. Therefore everything is meant for our good and must be so, because the nature of creation is inherently good. They deny the creation of evil and explain that good is a positive reality and that what we call evil, is only a nega-

tion of good Good predominates in the world although we may not see it at present in all cases. Thus, instead of tracing the cause of evil, they deny it and shut their eyes to it. This kind of optimism is one extreme ; pessimistic thinkers, on the contrary, go to another. They make evil a positive reality and good a negation of evil. They make destruction, death, and misery the goal of the universe, and deny the existence of good. They say that suffering and misery are the conditions of our existence ; that pleasure and happiness come accidentally. The struggle for our existence also involves some kind of suffering which we cannot avoid. If all our wishes be fulfilled the moment they arise in our minds, then how shall we spend our time? How shall we occupy our lives? There would be no struggle for existence, consequently, there would be no activity, no life. As the human frame will be rent into pieces if the weight of the atmospheric pressure which we are unconsciously carrying all the time be removed, so, according to the pessimistic theory, the lives of men will fail of their purpose and end, if they are relieved from the burden of need, hardship, adversity, and evil. There is no way of avoiding this except by death. Life is not worth-living according to these pessimists. They do not see any good in life. They must find evil everywhere. The best way of escaping evil is by committing suicide.[7] They do not believe in the idea that a creator who is merciful, just and all-good, created this world of misery, suffering, sorrow and evil. They do not say who created it. Thus the pessimistic explanation leads to another extreme, and does not satisfy any rationalistic mind.

Therefore a better explanation of the cause of good and evil is needed. But if the optimists are justified in seeing good in everything and in saying that God created this world for our pleasure and happiness, the pessimists are equally justified in seeing evil in everything and in saying that God created this world for the suffering and misery of the millions. The true explanation lies neither in optimism, nor in pessimism. They are the two extremes. As long as the idea of the special creation of the world by an extra-cosmic personal God is preached, so long the true philosophy of good and evil will not be

[7] This idea is very predominant among the Japanese.

properly understood. In the West, people are beginning to wake up from the sleep of superstition and prejudice and to see, through science and logic, that there cannot be two separate creators of good and evil who are constantly fighting against each other, nor only two forces of nature, but also all the phenomena of nature are but the expressions of one eternal Energy. The whole universe is the result of the evolution of that one Energy. And, therefore, Nature is one, and not two.

The theory of the creators (two creators) of good and evil is supplanted by the doctrine of evolution. Ahura Mazda and Ahriman, with their many names, such as Jehovah, Satan, Devil and others, having played their parts for centuries on the stage of the universe, are now slowly withdrawing themselves into oblivion. The idea of a special creation at a definite time, has been followed by that of a gradual process of evolution extending through millions of years, in which extra-cosmic creators have neither part, nor share. To a scientific mind the Garden of Eden has no attraction of any kind and it has become like a fool's paradise. The fall of man is no longer a reality, but appears as a mythological story. Thoughtful men and women of the Western countries, who believe in the doctrine of evolution, are just beginning to unlearn the scriptural dogmas. The time has come when people are applying logic and reason in solving the problem of good and evil. The tendency of scientific researches and investigations is to discover the unity of nature, which underlies the apparent duality of the opposing forces and also to explain the variety of phenomena through that underlying unity. In India, this unity of nature was understood by the monistic thinkers and the Vedanta philosophers many centuries before the birth of Christ. These monistic thinkers understood from the beginning that this world was not created at a special time by a special being, and aided by logic and reason they came to believe in the doctrine of evolution.

In the voluminous writings of the Hindu sages, there is no word which means a creation out of nothing. The word, they use, literally means *projection* and not creation, answering to the modern idea of evolution. Unlike the Western people of the present day, they had nothing to unlearn, as they had slowly and gradually discovered the true cause of good and evil,

and afterwards explained their mutual relation as clearly as possible. They said that good and evil are relative terms, one of which cannot exist without the other What we call good depends upon the existence of what we call evil, and evil exists only in relation to good. Being the interdependent terms they cannot be separated. In trying to separate them and to make each stand by itself as independent of the other, we not only destroy their relative and interdependent nature, but also destroy the terms themselves. The moment we try to separate good from evil, we find this to be true. Evil cannot exist alone. If we try to make evil stand by itself as entirely separate from good, we can no longer recognize it as evil Consequently, according to the Vedanta philosophers, the difference between good and evil is not one of kind, but of degree, like the difference between light and darkness. Again, the same thing can appear as good and evil under different circumstances. That which appears as good in one case, may appear as evil if the conditions change and the results be different. The same fire may be called a giver of life and comfort and a bestower of happiness and a producer of good, when it saves the life of a half-frozen man, or when it gives us warmth in the coldest days of winter, or when it cooks our food and guides our feet, but it will be called the producer of evil and a curse of God when it destroys life, or inflicts injury on man or on his property. Still the nature of fire is to burn, and this nature does not change. The great London fire destroyed many lives, brought ruin and destruction to many families, but at the same time it destroyed the germs of a plague which would have done more evil. So it was both good and evil at the same time. The same force of gravitation is called good when it attracts atoms and molecules of our bodies and keeps together the atoms of our clothes, gives shape to our houses, bodies, and this earth where we are now living, but it is the producer of evil when it kills a man who falls from the roof of a house. Electricity is good when it gives light, moves a street car, cures a pain ; and relieves a disease, but it is evil when it crushes a man under the shock of its tremendous currents As electricity, it is neither good nor evil, neither positive nor negative, and the other forces of nature are neither good nor evil, but their expressions may be called good or evil according to the results they pro-

duce. The forces of nature are running in the universe with tremendous activity and mad rush, like the currents of a mighty river which brings what we call good and blessings on one shore and evil and destruction on the other As standing on one shore, where good prevails, we say the river is very good, it is the producer of good, etc., so, standing on the other shore, we call the same river a producer of evil, or a creator of destruction. Similarly, we say the forces of nature are good or evil according to our standard, ideas and interests. On the one hand, the river fertilizes the country by depositing rich soil and help the growth of vegetation and, on the other hand, the same river destroys villages and all that stands in its way.

Good and evil exist in our minds. That which fulfils our interests, is called good, and that which brings to us misery or anything which we do not want, is called evil. When we look at the phenomena of nature by piecemeal, without recognizing their connection, we do not get the proper explanation of events, but if we look at the same phenomena as related to one another and to the whole universe, then we discover the true explanation and we are no longer puzzled. Then the proper cause of good and evil is understood. It is limitation, the inability to recognize the relation of the part to the whole. According to the monistic philosophers of India, it is impossible to find anything absolutely good, or absolutely evil, in this world of relativity. That which we call good, is only one phase and the other is evil. When we ignore the one phase, we see the other phase as along. The same event may produce evil in one country and good in another. The famine in India killed millions by starvation, but it made the American farmers richer than ever before. The famine has done evil in India, but good in America. This is true in every case. Our life, which is a great blessing to us, depends upon the life of others. The maintenance of our life causes thousands to die. Millions of lower animals are killed every day for our food. Each stomach has become a cemetery and each tooth a tomb-stone. When one man murders another, his motive is to do good to himself, or to his family, or to society, or to fulfil some purpose which he considers good. The murderer may believe that he does some good to somebody, but, as he takes a wrong course of action, he is called a murderer, and gets no sympathy from any-

body, and is punished by society and the State. When a big murderer, however, comes from the battle-field after committing hundreds of murders to possess another's territory, we praise him and honour him and call him the greatest hero, and reward him But if we analyze the nature of the work he has done, we find that he has committed many murders to serve his country. As the murderer of multitude is supposed to do good to his country, so possibly the man who kills but one person, may do some good somewhere, although we may not recognize it as such Our intellect is short-sighted, therefore, we cannot always see the true results of our actions. As we cannot draw a sharp line of demarcation between the good and evil results of the physical forces of nature and cannot say that this is good and good alone, so we cannot separate the good and evil results of our moral acts. That which is morally good in one case, may be evil in another. As, for instance, the commandment of God is supposed to be a moral good and beneficial to all. Think of the command which God gave to Saul: "Now go and smite Amalek and utterly destroy all that they have and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox, sheep, camel and ass".[8] We call it a good act, because God did it, but if one man commands another to do such a horrible deed, what will you call him? Such is our judgment. We say many things without knowing why we say them. Let us open our eyes and see how far good goes and how it is mixed with evil. Every act which we do, must be backed by a motive and that motive again is for the good of some, or of the evil of some. We may, or may not, understand it, but the results of our acts are always mixed with good and evil. Take, for instance, the nearest example. I am talking to you. Perhaps I am doing some good. At least, I intend to do so. But at the same time I am causing the death of millions of microbes. It may be good to me, to you, but the poor animalculæ would not call it good. When we see the results of this act from our standpoint we call it good, but if were to look at it from the microbes' statndpoint, it would appear quite different and they would doubtless call it evil. If we judge everything from our standpoint, we can never know whether it

[8] Cf. Samuel, XV, 3

is really good or evil, because our standard is limited and imperfect. Those who do not recognize the results of acts from different standpoints, are liable to all kinds of error. If I judge the whole universe by my standard, my judgment will be very poor. But when I look at things from the various standpoints, I can understand how the same event can produce good and evil in relation to different conditions Every mistake we make becomes a great teacher in the long run. Thus evil has its good, and good has its evil side. Therefore good and evil go hand in hand. But ordinarily, wherever we find a preponderance of good over evil, we desgnate it good and the opposite as evil. Again, that which is sinful to one, may be virtuous to another. Consider the different standards of sin among the Mahommedans, the Mormons and the Christians. Compare the scriptures of the world and see how what is a virtue in the Old Testament, is a vice to men who believe in other scriptures. If polygamy is a sin according to the Christians, it is a virtue with the Mahommedans and the Mormons, and was such with the ancient Jews. That which is good for some persons, as inculcated by their religion, may be evil to others living under a different dispensation.

Thus we cannot draw a sharp line of demarcation between good and evil. Punishment and reward, according to the Vedanta philosophy, are but the reactions of our own actions. It says that every action must have a similar reaction. If the action be good, the reaction must be the same. The Vedanta philosophy says: "Every action, whether backed by good or bad motives, is covered with its opposite, as fire is enveloped with smoke". If we examine our own lives, we will notice that good often comes out of evil. If the greater number of personal misfortunes have their good side, hardly any good fortune ever befell any one which did not give, either to the same, or to some other person, something to regret. The Vedanta philosophers try to explain the socalled punishment and reward by referring to the law of cause and sequence, or the law of action and reaction. Action and reaction are sometime opposite and sometime equal, says physical law. When we do certain acts, we are sure to reap certain results. But, if the results come before we have forgotten the causes which brought them, we call them either rewards, or punishments. If a good act is

done today, the result may come at once, or after many years. God never punishes the wicked, nor rewards the virtuous. He shines like the impartial sun equally upon the heads of the sages and the sinners. It is our own acts that bring the results, either in the form of reward, or punishment. When we understand clearly the law of cause and sequence, or of action and reaction, we cease to blame God, or any other extra-cosmic creator of evil. Then we do not say that evil has been interpolated from without. If we know that all the forces of nature, both physical and mental, are but so many expressions of one eternal Energy or Divine will which is far beyond the relative good and evil, then we do not see good and evil in the universe, but, on the contrary, we find everywhere the expression of that Divine will. The nature of an effect must be the same as that of a cause, because effect is nothing but the manifested state of the cause, and if the cause of the universe be one eternal, divine Energy, then the universe, as a whole, can be neither good nor evil.

When we can throw aside the narrow and limited glass of our relative standard, through which we are now looking at the events of life and put on our mental eye the glass of divine energy, or universal will, then we no longer see good and evil, or virtue and vice, or reward and punishment. But we see the expression of one law of causation everywhere. Then we do not blame our parents, or the Satan, or God, or anybody, but understand that all our misery is but the result of our own acts which we did in this life or in a past incarnation. If we understand that as electricity is neither positve nor negative, but appears as positive or negative when manifested through a magnet, we apprehend that the laws of nature only appear to us as good or evil when they express themselves through the gigantic magnet of the phenomenal universe. If we realize that the eternal Energy, or the Divine will, appears as good or evil only as related to our minds and lives then we can say, as the great sages in India said: "God does not create good or evil, nor does He take the virtue or sin of anybody. He does not punish the wicked or reward the virtuous. Our intelligence being covered, as it were, with the cloud of ignorance and relativity, deluded as we are, we imagine, on account of our imperfect understanding, that God creates good or evil, that

His creation is good or evil, that He punishes or rewards". It is through our ignorance of truth that we do not recognize the Divinity which pervades the universe, standing high above the reach of our conception of good and evil.

However, let us strive to see the Divinity, by going behind the phenomenal appearances of good and evil. Let us go to the eternal source of all the phenomena. Let us first reach the highest plane of spiritual oneness, and standing on that Divine will, let us understand that good and evil are two aspects of one eternal substance which is neither good nor evil, but is the Absolute or the Brahman. Then and then alone, we shall transcend good and evil and enjoy the eternal Bliss in this life. It should be remembered that relativity created by the categories of time and space is nescience (*ajnana*) and when we dispel the darkness of nescience, the ever shining light of the *Atman,* or the Brahman, is manifested. The light of the Brahman is self-revealing (*sayam-prakasha*) and it exists within us and within the phenomena all the time.

## CHAPTER IX

## WORD AND CROSS IN ANCIENT INDIA

"The Word was *Brahman*" or The Absolute —*Bri. Upanishad.*
"He who exists by Himself let first stream forth the Word, the Eternal, without beginning or end, the Divine Word which we read in the Veda, whence proceeded the evolution of the world."
—*The Mahabharata.*

Since the beginning of the Christian era the followers of Christ have popularised the two great sacred symbols of the ancient Aryans, the Word, or the Son of God and the Cross. Although these two symbols were unknown amongst the Semitic races, especially among the ancient Hebrews, yet they were known to the pre-Christian Greek philosophers as well as to the Aryan philosophers who lived in ancient India.

The conception that the Word was the only begotten Son of the Father, the First-born Lord, or the Son of God, was deeply rooted in the abstruse philosophical speculations of the Aryan minds who tried to bridge over the gulf that exists between the visible and the invisible, between the phenomenal and the noumenal, between the individual soul of man and God, the Creator of all. The Aryan seekers after the ultimate cause of the universe and the true relation of soul to God advanced many theories to explain the apparent difference on separation between the Creator and the created between God and the soul of man, and made various attempts to discover the means by which the two can be brought together in closer union and by which the soul of man will return to its Creator.

In ancient Judaism, however, the conception of Jehovah was so objective, majestic and high that the idea of union between the individual soul and Jehovah, or even its approach to His throne, was considered to be blasphemous, and insulting to Jehovah the supreme Diety. The result of this conception was that the idea of the sonship of man, or of the Word, never took any hold upon the ancient Semitic minds. The super-

ficial readers of the Old Testament may find some vague expressions of the idea of sonship of man in such passages as: "Ye are the children of the Lord your God";[1] or in the passage where Moses says: "Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful and hast forgotten God that formed thee";[2] or when he asks: "Is not he thy father that hath bought thee? Hath he not made thee and established thee [3] In whatever manner the Christian theologians might interpret such passages they never meant the same idea of the fatherhood of God, or of the sonship of man, or of the Word, or of Christ, which pervades the Fourth Gospel'. Moses meant nothing more than the fatherly goodness of the Creator. Through the paternal goodness of Elohim Yahveh. Abraham became the friend of God. A similar meaning lies behind the passage where Adam is described, once only in the New Testament, as the Son of God

The deep philosophical meaning which is connected with the first verse of the Fourth Gospel, 5. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God", was never expressed before by any of the writers either of the New Testament, or of the Old Testaments Some of the Christian theologians have tried to trace the origin of the meaning of the divine Word as given in the Fourth Gospel to certain expressions of some Hebrew Prophets of the Old Testament. For instance, they refer to the passage: "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made and all host of them by the breath of his mouth".[4] Some again refer to another passage: "He sent his Word and healed them".[5] In these and similar other passages Word does not stand for any other meaning than simple commandment, as we find in the verse: "He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth; his Word runneth very swiftly".[6] Thus we can understand that in the Jewish scritpures there is no historical antecedent of the idea of the divine Word as the Son of God which is described by the writer of the Fourth Gospel in the first verse of the first chapter. The

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[1] Cf. Deut., XIV, 1.
[2] Ibid., XXXII, 18.
[3] Ibid, XXXII, 6
[4] Cf. Psalm. XXXIII, 6
[5] Ibid., CVII. 20
[6] Ibid, CXLVII, 15.

Oriental scholars are unanimous in their opinion that the writer of the Fourth Gospel was a follower of Philo Judeas, the reformed Jewish philosopher, who was a contemporary to Jesus and who lived in Alexandria from 20 B.C. to 60 A.D., but never heard of Jesus. The writings of Philo Judeas abound in passages which show that he was a student of Greek philosophy and that he adopted the Greek conception of the Word, or the only-begotten Son of God, as explained by the Stoic philosophers of the pre-Christian era. It was through Philo that the Greek conception of the divine Word was introduced amongst the thoughtful class of the Jews then living in Alexandria, and was afterwards identified with Jesus the Christ by the writer of the Fourth Gospel, and was later accepted by Christians generally. Alexandria was in those days the principal centre of education and culture, where the Jewish, Greek, Hindu, and Buddhist philosophers met and interchanged thoughts and philosophical religious ideas. The Greek philosophers called the divine Word Logos. Logos is a Greek word which meant at first simply word, not as a mere sound, but as thought embodied in sound. The theory of the Logos first originated with Heraclitus, one of the earliest Greek philosophers, who lived from 500 to 440 B.C. Although he believed that fire was the primitive element of the phenomenal universe, still he postulated some power, force, or law, which controlled the material element fire. He called that power Logos, which is reason or order. Though the theory of the Logos or reason or order, was the primal cause of cosmos, originated in Greece with Heraclitus, yet it did not develop in meaning until the time of the Stoics. The Stoic philosophers believed that Logos, or Supreme Reason, or God, prevaded all matter. It was not only the creator of all things, but the controller and ruler also. The Stoic philosophers held that the Logos was universal and eternal and the human soul possessed a portion of the universal Logos and, therefore, man had a share of intelligence and reason. They believed that word, or speech, was the manifestation of reason, or thought, which would remain as non-existent for us without the power of speech.[7] This Logos became the medium through which the transcendent cause of the universe was related to the

[7] Cf. the *Vakyapadiya*

phenomenal world. It was like the bridge between God and the world. Philo's mind was seeking some explanation for the relation between Jehovah and the world and so he adopted the Stoic explanation and these theory of Logos

In Philo's hands the theory of Logos gradually developed in its meaning. By 'Logos' he wished to express not merely word, but thought, or idea of which word or speech is but the manifestation. As the audible or perceptible sound of a word is the expression of an imperceptible thought or idea, so the visible universe is the expression of the ideal universe, or the universe in a thought form existing in the Divine mind. This ideal creation or concept of the universe, or type of the universe in the Divine mind, was the Logos, and it was called by Philo the only-begotten Son, or the unique Son. Philo always used the only-begotten Son in its philosophical sense, that is, as the Thought of God, made visible in the world either by creation or projection, but there is nothing in his writings to show that he ever personified the Logos. These terms, more or less poetical with Philo, became afterwards most technical when the Logos was identified with Christ by the writer of the Fourth Gospel. The author of this gospel did not identify the Logos with Jesus of Nazareth, who was son of Mary, but with Christ, the incarnation of the ideal man, the perfect type of man, which existed in the Divine mind from the beginning. As the Logos was the only-begotten son of God according to Philo, who never heard of Jesus the Christ, so it was with his disciples. The author of the Fourth Gospel, believing in Jesus as the perfect type of man, gave him all the predicates of the Logos and described him as the Son of God

Some scholars are of the opinion that this meaning which was given to the Logos or word by Philo and the Neo-Platonists of later date, was the result of the influence of the Hindu philosophers who lived in Alexandria and Greece about the time of Alexander the Great in 333 B C. This has been supported by the writings of Eusebius who quotes a work on Platonic philosophy of Aristotles and states therein on the authority of Aristoxenes, a pupil of Aristotle, that an Indian philosopher came to Athens and had a discussion with Socrates. When Socrates told him that his philosophy consisted in inquiries about the life of man, the Indian philosopher is said to have

smiled and to have replied that no one could understand things human who did not understand things divine.[8]

In the most ancient writings of the Hindus, I mean in the Vedas, we find the idea of Logos most clearly expressed. There are many Sanskrit words used in the Vedas which signify that Divinity is the Lord of speech, or word, the Lord of thought and reason. For instance, Bṛihaspati is a Sanskrit compound word which we read often in the Vedas. Brihas comes from the Sanskrit root verb *bṛih* or *barh,* meaning 'to break forth' or 'to drive forth', and from the same root Latin Vergum and English Word can be derived ; and *pati* means the lord, or the husband owner Therefore, Brihaspati means the Lord or Father or Word. A synonym of Bṛihaspati is the Sanskrit Vachaspati—*Vachas* or Vak (the same as Vox) means word. So Vachaspati also means the Lord or Father of word or speech. In the *Bṛihadaranyaka Upanishad,* we read *'vak vai brahma'*,—"the word was the Brahman, or the Absolute". Again, it is stated: "That, of which these things are born, by which when born, they live and into which they live and into which they return and enter death or dissolution, is the Brahman". "He with his mind united himself with his word".[9] "In the beginning, Divine vak, or Word eternal, without beginning, or end, consisting of wisdom, was uttered by the self-existent One, from which all activities proceeded". "In the beginning the Lord of the universe shaped from the words the names and forms of all beings, and the procedure of all activities".[10] In one of the ancient writings of the Hindus we read: "I know that great self-effulgent Being who thought all forms and made their names".[11] "He desired let a second body be born of me and word embraced with mind".[12] "All things that can be thought of, had their beginning in Word, or in the eternal concept in the Divine mind". Again in the *Mahabharata* we read: "He who exists by himself, let first stream forth the Word, the eternal Word without beginning or end, the Divine Word which we read in the Veda, whence proceeded the evolution of the world". The Hindus believe that the phenomena of the world exist, because they are

[8] Cf Max Muller· *Theosophy or Psychological Religion,* pp. 83-84.
[9] The *Bṛihadaranyaka Upanishad.*
[10] Smriti.
[11] The *Taittiriya Aranyaka,* III., 12, 17.
[12] The *Bṛihadaranyaka Upanishad,* I, 1, 24.

in the Veda. The word Veda does not stand for any book or writing, but for Logos, or Sophia, or Wisdom, and comprehends all concepts necessary for the creation of all the created things. In the Veda, it is said. "When the Lord projected the concept of the earth from His Divine mind, the earth was formed", etc. By Word the vedic sages did not mean mere sound, but thought or concept in the Divine mind; therefore, the Divine mind was the Father, and the word or concept or ideal type was the Son like the Greek Logos, as explained by Philo.

The later Hindu philosophers took up this idea, discussed it, and wrote volumes after volumes books on the Logos theory. Whenever any man or woman, reached perfection and manifested divinity, he or she was worshipped as the incarnation of the Word, the first born or the manifestation of the ideal man or woman as existing in the Divine mind Krishna, Siva, Rama, Buddha, Ramakrishna and others are worshipped in India as the ideal types of men, or incarnations of the Word. As the doctrine of Logos, the very life-blood of Christianity, was purely of Aryan or Hindu origin, so the symbol of the Cross, which is the corner-stone of the structure of Christianity, originated not amongst the Hebrews, but amongst the Aryans. Well has it been said by St. Augustine: "What is now called the Christian religion, has existed among the ancients and was not absent from the beginning of the human race until Christ came in the flesh, from which time the true religion, which existed already, began to be called the Christian". Whatever importance the followers of Christ may attach to the worship of the Cross by connecting it with the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth, it existed as a religious symbol for centuries before the birth of Christ and was largely used as a sacred symbol by the Egyptians, Persians, Hindus, Buddhists, Tibetans, Chinese, and other ancient nations of almost all parts of the world. The Cross is the oldest religious symbol that has ever been invented by the human mind. Traces of the worship of the Cross as a religious symbol can be found amongst the most ancient prehistoric aboriginal tribes of the old and new worlds.

The ancient Egyptians used the Tau-Cross, which is like the English letter 'T'. In the Egyptian hieroglyphics, the Cross has been interpreted variously; for instance, a Cross with four equal arms has been assumed to have meant the four elements. When

the form of the Cross was composed of two of four sceptres with a circle at the point of interception, it is said to indicate the 'divine potentiality'. It stood sometimes for the protective power, sometimes for the life to come, etc. Some of the Egyptian deities, as Ra or Ammon-Ra. Ammon had the sacred Tau-Cross in their hands. The Cross was used by the Egyptians in tattooing the body and also in the paintings on the walls and tombs at Thebes. A long Cross, surmounting a heart and meaning good or goodness, was fixed upon the fronts of houses in Thebes and Memphis, intimating 'This is the abode of the good'. The Egyptian symbols of the five planets had a Cross connected with each. The natives of Abyssinia used to observe certain religious rites by plunging a Cross in the river, Gitche. In ancient India, Cross was used as a sign of prosperity, good luck, longevity and happiness, and also protector from evil, and was used largely in connection with religious rites and ceremonies The most ancient form of Cross which has been used in India from prehistoric times, is called Swastika. It is like a Greek Cross, but its arms are bent at right angles. It literally means in Sanskrit 'su'—well, and asti being, that is, 'well being', or 'welfare'. Originally the form of Swastika has two lines crossing each other, but afterwards it was shaped like i e. Cross. The word *Swastika* had been in existence in the Sanskrit language long before Buddha was born. In the Rig Veda, we read: '*Swasti me Indra*', i e.. 'Do thou, O Indra, grant me welfare'. The Swastika-Cross appears in the hands of Vishnu, the Preserver of the world, and represents the world-sustaining power which Vishnu possesses. It was found in the foot-prints of Buddha in the Buddhistic temples. In the Buddhistic inscriptions and coins, Swastika or Cross very often occurs. In the *Ramayana* we read: "Bharata selects a ship marked with the sign of the Cross or Swastika". The Buddhistic Stupas (tombs) were built in the form of a Swastika or Cross When a woman covers her breast with crossed arms, it is called Swastika-posture, that is, the sign of good luck, prosperity, and protection It is supposed that a woman with Swastika-posture is free from all dangers. When a person sits cross-legged, it is called Swastika-posture which is the best of all the sitting postures. In ancient times, houses were built in the form of a Swastika-Cross.

When the Cross became the religious symbol of the Buddh-

ists, wherever Buddhism went, the symbol of the Cross travelled with it. But it should be remembered that Swastika or Swastika-Cross was used in the altar of the sacrifice (*yajnavedi*) in the Vedic and classical period in India In Tibet, China, Korea, Japan, Burma, Ceylon, Java, and in other places, the Cross as a religious symbol was introduced from India. India is therefore, the motherland of the origin of the Swastika or Cross. In China Japan, and in other countries, the statues of Buddha were usually marked with a Swastika or Cross. In Tibet, the Cross is to be found as the royal emblem of the Bon-pa deities. The Lamas, or the Buddhist priests, carry a Cross and use it at the time of benediction. Sir Stamford Raffles, after living in Java for twenty years, writes: "Java received her civilization and art directly from India. Out of the six steps of the most ancient prehistoric temples in Java, three are in the form of a Cross". In the most ancient paintings of the Hindus, Krishna has a Cross in his hand. Yama, the Ruler of the departed ones, is painted as holding a Cross in one hand Some of the Christian Missionaries say that the Cross was introduced in India by the early Christians who visited the country. Such statements are not correct. Among the most interesting ancient relics that have been recently excavated in the forests of Central India, which were never visited by any Christian Missionary, two rude stone Crosses have been discovered. The archeologists think that those Crosses must have existed in good shape at least three thousand years before the advent of Jesus the Christ. Moreover, the ancient rock-cut Cave of Elephanta is nearly in the form of a Greek Cross Its dimensions are longitudinally 130 feet and transversely 123 feet, and its height is about 17 feet. In this Cave of Elephanta, which was cut before the Buddhistic period, there is a figure of the Hindu Trinity holding a huge Cross in one hand. This Hindu Trinity represents the deities, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. Tavernier, who visited Benares in the end of the seventeenth century, seeing a temple of Vishnu, said that the body of this edifice was built in the form of an immense Cross. This Vishnu temple was destroyed by Aurugzeb, the Mogul Emperor, who built a huge mosque in its place.

The Cross is to be found in almost all the ancient temples of India. Amongst the Jains, Swastika or Cross is the oldest

religious symbol In the Sanskrit grammar of Panini, written at least 400 B C, Swastika or Cross is described as one of the ancient signs for marking cattle, and even today cattle and sheep are marked with a Cross by the illiterate classes of India. Swastika is mentioned in the Atharva Veda. Even today the Hindus paint a Swastika or Cross on the walls of the room which the newly married couple enter immediately after the wedding. The 'Y'-shaped Cross is drawn on the foreheads of the Vaishnavas, the dualistic worshippers of Vishnu. The Cross was used in the Hindu coins in the prehistoric period. It was also used as decoration on walls, furniture, earthware, rugs, and on garments worn by the priests and priestesses in ancient times in India.

This Swastika or peculiar form of the Cross is the oldest of all forms of this symbol that are found in the West. It originated in the prehistoric times amongst the Aryans who inhabited in India, and from there it travelled all over the world The same sign was found in hundreds of places on the Christians' tombs in the Catacombs at Rome. There was a time when a great discussion arose amongst the early Christians as to the selection of the Cross which should be representative, and history tells us that Swastika was one of those which were suggested. It is for this reason we find it on the tombs in the Catacombs at Rome The latest use of Swastika mentioned in the literature on this subject, is in he Archiepiscopal chair in the cathedral at Milan. The prehistoric archaelogists maintain that Swastika or Cross travelled into Western countries from the East during the Bronze Age They claim that long before the tin mines of Spain, Britain or Germany were discovered, bronze came to Europe from the East i e. from Burma, Siam, and other places, where copper and tin were first made into bronze. When bronze was introduced into Western Asia, Egypt, and Europe, the sign of the Cross was also introduced in those countries, as the most ancient relic is found on bronze. Professor Wilson, in his celebrated essay on Swastika, which was read before the Smithsonian Institute, not only supports this theory of migration of the symbol of Cross from the East to the West, but also believes that it migrated from Asia to America. Regarding the same symbol which has been discovered in North and South America, Professor Wilson says:

"Adopting the theory of migration of the Swastika, we may, therefore, conclude that if the Swastika came from India or Eastern Asia (to America), it came earlier than the sixth century B.C.".

Thus we can understand how the Word, or the Son of God, was known in ancient India and how the Cross was the most ancient religious symbol of the Hindus. Not only this, but the earliest record of the sacrifice of a divine man in space is also to be found in the Rig Veda, described in mythological language. John P. Lundy, in his *Monumental Christianity*, says: "At any rate, the religion of India had its mythical crucified victim long anterior to Christianity I am disposed to believe this to be the victim described in the Vedas themselves. We read in the Rig Veda: 'The first-born Being, before the beginning of the material phenomena, became a victim of the sacrifice. The *devas* or gods, and angels who came later took the First-born Being for the animal of sacrifice, fastened him to a sacrificial post, sanctified him, and afterwads sacrificed him, stretching his limbs in the eternal space. From that sacrifice arose all that exist on earth and in the heavens'" Here you will notice the metaphor that the Frst-born Being was the only-begotten son of God, the absolute Being and he was fastened to a post and sacrificed by the *devas* for the good of the universe. The students of the vedic literature are well-aware of the fact that the most ancient sacrificial post was in the form of a Cross. On such a post the First-born Being was fastened like an animal of the sacrifice.

John P. Lundy has quoted from Colebrooke in his *Monumental Christianity*: "When that ancient sacrifice was completed, sages and men and our progenitors were formed by him. Viewing with an observant mind this oblation, which primeval *devas* offered, I venerate" Mr. Lundy further says: "This looks like the lamb, slain from the foundation of the world and whom all the angels of God worship". Thus the vital points of Christianity, in whatever manner they might have been explained by the priests and theologians, were of Aryan origin It originated in India and was used for the religious purposes. So whenever we worship the Cross, or the Son of God, we unconsciously worship the Aryan symbols of the prehistoric times. Whenever we think of the sacrifice of Calvary, we also unknow-

ingly think of the mythological sacrifice of the First-born Being which is described in the Vedas.

Although these and other similar religious symbols have certain value in helping human minds in the path of spiritual progress as objects of concentration and meditation, still they are of slight consequence if those abstract truths, for which all religious symbols stand, are forgotten, or are not properly understood. Many symbols are used in India, each of which represents an abstract truth[13] which ordinary minds cannot easily grasp. They are used largely by the dualistic and qualified non-dualistic worshippers of God. Most of them, like the orthodox Christians, do not understand the true meanings of the mythological symbols of the Word or Cross. These symbols, in truth, stand for an object to be deserved.

The object of the Vedanta philosophy is to free the human minds from ignorance, superstition, prejudice, and errors, as well as to lead them to the realization of those abstract truths which give foundation to the names and forms of all symbols. Therefore, Vedanta insists that salvation cannot be obtained by the mere worship of the Cross, or the Son of God, or the Word, in flesh and blood, and maintains that it can only be reached by going beyond all symbols, by realizing the sonship of the soul and its oneness with the universal Spirit Vedanta declares that each individual soul is, in reality, the Word, the Christ, or the Son of God, which dwells eternally in the bosom of the Father, nay, which is one with Him, and there is no gulf between the Father and His children, and the realization of this supreme unity depends upon the sacrifice of the lower self upon the Cross made by the traversing of the Divine will by the human will. Such a sacrifice obliterates the Cross and leaves only the Word, which is the Father, or the absolute Brahman.

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[13] The abstract truth is not easily understood, as it is the basic or absolute truth. The abstract truth is an object to be contemplated in deep thought.

## CHAPTER X

# WHO IS THE SAVIOUR OF SOULS

"Even shouldst thou be the most sinful of all sinful (men), thou shalt by the raft of knowledge of thy *Atman* or Self cross over the whole ocean of sin"—*Bhagavad Gita, Ch. IV, 36.*

Who is the Saviour of souls—is a question of momentous importance in all the great religions of the world. Since the first dawn in human minds of the nature of the soul, this question has been asked and discussed by prophets and priests, kings and beggars, as well as by the inspired revealers of the sacred scriptures Various attempts have been made since the beginning of the religious history of the world to arrive at the right solution of this great problem. It is a question so deep in its nature that many advanced thinkers, philosophers and metaphisicians of all ages and climes have confessed their failure to arrive at any satisfactory solution They have tried, but the conclusions they have reached, have not been universally acceptable. Indeed, as this is a problem to be solved by each individual soul, it is highly improbable that any particular solution can give satisfaction to all classes of minds. The question resolves itself into three divisions, and each of equal importance: (1) Who can really be called a Saviour? (2) From what, and in what way is a soul to be saved? (3) What is the true nature of the soul? These three points must be understood very clearly before we are able to discuss the main question at issue, that is, who is he Saviour of souls?

Three great spiritual leaders of the world are worshipped today as the Saviours of mankind by the peoples of different countries. One was of Semitic origin, and the other two appeared amongst the ancient Aryans who inhabited in India. The one is known as Jesus the Christ, and the other two are Buddha and Krishna. Each of these Saviours is recognized by his followers as the Incarnation of God on earth. The followers of these Saviours worship their masters as God Himself The general belief in India is that, like Jesus the Christ, Buddha,

Krishna and Ramakrishna also possessed the divine powers of atoning for sins and of leading suffering humanity through different paths to the abode of eternal happiness and everlasting life. As the followers of Jesus the Christ hope to be saved from sin and eternal suffering through their sin-atoning Master, so the followers of Buddha and Krishna expect to reach the highest ideal of life which is the ultimate goal of religion, through the paths laid down by their divine Masters. Although each one of these is worshipped as the Saviour of the world, still the idea of salvation, the true meaning of the word salvation, and the methods of attaining to it, are understood differently by the followers of each of these three great Incarnations. We all know that the Christians mean by salvation, redemption from sin, escape from eternal punishment, and the attainment of everlasting felicity in heaven, through faith in Jesus the Christ who died for sinners

According to the majority of Christian sects, each individual soul is born sinful, inheriting sin as his birthright. They accept the account of creation as given in the Genesis, and believe in the temptation and fall of man through the influence of Satan, the creator of evil. When the first man, Adam, was created, he was made perfect and sinless after the image of the Creator, and then the evil spirit appeared on the scene and sowed the seed of evil in the fertile soil of Adam's soul. As that positive seed of evil grew into a tree and bore fruit, Adam's sin for the disobedience to the command of God: brought about his fall, punishment, suffering, and death. The tree of evil did not die with the death of the first man, but it continued to grow larger and larger with innumerable branches until the whole world was covered with its shadow, sorrow, disease, and death The results of Adam's sin or disobedience to God's command have been reaped by his descendants from generation to generation for nearly six thousand years. At last, when the whole world was groaning under the burden of sin and suffering, the compassion of the Father in heaven was aroused and He showed how much he loved mankind. It is said. 'God so loved the world that He sent His only-begotten Son to save the souls of men'.[1] If that love had been shown a little earlier,

[1] St John, III, 16

how many thousands of souls might have been saved from sin and its consequent suffering! The ways of the merciful Father are mysterious and beyond human comprehension Jesus the Christ came and sacrificed himself, taking upon his shoulders the burden of the sins of all humanity. His blood washed away all the sins of the world, and since then the world has become free from sin, suffering, and death for those who accept this sacrifice and redemption. Of course, these results are not to be enjoyed by the unbelievers, or the heretics, but only by those who believe in Jesus the Christ as the Saviour of the world. Most Christians assert and believe that although Jesus the Christ died for all humanity, only those who come to him, shall receive redemption from sin and go to the heaven to enjoy celestial felicity. Those who, either through ignorance or perversity, fail to come under his banner, shall suffer for eternity This is the explanation and solution of the great problem of salvation of the souls as understood and preached by the theologians and the priests of Christendom and as popularly accepted by the Christians.

The whole idea of Christ's being Saviour of the world and of the individual souls is most intimately connected with the theory that each individual soul is born in sin and is destined to suffer Being born sinful, it has no power to save itself from the inevitable result of sin, which was committed, not by itself, but by the first man ; consequently, it needs the help of the innocent, holy Son of God, who came down from the heaven to rescue the sinful souls by taking upon himself the burden of said guilt, suffering its results in his own person. It is often said that before accepting Jesus the Christ as the Saviour of souls, a man must believe that he was born in sin, that the very nature of his soul is sinful, that he cannot redeem himself, that he has no power to obtain salvation save through external help and he must have absolute faith in the theory of vicarious atonement, and through that faith alone he will go to heaven and be free from all sin and suffering. No one is allowed to ask any question regarding any of these points, he must accept the doctrine or suffer the consequences, and there is no other alternative.

This solution may bring comfort to many souls. It may solve some problems of life and be entirely satisfactory to those

who can accept it. We do not wish to disturb the well-settled opinions and beliefs of those who are contented with this explanation and are not ready to ask questions, or seek farther. But there are many others who do not wish to accept anything upon heresy, or because it is written in some book, and who do not care to believe anything on external authority Such minds have found this solution unsatisfactory, illogical, and contradictory. Some of the best thinkers and philosophers of the world as well as the advocates of modern science have asked again and again: "If God is infinite and all-pervading, where is there room for Satan? Who created Satan? Why did not God prevent the first man, Adam, from being tempted by that evil spirit? Why did He not protect him? Why should He punish an innocent man instead of the doer of evil? How unkind and unjust must he be, who punishes his own son for the faults of others All these questions and many other questions have arisen again and again in the minds of thinking people, driving them to discouragement and unbelief. To them we say—friends, you need no despair, there is great hope for you, there is another solution of the problem which may appeal to your reason and bring comfort to your souls. That solution, standing on the rock of reason, science, and philosophy, answers all questions and doubts and may clear away all your difficulties.

First of all, let us examine carefully the origin of the idea of various atonement. In ancient times, when primitive men were divided into tribes, each tribe had a tribal god. They believed that they could hold communion with these supernatural beings through the prophets, priests, witches, or through oracles or inspirations. Their tribal gods were numerous, as you will find them among the ancient Semitic tribes The members of each of those tribes believed that their god was their ruler, protector, guide, and friend, and whenever the god was angry or displeased, evil overtook them, and whenever any misfortune happened, or any disease fell upon them, they thought that it was the result of their god's wrath, and so they tried to appease him by going to the priests, or to some necromantic diviners, or to certain prophets, and then they performed such acts as these sages directed The priests usually told them to offer the most useful and valuable things to their gods.

In this way gradually grew up the idea of offering sacrifices and prayers to their god, thus bringing him to their side and appeasing his wrath. The main object, however, was to get rid of the miseries and sufferings of life. Sometimes they offered things which could not be easily obtained. Sometimes they sacrificed animals which were of great use to them. Some tribes reached the climax by offering up the human beings.

It was the custom amongst the ancient Jews to sacrifice the human bodies before the altar of Jahveh Nothing was of more value than a child, and therefore the first-born child, or animal, or fruit of trees, belonged to Jahveh, and they gave it to him. Before offering these sacrifices the priests transferred the sins to the innocent animals, and when these animals were killed they had the belief that the blood of these innocent creatures would purify the souls of the sinners and wash away the sins committed by the members of those communities or tribes. They used to sprinkle the blood of the sacrificed animals on the heads of the sinners, believing that they were thus made free from all sins. This custom still prevails in some parts of the world. There are tribes in India who sprinkle blood of sacrificed animals in the same way as we read in the Old Testament. This custom gradually developed into the idea of vicarious atonement ; the blood of the innocent is the purifier of souls and the redeemer of the wicked.

In the whole world, the Christian nations alone have kept up this theory of vicarious atonement. The Zoroastrians, Jews, and Mohammedans no longer accept it. They try to be free from sins by following the commands of their God, obeying the scriptures and living a righteous life. Now, as long as we believe in the special creation of man at some particular time by some extra-cosmic being in his temptation and fall in the transmission and inheritance of sin as that of some positive thing like wealth or property, so long we are bound to believe that the individual soul is born in sin and it has no power to save itself from punishment and it needs help from outside; so long we are forced to accept the idea of vicarious atonement. Modern science has shown that this world was not created at any special time. The doctrine of evolution has thrown that theory into the background So we are not obliged to accept the account as given in the Genesis Modern Geology

has proved that man appeared as early as the tertiary period, more than 10,000 years ago, and therefore, we need not concern ourselves about the temptation and fall of man, perhaps 4,000 years later. The Satan is already entombed in the grave of the nineteenth century, and so we need not talk about the inheritance of sin. First of all, we are not bound to inherit the sins of our parents, and consequently nothing can force us to accept the theory of vicarious atonement Let us throw aside all the dogmas and superstitious beliefs with which we have burdened our minds from childhood. Let us forget for a moment that we are born in sin and that our nature is sinful All such ideas do not bring any good to humanity. They make us more sinful and keep us on the plane of sin and wickedness, because the power of thought is tremendous "What thou thinkest, thou shalt become," is the saying of all sages. If we constantly think of ourselves as sinful, or as born in wickedness and also to be punished eternally, then by the power of thought we make ourselves sinful There is no hope for us to be better until we forget these things If I constantly think that I am wicked, I keep myself on that plane. If I constantly think that I am weak and diseased, I bring disease in myself Fixed thoughts and ideas which predominate in our minds, mould our inner nature and force us to act in accordance with those thoughts The Christian Scientists and the Mental Healers have found this to be true. They know what an enormous power the faith has. If I believe myself to be born in sin and shapen in iniquity, then that belief intensifies all the evil propensities in my nature, and makes it almost impossible for me to attempt their conquest. I know many people who have been brought up in institutions where it is taught that every individual soul is born in sin. The idea of a born sinner has become so strong in their minds that they can hardly imagine it possible for a soul to do good deeds without being helped by Jesus the Christ They are frightened when they hear for the first time that God dwells within them They cannot believe it. They will say "How is it possible for God to dwell in the body of a sinner like me?" This is the effect of training they get from their childhood This degeneration of the human mind is the result of such training. It prevents the realization of truth and keeps them back from the path which leads to perfection.

The fact is that we have not inherited the sins of our parents Why should we inherit sin of another? Who can force us to inherit sins? Who compels us to inherit sin from our fathers or grandfathers? Did our parents create our souls? Have we sprung into existence out of nothing? Did we come into existence from a state in which we did not have our individuality? Is this my first and last birth? No, it cannot be. Who can answer such questions? We have inherited sins from our parents and the parents may delude the ignorant minds of children. But no right-thinking persons can accept it as true. Truth is this that our present lives are the result of our past lives. But, in fact, we are not the victims of the sins of our forefathers, as we possess individuality quite distinct from them. We existed as the immortal souls before our bodies were born, and shall exist after the death of our mortal bodies. Jesus the Christ said: "Before Abraham, I was". So it is with each individual soul Each soul existed before Abraham was born, nay, before the creation of the world, and it has been manifesting its powers from the beginningless past Our present existence is a connecting link in the chain of our various manifestations We are living at present in delusion, committing repeated mistakes and reaping the results of those mistakes, and also thinking that we are born as sinners and are to be punished forever.

One point we should remember that as long as we think we are born sinners, we are not approaching the true nature of our souls If the innate nature of our souls be sinful, who can save us? It is impossible for anyone to change the innate nature of anything without destroying the thing itself The innate nature of fire is heat. Did you ever see that fire exists without heat? Can fire exist, being separate from its innate nature? It is impossible If the innate nature of the soul be sinful, then it can never exist as sinless There is no power in the universe that can change the innate sinful nature of the soul without destroying the soul itself. Consequently, salvation of a sinful soul will be identical with the destruction or annihilation of it. Therefore such statements that we are born in sin and the innate nature of our souls is sinful, are absurd, illogical, and misleading On the contrary, if we accept God as the infinite Spirit, we cannot deny that He dwells everywhere. If that be the case, then God dwells within us and also dwells in every

individual soul. Who can prevent it? If you do not believe that, you do not believe that God is infinite Spirit If we once admit that Spirit is pure, sinless, and divine, then we are forced to have the conclusion that the Spirit which dwells in us, is sinless and divine The Infinite is always one and it cannot be many. How can the true nature, or the Spirit, in man, which is a part of the universal Spirit, be sinful, when God, the infinite Spirit, cannot be corrupted by sin? How can the Spirit which dwells in the soul of each individual, be called sinful? What right have you to teach your child that it is born a sinner and that it has inherited sin as its birthright? You have no right whatever. On the other hand, teach your children that they are the pure souls, the divine Spirit dwells in each one of them, and God is within them If your children imbibe such ideas from their childhood, they will be more spiritual when they grow older, and they will not have to unlearn anything. We all know how difficult it is to unlearn things which we have learnt in our childhood. How many grown-up people ever succeed in unlearning the ideas with which their tender minds were inoculated in childhood? So teach your children such ideas as "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you"; "I and my Father are one". That will be of great help to them. Do not accept the interpretations which you get from the priests, or from the books First of all learn the true meaning yourself and then explain it to others. First be and then make. If you do not understand the true spirit of Christ's sayings, wait for the explanation and search within. The true meaning will come to you in time That explanation will be true which is not bound by the limitations of the manners, customs, prejudices and particular beliefs of a particular race The standard of truth is always universal and is not limited. That explanation will be the true one which is not limited by books or dogmas, but which will harmonize with the truths discovered by all religions.

Jesus the Christ did not teach the idea of vicarious atonement. None of the great spiritual teachers of the world taught the dogma that we are born in sin and are going to eternal perdition. In India, we do not find such teachings, and from ancient times these ideas were never accepted by the thinkers, sages and philosophers. The most ancient scriptures of the Hindus are the Vedas. They do not teach it. On the con-

trary, the Hindu philosophers unanimously declare that each individual soul is immortal and pure, and cannot be stained by sin The ancient seers of Truth in India realized unity and infinity of the supreme Spirit and also the divine and sinless nature of the soul of man. They never preached the idea that the soul was created by some being at a certain time. They never taught it to their children. If we read the *Upanishads*, there we find that the vedic sages, realizing the divine nature of the soul, declared before the world: "Oh, ye children of immortal bliss, listen to me: I have discovered the truth; I have found the path. Know ye your true Self; that knowledge will light you across the ocean of death and sin".[2] The expression of the word 'children of immortal bliss' is full of sweetness, and really it is a life-giving and heart-consoling expression.

One of the results of such teaching is that the Hindu mind cannot imagine why an individual soul will think to be born in sin. A Hindu mother never teaches her children such ideas. There was a Hindu queen who used to teach her children *'tat twam asi'* i.e. 'that thou art'. It means that thou art the eternal Spirit, that infinite Spirit, the all-knowing Spirit, and the Spirit that is free from sins and sufferings and cannot be stained by sin. When she put her babe into its cradle, she used to sing: "That thou art". "Thou art the divine Spirit". As the child grew older, it asked its mother the meaning of what it heard, and the mother said: "Go and find out the meaning". That impression created in the mind of that child which was so strong that he afterwards became one of the great sages of India. If Christian mothers would teach their children in the same way, instead of telling them that they are born sinners and going to be punished, what a great blessing would it be to the children and to society! Then the number of sinners would decrease among the Christian nations.

So it can be said that there is no such thing as absolute sin, nor is it possible for one to inherit it like a piece of property. Sin is nothing but selfishness. Its cause is the ignorance of our true nature As long as we do not know our real nature, we remain selfish. If all individuals are born sinful, then why is it that sinful parents produce virtuous children? There are

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[2] Cf *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, Ch. II, 5; III, 8.

to be found many instances of this. Now here a question may arise: "If our true nature is divine, why are we not conscious of it, and why do we not know that the spirit which is dwelling within us, is divine?" To this question it can be said that we are not conscious of our true nature because of our imperfect understanding which does not allow us to see things as they are. We mistake the body for the soul and soul for body, matter for spirit and spirit for matter We identify the changes of the body with the nature of the soul. We give all the attributes of the body to the soul, and if the body is diseased we think we are diseased and are suffering.[3] This understanding, being subject to evolution, gradually manifests in a better way and ceases to make mistakes as we rise higher in the scale of evolution. Mind and intellect are the medium through which the perfect and divine Spirit within us is expressing its powers. The *Atman,* or the divine Spirit, may be compared to the self-luminous sun and the medium of mind to space. When the mental space is covered with the thick and heavy clouds of ignorance, the light of the self-luminous sun of the *Atman,* or the divine Spirit, is invisible to the eye of the understanding.[4] As the most powerful rays of the sun seem to us to be powerless and dull on a rainy day, so the most powerful rays of the divine light of the self-effulgent *Atman* do not shine on the understanding when the heavy clouds of ignorance overhang the intellect. When ignorance covers the light of the Spirit, the understanding makes many mistakes. Just as in the partial darkness of twilight our eyesight is often deluded and we mistake a rock or a tree-trunk for a robber and are frightened, so in the darkness of ignorance our understanding mistakes the body for the soul and matter for spirit and *vice versa.* Then we suffer and cry for help. Through such mistake we falsely identify ourselves with the limited medium of mind, intellect, senses, and body, and attribute their qualities to our true nature. Then the self-consciousness of the *Atman* or divine Spirit in us becomes confused with those limitations. The result of this mixture is what we call egoism or selfishness, or, in other words, the

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[3] This mistake is known as *adhyasa* and this has beautifully been explained by Sankara in the *Adhyasa-bhasya*

[4] In the *Vedantasara,* Sadanand Yati has given this very example for making explicit the self-luminous nature of the *Atman.*

idea of *"I* and *mine"*, "I am this or that", "I am born", "I am diseased", and so forth. The changes of the body and also the senses and modifications of mind are identified with our true nature, the *Atman,* or the Spirit The appearance of the *Atman* as the limited ego is sometimes described as the fall of the divine Spirit within the limitation of the phenomenal existence. This appearance of the Absolute as the relative individual ego through the power of ignorance is described in the Old Testament in a crude mythological way as the fall of Adam which is the personified pure and perfect image of God. Ignorance is the Satan Through the influence of the indescribable magic power of ignorance, or *avidya,* or nescience, as it is called in Vedanta, the eye of *buddhi* or understanding is overcome. Then Adam, or the divine nature, or the *Atman,* through the association of *buddhi,* or imperfect understanding, falls from the Paradise, i e. appears as an individual ego, losing for the time being the consciousness of the Absolute and becoming selfish and miserable. This, according to the teachings of Vedanta, is the spiritual meaning of the fall of man. The fallen ego will recover its absolute state and pristine glory through the help of the *Atman,* which is described as Christ. This is the whole secret of true Christianity. The ego is the apparent or selfish man. Buddha called this *Atman,* the Truth, and the apparent man, the soul. Who can save the apparent man except the real man, or the *Atman.* There is no other Saviour of the soul from this attachment to body and senses and from the bondages of ignorance and their result, and the way of salvation is the knowledge of the *Atman,* with the consequent surrender of the limited ego. If the soul, realizing its Divine nature, tells any unawakened soul: "Thou art spirit ; thy true nature is divine", then that true soul acts as the greatest friend and is called the saviour of the unawakened soul As the incarnations of God like Krishna, Buddha, Ramakrishna, Christ and others declared this truth to the world through their divine personality and power, they are called the greatest friends of mankind and also the Saviours of the world. Still we must not forget through the zeal of our loyalty to and reverence for those great souls that they merely point out the right paths to Godconsciousness and the true Saviour of the apparent ego is the *Atman.* Even the great souls like Jesus the Christ could not bring into the right

path to those who were not ready for such teaching. Think of what a small number of disciples Jesus left after so much sacrifice. What does it show? It shows that only those who feel the need of spiritual help can follow the example and teachings of the great soul, whether it be Christ, or Buddha, or Krishna, or Ramakrishna, or any other. They alone can attain to God-consciousness who are striving for salvation No one can save you if you are not ready to be saved. When the individual soul, dwelling in the darkness of ignorance, committing many mistakes, reaping their results and gathering experience in different planes of life, catches a glimmer of the light of Truth and struggles towards it, then and then only, the divine light which is shining within, is discovered or manifested and the Satan or ignorance is conquered. Christ said: "Seek and ye shall find"; "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free". Similarly Buddha said: "Truth is noble and sweet, truth can deliver you from evil. There is no Saviour in the world except Truth. Have confidence in Truth, although you may not be able to comprehend it, although you may suppose its sweetness to be bitter, although you may shrink from it at first Trust in the Truth". But where is that Truth to be found? Not in the temples, not in the churches or mosques, not in the books or creeds or sayings of this or that Prophet, but in the depth of your own heart Search within. It is the Atman, the Soul of our souls Vedanta also says. "One should save oneself by one's own Self or the *Atman;* never should one let onself sink in the ocean of birth and death. For the *Atman,* or the divine Self is he greatest friend and the Saviour of soul".[5]

[5] *Bhagavad Gita,* Ch. VI, 5-6

## CHAPTER XI

# GOD, OUR ETERNAL MOTHER

"I am the Father and Mother of the universe".

—*Bhagavad Gita, ix, 17.*

The worship of God as the Divine Mother of the universe is unknown to the people of the West.[1] Since the introduction of Christianity into Europe, the conception of God as the Creator and the Father of the universe has been preached by the theologians and the priests of Christendom Jesus, the founder of Christianity, worshipped God as his Father, and prayed to Him as the Father of the universe, and, consequently, those will follow Jesus and His teachings, worship God through this relation, established by the Master. The relation between the father and the son is much higher than that of the creator and his creatures, or the master and his servant. The more we advance in spirituality and more nearer we approach God, the closer becomes our relation to Him The worship of God is impossible without having some kind of relation between the worshipper and the object of worship.

In the Hebrew religion, God (Jehovah) was conceived of as the Creator, Ruler and Governor of the universe. He was like a most powerful and despotic monarch All creatures were related to Jehovah as the subjects to their ruler. As a ruler, punishes his disobedient subjects, so Jehovah punished those who disobeyed Him or his laws The duty of a subject was almost the same as that of slave to his master. As a slave serves his master through fear of punishment so the Hebrews served Jehovah The transition from such a relation to that of the father and the son was indeed a great step It was no longer an external relation to power and strength, but became a kind of kinship or blood relation, as it exists between an earthly father and his son There is a tie of love which binds a son to his father, and such a tie brings the individual soul much

[1] In America Theodore Parker was the first who spoke of God as our Mother

nearer to the Creator of the universe. As the earthly father of an individual is ordinarily considered to be his creator because of his begetting him and bringing him into existence out of nothing, so when the undeveloped human mind began to think of creation of the universe, it imagined that the Creator was one who begot the universe and produced it out of nothing. Consequently, the Creator became the Father of the universe.

It is found that all our conceptions of God begin with anthropomorphism i e. with giving God the human attributes in a greatly magnified degree and end in de-anthropomorphism i.e., with making Him free from all human attributes At the first stage of our conception of God, He appears to us as an extra-cosmic Being, or as the Creator of the universe, who is separate from the universe and dwells outside of it, just as a carpenter is separate from the chair or the table which he makes, or as the father is separate from the son whom he creates. The Hebrew conception of Jehovah was purely anthropomorphic He was an extra-cosmic Beng He dwelt in a heaven outside of the universe and possessed all human attributes. He created the universe out of nothing, fashioned it and became its ruler. The same Jehovah, when considered as the Father of the universe by Jesus and His followers, did not lose His extra-cosmic nature Even today the majority of the Christians do not go beyond this idea of an extra-cosmic God. They worshrip the same extra-cosmic Jehovah as the Creator of the universe and as their father. Jehovah is always masculine, and He is never described as feminine

According to the Hebrews, the masculine element of nature possessed all activity, strength and power. The male principle was recognized as the generator, and the female principle of nature was thought to be lower, insignificant, powerless and passive The female principle of nature was the producer and bearer of what the male principle created, and consequently, everything that represented the female principle, was considered as unimportant This explains why womanhood was estimated so low by the writers of the Old and New Testaments, especially by the great Apostle to the Gentiles. Even the very appearance and existence of woman on earth depended upon a man's rib according to the Genesis. Although the Creator was represented by the Hebrews as masculine and allpowerful, yet

when they explained the Genesis of the world, they could not deny the presence of the femine element which helped the Creator in bringing life into existence In the Mosaic account of Genesis, we read. "And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters"[2] which literally means that the Creator impregnated the waters, or the female element of nature. As God, or the male element, was extra-cosmic, outside of nature, and possessed all activities and powers, so He became the object of worship, and the female element, or nature, was entirely ignored. Every Christian admits the existence of nature, which is the female principle, but she has never been worshipped or adored. The idea of the Father grew stronger and stronger and that of the mother nature was left aside as passive and powerless, and was ultimately ignored. As long as the conception of God remains as extra-cosmic, separate from nature, which is passive, so long will He appear as the Father alone. The more we comprehend God as immanent and resident in nature, the more clearly we understand also that God is our Mother as well as our Father. When we see that nature or the feminine principle is inseparable from the Being or the masculine element and when we realize that nature is not passive and powerless, but the divine Energy, then we understand that God is one stupendous whole, in whom exist both the masculine and feminine principles Then we no longer separate nature from God, but we recognize nature as a part of the manifested divine Energy.

The tendency of modern science is towards this end. The doctrine of evolution, co-relation of forces, and persistence of energy, all these clearly prove that the phenomena of the whole universe and various forces of the external and internal world are but the expressions of one eternal Energy. The theory of evolution explains only the mode in which that eternal Energy produces this phenomenal universe Science has disproved the old theory of creation out of nothing through the fiat of an extra-cosmic God, and has shown that something can never come out of nothing Science teaches that the universe existed in a potential state in that primordial Energy, and gradually through the process of evolution the whole potentiality has be-

[2] Genesis, I, 2.

come kinetic or actual. The eternal Energy is not an unintelligent energy, but is intelligent. Whenever we cast our eyes either in the external or internal world, we find the expression, not of a fortuitous or accidental combination of matter and mechanical forces, but of regular laws guided by definite purpose. This universe is not a chaos, but a cosmos and one harmonious whole It is not an aimless chain of changes which we call evolution, but there is an orderly hidden purpose at every step of evolution. Therefore that Energy is intelligent We may call this self-existing, intelligent, eternal cosmic Energy the Mother of the universe. She is the source of infinite forces and infinite phenomena. This eternal Energy is called in Sanskrit, *Prakriti,* Latin *Procreatrix,* the creative power of the universe. As we find,

*"Tvam para prakritih sakshat brahmanah paramatmanah,*
*Tvatto jatam jagat sarvam tvam jagat-janani shive."*

"Thou art the *para-Prakriti* or the Divine energy of the supreme Being Of Thee is born everything of the universe, therefore Thou art the Mother of the universe". As all the forces of nature are but the manifestations of this divine Energy, so She is called all-powerful Wherever there is the expression of any force or power in the universe, there is the manifestation of the eternal *Prakriti* or the Divine Mother. It is more appropriate to call that Energy Mother than Father, because, like a mother, that Energy holds within her the germ of the phenomenal universe before evolution, develops and sustains it, projects it on space and preserves it when it is born. She is the Mother of the Trinity, Creator, Preserver and Destroyer. She is the source of all activities. She is the Sakti, i.e. force in action. A Creator, when deprived of his creative power, is no longer the Creator As the creative power is one of the expressions of that eternal Energy, so the Creator is looked upon by the Hindus as the child of the universal Divine Mother So are the Preserver and the Destroyer The Hindus have understood this eternal Energy as the Mother of the universe, and have worshipped Her from prehistoric times. Here you must remember that this divine energy is not the same as the powerless and passive nature (*jada-prakriti*) which

was rejected and ignored by the Hebrews and the Christians. You must not mistake this worship of the Divine Mother for nature-worship. In the Rig Veda, we read: "The Divine Mother says 'I am the Queen of the universe, the giver of all wealth and fruits of works. I am intelligent and omniscient. Although I am one, by My powers I appear as manifold. I cause war for protecting men, I kill the enemy and bring peace on earth I stretch out heaven and earth I have produced the Father. As the wind blows by itself, so I produce all phenomena by My own will. I am independent and responsible to none, I am beyond the sky, beyond this earth. My glory is the phenomenal universe; such am I by My power'."[3] Thus the Divine Mother is described as all in all. We live and move and have our beings in that Divine Mother. Who can not live for a moment if that eternal Energy ceases to manifect. All our mental and physical activities depend on Her She is doing whatever She chooses to do. She is independent. She obeys none She is producer of every event that occurs in the universe. She makes one appear good, spiritual and divine, while it is She who makes another appear as wicked and sinful[4] It is through Her power we perform virtuous deeds or commit sinful acts. But She is beyond good and evil, beyond virtue and vice. Her forces are neither good, nor evil, but they appear so to us when we look at them from different standpoints and compare them with one another

When that all-pervading divine Energy manifests, She expresses Herself in two sets of opposite forces. The one set has the tendency towards God and is called *vidya* in Sanskrit, and the other towards worldliness and is called *avidya*. The one leads to freedom and happiness, and the other to bondage and suffering The one is knowledge, the other is ignorance The one is light, the other is darkness Each individual soul is the centre where these opposite forces are constantly working and fighting with one another When *vidya* or the powers which lead Godward predominate, we advance towards God and become religious, spiritual, and unselfish, but when its

[3] Rig Veda, x, 125

[4] The Hindu deity, Kali is conceived with four hands In two hands, there are the *abhayamudra* and the *kripana* (sword), which mean that she gives protection to Her devotees by one hand and punishes the wicked by the other

opposite, the *avidya* power, prevails, we become worldly, selfish, and wicked. When the former is predominant, the latter is overcome, and *vice versa.* These powers exist in each individual, though they vary in the degree of their strength in each. The man or woman, in whom the Godward-leading powers prevail, is called devotional, prayerful, righteous, pure in heart, and unselfish These qualities are the expressions of *vidya* powers within us. Such higher powers are latest in all and even in those who do not show such qualities. All persons can rouse those latent powers by practising devotion, prayer, righteousness, purity, and unselfishness The easiest way to attain these powes is by the worship of *vidya-Sakti,* or that aspect of the Divine Mother which represents all powers that lead to spiritual perfection. By worship or devotion we mean constant remembrance of that aspect. If we constantly think of the source of all spirituality and of all the higher powers which make one spiritual, surely those powers will be arounsed in us and we shall become spiritual, righteous and unselfish. Therefore the Hindus worship this *vidya-Sakti.* When they worship that aspect, they do not deny or ignore the opposite aspect which leads to worldliness, but they make it subordinate to the higher *vidya* aśpect. Sometimes they think of these opposite forces separately, personify them, and make them the female attendants of the Divine Mother. The Divine Mother has many attendants. All the evil forces of nature are Her attendants. She stands in the centre of the universe radiant in Her own glory, like the sun when surrounded on all sides by thick dark clouds.[5]

Whenever there is any expression of extraordinary righteousness and spirituality, there is a special manifestation of the Divine Mother. There is Her incarnation. The Divine Mother incarnates sometimes in the form of a man, and sometimes in the form of a woman,[6] to establish order and righteousness All men and women are Her children. But there is something more in woman As woman represents motherhood on earth, so all women, whether married or unmarried, are representatives of that almighty Divine Mother of the universe.

[5] Consult "Kali the Mother" by Swami Vivekananda

[6] Consult the song of Kamalakanta. "You do not know that the primal Cause, the Divine Mother (Shyama Ma) is not only a woman" etc.

It is for this reason women are so highly revered and honoured by the Hindus. There is no country in the world except India where God the Supreme Being is worshipped from time immemorial as the Divine Mother of the universe. India is the only country where the earthly mother is looked upon as living Deity, and where a man learns in his childhood: "One mother is greater than a thousand fathers." You have heard many stories regarding the condition of women in India. Most of these are grossly exaggerated, some are utterly false and some are partially true. The familiar American story of Hindu mothers throwing their babes into the Ganges to become food for crocodiles, is unknown among the Hindus In the first place, crocodiles cannot live in a strong current like that of the Ganges. I have travelled the length of this mighty river from its mouth to its source, some fifteen hundred miles, but never saw any such acts. These statements were heard by me for the first time after coming to America, though tales and pictures to this effect have been quite common in this country in books for the young. There is not time to go into a discussion of those points today, but so far I can assure you that you will not find any other country where every living mother, as Sir Monier Monier Williams says, "is venerated as a kind of deity by her children, where every village or city has its special guardian mother, called (in Sanskrit) *Mata.* * *"[7] It is extremely difficult for a Western mind to grasp exactly what the Hindus mean when they say that every woman is representative of the Divine Mother. A very simple illustration will give you an idea of the respect the Hindus have for women. In Sanskrit when two names are used together, the rule of grammar is that the more honourable should stand first. In Sanskrit we say women and men, not men and women; instead of father and mother, we say mother and father; instead of husband and wife, wife and husband, because a woman is always more honourable than a man. In India, wives do not adopt their husbands' names and they do not merge their individuality into that of their husbands, as women do in the West, but they keep their own names separate. If a wife's name be Radha, and her husband's name be Krishna, and if we say them together, we

[7] Cf *Hinduism and Brahmanism, p 222.*

would say Radha-Krishna and never Krishna-Radha. The wife's name must be said first. So we say Sita-Rama. Sita is the wife and Rama is the husband Again, when God incarnates in the form of a man, as in Krishna or Rama, the wife of such an incarnation is worshipped as the incarnation of the Divine Mother. The wife is worshipped first and then the husband. A Western mind does not easily appreciate the wonderful reverence for womanhood which the Hindus have.

The Divine Mother is the personal God, the same as *Iswara* in Sanskrit, and the Brahman or the absolute Substance, or the universal Spirit, is the impersonal Being. The Brahman is formless, nameless and without any attributes. It is the ocean of absolute intelligence, existence and bliss (*sat-chit-ananda*). It has no activity, because activity means attribute. The Brahman is attributeless. It is the Godhead of Fichte, the Substantia of Spinoza It transcends all phenomena. Before phenomenal manifestation, the Divine Energy rested on the bosom of that ocean of the absolute Being in a potential state. It is the dormant state of activity, somewhat like our deep sleep state, when all activity is latent. As in deep sleep (*susupti*), all the mental and physical powers exist in us in an unmanifested condition and nothing is lost, so before the beginning of the cosmic evolution all the phenomenal forces of the universe remained dormant in that Energy. There were no phenomena, or no manifestation of any powers whatever. Again, as in our waking state all the latent powers manifest and we are able to walk, move, talk, and are tremendously active, so when a portion of that impersonal Being wakes up and manifests the latent cosmic powers out of the sleeping energy, evolution of the cosmic Energy begins and the impersonal Being appears as the Creator of the universe and also as its Preserver Then the impersonal Being is called personal, on account of that manifested energy. According to the Hindus, that impersonal Brahman is neither masculine, nor feminine. But the personal God is masculine and feminine both in one. Energy and Being are inseparable in the personal God. As pure Being without energy cannot produce any phenomena and as Energy possesses all activity and is the Mother of all forces and phenomena, so the personal God is most appropriately called the Mother of the universe. As fire and its burning power or heat are inseparable,

so Being and Energy are inseparable and one. Those who worship the masculine aspect of God, in reality worship the male child born of that Divine Mother. Because the activity, strength, and power which make one masculine, owe their origin to that Divine Energy. But those who worship the Divine Mother, worship the Whole i e. worship all gods, all angels, and all spirits that exist in the universe.

The wonderful effect of this conception of the Mothehood of God is to be found in the daily life of almost every Hindu woman as well as man. A Hindu woman thinks that she is a part of the Divine Mother, nay she thinks that she is one with Her. She looks at all men and women of the world as her own children. She thinks herself as the blessed Mother of the world. How can such a woman be unkind to anybody? Her pure motherly love flows towards all men and women equally. There is no room for any impure thought or feeling or passion in such a heart. That perfect motherly feeling makes her ultimately live like the Divine Mother on eath. Her ideal God in human form is her own child. She worships the incarnation of God as Her most beloved child Just as Mary was the mother of Jesus, so the Hindu women in India often look upon themselves as the mother of Krishna, who is called the Hindu Christ, or of Rama, another incarnation. The Christian mothers, perhaps, will be able to appreciate this to a certain extent If a Christian mother thinks that she is Christ's mother and loves Him as she loves her own child, the effect will be wonderful. She will then understand what divine Motherhood is. The Hindus think that this is the easiest way for women to attain to that love which makes one unselfish and divine. A mother can sacrifice everything for her child. She naturally loves the child without seeking any return, though there are mothers who do not possess pure and unselfish motherly feeling and love. A true mother, however, loves her child above everything If such a child be an incarnation of God Himself, how easy it will be for the mother to attain to the highest goal of religion. I know a lady in India, who became a widow when she was young. She did not marry again. She was not like the ordinary woman of the world who thinks that a husband is essential for her material happiness and that marriage is the highest ideal of life. She lived the pure life of a nun and wor-

shipped Krishna as her own child She became so advanced in spirituality that hundreds of educated men and women of high rank in Calcutta would come to see her and to take spiritual instruction from her They used to kiss the dust of her feet as the devout Roman Catholics kiss the feet of statue of Mary. She is now revered and called as the Mother of God, Mother of Krishna. She lived in a place near Calcutta. She could feel in herself the presence of the blessed Mother of the universe.

Another wonderful result of this conception of God as the Mother of the universe is that when a man worships God as his mother, he always thinks of himself as a child in its Mother's arms. As a child does not fear anything when it is near its mother, so the worshipper of the Divine Mother is never afraid of anything He sees the blessed Mother everywhere In every woman he sees the manifestation of his Mother. Consequently, every woman on earth is his mother. He conquers all lust and sense desires He sees woman in a different light. He worships every woman mentally. I have seen a man who lived on this earth like a living child of the Divine Mother, being always protected and taken care of by Her. He worshipped God as the Mother of the universe Through that worship he became pure, righteous, and spiritual". He used to say: "My Mother, Thou art in all Thou art my Guide, my Leader and stength" His Divine Mother showed him the true nature of man and woman. He used to bow down before all women and young, mature and old men, and said to them: "You are the living representatives of my Divine Mother, *Adya-Sakti* on earth". How can a child have any other relation to one who is the same as its real mother? By this kind of devotion he conquered all lust and worldliness. His childlike, whole-souled and rapturous self-consecration to the Divine Mother is a landmark in the religious history of India. His whole life, which was the personfication of purity, self-control, self-resignation, and filial love to the Divine Mother, stands as a mighty testimony to the reality and effectiveness of the worship of God as the Mother of he universe. When he used to sing the praises of the Divine Mother he gave life to every word he uttered, and no soul could hear him without being moved to tears by deep devotional feelings, without

realizing that this wonderful child was in direct communion with his Divine Mother . His Divine Mother showed him that each woman was her incarnation, so he worshipped and honour- all women as a son might worship his own mother. Some Western people may laugh at such reverence, but a Hindu is extremely proud of it The Hindus know how to honour a woman Prof. Max Müller was much impressed with the wonderful life of this great sage, and recently published his life and sayings.[8] He was once asked: "If we are the children of your Divine Mother, why does She not take care of us? Why does She not come to us and take us up in Her arms?" The sage replied· "A mother has several children. To one she has given a doll, to another some candy, to the third, a music box, according as each one likes Thus, when they begin to play and are absorbed they forget their mother ; she in the meawhile' looks after her household work. But the moment any one of them gets tired of the play, and, throwing aside the playing, cries for the mother: Mamma, Mamma dear!' she runs quick to him, takes her up in her arms, kisses him often and often and caresses him. So, oh man! being absorbed in your play with the playthings of the world you have forgotten your Divine Mother; when you get tired of your play, and, throwing aside the toys, you cry for Her sincerely and with the simplicity of a child, She will come at once and take you up in Her arms. Now you want to play and She has given you all that you need at present"

It should be remembered that each one of us will see the divine Mother sooner or later. The Mother is always taking care of us and protecting us whether we feel it or not, whether we realize it or not. "O, Mother Divine! Thou art the eternal Energy, the infinite source of the universe Thy powers manifest in the infinite variety of names and forms. Being deluded by the power of ignorance we forget Thee, and take pleasure in the playthings of the world. But when we come to Thee, take Thy refuge and worship Thee, Thou makest us free from ignorance and worldliness, and givest eternal happiness by keeping us, Thine own children, on Thy bosom".

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[8] Vide *Life and Sayings of Ramakrishna,* by F Max Müller, Published by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York

## CHAPTER XII

# DIVINE COMMUNION

"He whose heart is unattached to the objects of senses, and whose soul is fixed in Divine Communion with the Brahman, attaineth to bliss everlasting."—*Bhagavad Gita, Ch. V, 21.*

Divine Communion, according to the Christian belief, is most intimately related to that ritual which is known by various names, the Lord's Supper, the Eucharist, Sacrament or Mass. The general belief is that during the celebration of this ritual the souls of those who partake in this holy service commune with each other as well as with Jesus Christ, the Son of God. In the Matthew we read: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it and broke it and gave it to the disciples and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them saying: Drink ye all of it, for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins".[1]

These words have given foundation to that memorial service called "Holy Communion", which was instituted by Jesus the Christ and which has been practised by all the Christian nations for nearly 1900 years; but if we read the religious history of other nations we find that the eating of bread, or the body of God, and the driking of wine or the blood of God, existed among pagan peoples many centuries before Christ was born, and was paractised by the Greeks, Egyptians, Persians and the Hindus of the vedic period The readers of the comparative history of religions know that the Eucharist is one of the oldest rites of antiquity The Greeks called it the Eleusinian mystery. Rev. Robert Taylor said: "The Eleusianian mysteries were the most august of all the pagan ceremonies celebrated especially by the Athenians every fifth year in honour of Ceres, the goddess of corn, who, in allegorical language, had given us her flesh to eat, just as Bacchus, the god of wine, in like sense, had given us his blood to drink" Prodicus, a Greek

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[1] Cf Matthew, Ch XXVI, 26-28

sophist of the fifth century B C, says that the ancients worshipped bread as Demeter (Ceres) and wine as Dionysus (Bacchus) therefore, when they ate the bread and drank the wine, after it had been consecrated, they were eating the flesh and drinking the blood of their deity. The Eleusinian mysteries were accompanied by many religious rites and ceremonies expressive of the purity and self-denial of the worshipper, and were therefore, considered to be an expiation of past sins. Throughout the whole ceremony the name of the Lord was repeated many times.

The ancient Egyptians annually celebrated the resurrection of Osiris, their Saviour and Lord, and commemorated his death by eating bread and wine consecrated by the priest through many rites and ceremonies. The worshippers who partook of this holy sacrament, believed that the bread and wine became the veritable flesh and blood of their god Osiris. In Persia, many centuries before the birth of Christ, the worshippers of Mithra,[2] who, according to the Parsees, was the Mediator, Redeemer and Saviour of the world, took the sacrament of bread and wine with the same belief that the Christians do today. Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Renan and other scholars believe that the Christian Eucharist was an imitation of the Persian ceremony which was practised by the worshippers of Mithra from most ancient times In India, among the ancient vedic sacrifices, we find one of special importance for remission of sins. It was a sacrifice of cake and wine. Cake was called the *purodasha,* and wine was called the *Soma,* this cake was made especially for this purpose, was round in shape, its top resembling the back of a tortoise. It was considered to be the symbol of the body of the Prajapati, the First-born Lord of all creatures, who sacrificed himself before creation for the good of all and out of whose body the whole universe arose. The wine of the *Soma* plant is described in the Vedas as the liquor of immortality,[3] the giver of life and strength, or the water of life. It was called the nectar (*amrita*) which purified the body and soul of all those who drank, and which conferred immorta-

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[2] Mithra—Mitra—Mitu—*Itu*—all the name of Sun-god Cf I M Robertson

[3] *Soma* was a liquor extracted from the *Somalata* This *Soma*-juice was used in the Vedic sacrifices

lity upon them. The sacrificer in ancient times consecrated this cake (*purodasha*) then cut it into pieces, and, chanting or singing the nature of the Lord, threw each of those pieces into the sacrificial fire, and at the same time he poured consecrated wine into the fire The remaining portions of the cake and wine were reverently eaten by the assembly family The sins of the past fortnight were confessed, repentance was expressed, forgiveness was asked, and when they drank the divine beverage they thought that they were in communion with the Heavenly King in spirit and that they were one with the Heavenly King and the Father of the universe. Every householder used to make this sacrifice at the end of each fortnight and husband and wife performed it together and ate the cake and drank the wine with the rest of the family. The rich and powerful employed the ordained priests to perform the sacrifice for them.

Thus we see that the holy communion service was performed by the ancient nations for the expiation of their sins even centuries before Christ institued it among his disciples and the ritual which is observed today by millions of the Christians all over the world, was performed long before the time of Christ by many nations who had never heard of him. But the Hindus did not continue this practice, and they gave it up when the vedic seerc began to grasp more abstract truths. Their truth-seeking minds could not rest contented with the sacrifices nd ceremonials which were described in the Vedas. They gradually came to see that those sacrifices stood for something greater and they tried to understand the spiritual significance They searched for deeper knowledge of the mysteries of the universe and struggled for the realization of the true nature of the soul and its relation to God, who was the objective Lord and Father of the universe At that time they began to question whether or not God was objective and extra-cosmic, whether or not the soul was created by God. Those seekers after Truth were gradually led beyond that old conception of an objective personal God who dwelt in heaven outside or nature As they progressed higher and higher in spiritual researches and arrived at the Vedantic conception of God and the world, their meaning of the Divine Communion became higher and more spiritual.

Here we should remember that as long as God is extra-

cosmic or outside of nature and He is far from us, there remains a vast gulf of separation between God and man. The more distant God is from us, the less chance there is for us to approach Him and come into direct communion with Him. Such being the conditions, the problem of Divine Communion does not arise in the minds of the followers of a religion which makes God unapproachable, as we find to be the case in two of the great religions of the world, Judaism and Mohammedanism. These two religions believe in an extra-cosmic, objective, and personal God, who is the all-powerful Creator of the world and of the human souls. In Judaism, the conception of Jehovah is so transcendent, objective, and so strongly marked and majestic, that there arose a vast sea of separation between Jehovah and the individual souls The communion or approach of any individual to Him was considered to be almost an insult to the Deity. This difficulty which such a conception produced, was understood and also felt for the first time by the Alexandrian Jews, like Philo and his followers who were influenced by the Greek philosophy, and they tried to bridge over that sea of separation between God and man by accepting the Logos theory of the Greek philosophers.

The Logos is described in the writings of Philo as the only-begotten son of God or the Father. It was considered to be the Mediator, or the bridge between God and the world, between the Creator and His creatures. The same Logos was afterwards identified with Jesus the Christ, and since that time the followers of Christ have believed that no one could come into close communion with God except through that especial Logos, or Word, or Mediator, or through Jesus the Christ The orthodox Christians think that it is impossible for a human being to commune with the Divinity except through the only begotten Son, the Christ. They say that it is blasphemous even to think of the possibility of an individual soul approaching God without coming through Jesus, but they have forgotten, however, that the expression of only-begotten Son was first used for the Logos which was universal, and not for any particular personality.

Do you know why the Christians say that it is impossible for any individual to approach God without coming through Christ? It is because their conception of God is the same

objective, majestic, transcendent, and extra-cosmic Being, as Jehovah of the Jews, under the name of the Father in Heaven. As long as this conception of the Father in Heaven remains as extra-cosmic, so long such an idea will continue to prevail. In Mohammedanism, the conception of God is the same as that in Judaism. The Allah is the all-powerful, transcendent, and personal God who dwells in the heaven outside of the universe. Like Jehovah, Allah is to be feared rather than to be united with, or approached or communed with. According to Mohammed, true religion lies in the complete submission to Allah's will and nothing more. But there is no possibility of a beatific communion with Allah in the religion of Mohammed The modern Babists who are but reformed Mahammedans, maintain a silimar conception of God They believe in the same Allah who is extra-cosmic, majectic, and outside of the universe. God of Mohammed lived in a heaven, and from that celestial abode, commanded the universe, but the more philosophical class among Mohammedans went beyond this conception, they were known as the Sufis and were almost like the Christian mystics of the Middle Ages They were the mystics among the Mohammedans. They believed in a communion with God and that communion could be established through love in the state of ecstasy.

Although these Sufis believed that a human being could approach God, yet they did not accept the idea that a human soul could be one with Him. Really they were dualists, as they believed that the individual soul could be god-like and a temporary union between the soul and God could be accomplished only through love. They did not believe in any other mediator. They even rejected Mohammed as the only Prophet of God The writings of the Sufis are full of Oriental metaphors which seem horrible to many of the practical Western minds Even the mind of a great philosopher like Emerson could not understand the metaphorical language of the God-intoxicated Sufi poet and philosopher Hafiz Those who have read the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam, will understand how difficult it is to grasp the true and intrinsic meaning that underlies the metaphorical expressions of the Persian Sufis.

[4] The Sufis of Persia and Arabia and even the Christian, Spanish and German mystics were like the Vaishnava mytics of India

Sufiism, that arose about 820 A D. after Christ, was the result of the influence of the Vedanta philosophy of India upon the dry Mohammedan conception of the objective personal God or Allah The peculiarity of Vedanta, on the contrary, lies in a conception of God which is not only objective, but both subjective and objective. He is not merely transcendent but also immanent He is the embodiment of Love, nay, He is all-Love and the Ocean of Love. God, according to Vedanta, is not only outside of nature, but dwells in every particle and atom in nature He is not only the soul of the universe, but He is the Soul of our souls, the Life of our lives Although Vedanta does not object to the worship of an extra-cosmic personal God, yet it does not stop there as other religious systems have done On the contrary, it says that a man may fear and worship God as the extra-cosmic Being for some time, but when his spiritual eye[5] is opened and he undersands the true nature of the soul and its true relation to God, he begins to realize that God is both objective and subjective

The soul, according to Vedanta, is not created by God out of any material which is outside of Himself, but it emanates from the spiritual essence of the Divinity, and, consequently, it is of the same substance and the same nature as God Himself. It is immaterial, immortal, and unchangeable It is not separate from the universe, and there is no gulf of separation between God who is infinite and all-pervading and the human soul or the world He is like the eternal background of the variegated colours and scenes of the panorama of the phenomenal world. He is like the spiritual canvas upon which are painted the pictures of the human souls by the invisible hands of the almighty Artist. He is the infinite source of all powers and forces which are manifested in the material or physical planes of the universe. He dwells within our souls And it should be remembered that every individual soul is a part of the spiritual body of God of Vedanta. He is nearer to our souls than our bodies. He is nearer than our senses, our minds, and our intellects He is the essence of our existence and life. In Him, we live and through Him we exist consequently, there is no need of any bridge or any mediator between Him and us. The relation of

[5] The *Prajna-chaksu.*

the individual soul to God is naturally so close and so intimate that Divine communion in Vedanta has a more spiritual meaning and a deeper significance than that of merely eating the flesh and drinking the blood of God. God has neither flesh, nor blood. True communion with the Divinity, according to Vedanta, does not come through any external relation to place, time, or personality, but it comes to the soul when the innermost door of the soul is open to receive that blissful current of the divine Spirit, which rushes in with tremendous force It comes when the depths of our hearts are flooded with the one and undivided sheet of water of immortality and when all the weeds of selfishness, hatred, jealousy, sectarianism, and bigotry are washed away by the tremendous outrush of the current of that all-loving omniscient Spirit. Then there rises on the horizon of the soul the self-effulgent sun of wisdom, and the calm and benign rays of that eternal sun dispel the darkness of nescience or ignorance that had reigned there for ages, and illumine the heart with the divine light.

Divine communion comes at first like the reunion of two kindred spirits, united by the everlasting bond of love, but those two spirits are apparently separated by the delusive power of forgetfulness.[6] As a child who loves its mother and knows nothing but that beloved mother, may forget her for the time being when its whole soul is fascinated with the toys of the Christmas time, or as a young woman charmed by jewels and beautiful garments, may forget her lover whom she adores and considers as the embodiment of all happiness. Even so, the individual soul bewitched by the objects of sense, may forget the true source of happiness which is more intimately related to it than the mother is to child, or the lover to the beloved one But, as the joy of the child when it is reunited to the beloved mother and as the joy which comes to the soul of that woman when she again remembers her lover, cannot be described by words, so that happiness which comes through the reunion of the soul with God, is beyond the power of utterance. That happiness is not temporary, but it is unending and everlasing. This reunion leads to a still higher realization of the spiritual oneness with God. At that time the soul regains its true

[6] This forgetfulness is known in Vedanta as *bhranti* or error, and this *bhranti* or error is removed by the right knowledge, or by correction.

nature, breaks through all barriers and walls of limitation, and attains to perfect freedom and omniscience. From that time the divine qualities begin to flow through the soul. In that state, all questions are solved, all doubts cease, all results of the actions are annulled and all the knots of desire that arise in the self-loving and self-seeking ignorant heart, are torn asunder.[7] After this realization there is no more struggle for the expiation of sins, no more crying for forgiveness, and no more fear of punishment Then the human soul is transfigured with the divine Spirit, and this transfiguration, or perfect atonement, or at-one-ment with God, is the aim of Divine communion

Divine communion brings the attainment of Godconsciousness, and then all other phases of knowledge or consciousness that are manifested on the lower planes in daily life, merge into this supreme consciousness of the divine nature of the soul It is called in Sanskrit, *samadhi.* It is the state of Godconsciousness. If any man, or woman, can reach this state for an instant even, then he, or she, destroys all effects of sins which he, or she, may have committed during perhaps hundreds of previous incarnations. No individual soul, whether virtuous or sinful, rich or poor, can even become truly sinless and happy without coming into that state[8] of Godconsciouness. You may cry for help and pray for forgiveness day after day and night after night, may ask redemption from sins, but rest assured that he who will forgive sins is your own Self. Your own divine nature alone can make you free from sins You may call that divine nature, God or Buddha or Christ, it is all the same ; no one other than the divine Self possesses the power of forgiving the sins of the individual ego. Remember that all help that you have received, has not come to you from outside, but it has come from the very bottom of your own soul. You might have thought through ignorance that forgiveness and help came from outside, but the time is sure to come when you will have to realize that all the help you have received in your life, or will receive in the future, is from within That it is your own divine

[7] *The Mundaka Upanishad,* 2, 2, 8

[8] In Advaita Vedanta, this Godconsciousness has been described as the fourth state or *turiya.* But, in truth, Godconsciousness or the *turiya* Brahman is not a state at all, but it transcends all kinds of category like state, etc.

Self that will help and forgive you, who, through ignorance and self-delusion, have committed many mistakes, and have played the part of a sinner

The highest ideal of Divine communion or the attainment of Godconsciousness—does not come through ceremony or ritual, nor by muttering passages from the scriptures, nor by counting beads, nor by confessing sins to a priest, nor by worshipping the departed spirit of any holy man. These may be helpful to those whose souls have not awakened to spiritual truth, but Godconsciousness comes through the realization of our true nature which is eternally one with the pure, blissful and all-knowing divine Spirit.

There are many paths that lead to such realization Each of these paths is described in Vedanta as the method of attaining this supreme consciousness Those who practise Yoga sincerely, keeping the attainment of divine communion and Godconsciousness as the highest ideal, should not stop until it is acquired Life is not worth-living if we cannot become conscious of our divine nature in this life. What good can be gained by living like slaves to passions and desires ; what shall we gain for our souls by attiring our bodies in rich raiment, or by living in beautiful mansions, or by filling high positions in the state or country? These may be of great value to those whose aim is not higher than the attainment of earthly comforts and pleasures of the body-stay? Not more than five or six scores of years, but remember that the soul life is not confined to the life of the body, but it is from eternity to eternity

What are you going to do for your souls? Have you gained anything for the soul? The treasures of the earth do not enrich the soul, and comforts of the body cannot long satisfy that soul which is overburdened with cares, anxieties, sufferings and worries, and which is obeying the commands of hundreds of masters, internal and external. The pleasures of the senses do not satisfy the soul which has realized the transitoriness and ephemeral character of the worldly objects. No family ties and earthly relations can ever quench the thirst of that soul which longs to drink the nectar that comes through Divine communion alone. No earthly thing can stand in the way of that soul which eagerly seeks the path to return home and rest there peacefully after

the tiresome journey along the by-ways in the maze of the phenomenal world. Vain are the hopes of those who try to be happy by acquiring wealth or the pleasures of the senses and comforts of the body. Since the beginning of the history of mankind no human soul has ever become truly happy or peaceful or blissful in this life by pursuing the pleasures of the senses and comforts of the body. Therefore Vedanta says: "If a man becomes master of the whole world, still he is not happy, because he wants something else". Jesus says. "What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and lose his own soul?" Neither happiness, nor immortality, can be bought by the almighty dollar. One may be the father of many children, but he must be a fool who expects to be happy on account of many children True happiness comes to a soul when it renounces the foolish idea of becoming happy through sense pleasures and earthly enjoyments and seeks Godconsciousness by entering into the gate of Divine communion. He who has entered that gate by the sincere and earnest practice of Yoga and has succeeded in regaining his true nature, sees the Divinity everywhere. To his eyes the beauty of human face, or of a landscape, appears infinitely more beautiful, because behind that beauty he sees the infinite source of all beauty and knows that this external beauty is but a partial expression of that divine beauty. He feels divine presence in music as well as in every sound that enters into his ears. Such a soul perceives the Divinity in every object of the senses. Then the mysteries of life and death are solved. The whole life which seems to us meaningless, unfolds the higher purpose, nobler and more spiritual meaning to one who has reached Godconsciousness through Divine communion He whose soul communes with the divine Spirit within, does not care for any celestial felicity; he does not want anything of this world, he is serene, peaceful, restful, happy and always contented, free from worry, anxieties, misery, sorrow, suffering and fear of death. He knows that the he is *divine*. If the whole world persecutes him, tortures him and cuts his body into pieces, even then he resists not, but blesses his persecutors and gently utters: "I am Spirit divine; swords cannot pierce me, fire cannot burn me, the pains of the body cannot affect me; I am immortal. I am in the sun, in the moon, in the stars; nay, I am the soul of the persecutor's soul. I am He, I am He If the whole world go, I do not lose

anything by it." He says. "I bow down to my divine Spirit, which does not possess anything, yet which is the Master of all that exists in the universe, or will exist in the future"

## CHAPTER XIII

# WAY TO THE BLESSED LIFE

"They attain to the blessed life who have ceased to be wicked doubts are cut asunder, senses are subdued, and hearts are undisturbed by desire and passion , who love to do good to all creatures, who have realized the Truth, and whose inner self is molten into the essence of divine Self."

—*Bhagavad Gita, V, 25, 26.*

In the whole animal kingdom, man alone is capable of solving the problem of life. Other animals live, but they cannot ask what life is, nor can they understand its purpose or the source from which it proceeds. The human beings alone are endowed with intelligence enough to ask such questions. They alone can understand the purpose and aim of life and can trace its source and know the various aspects through which the life principle manifests itself in this world of phenomena. From time immemorial this problem of life has been discussed over and over again and various conclusions have been arrived at by different philosophers and thinkers of all ages and all climes. Some say that life is a great blessing ; it is the source of unbounded joy and happiness and is blessedness itself, while others hold that life is not worth-living, because it is full of misery, sorrow and suffering, disease and pain, and its end is death It is true that our earthly life is beset with misfortune, distress, pain, anxiety, and disease and also various other sufferings which arise from the constant struggle for existence, yet none but the superficial thinkers will maintain that life is not worth-living, or death is its goal.

When we understand the true meaning of life, we know that life is opposed to death, as light is opposed to darkness. Life, in its most abstract sense, means being It is the same as being or existence, and death means non-being or non-existence Where life is, there death cannot exist. If life be a reality, then what we call death, must be unreal. That which lives or exists, can never die, or become non-existent ; and that which

does not live in any form whatever, and never becomes existent. Existence, can never become non-existence, and a non-existence can never become existence.[1] This is the law of nature Whatever exists, will continue to exist Such being the law, whether we consider our earthly life is worth-living or not, we cannot say that death is the goal of life As life or being is deathless and indestructible, so it is birthless and beginningless. That which is subject to death, is a compound thing, and has a beginning, but that which does not die, is simple and, therefore, has no birth and no destruction. If we look around in this world of phenomena, we shall see that that which is birthless, is deathless also, and as life is opposed to death and has no beginning, life is beyond death and birth. Again that which is birthless and deathless, does not change, but that which changes, is within the realm of birth and death. As life or being in its true sense is beyond that realm, it cannot change its nature, or decay. There is no sorrow, suffering, misery, decay, death, or change of any kind in true life and therefore, it is blessed It is blessedness itself

True life is the eternal and self-existent power which animates all things and is the source of all activities and all living forms. That power manifests in the animal and vegetable kingdoms as well as in man. From the minutest protoplasm up to the greatest man, wherever there is any sign of life, there is expression of this all-pervading eternal power which is unchangeable and one in its essence Electricity is one universal and inscrutable force, but on account of various ways, in which it is made manifest through different electric machines, it appears in many forms as heat, light and motion We see it every day in the electric cars that one current gives motion, light and heat So it is with the universal mysterious life force. It is one, although appearing many when manifesting through numerous forms of existence. We may, therefore, say that true life is one in essence, but its apparent exprssions are numberless. Our earthly lives are so many expressions of true Life which is blessedness, one, and eternal Life being real, its apparent expressions must be the expressions of one Reality

[1] The Bhagavad Gita (2 16) says *"nasato vidyate bhavo nabhavo vidyate satah"* Such is the final conclusion of modern science as it says that everything in this world is not lost, everything is indestructible

too. These expressions are what we call apparent life They are like so many reflections of the true and universal Being of the universe These expressions or manifestations of that universal Life vary in different individuals because of the variety of conditions, upon which those reflections depend. Again the conditions being subject to change, the reflections or expressions of true life appear as changeable The apparent life can shape itself in manifold ways, according to the condition of its environments and evolves from the lower to the higher and from the limited towards the unlimited. Our apparent or earthly life is nothing but a symbol of the eternal life-principle, conditioned by time and space True life or being or blessedness is beyond time and space, and is not bound by conditions of any kind. It is not subject to the laws of phenomena. It is independent and perfect, while the apparent life is dependent upon the laws which govern the world of phenomena and also is conditiond by time and space. True life, or real being, does not need any help from outside It does not require anything from beyond itself. It is self-reliant, self-complete, self-sufficient, and self-loving, while the apparent life, being an imperfect reflection of the true life, depends upon the conditions of the environments, and represents imperfectly those higher qualities of self-reliance, self-completeness, self-sufficiency, self-love, and independence, which make true life a blessed and perfect whole When the apparent life separates itself from the true being and isolates itself from the life of the universe, the partial reflections of these higher qualities in the apparent life are then known as selfishness

If we examine the relation of this apparent life to the real life, we understand that it is nothing but a part of that universal life. As a part is related to the whole and cannot live independently of the whole and as a ray of light or a reflection is related to the sun and cannot exist independently of the sun, so the apparent life is related to that true being which is called blessedness, and cannot exist independently. Like true life, this apparent life possesses self-love, but unlike the self-love which is in the true life, is a love of the particular and not of the whole. True life or being loves itself or the whole, and as that whole is God, its love is divine. It lives in God and loves God. The self-love in the apparent life is love of

a part alone, as separated from other parts and isolated from the whole or God, and, therefore, it is selfishness. The apparent self-love is nothing but an attachment to the transitory conditions through which the eternal life expresses itself on the physical plane True life loves nothing but one unchangeable personality which is identified with the non-eternal form.[2] On account of this attachment to constantly changing conditions, birth and death and is a slave to its conditions, and is sorrowful, miserable, restless, unhappy, and, consequently, unblessed. The apparent life or ego appears as unblessed, because the conditions through which the true universal life manifests, are limited and imperfect.

The unblessedness consists in the idea of separateness of the part from the whole, and in the bondages of other imperfections arising from this mistaken notion of individual isolation. To be united with the whole, to be free from the bondages of these imperfections, and to be perfect, are blessedness. Each individual germ of life which we have already called the apparent life, possesses an innate tendency towards the attainment of this blessedness and also freedom from the conditions of unblessedness. Our earthly life consists in a continuous fight with the environments which have kept us away from the central truth, or the blessed life. We are constantly struggling to expand the sphere of self-love, by breaking down the walls of limitations which constrain the apparent life to a narrow selfishness and thus to be united with the true life of perfection.

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[2] Such is also the divine confession of the mystic philosopher J G Fichte when he says: "Life is itself Blessedness, I said It cannot be otherwise, for Life is Love, and whole form and power of Life consist in Love and spring from Love * * Further, Love is satisfaction with itself, joy in itself, enjoyment of itself,—and therefore, Blessedness, and thus it is clear that Life, Love, and Blessedness, are absolutely one and the same * * "Being,—I say again,—Being and Life are, once more, one and the same * * And thus we have opened the way towards an insight into the characteristic distinction between the True Life, which is one with Being, and the mere Apparent Life, which, in so far as it is mere appearance, is one with Nothingness Being is simple, unchangeable, ever the same, therefore, is also the True Life simple, unchangeable, ever the same Appearance is a ceaseless change, a continual floating between birth and decay, therefore, is also the mere Apparent Life a ceaseless change, * * The central point of all Life is Love. The True Life loves the One, Unchangeable, and Eternal; * * That object of the Love of the True Life is what we mean by the name God, * * The True Life thus lives in and loves God, * * To be united with the beloved object, and molten into its very essence, is Blessedness."—Vide *The Doctrine of Religion in Fichte's Popular Works* (1873) by William Smith, L L.D, pp. 389-394

The evolutionists do not know the cause of the variation or natural selection. They cannot say what determines life and makes it manifest differently at every step of evolution. But Vedanta philosophy says that cause of this variation is that innate tendency in a germ of life to be united to the whole and to reach perfection. The aim of each apparent life or ego is to reach that state of blessedness which is the goal of evolution. As we approach nearer and nearer to perfection by passing through the various stages of physical, mental, and intellectual evolution, the ways of our living become better, and by experience we learn that the best way of true living is not by obeying the dictates of the apparent life or lower self, but by following the blessed will of the universal Being which is the true and absolute life. We start at first with a little, weak, and dim ray of will, which gradually becomes wider and stronger and brighter as we ascend through the different grades of evolution. Experience teaches us the relation that exists between the individual will and the cosmic will the will that governs the universe When we realize the true relation of the individual will to the universal will, we find that life or will which we have so long called ours, is not ours, but is simply a part and parcel of that one and universal life or will which moves the universe. Our bodies are like so many little instruments through which the universal life-principle is expressing itself on the plane of phenomena The mind, will, and life of one individual are not entirely separate from those of another, but are connected with all mind, all which is one and indivisible As long as we do not realize this, but, on the contrary, think of ourselves as separate from one another and as not related to the universe, so long shall we follow the dictates of our limited and imperfect will and think that by doing so we shall gain the highest benefit. The result is that we make mistakes at every step and these mistakes cause us to feel dissatisfied, unhappy, and sorrowful. We do not gain what we wanted, nor do we reach the goal for which we started. The idea of separateness or mistaken notion makes the apparent life or ego think that it is free and independent, while, in fact, it is bound hand and foot like a slave. The moment we realize our relation to the whole we are no longer bound by any conditions of selfishness, but we are free. At present we are living as

slaves without being conscious of our slavery. By mistake we are imagining that we are free, but if we examine our life most minutely, we shall find that we are not free If we look around us, it would be almost impossible to find a man or a woman whom we could call truly free. We ought to be ashamed of this state of things, but we are not, because we do not know that we are in bondage. Very few, indeed, realize that this life is a life of slavery and drudgery and that the ego is enchained by the conditions of the phenomenal world. Amongst those, who realize this, a few struggle for emancipation and a very few of these become really free. But the majority delude themselves by thinking that they are free and so love the present conditions of their unblessed life and do not seek a better state There have been cases where a man, born and brought up as a slave and living in the society of slaves, has preferred to remain a slave rather than become a free citizen. Think of some of the Negroes of South Carolina, who actually prefer slavery to freedom If any one gets some idea of freedom and tries to get out of slavery, his fellow slaves will think that he is going the wrong way and will try to force him to continue the old life and strive by all means to hinder his becoming a free citizen But a courageous man who loves freedom and struggles day and night for emancipation, will not be dominated by the influence of others. He will seek the company of those who are also striving to be free and have wiped off the mark of slavery from their foreheads to learn from them the means of attaining freedom

The community in which we are now living, is exactly like that of the slaves. Being deluded by our vanity and self-conceit we do not realize our present condition and never struggle for freedom On the contrary, we fault with those who criticize them, call them crazy or foolish, and essay to put them behind the doors of the lunatic asylums, and such is our mental condition. Are we not slaves to our desires, passions senses and also to the body and the changes that are constantly going on in the machinery of human organism? Are we not slaves of anger. hatred, jealousy, fear, and sense enjoyments? Are we not slaves of greed, wealth, and possessions? Are we not slaves to ordinary desires for political power and also for name and fame? Are we not constantly obeying the commands of these mas-

ters who are ruling within us? Where is our freedom? Really we are slaves to desires, passions, comfort, luxury, ambition, pride, beauty, anger, hatred, and sense pleasures, but we do not feel bondage in them or are not conscious of the fetters. How elated and flattered we feel when any person utters sweet and kind words How insulted, wounded and hurt we feel when we hear harsh and unkind words, and how we long for revenge when we are injured. Can there be any condition worse than this? Are we born to follow this course and obey these pitiless masters all our lives? We rarely ask such questions. On the other hand, we say that this life is full of happiness and pleasure. While we have a longing for sense pleasure, we suffer and are unhappy We are sleeping the sleep of ignorance after drinking, as it were, the cup of the fearfully intoxicating liquor of self-delusion. All humanity is madly pursuing the phantoms of hope which change their colours as one approaches them, or suddenly vanish to reappear at a distance with fresh brightness like will-o'-the-wisps, forcing the pursuer to chase them again The vain pursuit of these phantoms of hope leads humanity into unbearable suffering, misery, and disappointment. We have made ourselves slaves of these deluding phantoms, and this is the way in which we are living. Each individual loves something and strives after something, but knows not what it is, or how to get it Do you know what we are striving after? We are striving after happiness, but we do not know the conditions through which that happiness comes It will never come under the conditions in which we are now living Happiness does not come to a slave. He may delude for the time being and may think that he is happy, but when he comes to his senses and asks himself, am I happy now, he finds that after all it is not happiness, but it is delusion or *maya* Happiness does not exist in slavery, but in freedom. He who is free, is alone truly happy That happiness which comes through perfect freedom, is eternal If we want that unending and eternal happiness, we shall have to become free by breaking down the chain of slavery We should remember that if we were really free, we would have been happy and we should not need to seek happiness, because freedom is the condition of permanent and unchangeable happiness. Again, before seeking freedom, we must realize the unblessed state of our earthly

life, and must become conscious of the fact that this apparent life is a slave life.

The moment we come to know that we are living like the slaves, that very moment we begin to feel the effects of slavery in our life and seek the company of those who are free and blessed. Then we struggle for emancipation and deliverance from the bondage of ignorance. Whatever we want sufficiently, we shall surely obtain Who is responsible for our present slavery? We ourselves are slaves, because we have bound ourselves hand and foot by our own desires. If we want to conquer them, we can do so We must not blame another person, or God, or Satan, for our slavery, but we should blame only ourselves. If we seek freedom and happiness, let us struggle hard enough for them and we shall surely attain to them This freedom is the highest ideal of all philosophy and religion. What did Jesus say? He said: "And ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free."[1] What is that truth and what kind of freedom did he mean? We read the Bible, but we do not understand the true meaning of these words We read the *Bhagavad Gita,* but we rarely get into the real meaning of the lines. Our eyes are covered with ignorance, therefore, we do not see things as they are Mere reading will not bring knowledge of the absolute truth and freedom. That knowledge will come when we really desire it and strive after it

In Vedanta philosophy, this freedom is called *mukti,* or *moksha* It means emancipation from the bondage of selfishness and all other imperfections. Vedanta philosophy does not speculate, nor theorize, nor give any artifical scheme of salvation It describes the conditions of our present life and shows the way to freedom. It does not ask any one to accept anything, because it is written in this or that book, but tells him to find the cause of his slavery and to remove it. When the cause is removed, the effect is also gone Proper diagnosis is absolutely necessary for the successful cure of a disease Slavery is the result of a diseased mind and the cause of that disease is ignorance or the non-realization of our true life, in which there can be no suffering and no misery. In that true life, eternal happiness reigns supreme.

[1] St John, VIII, 32

Now it can be asked as to where shall we find that true life? Shall we have to go into a cave, or a forest, or a desert, to find it? No, it is dwelling within the cave of each individual heart and we must search within. Our real life is the background of our apparent life or ego. It is called by many names. Some call it God—the Father in heaven, some call it the blessed life, while others call it the Soul of our souls, which is the *Atman* The difference is only in name. The dualists call that Truth God, because they look at it from without. But those who look at that Truth from within, call it the *Atman,* or the Self, or the true Spirit, or the Divine nature of man. According to Vedanta, this true life is one, although its expressions are many. When it is looked at through the conditions of time, space, and causation, it appears as the sun, moon, and stars, and also as all phenomenal forms. They are nothing but so many expressions or appearances of that one Being which is the true life They exist as such in relation to our mind, and the true life is behind the mind. True life is unchangeable, but the mind is subject to change. Out of mistake we think that mind is all in all, but there is something within us much more subtle and much more important than what we call the m[illegible] is something is expressing itself through the changea[illegible] of the mind, the functions of which, as every one kn[illegible] constantly changing. Our intellect grows and our understa[illegible]ing grows, or is subject to growth, but does the life grow? No, life is always life, and there is no growth in it. From less life it cannot grow into life; but the conditions through which the life force manifests, change and grow. We generally mistake the growth of the body for the growth of life. The body grows, because it is subject to growth, but life itself is unchanging, free, and divine. It may be asked, if our true life, or the divine nature, is ever within us, is it not self-contradictory to say that we are living as slaves? If it be true that we are living as slaves, must we not admit that our true life, or divine nature, is a slave too? This question was asked by the seekers after truth in ancient times. The sages of India knew that the true nature of man is free, divine, and perfect; they answered this question by saying: "It is the mind which is the cause of slavery and bondage, and whenever we shall go beyond the mind, we shall be free". The mind alone makes one act as a slave,

and it is also the mind that leads one to perfect freedom. That is, when the mind is imperfect and is attached to the conditions of phenomenal existence, it keeps the soul in bondage, but when that mind is purified, it is freed from all delusions, and learns to go below the surface of things and begins to discriminate the eternal from the non-eternal, the real from the unreal, the true life from the apparent life, and blessedness from unblessedness, and thus becomes the means of attaining freedom It makes us realize what is behind the mind and brings the ego back to the centre of truth from which it proceeded

As long as our mind is imperfect we are far away from the central truth of blessedness The tendency, however, in each ego is to go back to the centre Most of the modern thinkers say that life is a struggle with the environment. But they do not tell us the object of this struggle Is it without purpose? No, we are struggling constantly with the environment to get back to the centre from which we started and to break down the walls of selfishness This struggle will end when the mind is purified. After passing through the various stages of evolution, each ego is bound to attain to freedom. We may not struggle for it now, but sooner or later, according to the experience which we have gathered, the struggle for freedom and perfection must begin for us. We have come to this world to gain experience. By experience is meant the manifestation of latent powers and also knowledge of the results which proceed from it. A child is born with an undeveloped mind and its wisdom is also undeveloped. But do you think that as it grows older, it gathers experience and knowledge entirely from without? No, the germ of divine knowledge is already within If the germ contained no intelligence, it would be impossible for a child to learn anything We cannot learn if we do not have a tendency to learn. We know that knowledge is nothing but the real property of our own souls The external objects only give the suggestions which bring out that which is hidden within each soul In trying to manifest the latent powers each soul passes through the various stages of evolution, and after gathering experience in all, reaches perfection Those who understand the process of evolution, know how painful and tiresome it is to go through many incarnations Of course, those who

think that this life is the first and last chance for reaching perfection, have some kind of consolation in the hope of going to heaven, but if they happen to fail in it, their condition is miserable Are not such ideas childish and unscientific? Those who have gone a little deeper, find that these are the mistaken notions. The soul existed before the birth of the body and will continue to exist after death of the body. What we are today, is but the result of our past, and our future will be the resultant of what we are now So each apparent life is one of the links in the chain of evolution of each individual soul. We may remain as visible or invisble and may go to a higher or lower plane, according to the results of our desires, but each of these states is temporary and comparatively brief

This process of evolution will continue without cessation until it brings unto us that state where we become free from imperfections, sorrows, miseries, etc This is a long and at the same time slow process Therefore Vedanta asks, if perfection be the goal of life, why should we wait so long? It says, let us attain more speedily to that goal and live the life of blessedness. Be happy from this day and from this moment let us live as masters and not as slaves. Many people think that blessedness will come after death in the grave, but they are mistaken, because after death the life of blessedness or perfection comes only to those who have attained it in this life. Those who have not attained it here on earth, will not attain it in the grave. We cannot win this state by good works, nor by a belief in a creed or dogma Virtuous deeds do not produce it as their result The state of blessedness unfolds itself in our souls when we cease to be wretched and do not mistake the unreal for the real. Virtue and ethical deeds help the soul by purifying the mind from all selfishness and other imperfections, and remove the obstacles that obstruct the manifestations of the divine powers Thus by doing good works, we prepare the mental field and bring about those favourable conditions under which alone the seed of the divine nature within, can attain to full and perfect expression. When the mind becomes pure, it begins to discriminate the real from the unreal, the eternal from the non-eternal, the true life from the apparent life, and then it begins to feel the necessity for freedom, and enters consciously upon the struggle to attain it

Two things are requisite for the attainment of the blessed life First, we should understand the nature of the true life and realize the difference between the true and the apparent life, along with their mutual relation. Secondly, we should struggle for freedom by withdrawing our minds from transitory things and fixing them on that which is eternal; or, in other words, we should be unattached to the non-eternal and love that which is eternal, thus causing our wretchedness to cease Through love and love alone, can the apparent life be united with the true life Our life is determined by the things we love. If you tell me the thing you love and show me the thing you love, then you will show me your life, because we live in what we love If we love the highest, we live on the highest plane; if we love the mere physical form, we are on the material plane So try to find out which thing you love most, and then you will see where you are living Let us try to love the highest. If you love the highest, you have come nearer and closer to that eternal Truth which is the centre of the universe The blessed life will be achieved only through love We cannot attain to that state of blessedness until we realize the unity of life, because blessedness consists not in separateness, but in oneness. The Reality of the universe is one. It cannot be many, although its expression may be multiform If we understand the unity of existence, then we have attained the state of divine life.

Love means the expression of oneness. We are one with whatever we really love Therefore, through love we will reach that unity or blessedness[4] Before we can love the highest, we must know it Love of a thing is impossible without the knowledge of the nature of the thing Therefore knowledge of true life is the first thing necessary for the attainment of blessedness When the apparent life or ego knows its real nature, it begins to love that which is unchangeable and one. What then becomes of the lower selfish life? It disappears when true life dawns, and that moment we become free from death, disease, sorrow, suffering, and pain, and reach blessedness. Then we are

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[4] It has been thus sung by Shelley the mystic poet·
'I know
That Love makes all things equal· I have heard
By mine own heart this joyous truth averred
The spirit of the worm beneath the sod'
In love and worship, blends itself with God —Ep 125-29.

far beyond the reach of trouble and misery, just as the sun is always beyond the clouds The clouds may hide the sun, but can never touch it The soul of that man who has realized blessedness, cannot be touched by the imperfections those proceed from selfishness. Then self-love changes into divine love, and one becomes conscious of the greatness and majesty of his true nature. Then one knows that all the powers of the universe have proceeded from the infinite source of powers which lies within each individual soul. Then the soul of the apparent man rests in unwavering repose in that one eternal Being, or in the state of blessedness, and his body and mind work incessantly for work's sake for helping others. When he turns his love from the world to the eternal One, he reaches the blessed life. The life of such a man may be called a personification of all the blessed qualities that exist on that highest plane. When the fountain of blessedness is once opened, all the blessed qualities flow through him eternally Such a soul or pure spirit is the embodiment of all the best teachings which the scriptures of the world contain He becomes then the personification of the Sermon on the Mount. That blessed state was described by Jesus the Christ He understood it and expressed it at every moment of his earthly life. He loved God. He lived in God and through God. He manifested the Divinity. Each individual soul will eventually do the same. Jesus the Christ was not an exception, as is popularly understood. There cannot be any exception to the laws which govern the universe Every socalled exception is a law If Jesus attained to blessedness, we also can attain and each individual soul will attain to that state of blessedness If we cannot, then Jesus did not attain it Such being the law, let us realize it in this life. Then all the actions of our life will be blessed like those of Christ.

This blessed life is described in the *Upanishads* "The realization of the *Atman*, or the eternal Truth, produces a revolution within us At that time all the knots of desires for transitory things are torn asunder, all doubts cease for ever, all questions are solved, and the soul becomes free, emancipated, and perfect."[5] The way to such a blessed life is also described: Vedanta says: "That realization will come through constant

[5] The *Mundaka Upanishad, II,* 2, 9

hearing, constant thinking, and proper meditation". So, first of all, hear constantly and repeatedly that your true life is divine, immortal, and perfect. Constant hearing will bring before your mental eye this ideal, and then you will begin to feel it Secondly, think of your present conditions and compare them with your divine nature. See where you are, and how far you are below those highest ideals Let each of your nerves and brain cells pulsate with the idea that your true nature is divine and free, and then you will get the result of thinking Thirdly, concentrate your mind on that divine Being, or on your true nature or life, whose reflection the apparent life is, meditate on the central truth of oneness and unite the apparent ego with that perfect life or perfect nature from which proceed all blessedness, holiness, happiness and peace. Through this concentration and meditation the blessed life or Divine communion is attained

## APPENDIX I

Regarding the worship of Jahveh in the form of a bull, Dr. A Kuenen, the professor of theology at the University of Leyden, says: "Side by side with the worship of false gods, there existed in Ephraim a Jahveh-worship, which is strongly condemned by Amos and Hosea, nay, is placed by the latter entirely upon level with the service of the false gods. It is the worship of Jahveh under the form of a bull."[1] As regards human sacrifices, the Doctor says: "We cannot help assuming that those who worshipped Jahveh in this shape also slaughtered men in his honour "[2] "Jahveh was conceived by those who worshipped him to be a severe being, inaccessible to mankind, whom it was necessary to propitiate with sacrifices and offerings and even with human sacrifices "[3]

As regards the sun-worship Dr Kuenen says: "Originally Jahveh was a god of light, or of the sun, and the heat of the sun and consuming fire were considered to proceed from him and to be ruled by him."[4] Kewan, or Chiun, or Saturn-worship is described in Amos, (v 26, 27) Dr. Kuenen says: "Amos, in accordance with his contemporaries, ascribed the worship of Saturn to the Israelites in the desert". According to him there was a connection between the Saturn-worship and the dedication of the seventh day, and this custom was afterwards adopted and modified by the worshippers of Jahveh.[5]

The tree-worship is mentioned in Deuteronomy (ch xvi. 21) The grove (or Asherah) stands for a tree or stem driven into the ground close to the altar of Jahveh "He (Hezekiah) removed the high places, and broke the pillars, and cut down the Asherah , and he broke in pieces the brasen *serpent* that Moses had made; for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it, and he called it Nehustan "[6]

According to the best authorities of the present day, Moses

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[1] Vide *Religion of Israel,* Vol I, p 73
[2] *Ibid* , p 75
[3] *Ibid* , p 249
[4] Vide *Religion of Israel,* Vol I, p 264.
[5] *Ibid* , p 264
[6] Vide Vol II, Kings, XVIII, 4 (revised version)

lived about the fourteenth century before Christ. Dr. Kuenen says "The exodus is accordingly placed by one in B C. 1321, by another in B C. 1320, and by a third in 1314 B C Of course perfect accuracy on this point is unattainable With this reservation I accept the year 1320 B C as the most probable"[7] It is a well-known fact that the book of the Genesis was not written by Moses, but by some priest during the period of Jewish exile in Babylonia Prof Kuenen says. "It is true, he (the author of the book of Origins) is a priest, and as such is deeply attached to the Jahveh-worship, the ceremonies, and the privileges of the priesthood The author of the book of Origins was not the first in Israel to narrate history from the creation of the world to the settlement of the people in Canaan The course which he had to follow, therefore, had been pointed out to him by his predecessors and especially by the author of the second Creation narrative and the accounts connected with it"[8]

Regarding the influence of Parseeism upon Judaism, Dr Kuenen says "We discover the traces of the influence of the Persians in the doctrine of angels" Of the idea of Satan he says: "It would be hazardous to see the Persian notion of Auro-Mainyus in this small codification were it not that the Jewish Satan subsequently acquired the traits of this spirit of darkness more and more. . .The older Israelitish prophets and prophetic historians had not hesitated to derive even evil, moral evil not excepted, from Jahveh. This shows that the conception of the moral world had undergone an important change."[9]

On the subject of immortality Dr. Kuenen says: "The Israelite's ideas of the human body and soul and their mutual relation hardly admitted any other notion of man's existence after death than that of resuscitation, i e, of the miraculous restoration of the body into which the spirit returned. As soon as Jahveh takes back the breath of life, man and beast die But that spirit does not live on, at all events not independently or individually Let it be taken into consideration, however, that the hope of a resurrection from the dead also existed among the Persians Does it not become extremely

[7] Ibid, Vol I, p 121
[8] Ibid, Vol II, pp 157-159
[9] Ibid, Vol III, pp 37-40

probable, therefore, that Parseeism was not entirely foreign to the rise and the first growth of the Jewish dogma? Must we not also assume here that the germs which lay hidden in Judaism were fertilized by contact with a religion in which they had arrived at maturity?"[10] (Rel. of Is., Vol. III, p 43). Now, according to Hindu chronology, Krishna flourished in India about 1400 B C

[10] Ibid , Vol III, p. 43

## APPENDIX II

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

*Q* Swami, does the soul exist after death?

*A* Yes

*Q.* What is difference between the soul and the spirit?

*A.* According to the Vedanta philosophy, soul, or the individual soul, or the living soul, means the ego When spiritualists use the word spirit they mean the living soul or ego. But this word is also used in a higher sense, and by the spirit we mean the *Atman,* which is the unchangeable basis of consciousness and intelligence Consciousness or intelligence in the light which illumines our inner nature, and the spirit or the *Atman* is the source from which proceeds that light or consciousness Soul or ego is the receptacle, as it were, of the spirit It is the spirit plus the mind with its various modifications The mind includes all the mental activities, such as intellect, understanding, memory, emotion, power of perception, etc.

*Q* Does the Vedanta philosophy teach Nirvana, or the annihilation of the soul?

*A* No. On the contrary it teaches that the true nature of man is beginningless and endless

*Q.* What do you mean by Nirvana?

*A.* The cessation of all imperfections, and the attainment of perfection and freedom from the bondages of ignorance, selfishness, sorrow, suffering and misery.

*Q.* Shall we lose our individuality after death?

*A.* No, we can never lose our individuality We retain it through all eternity. As the *Atman* or our divine nature is eternal, so is our individuality

*Q.* Has the soul any form?

*A.* No. But it can take any form. The soul or ego is the invisible germ of life which contains within it mind, sense-powers, vital energy and the finer particles of ethereal matter. It is called the subtle body or spiritual body, as we find in the New Testament, when it appears in a certain finer form.

*Q* What is our divine nature?

*A.* The *Atman,* or the spirit. It is one with the universal Spirit or the absolute reality of the universe. It is pure, sinless, immortal and perfect?

*Q.* Does Vedanta teach that this world is an illusion?

*A* No It teaches that this phenomenal world is the objectified thought of God and the universe is the result of evolution of the one eternal Energy which is called in Sanskrit *Prakriti,* the Latin *Procreatrix, prajna, or maya,* meaning the creative Energy or divine Will. Some translate *maya* to mean illusion, not knowing its proper meaning. *Maya* never means illusion. When a Vedanta philosopher says the phenomena are *maya,* he means that they are relative, conditional, and not absolute

*Q* Was Jesus a dualist or a monist?

*A.* Jesus the Christ was a dualist when he said: "Our Father which art in Heaven" He was a qualified non-dualist when he said· "My Father is greater than I," and when He used the illustration of the vine and its branches, He was a monist when he said. "I and my Father are one", and "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you" He recognized these three stages and explained them in these ways so that his disciples might comprehend

*Q.* What is the practical use of the Vedanta philosophy?

*A.* The practical use of this philosophy consists in the knowledge of our true nature It teaches us what we are, why we have come into this world, the purpose of life, how to fulfil that purpose, and how we can live as masters and not as slaves Now we are living as slaves of our desires i.e. slaves of our senses, attached to the transitory objects of this world. We are denying the real being of our soul and spirit, which are our true nature By the help of the teachings of Vedanta we can become free from all these bondages, gain spiritual enlightenment and attain perfection in this life Understanding of these teachings helps us to manifest divinity through all the works of our everyday life and to love our neighbours as our true Self which is divine and one

*Q.* How do you define happiness?

*A* Happiness is the reflection of our blissful or divine nature on the mind undisturbed by desires, passions or anxieties Happiness comes in freedom, never in slavery.

*Q.* What do you mean by freedom?

*A.* True freedom means the emancipation of the soul from the bondages of ignorance, delusion, selfishness, and other imperfections

*Q.* Did you say that the child's mind is like a blank sheet of paper?

*A.* No It is an exploded theory started by Locke, that the mind of a new-born child is essentially a *tabula rasa.* Vedanta philosophy says that each child is born with certain tendencies and capacities which are the results of the child's experience during its past incarnation.

*Q* Did the soul of the child exist before its birth?

*A* Yes

*Q.* When was the soul created then?

*A.* The soul was never created by anybody. It has no beginning It exists from eternity to eternity.

*Q.* Do you think that each one will attain to blessedness?

*A* Yes Each individual is bound to reach the Blessed life sooner or later.

*Q.* Does not Vedanta teach the doctrine of eternal punishment?

*A* No Vedanta teaches that God never punishes the wicked, nor rewards the virtuous. Punishment and reward are but temporary reactions of our own actions.

*Q.* Is Vedanta optimistic or pessimistic?

*A* Vedanta philosophy is neither optimistic nor pessimistic. It enquires into the true nature of good and evil, describes their interdependent relation, and ultimately leads human minds to the realization of the Divinity, the life and soul of all phenomenal objects.

*Q* Is not the Creator of evil separate from the Creator of good?

*A.* Vedanta teaches evolution and not special creation, and consequently it has no need of the unscientific conception of two extra-cosmic creators, the one of good and the other of evil

*Q* How do you explain good and evil by the theory of evolution?

*A.* In the process of evolution that which appears beneficial to us under certain conditions, is called good ; and that which is injurious to us in any way is called evil

*Q.* What does Vedanta say regarding the inheritance of original sin?

*A* Vedanta does not recognize any such thing as original sin, which is bound or destined to inherit.

*Q.* What is the meaning and cause of sin?

*A* Sin means selfishness. It is the result of ignorance of one's true nature or divine Self.

*Q* Does your philosophy teach vicarious atonement?

*A* No, but it teaches how to attain at-one-ment, or oneness with the supreme Spirit through the realization of the Divinity within

*Q* Can a sinner reach perfection?

*A* Yes When a sinner realizes spiritual oneness with his true Self which is pure, sinless and divine, that very moment he becomes free from all sins and imperfections ; and he remains so for ever.

*Q.* Are we responsible for our deeds, good or evil?

*A* Yes We are responsible for every action, both mental and physical Moreover, we are bound to reap the results, the deed will surely return to the doer.

*Q.* How do you differentiate good from evil actions?

*A.* By the motives that prompt them. An evil action may result in benefit to others, but is not on that account a good action, nor can it bless the doer of it.

# RELIGION, REVELATION AND GOD

## PREFACE

*Religion, Revelation and God* is a collection of lectures on What is the New Pantheism, Pantheism and Vedanta, Ideal of Vedanta and Method of its Attainment, Vedanta and the Teachings of Christ, Gautama Buddha and His Philosophy, Religion of Vedanta, An Interpretation of Vedanta and Religion, Divine Inspiration, Revelation and God, God in Everything, and Soul and God, delivered from 1902 to 1903 before the talented American audience Now these twelve lectures, which remained so long unpublished in the form of manuscripts, are now offered to the reading public in the book form Three appendices, (i) 'Questions and Answers', which were made on March 28, 1921, (ii) 'Science and Religion', which was published in the Prabuddha Bharata' in October, 1898, and (iii) 'The Motherhood of God', which was published in the 'Prabudha Bharata' in September, 1898, are also included in this book.

The first chapter deals with the subject: 'What is the New Pantheism' This lecture was delivered in America by Swami Abhedananda in reply to Mr. Joseph Cook, who gave a lecture on the subject of New Pantheism in the city of Boston, in 1902. Mr. Cook tried to prove in his lecture two main perplexing problems (1) How can we, in any actual and complete sense, cut loose from dualism, on one hand, and fail to plunge into some form of pantheism, on the other, (2) Can the modern idea of immanence of God in nature successfully escape the charge of being pantheistic? Mr. Cook also tried to prove that Waldo Emerson, Goethe, and some other philosophers, including the celebrated poets like Wordsworth, Shelly, Keats, Tennyson, Browning, Arnold and others were pantheistic. Swami Abhedananda efficiently and intelligently gave an answer to Mr Cooks's logical and argumentative lecture. The Swami said that Mr. Joseph Cook was right to a very large extent in his arguments, because Waldo Emerson might be considered as a pantheistic. So were Goethe and most of the idealistic poets like Wordsworth, Shelly and others.

Pantheism holds that God is immanent in all things of the universe, or God can be said to be the all-pervasive presence of

an immanent Spirit. Mr Cook quoted Dr. Hodge, President Patton, Dr Gladden, Prof. Oessor LeConte, John Fiske, Prof. Cessor Detbear, Prof. Cessor Tylor, Prof. Cessor Schmidt of Cornwell University and others, but his lecture and arguments involved several perplexing problems which must be clarified Mr. Cook forwarded that as Mr. Emerson believed in the immanence of God, so he was pantheistic As Words worth, Keats, Shelly, Browning, and other poets admitted immanency of God and God's glory in nature, so they were also the upholders of the theory of pantheism But these statements should be considered with care. Swami Abhedananda said that Emerson and the poets like Wordsworth are pantheistic, but "in any event, if we accept the growing conviction of modern scientific and philosophical thoughts that 'God and Nature are one', and 'Man is of one substance with the Father in Heaven', then I fail to see how we are to escape the dilemma of being called to be pantheistic And I am ready to accept as true Prof Cessor Tylor's statement that 'we have been altogether too afraid to this term pantheism". Further the Swami said: "I am not pleading for pantheism as such, nor for any other 'ism', unless it be for that form of Godconsciousness", which is affirmed by the ultimate conclusion of modern scientific research. Further, we find that our scientific men and philosophers are now going back from matter to ether, and by applying the principles of pure physics and mathematics, they at last discovered an universal ether. So, from point of view, said Swami Abhedananda, we may now infer that all physical phenomena may be traced back to the varied motions of the atoms for the source of physical phenomena We must look to the substance of the atoms, the ether.* * But when we come a step further back and see how the atom is constituted and what it is, then we catch a glimpse of the source of the eternal energy, from which spring two phenomena, physical and psychical—matter and mind, and at last we find that matter and mind are the two extremities of one and the same substance, God, the neutral point, which is neither matter, nor mind, but at the same time permeats the whole fields of matter and mind. And this is the rational and scientific conception of both creation and the ultimate substance behind creation. The Swami surveyed all the views regarding pantheism, new pantheism, idealistic pan-

theism, together with idealism, scientific idealism, etc, and quoting the real and tangible significance of the following lines from an address of Prof. Cessor Schmidt of Cornwell University, said that intuition is the masterful quality of the human soul which enables it to penetrate into the core of things and movements in advance of ploding reason A translation of a poem, sung by an intuitive pantheistic Hindu, is quoted in the last, and this poem appeared in the pages of the *Boston Transcript.*

The second chapter deals with the subject, 'Is Vedanta Pantheistic'. Swami Abhedananda said that if we trace the original meaning of the word 'pantheism', we shall have to look into the Greek mythology. There we find that the ancient Greek shepheards maintained the belief in a god whom they called 'Pan'. This poetic description of the god 'Pan' is nothing but the crude and imperfect symbolization of the conception of God which the shepheards of those days had. The god 'Pan' was also the god of the hills, mountains, and rivers. However, the word 'Pan' means 'all' and 'theism' means 'belief in a god', and, therefore, it asserts the consubstantiation of God with nature.

There are varieties of pantheism, such as, *poetical aesthetic pantheism, doctrinal pantheism, realistic pantheism, philosophic pantheism, materialistic pantheism, scientific pantheism* and so on. (1) *Poetical aesthetic pantheism* is nothing but the worship of nature for its beauty, or for its aspects (2) *Doctrinal pantheism* is based on the doctrine that everything in this universe is the ever-changing manifestation of God, and when we worship the objects of nature, we worship God. (3) *Realistic Pantheism* is that in which the natural causes of the phenomenal world are personified and deified and worshipped. (4) *Philosophic pantheism* maintains that there is one being or substance, which is the cause of both mind and matter—thought and extension, and this being or substance is God. Spinoza believed in the doctrine of philosophic pantheism. (5) *Materialistic pantheism* holds that matter is the cause of everything. The Greek philosopher Xenophon was the first to promulgate this doctrine. Anaxagoras also believed in this doctrine. (6) *Idealistic pantheism* holds that 'God is love, and whosoever dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God'. The philoso-

phers like Schlegel, Hegel and other maintained *idealistic pantheism.* The Christian mystics of the Middle Ages believed in this doctrine. Goethe, Bruno and the poets like Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley Tennyson, Byron and others were pantheists, to some extent. The philosophers like Herbert Spencer, Huxley, John Fiske, Voltaire, Thompson and others were the scientific pantheists.

Now it is asked whether Vedanta is panthetistic or not. Really Vedanta does not teach the doctrine of pantheism. It does not teach aesthetic pantheism, because it does not support the worship of nature instead of God. Vedanta does neither teach philosophic pantheism, nor realistic, idealistic, and scientific or materialistic pantheism. In fact, we cannot even limit Vedanta by any kind of 'isms' like deism, monotheism, monism, etc, but it is limitless and universal. Vedanta says that all differences in 'isms' are merely differences in degrees and not of kind. As the conception of God in us grows higher and higher, so we pass from one 'ism' to another. Vedanta says that these 'isms' are like a class in the school of religion and the individual soul is a student in that school. If anyone stops in one class and spends his life there, then his progress will cease So he will have to pass the classes one after another and at last he is promoted to the highest class of religion, which is known as spiritual realization.

Vedanta presents two aspects of one and the same Reality. One is called the absolute Reality and other is known as the phenomenal or relative reality. Really one absolute Reality appears as transcendental and phenomenal for the limiting adjunct of nescience or *maya.* Vedanta is so liberal that it does not quarrel with any religious sect and belief, but it says that for ignorance we imagine a difference between one sect or belief and the other, but, in truth, there is no diffrence, as one absolute Reality is conceived and worshipped in various forms and various names. We call the Brahman, God, Hari, Rama and others, but it should be remembered that one absolute Reality is known by different names and different personalities. So Vedanta has no narrow view of limiting the one stupendous whole Reality, as it prescribes different forms and names of one and the same Reality for different devotees or worshippers of different tastes and temperaments.

The third chapter deals with the subject of 'Pantheism

and Vedanta'. Swami Abhedananda discussed this chapter in reference to the previous one. The Swami said that 'pantheism' is a magic word which enchants and influences the mind of many untrained minds. Now it is found that if a person believes that God is omnipotent and He dwells everywhere, he is called pantheistic. Waldo Emerson is called pantheistic, because he believed in an all-pervading God or Deity. It is a rediculous matter that Mrs. Eddy found pantheism in anything which belonged to outside of Christian cult or theology. Dr. A. P. Hodge described pantheism as nothing but pure monism which reduces the phenomenal world into one absolute substance. Now we find that pantheism, according to Dr. Hodge, is somewhat similar to that of Spinoza. It has already been said that Fichte, Schelling, and others maintained the doctrine of scientific pantheism, which uphold the view that there is one Reality which is the basis or substratum of the phenomenal universe. According to Ernest Haeckel, pantheism uphold the view that there is one Reality which is the basis or substratum of the phenomenal universe. According to Ernest Haeckel, pantheism teaches that God and the world are one, and the idea of the Divine will is identical with the idea of God. But Vedanta teaches that the Reality of the universe is beyond matter, mind, force, and energy. This Reality or the absolute Brahman of Vedanta is not the same as the Substantia of Spinoza, rather it is known as *Isvara*. But, according to the strict logic of Vedanta, *Isvara* is inferior to the absolute Brahman, because *Isvara* is regarded as the Creator of the world, but the absolute Brahman being raised above *maya*, does not create, but remains as witness (*sakshi*) having no agency in any act of creation. But Vedanta and specially Advaita Vedanta of Sankara makes a room for immanency of the Brahman for the solution of the question of creation or projection (*sristi*) of the world of appearance, and has admitted the phenomenal existence (*vyavaharika-satta*) of the world, though in the final analysis, it makes the Brahman transcendent. That is, Sankara admits that until and unless a person realizes the Brahman as the only Reality and other than the Brahman, everything is unreal, so long the phenomenal existence appears as real, but it is sublated and contradicted by the transcendental Reality. So Vedanta admits God, who lives with *maya* (causal

nescience), but dominates over it *Isvara* can be said to be the all-knowing and all-intelligent cosmic ego. *Isvara* dwells in every object and gives reality or existence (*satta*) to all objects of the universe. *Isvara* can be called the universal cosmic energy of modern science. The *Upanishad* calls *Isvara,* in its essence, the Reality. But it does not mean by the word, 'reality' the reality of name and form of a thing, but it says that name and form exist in and through the source of existence, which is known as reality or Reality. So we cannot say that Vedanta is pantheistic, because Vedanta proves that God, or the Absolute, is in everything and in all, but everything and all are not God or the Absolute.

The fourth chapter deals with the subject: 'The Vedanta Philosophy'. Swami Abhedananda explained in the chapter the fundamental principles of the Vedanta philosophy, as he did in the other lectures on Vedanta The Swami explained that the Vedanta philosophy has disclosed the secret of various methods of religious and spiritual practices, and explained the purpose of life and the method how this purpose can be fulfilled. He divided the Vedanta philosophy into different schools and said that though different teachers of different schools forward methods of *sadhana* in some different ways, yet the goal to be attained through those methods is one and the same, and that is the attainment of Godconsciousness. The Swami said that the Vedanta philosophy is not pessimistic like Buddhism, as it does not teach that the whole universe is an 'illusion, but it teaches that *maya* means the relative or conditional phenomenal existence, which is annulled or sublated by the permanent existence. The permanent existence is the transcendental absolute Reality, which is not limited by the categories of time, space and causation.

The Swami said that the Vedanta philosophy is not confined to any particular book or scripture, but it embraces all the scriptures of the word as well as disclose the central and ultimate truth of all scriptures. It is neither built around any particular person, nor is the collection of special revelations. Moreover it gives a rational explanation of the moral, and spiritual laws that govern the destiny of each individual soul.

The fifth lecture deals with the subject: 'Ideal of Vedanta and How to attain It". Swami Abhedananda said that the ideal

of Vedanta is to open our eyes to eternal absolute truth, to realize this truth or reality and to live in this world of nescience without being overcome by *maya*.

It should be remembered that we take refuge under the shade of Vedanta to learn the tricks of escaping from the snare of indefinable *maya* and also to get into the core of truth that makes us free from the fetters of false knowledge and help us to recognize our immortal heritage. Then the Swami described the pitiable condition of the chained men of the world. He said that we are sleeping unconsciously the sleep of self-delusion. The whole humanity is also madly pursuing the phantoms of hope which change their colour as we come nearer, and then after a moment they appear at a distance with new brilliance and fresh colours which attract our attention again and again, and drag us headlong in that aimless pursuit. So we shall have to wake from the sleep for realizing the nature of this self-deceptive delusion and at the same time for realizing the nature of the *Atman* that transcends the limit of nescience and shines all the time in its own undying glory. The Swami made a remark that for realizing the immortal *Atman* we shall have to hear constantly and repeatedly and over and over again that our *Atman* is divine and to think of it day after day and night after night, and let each of our nerves and brain-cells pulsate with the idea that we are divine, immortal and one with the Supreme, and then concentrate our thoughts and meditate upon the Supreme, which will confer upon us the boon of Immortality.

The sixth chapter deals with the subject: 'Vedanta and the Teachings of Christ'. Swami Abhedananda began this lecture with the message of the *Bagavad Gita* that God Himself reincarnates for the welfare of the human society when necessity arises He recognized Rama, Buddha, Krishna, Christ, Chaitanya, Ramakrishna as the divine Incarnations. The Swami said that when the great Incarnations of God use the word 'I', 'Me' and 'Mine', they never think of themselves as the human beings, but always mean the higher spirit of the Divine Self. In the *Gita,* we find that while inspiring Arjuna in the battle field of Kuruksetra, Sri Krishna said to his friend and disciple Arjuna: *"sarva-dharman paritajya mamekam sharanam vraja, aham tam sarva-papebhyah moksayayami*

*ma shuachah"*, i e. giving up all the formalities of religion, come unto me, follow me, take refuge in me, worship me, and I shall give the rest and make thee free from sins, grieve not, (XVIII 66). Christ also said to his disciples: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I shall give you rest". Thus we find both Sri Krishna and Christ have used the word 'I, 'Me', and 'Mine' (*aham, mayi, mam, mamekam,* etc.) in their sayings, and it should be remembered that both of them, being the divine Incarnations of God, used those words in a God-absorbing feeling or spirit (i.e. being *atmastha*), and Sri Krishna meant that Arjuna should dedicate his individual will to the cosmic will of the Lord with his single-hearted devotion. Christ also meant so. Now from this it is understood that until and unless a man entirely forgets his selfish idea, so long help from the Almighty will not come unto him. The Vedanta philosophy teaches us the same truth Vedanta also says to remove the darkness of vanity and selfishness from our mind, because vanity and selfishness are no other than *avidya* The nature of *avidya* or ignorance is to cover and that of *vidya* or knowledge is to recover or unfold. So the Vedanta philosophy and also all the Prophets and Incarnations instruct all to go beyond the egoistic idea so as to receive the self-revealing flash of the Divine knowledge or consciousness.

The ideal of the sublime teachings of both Vedanta and Christ is not to go to heaven and to enjoy the pleasures of life, but to enjoy freedom i.e freedom from the bondage of ignorance or *avidya* The Divine Being, or the *Atman*, dwells in each minutest atom as well as in the largest solar system. He dwells in the hearts of all beings, so we should take refuge in Him, and should remove the idea of separateness from Him, so as to realize that I and my Father are one

The seventh chapter deals with the subject: 'Gautama Buddha and His Philosophy'. This lecture is divided into four sub-headings: (i) Is Buddha indebted to Kapila; (ii) Gautama Buddha's Philosophy; (iii) Mayavada of Buddha; and (iv) What is Pratityasamutpada This chapter really deals with an important and informative subject on the Buddhistic thoughts. Swami Abhedananda treated the subject in a very systematic way by quoting the original references from the works of the Buddhists. The Swami said that philosophy of Buddha evolved

around his dynamic and ennobling personality and also around his sublime thoughts and teachings and dialogues. Buddha's disciples followed the path of Buddha, but afterwards they were divided into various sects for their different customs and creeds and religious beliefs.

Swami Abhedananda said that if we critically study the philosophy of Buddha, we find that some of the principal thoughts and ideas differ from those of Kapila, the promulgator of the *Sankhya* system. Buddha said that the manifestation of the universe is a mere non-existence or illusion, and, therefore, there is no principle like *Prakriti*. But Kapila admitted the existence and importance of the *Prakriti* and said that the universe evolved from the contact of the *Prakriti* with the *Purusha*, and the universe vanishes when the *Prakriti* dissociates her contact with the *Purusha*. Buddha also denied the existence of the attributeless *Purusha*.

Swami Abhedananda showed some similar ideas that exist in both the *Sankhya* of Kapila and the *Madhyamika-vritti* of Nagarjuna The Swami said that both these systems agree in the following points, to some extent:

I. The substance or the *Prakriti* and the *gunas* or the attributes are different;
II Cause and effect are identical;
III Time and space (*desa* and *kala*) are the forms of our thoughts or knowledge;
IV. There is no existence of God, the Creator;
V. Being the source of contradictory facts, the Vedas are not valid and genuine.

Buddha and Jaimini denied the existence of God and also the authority of the Vedas. Kapila also denied God, though Patanjali afterwards modified that idea The Swami discussed comparatively the process of evolution in both the systems of Kapila and the Buddhists, along with the ingredients like *sadindriya, skandhas, vedana, vijnana, sanjna,* and *samskara* (of the Buddhists) and *buddhi, ahamkara, tanmatra,* and *indriya,* etc (of Kapila) The Swami said that ultimate goal of both the systems is the same. But, from the critical study of both the systems, it is found that Buddha himself and the later Buddhist borrowed many things in their philosophy

from the *Sankhya* philosophy of Kapila. As for example, the term *'Bodhisattva'* is connected with the *sattva* quality of the *Sankhya,* and the particle *bodhi* is derived from *buddhi* (of the *Sankhya*). Therefore *sambodhi* in the *Prajnaparamita* has been used in the feminine gender, corresponding to the gender of *buddhi* (of Kapila). Further the particle *tanmatra* of the *Sankhya* corresponds to *tathata* of the Buddhists Some scholars are of the opinon that the Buddhists borrowed the word 'Nibbana' (Nirvana) from the word 'Brahmanirvana' of Advaita Vedanta The Swami also discussed elaborately about Nirvana, as has been used by Buddha himself and his followers.

Regarding Gautama Buddha's philosophy, Swami Abhedananda said that Buddha taught his disciples to look to the world from four different standpoints, which were known as *'chatvari dharma-padani'* or the four facts of virtue, and they are:

I. *Anityah sarva-samskarah ;*
II. *Dukhah sarva-samskarah ;*
III *Nairatmah sarva-samskarah ;*
IV. *Santam nirvanam cheti*

Now, it is said that from the four facts of virtue or *dharma,* there evolved four different schools of the Buddhist thought, known as, Madhyamika, Yogachara, Sautrantika, and Vaibhasika. Swami Abhedananda explained the viewpoints and doctrines of these four schools, and compared the two existences of the Madhyamika school with those of the Advaita school of Vedanta, as explained by Sankara, and also refuted the view that *sunyata* means nothingness. The Swami said that Buddha meant *sunyata* as suchness or thatness, which signifies a positive fact of feeling of nothingness, the fact which is supported by the statement: *'aham sunyam'* (I am nothingness itself) like the Vedantic statement *'aham brahmasmi'* (I am the Brahman). The *Prajnaparamita* explains this state of *sunyata* or nothingness as an inconceivable thing beyond all relativity of existence and non-existence, which is neither a combination of the two, nor a negation of the two.

In the discussion on the 'Mayavada of Buddha', Swami Abhednanada quoted from the Buddhist scripture the statement· *"dharmataisa sarva-dharmanam maya-dharmatamupa-*

*daya"*, i.e. the objects that are said to exist, are mere illusion or *maya*. Buddha compared this *maya* with the false work of a magician So this *maya* is known as *avidya* or *samvriti*.

While discussing about the theory of *pratityasamūtpada*, Swami Abhedananda said that this term connotes the idea of 'dependent origination'. The Swami then explained twelve stages of this process of dependent origination, and it should be noticed that on each stage other stages depend. As for example, on *avidya* or ignorance *samskara* depends, on *samskara, vijnana* depends, and so on These twelve stages are known as twelve *pratyayas*. Nagarjuna explained four main *pratyayayas* which are *hetu, alambana, samanantara* or *anantara* and *adhipati* The Swami also discussed about two traditions of the Buddhists which are casually divided The *pratyayas* have six *hetus* and five *phalas*, and these have been shown with a chart

The eighth chapter deals with the subject: 'Religion of Vedanta'. Swami Abhedananda said that religion of Vedanta is universal and strongly comforting to those who have outgrown dogmas and creeds of special and sectarian religions. The special characteristic of Vedantic religion is that it can harmonize the ultimate conclusions of both science and philosophy. "In fact, religion means a knowledge of the absolute Being, or the Godhead and also the attainment of Godconsciousness. It is being and becoming one with the Divine, or the realization of oneness of the individual soul with the supreme Spirit This is the meaning of the word 'religion in Vedanta' Immanual Kant tried to harmonize his philosophical system with that of religion, but he met with a sad failure in the end. He forwarded three great ideas of religion like personal God, free will, and immortal soul so as to harmonize philosophy with religion, but he failed, and the result was that he became as dogmatic as a Catholic priest But when he tried to bring his philosophy down to the plane of ethics, he had to assume something. Similarly Herbert Spencer failed to make his philosophy a religious one. Ernest Haeckel and other scientists also tried to build an ethical and utilitarian ideal, but they were also failure to do so, because they denied the existence of God and an individual soul and its freedom and immortal nature. The Christian theology also threw aside

philosophy and science and, consequently, it rejected the universal outlook of religion, as it was built on the authority of a book only. The New Thought Movement was successful to harmonize religion with philosophy to a certain extent, but it was called the American religion of Vedanta and not true type of Vedantic religion. Such was the deplorable conditions of the Christian Scientists and the Mental Healers of America. But, in India, we find that religion of Vedanta is very rational and scientific and it harmonizes with it the fundamental principles of both science and philosophy.

The ninth chapter deals with the subject: 'An Interpretation of Vedanta and Religion'. So to say, this subject is no other than a reply to Mr. Dresser's article on 'Vedanta' which was published in the *Arena,* in October, 1900 Swami Abhedananda said: "After reading Mr. Dresser's article * * I feel it my duty * * to say a few words, with the Editor's permission on the same subject. I also write to correct some of Mr. Dresser's misinterpretations of Vedanta for the benefit of the many American students * *". The Swami refuted those views of Mr. Dresser so as to represent the correct interpretation of the doctrine of Vedanta:

I Vedanta and religion harmonize the thoughts and ideas of all the scriptures of the world.

II. The word *maya* does not mean illusion, as it means a conditional or relative or phenomenal existence (*vyavaharika-satta*). *Maya* is also known as the creative energy that helps the Brahman to create or project the world-appearance

III. The Infinite or the Brahman is not finite in any time, though it assumes the form of the world and its beings through *maya,* but this assumption is not real

IV. There is no degree of reality of *maya,* as *maya* has no reality of its own.

V. Vedanta never teaches birth and death of the *Atman,* as the *Atman* is birthless and deathless and immortal all through eternity.

VI Vedanta never teaches pessimistic and fatalistic doctrines.

In this way, Swami Abhedananda refuted many views on Vedanta subscribed by Mr. Dresser, and said that Mr. Dresser absolutely failed to grasp the meaning of Advaita Vedanta, and

though he grasped, to a certain extent, the philosophical ideas of Ramanuja, yet his interpretation on philosophy of Ramanuja was defective in many places.

The tenth chapter deals with 'Divine Inspiration, Revelation and God'. Swami Abhedananda said that when the senses are withdrawn from the external objects and beauties and are concentrated in the *Atman,* i e. when the senses are silent and mind and intellect are still, then the Lord, the *Atman,* comes and pays us a visit. The silence of the senses, mind and intellect is the only condition, in which we receive 'divine inspiration'. But this silence does not come until we have gone through many intermediate stages of evolution. These stages are indicated by the struggles of our mind and intellect, and these struggles are only the outward signs of the progress of the soul. It should be remembered, the Swami said, the progress of the soul comes from within, and it is the gradual unfoldment of the latent powers and wisdom. In fact, mental and intellectual evolution bring out the powers and wisdom of the soul.

What do we mean by 'inspiration'? Inspiration is nothing but the lessons which we get direct from the Divine Being. The river of knowledge is constantly flowing in our soul and if we wish to drink water of that river of knowledge, we shall have to make the senses and mind silent and have to go deep into the core of knowledge. Swami Abhedananda said: "It is in silence that God (the Absolute) speaks within us. In that state, the higher soul, the *Atman* reveals its true nature and the veil that covered its face, is lifted up. That is the meaning of 'revelation' or 'flash of divine knowledge'. Like inspiration, revelation comes from within i.e. from the depth of our innermost soul, and so revelation is also known as divine inspiration When revelation or divine inspiration comes or dawns upon the horizon of intellect, all questions are solved, all doubts are thrown aside, and God reveals His real nature to him who receives inspiration or revelation. So revelation is the ground where God descends and reveals His real nature or essence The ordinary mortals cannot get that divine revelation as they do not prepare the ground of their mind or intellect through spiritual *sadhana,* and so they prove themselves as the false teachers. So Swami Abhedananda

said that without spiritual *sadhana* or practice, a man cannot get that divine inspiration or revelation, and revelation is the only guarantee for taking a pure and spiritual man to the sanctuary of God the Absolute

The eleventh chapter deals with the subject: 'God in Everything'. Swami Abhedananda said that wherever we go, carry the world within us The world is the manifestation of our mind and we create the world according to desires of our mind So if we go beyond the limit of our mind and purify our mind, then we will see that everything of this world is pervaded by God (*Isvara*). Now, what do we mean by purification of the mind? Purification signifies the idea of reducing the mind into consciousness If we concentrate the mind and reduce hundreds and thousands of modification (*vrittis*) into one consciousness, then that shining consciousness will reveal truth that God is everything and God is in everything of the world and without God the world bears no meaning and existence. It is well-known to everyone that the *Isha-Upanishad* has proved it without any shadow of doubt that God the Absolute pervades every atom and molecule of the world (*"Ishavasyam idam sarvam yat kincha jagatyam jagat"*) and God is the support and fountain-head of everything of the material mental and spiritual world.

Swami Abhedananda here disclosed a secret of life and that is the disinterested love and work for all. To seek interest means to get the result (*phala*) of the work (*karma*) done, and the *Bhagavad Gita* says that he, who desires return for work, is destined to death, so it will be wise to do work with the spirit of service to God, because the spirit of service to God makes a man free from selfishness and ego-centric idea and, consequently, purifies the mind to receive the ever-shining light of divine inspiration of God and also to realize the immortal *Atman*

In conclusion, Swami Abhedananda said: "Being the children of the Emperor of the universe, how can we dare to live like a beggar? There run some lines of a Bengali song: *"ami sāmānaya to nai, rāja-putra hai, pitār dhane more purna adhikār"* i.e I am not so little a man, but am the son of the king of the universe, and so, being the son, I have full control over the property of the Father'. Really divine realization is our birth-right, and we feel ourselves weak and poor and igno-

rant only for the non-knowledge of God the Absolute. So it requires only to remove the ignorance or *avidya* from us, and then Divine God, or the Brahman, will be revealed unto us The *Upanishad* says "He who sees God in everything and everything in God, is a Yogi"

The twelveth chapter deals with "Soul and God'. In this chapter, Swami Abhedananda selected two main principles, soul and God. The gross phenomenal knowledge gives us an idea of difference between the individual souls (*jivatman*) and God (*paramatman*), and says that God the Creator is far superior to the individual soul. But Vedanta, and specially Advaita Vedanta, discloses the truth that the individual soul is no other than the absolute Brahman (*jivo brahmaiva naparah*) and we think that the soul is different from God only for the cause of nescience or *avidya.*

The Swami said that it will be wise of every man to find out his relation to God the Absolute, because the process of finding out a relation between the soul and God is no other than a method of discrimination (*vichara*) between the real and the unreal, and when the individual soul comes to know by this mental or intellectual process that God the Absolute is the only reality and other than Him, everything is unreal and impermanent, then he concentrates and meditates upon God the Absolute and realizes at last his non-difference from Him, and says "I am the absolute Brahman, and everything which seems to be different from the Absolute, is, in reality, the Brahman, and nothing in this vast universe, from the minutest germ of life to the gigantic solar system, is different from the Brahman. There are many materialists who deny God and deny even the existence of the soul, but it is an undeniable fact that they cannot deny the existence their own self Vedanta says that as they cannot deny the existence of their own self, so it is proved that there is something permanent which cannot be denied and that permanent lasting something, the *Atman,* or the Brahman, is the support and inner essence of all the living beings. Abhedananda explained beautifully the positions and viewpoints of the upholders of different systems of religious faith and said that paths to God only differ, but God, the goal, remains the same. Men may approach to God, or to the Absolute, through the paths of knowledge

(Jnana-Yoga), or of devotion and love (Bhakti Yoga), or of work (Karma Yoga) and or of concentration and meditation (Raja Yoga), but, in the end, they reach one and the same goal, God or the Absolute. The Rik Veda also says: "The Truth is one, but men call it in different names and ways" (*"ekam sad vipra vahudha vadanti"*). So Swami Abhedananda said: "The *Atman* within us is the source of the supreme light, and the ego contains the reflection of that light. * * One dwells in the cave of the heart, the other on the summit of the heart. The one witness the other and the individual ego drinks the reward of its own work. We may call the one, the light, and the other, the reflection, or image, or shadow". Now, it is a fact that a reflection cannot stand without the thing to which the reflection belongs, or a shadow or an image cannot stay without the thing behind the shadow or image. So whenever we will discover that we are the reflection of God or the Absolute, then we will realize that God or the Absolute exists not being apart from us. So, as soon as *prativimba* will be determined, the *vimba,* God or the absolute Brahman will automatically be determined as an ever-related thing or essence of the individual souls. Freedom must be attained by every man and woman, and freedom from the chain of delusion (*maya*) means to attain to absolute Brahman.

Three lectures, Questions and Answers, Science and Religion, and The Motherhood of God have been appended in the last of the book. The Questions were asked on different subjects and Swami Abhedananda gave their answers in a very beautiful way. In the second appendix, Science and Religion, the Swami showed a harmony between them. He said that the conclusion of rational religion is in full accord with that of modern science. In the third appendix, The Motherhood of God, the Swami said that God is both the Father and the Mother. In India, God is conceived as the Divine Mother or Sakti and She is the eternal Divine companion of God, the Creator. The Swami also refuted the Christian idea of extra-cosmic God, who sits on the throne in the heaven, and proved that God is both extra-cosmic and intra-cosmic, God is both transcendent and immanent.

SWAMI PRAJNANANANDA

## CHAPTER I

## WHAT IS THE NEW PANTHEISM

In the palmy days of Joseph Cook, while he was holding forth before such delighted audiences in city of Boston, his subject, on one occasion, was Emerson. This address, which was delivered in Mr. Cook's characteristic style, may be paraphrased as follows: Mr. Emerson believes in the immanency of God, and, therefore, he is a pantheist. Being thus effectually crushed by Mr. Cook's ponderous logic and duly labeled, Emerson was respectfully but incontrovertibly shelved among the metaphysical mummies of bygone days

Our theme involves several perplexing problems Two of these problems may be expressed with sufficient clearness, perhaps, by the following propositions: (1) How can we, in any actual and complete sense, cut loose from dualism, on one hand and fail to plunge into some form of pantheism, on the other? (2) Can the modern idea of the immanency of God in nature successfully escape the charge of being pantheistic?

To a very large extent, I think, it will have to be admitted that Mr. Cook was right. Mr. Emerson was pantheistic. So were Goethe and the larger realm of poetry from his days. The English poetry of the century stated by a recent essayist, is alive with Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson, Browning, Arnold,—it seems the ceaseless refrain of all their songs. So were with many of the essayists and, in fact, in the whole world of literature of the present day and of the immediate past. To come nearer home, there are those all about us, our best writers and teachers, whose writings would have to be classed in this category, although they would perhaps claim that they belong to the division of pantheists, may as well be denominated hyper-theists In any event, the modern world's apprehension, thought, feeling and outreaching reality have resulted so far in conviction of an immanent God in all things —the all-pervasive presence of an immanent Spirit. Dr. Hodge has said: 'If God is in the planet, He must be in the atom'.

Call this conception theism or cosmic theism, with Fiske,

if you do, but it is a theism which, as President Patton states, may be considered as embracing polytheism, pantheism, and monotheism (theism *par excellence*). It is monistic. It is the new pantheism, and is being emphasized everyday by the advancement made in scientific discovery and speculation along the line called the new materialism

Monistic idealism, or the conception of an immanent God, pervades all our modern religious thought and feeling. It is taught in our liberal universities and tinges deeply, if it does not especially characerize the new theology In fact, the substitution of an immanent God for the traditional or far-off God may almost be said to be an universal movement throughout the intellectual world.

Correctly stated, it is pantheistic, or, at least, seems to me to be pantheistic Some try to escape the dilemma by asserting that God, in reality, infinitely transcends the universe, admitting that He pervades it throughout and glorifiies it. Just how it can be maintained, however, that this view is not tinged with dualism and is not exactly clear It might be claimed, on the other hand, that this conception of transcendency can only be reached through our knowledge and apprehension of the universe and is, therefore, essentially pantheistic or monistic, if you please call it so. In any event, if we accept the growing conviction of modern scientific and philosophical thoughts that 'God and Nature are one', and 'Man is of one substance with the Father in Heaven', I fail to see how we are to escape the dilemma of being called it to be pantheistic And I am quite ready to accept as true Prof. Cessor Tylor's statement that 'we have been altogether too afraid of this term pantheism'.

What is pantheism after all, or, at least, the new pantheism, it is but a philosophy which tries to formulate, in some vague way, the superlative, if not supreme, Godconsciousness, that has come and is coming more and more clearly everyday to this modern world of ours? The marvellous revival of love of nature, or inspiration from nature, which so characterizes our day, 'is God's latest revelation of Himself to man', as presently stated by President Hall. Nature is an all-inclusive term as understood today. Human nature is but a single division or differentiation of nature and cannot, from the present outlook, be separated from the common world of nature, and it is upon

our apprehension of the whole realm of nature that the idea of God is based.

It may be justly claimed, furthermore, that before we can maintain that the universe is not, in an essential sense, 'the measure of deity', we ought to feel pretty sure that we not only apprehend, but comprehend the universe in all its completeness and perfection also The more that is learned of it, both in its physical and psychical aspects, the more marvellously wonderful, profoundly aweful, and divinely inspiring and beautiful it becomes To those who are best informed of the progress of modern movements in the direction of a growing apprehension of the nature and the meaning of the universe thereof, it is little wonder that the conviction has become overwhelming that God and nature are essentially one. Neither is it to be wondered that this conviction should first express itself in poetic form We come to observe in these later days that science is practically little other than the verification of the ideal in nature. 'Poetry', said Wordsworth, at an age when only the prophetic soul could have grasped the thought, 'is the impassioned expression which is on the countenance of science'

Was not Wordsworth the high priest among those Prophets and Absolutes, who proclaimed that form of pantheism which, although now termed 'the immanency of God', is seem to be, in the very truth, the impassioned expression which is on the countenance of modern science, and constitutes, in very deed and truth, the breath and finer spirit of all our deepest knowledge?

I am not pleading for pantheism as such, nor for any other 'ism', unless it be for that form of Godconsciousness which, if I am any Prophet at all, awaits the immediate future, and is fast being revealed to those who have an eye or an ear at all sensitive to the touch and significance of modern scientific research. In this connection, let me quote the closing lines of President Gilman's address on 'Fifty Year of Science', delivered at New Heaven months ago· 'Finally let me say, with the solemnity of deep conviction, that, dearer than the fellowship of breathren, deeper than the love of knowledge, too precious ever to be given up, too sacred for careless speech, is the invigorating and inspiring belief that science in its ultimate assertions echoes the voice of the living God'.

Most of you, I hope, read a few weeks past Dr. Gladden's reasons for being thankful as they were given in the Republican, and you will recall these words: 'Unless Nature, which includes humanity, makes the existence of God probable to the human mind, it is idle to imagine that faith can be maintained If He is not in His world, we need not look for Him anywhere else. Indeed there is nowhere else to look'

Take the old terms, 'the infinitude of God', 'the omnipresence of God', etc. Do these terms mean, or can they be made to convey, the idea of an isolated God? Their only rational meaning is that of an absolute immanent God. If they mean anything less than that, we are left with an inevitable conception of a limited God, and something other than a real universe Prof Oessor Le Conte has well said: 'Either God is far more closely related to Nature, and operates in it in a more direct way than we have recently been accustomed to think, or else (mark the 'alternative') Nature operates itself and needs no God at all There is no middle ground tenable' It is materialism or something akin to modern pantheism

The great contention of the ages is over the question of the real meaning of matter. 'What we have come to', asserts a recent writer, 'is the persuasion that, if matter is the ultimate productive cause of universal life, it must be, as Martineau has written, such extremely clever matter, matter that is up to everything, even to writing Hamlet, and discovering its own evolution, matter, in short, which, but for the spelling of its name, does not differ appreciably from our old friends, mind and God'.

The day has come, however, when even such a 'persuasion' as this is no longer the highest reach of human reason The day has come when we do not have to regard matter, this 'clever matter', as the ultimate productive cause of anything Our scientific men and philosophers are now going back from matter to ether and, applying the principles of pure physics and mathematics, reasonably conceive of the origin of the atoms of matter, tracing their productive cause back to the volitional self-activity of an absolute personality or, in other words, to the infinite and eternal energy, unified and embodied, eternally expressing itself in and through this immaterial, super-physical,

everywhere present substance (the only real substance we know anything of), which we have learned to call the universal ether

Why should not the deity be looked for as found, apprehended and felt in Nature, when not only we ourselves but every atom of matter is of the very substance of God, and thus in the very truth begotten, not artificially made or created? Think for a moment of the significance and the tremendous difference too between the fact or conception of being begotten and that of being created For instance, we, in our finite way, are capable of creating perfectly a beautiful complex machine But this is all purely mechanical and artificial, and is a product of a mere thing It lacks all the elements of inherent life and growth and is, therefore, transcient There are, and can be, none of the elements of personality in it But that which is begotten, possesses in potential form qualities and attributes common to the begetter

In the created Nature, there is no room for personality There is no place for intercommunion and sympathetic relationship between cause and effect or effect and cause. Creation rests upon a plane below that of fatherhood and childhood and all relations which these term imply and involve. If however, we drop out of our consciousness the conception and all the allied conceptions that have organized themselves around this word 'creation' and rise to the full significance of this other term 'begotten', we shall observe an impersonal pantheism which becomes an antiquated conception and drops out of existence by virtue of its own weight

If I am not mistaken in my understanding of implications of the latest trend of scientific thought, this conception reveals in entire harmony and it must logically follow the present outlook Let me quote a few lines from Prof. Cessor Delbear's latest statement: "Mathematicians, physicists and chemists are all adjusting their thoughts and interpretations of phenomena to the vortex ring of matter. The idea is that the atom is a vortex ring of ether in the ether, and its properties as an atom are due to the character of the motion which is embodied in it in addition to the inherent qualities of the ether itself out of which they are made".

So, from this point of view, we may now infer that all

physical phenomena may be traced back to the varied motions of the atoms ; but for the source of psychical phenomena we must look to the substance of the atoms, the ether, Thus, at last, there come to view a rational conception why it is that physical and psychical phenomena run back on parallel lines to the atoms, and why it is that these two phenomena may be considered as two aspects of the one substance. But when we come a step further back and see how the atom is constituted and what it is, then we catch a glimpse of the source of the one, the eternal energy, from which spring the two phenomena.

'Assuming this', continues Prof Cessor Delbear, 'it seems that what science has so far been chiefly concerned with, is the function of the atoms as exhibited by the particular form of motion it has, and no attention has been given to its function as due to the qualities and character of its own substance—a substance that cannot be defined in terms of matter, and leads straight to the conclusion that beneath the function of motion are other properties, out of which could emerge, under proper circumstances, other phenomena, such as life or mind, or whatever may be in the substratum' This is a new and profound significant conception of science Can it be wondered at that, before such a conception finite man should stand with hushed voice and reverently bowed head? We are so familiar with the terms 'life' and 'mind' as they impress us less when used in this connection, but those other words 'or whatever may be in the substratum' We already possess 'life' and 'mind', in some degree, transmitted to us from the infinite parent source ; but we pause humbly in wonder and awe when we dare allow ourselves to contemplate the possibilities and potentialities which lie in that divine 'substratum', from which we come and of which we inherit, actually inherit Truly, we are begotten, not made. We then possess, in reality, organic relations with this infinite substratum, and it does not yet appear what we shall be'. Prof Delbear goes on to show that 'consciously directed super-physical energy must be assumed to give a rational account of the apparition of the first atom'.

The older view, then, which had ascribed to matter of the single function of molecular energy or motion, and all that it implies, we must now add the exhibition of 'choice' and consciously directed energy, unlimited in space, time and quality,

for the universe, is unlimited in all these'. What are these but attributes of personality?

Here, then, we find scientific basis which affords scientific confirmation to the speculations of our modern biologists and naturalists who, by observation of phenomena alone, were driven to the conclusion that every atom possessed psychical as well as physical qualities and attributes And this view has been confirmed, as Prof. Cessor Delbear says, 'by being in consonance with all the sciences, geometry, astronomy, geology and zoology, all grounded in experiences'. 'Such knowledge as this', he continues, 'is knowledge which all mankind is bound to accept and adopt as soon as it is understood. There can be no quibbling about it, and history must everywhere be interpretated in accordance with the fundamental principles. There is no one of the great religions of the world, but will be profoundly modified just as fast as its adherents become acquainted with molecular science. In it there is no mysticism or jugglery, but through all things and over all things there is existence, power and potencies which are slowly but certainly working out through matter in all its forms, the development of consciousness through experience'.

Are we not here afforded of a glimpse how it may be that consciousness is thus worked out through experience? Is it not, because the relations that exist between matter in all its forms, and the infinite substatum are organic relations, and are we not, in the deepest and most real sense, children and not things artificially created? Again I repeat, and with new emphasis, what I stated earlier 'We are spirit because He is spirit , we live because He lives ; we inherit His love, His wisdom, His eternity'. We are, indeed, still an unfinished path of an unfinished process, but we are predetermined by our inheritance to an ultimate harmony and oneness with whatever may be in the substratum'. Monistic idealism or the conception of the immanence of God finds, in this view, wonderful illumination and emphasis , and if we may consider the ether as the body of deity, coequal with space, pervading and also embosoming all bodies everywhere what conceivable place is there where God is not? To this extent 'God is all, and all is God'.

From such an altitude of scientific thought as this, we may catch the real and tangible significance of the following lines

from an address of Prof Cessor Schmidt of Cornell University, delivered a few days ago 'He is the energy, the soul, for in Him we live He changeth not There is no exception to His laws In any mansion of His house we shall find His justice and His love to be the same. This gives more rest to the soul than any myth that hath passed away from our world of thought and fact'. And another expresses a like idea in a more poetic, but not less true form: 'The secret of moral happiness is with him to whom the sunshine is a caress, the twilight a benediction, high mountains a feeling, and the ocean a presence'. I said some moments last that it is not to be wondered at, that poetry should be the first to recognize and express the 'breath and finer spirit of all knowledge' Intuition is that masterful quality of the human soul which enables it to penetrate to the core of things and movements in advance of plodding reason I also suggested that the present movement in the world of thought points to a coalescence or union of the essentials of the two great divisions in the world of philosophies and religions In a later number of the *Boston Transcript* there appeared a translation of a poem sung by an intuitive pantheistic Hindu of many thousands of years ago A few verses, characteristic of all of them, are as follows.

And God is within forever mine ;
All good is forever mine ,
To all who seek it is given,
And it comes by a law divine.

Oh! I stand in the Great Forever,
All things to me are divine ,
I eat of the heavenly manna,
I drink of the heavenly wine.
Who is this "I" that is speaking,

This being so wonderous in might?
'Tis part of the primitive Essence,
A spark of the infinite Light.

Blasphemous and vain they may call me ;
What matters it all to me?
Side by side we are marching onwards,
And in time we will all agree.

Ye pilgrims of varied probations,
Ye teachers of men,
To your heaven-born revelations
My spirit shall answer, 'Atman'

To this voice of the Hindu seer there was echoed back across the centuries, few months back, from this Western world of science, another voice, less flowing and liquid in form, perhaps, but largely expressive of the thought of these closing hours of the nineteenth century And in it may be discerned tokens that the 'time when we will all agree' may not be very far away:

A fire-midst and a planet,
A crystal and a cell,
A jelly-fish and a saurian,
And caves where the cave men dwell ;

Then a sense of law and beauty,
And a face turned from the clod,
Some call it evolution,
And others call it God.

A haze on the far horizon,
The infinite, tender sky,
The ripe, rich tint of the cornfields,
And the wild geese sailing high.

And all over upland and lowland
The charm of the golden rod,
Some of us call it Atman,
And others call it God.

Like tides on a cresent sea-beach
When the moon is new and thin,
Into our hearts high yearnings
Come welling and surging in,
Come from the mystic ocean,
Whose rim no foot has trod,
Some of us call it Longing,
And others call it God.

A picket frozen on duty,
    A mother starved for her brood,
Socrates drinking the Hemlock,
    And Jesus on the rood ,
And millions who, humble and nameless,
    The straight, hard pathway trod,
Some call it Consecration,
    And others call it God.

## CHAPTER II

# IS VEDANTA PANTHEISTIC

Wherever we go we meet people who ask questions: Is not your philosophy pantheistic? Is not Hinduism pantheistic? Has it not been proved that your Vedanta philosophy teaches pantheism? It is curious to notice how this word 'pantheism' prejudices the minds of the Western people. Whenever it is uttered, read or heard of, it is disliked immensely. It changes the whole attitude of the reader or listener.

If we ask such persons what they understand by that word, perhaps a very few would be able to answer correctly. Moreover, if we ask them as to what harm is there in the Hindu belief in pantheism, they cannot reply. Nevertheless, they have a strong impression that it is very wrong to be a pantheist.

If we want to trace out the original meaning of the word 'pantheism' we shall have to look into the Greek mythology There we would find that the ancient Greek shepherds maintained a belief in a god whom they called 'Pan' and whom they used to worship. They believed that god 'Pan' was the god of sheep as well as of shepherds, that he was the guardian of fishermen and of bee-keepers, and a patron of all persons engaged in hunting and fishing This god 'Pan' has been described rather poetically as having the head and trunk of a man, but with horns and goat's heard, pug-nose, pointed ears, a tail and goat's feet. He is very fond of music and said to be the inventor of shepherd's lute which he used to play upon. This poetic description of the god 'Pan' is nothing but the crude and imperfect symbolization of the conception of God which the shepherds of those days had This conception was to symbolize the spirit of nature that exists in man, beasts, fish birds, insects and plants. The shepherds thus made the idea of the kinship which exists amongst all living creatures and objects. Gradually this idea changed and extended The God 'Pan', thereafter, became the god of the hills, mountains, rivers, etc and afterwards used to be identified with every personafied object of nature. These were the original ideas to mean the

word 'pantheism' We may call them obsolete forms of 'pantheism' At first, there was the worship of this God Pan only but afterwards within him the worship of nature in all of its personified objects and forces had been thought of 'Pan' means 'all' and 'theism' means 'belief in a god'. And pantheism in its rudest forms is universal godism It asserts the consubstantiation of God with nature

Through centuries new conceptions and ideas have been added to the primitive forms of pantheism. Even today we hear of many varieties of pantheism. *poetical aesthetic pantheism, doctrinal pantheism, realistic pantheism, philosophic pantheism, materialistic pantheism, scientific pantheism,* and so on *Poetical aesthetic pantheism* is nothing but the worship of nature for its beauty, or for its aspects. *Doctrinal pantheism* is based on the doctrine that everything in this universe is the everchanging manifestation of God, and so by worshipping the objects of nature, we worship God. *Realistic pantheism* is that in which the natural causes of the phenomenal world are personified and deified. As for instance, if matter be the cause of all the phenomena, then this matter would be the object personified and deified If heat be the cause of natural objects, that heat would be personified, deified and worshipped That is what we call *realistic pantheism* Spinoza's philosophy of pantheism is *philosophic pantheism* He believed that there is one universal Being or Substance, which is the cause and whose attributes are mind and matter, thought and extension He stated this Substance as the self-existent infinite substance of God His idea is entirely different from the Christian conception of a personal God. The God of Spinoza is nothing more than the Substance It is for this reason that many of the philosophers have looked upon Spinoza's doctrine as atheism, because he did not believe in a personal God Some called it pantheism of one substance. *Materiastic pantheism* holds, that matter is the cause of everything, as we find in the system of Strauss and other materialists Matter is the cause of all phenomenal universe From that one source which is material and insensate, everything has come. It is sometimes called the atheistic physics. The Greek philosopher Xenophon was the first to promulgate this doctrine It was he who first explained the proposition that all is one. His God is all eye, all ear and

all understanding The same we find also in the philosophical statements of another ancient Greek philosopher, Anaxagoras, who lived six centuries before the birth of Christ. He believed that the substance is the common source of all the objects of the universe. He called it an unlimited, eternal, undifferentiated gas from which all objects emanate and into which everything comes back in course of time. The idealistic school teaches idealistic pantheism, which tends to absorb the world in God, while the *materialistic pantheism* of the Ionic school tries to absorb God in the world and differed from atheism merely in name. In the epistle of John we find an echo of *idealistic pantheism,* in such passages as 'God is love', 'Whosoever dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him'

In modern times, the philosophies of Schlegel, Schelling, Hegel and other German philosophers teach the same idealistic pantheism The neo-Platonists believed in dualistic pantheism Some of the Christian mystics of the Middle Ages believed in the idealistic pantheism, but could not express their ideas perfectly. Those who had expressed them were persecuted In 1600 A D Giordano Bruno was burned in Rome for his pantheistic opinion When he was asked what he believed in, he replied that he did not believe in creation, but believed in the world as an emanation of the infinite Mind. He said, 'To realize God everywhere, to see God everywhere, and to realize that He alone remains and all else is perishable phenomenon and passing illusion , and also there is one intelligence existing in God, and in man and beast, and in all that we call matter—this is to be the aim of true philosophy' Goethe was an idealistic pantheist Most of the eminent English poets, such as Wordsworth, Shelley, Tennyson and Byron were pantheists. In America, Emerson is also cosidered by many as an idealistic pantheist But there is still another kind of pantheism which is known at present as scientific monism Herbert Spencer, Huxley, John Fiske, Voltaire, M. Thompson and several other modern scientists believe that there is one unknown and unknowable reality, which is the basis of mind and matter and which is the cause of all phenomenal appearances

Thus we observe that there are many kinds of pantheism Such being the case, when we question 'Is Vedanta pantheistic?' we have to find out what kind of pantheism we mean. If we

consider the meaning or usual conception or pantheism, that it is nothing but the worship of the unconscious or personal nature as God, then we say Vedanta is not pantheistic. Webster defines that pantheism is the doctrine which holds there is no God, but the combined forces or laws that are manifest in the existing universe and if this is considered we would say that Vedanta is not pantheistic, it does not teach pantheism. Vedanta does not believe in such a God and, consequently, it cannot be pantheistic Vedanta does not teach aesthetic pantheism, because it does not teach the worship of nature. It does not teach realistic pantheism, nor philosophic, idealistic, scientific, or materialistic pantheism We cannot limit Vedanta by any of the 'isms' of the past, present or future. None of these 'isms', such as theism, monotheism, deism, pantheism, or monism, can accept all the teachings of Vedanta , but, on the contrary, Vedanta can embrace a theist and a monotheist with one hand, and a deist, a pantheist, or a monist with the other.

You may ask as to how can it be possible to embrace those who are diametrically opposed to one another It is possible in Vedanta, because Vedanta says that all these differences in 'isms' are merely differences in degrees and not of kind It says that all these 'isms' appear to have their real value when they are understood as relating to the different stages of spiritual evolution ; Vedanta recognizes them all.

Vedanta accepts the idea that there is a natural evolution of our spiritual conception, and it teaches that each individual mind passes through all the stages that lie in animism or polytheism on the one hand, and the highest form of monism on the other. One who follows the teachings of Vedanta, can be a theist, a monotheist, a deist, a pantheist, or a monist He may belong to any sect or class, creed or denomination, or to any religion, and still be a follower of Vedanta, if he does not limit his God to any peculiarity of doctrine or dogma and does not say that his 'ism' alone is true and correct, when other 'isms' are wrong You may belong to any sect, creed, denomination or religion, but Vedanta asks you not to stop in any of the 'isms'. It bids you to go forward, always keeping the mind open to the truth According to Vedanta, each of these 'isms' is like a class in the school of religion and the individual soul is a student in that school. If anyone stops in one class and

spends his life there, thinking that there cannot be anything higher than that, then his progress will cease Let him know that there are other classes higher than that Let him strive to attain to those classes and let him try to be promoted subsequently Let him grow, march onward till he reaches the eternal ocean of truth. None of these 'isms' is the reality of God They are nothing but the names of certain stages in the path of spiritual realization

While we realize this, why should we find fault with the 'isms'? Why should we hold that this 'ism', etc.? If we realize that each one is in the path of this realization of the eternal Truth, all quarrels cease forever There is no fault-finding, no curse and no persecution As Vedanta teaches this, how can we say that Vedanta is pantheistic?

Vedanta presents two aspects of the same Reality: one is the eternal ocean of intelligence, existence, and bliss without attributes, and is called the Absolute, the other aspect is said to be with attributes That is, when this eternal ocean of Truth is related to this phenomenal universe, it becomes God, the Creator, the Preserver, the Father and the Mother of the universe. He is a personal God He has all the attributes we give to personal God He is worshipped by all dualists, theists, monotheists, as well as all other kinds of dualists those exist on the earth

But the same God, the same Reality in nature, looked upon without reference to the phenomenal world, becomes an impersonal God, an absolute, the *Substantia* of Spinoza, an animism of the philosopher, the unknown and unknowable of scientific monism We cannot pray to or worship Spinoza's *Substantia* What would be the use of praying to that? An absolute cannot be worshipped. There is no such difficulty in Vedanta, because it admits that the personal God is the Father, or the Mother

He is the Father of the universe, both animate and inanimate He is worshipped by all under different names. There is nothing in the universe which can be equal to Him. How can there be anything greater?' There are many such expressions But those who do not go beyond this phenomenal existence, beyond the relative world, do not believe in the existence of that absolute divine essence Vedanta has no harsh word

to apply to these persons It has no quarrel with them; but, at the same time, it leaves room for those who are philosophic and are more advanced in spirituality than as an ordinary dualist is. But people may think without understanding the meaning of the word, that Vedanta is pantheistic It is not pantheistic, but a spiritual oneness—the same oneness which we find expressed by the great Prophets of the world. We find it in the expression of Jesus, 'I and my Father are one' We also find it in the expression of the Hindu sage or Prophet, 'I am He' This expression is not her but the spontaneous expression of the realization that lies behind

Vedanta is not antagonistic to any existing religion, sect, or creed It has no quarrel with Christianity, Mohammedanism, Judaism or Buddhism A follower of Vedanta can go to the church, synagogue, mosque, or a temple, and can worship wherever he pleases People may call him a Christian, a Mohammedan, a Hindu, or a Buddhist, but he does not find any difference except in words We may worship the Eternal Being through Jesus, or through any other Prophet. If we only admit that all these 'isms' are nothing but different stages of spiritual evolution, if we do no quarrel with anybody or any sect, creed or denomination, if we are not bound by any sectarian dogma creed or narrow idea, if we are free from any superstition, prejudice and bigotry—then we are true followers of Vedanta Pantheism is antagonistic to theism, but Vedanta is antagonistic to none. In pantheism the prevailing idea is that God has been changed into matter and force; but Vedanta does not teach that It says that God is unchangeable. He can never be changed into any matter or force or anything else; that matter and force are nothing but the expressions of the divine will, which is eternal That divine will is working in nature. The God of Vedanta is a living God In Him we live, through Him we exist. Without Him there cannot be anything

Vedanta does not teach special creation, but it teaches that the whole phenomenon of the universe is the expression or manifstation of the divine will That divine will is understood by modern scientists who call it as 'the eternal energy'. All the laws of nature are nothing but the moulds in which that divine will works in the universe. A true follower of

Vedanta is sometimes dualistic, sometimes monotheistic or sometimes monistic. When he realizes that his body is the temple wherein dwells that divinity. When he identifies himself with his body, he says, 'I am nothing; Thou art mine all Thou art the creator, I am the creature' When he sees the divine image that is within him, he says, 'I am part and parcel of Thee' And, when he sees this Spirit, which is divine and immortal, he says, 'I and my Father are one'

## CHAPTER III

# PANTHEISM AND VEDANTA

A question of great importance that disturbs the minds of the students of Vedanta philosophy and prevents many from understanding the true spirit of its teachings is whether Vedanta is pantheistic This question has often been put forward by hundreds of people in different countries, especially in Europe and America where Vedanta and other philosophies are being taught This has been answered again and again by many oriental scholars, but still it frequently rises in the minds of many students who are trying to appreciate the sublime teachings of this philosophy, and it disturbs their mental peace Whenever anyone being interested in these divine thoughts begins to read any writing or a translation of any of the Sanskrit work on the subject, he finds, in the first place, some such expressions or passages perhaps in the introduction, that this religion is pantheistic and this philosophy teaches nothing but pantheism. It is curious to notice the effect that is produced in the minds of many people by the magic word 'pantheism'. It has a magical influence over many uneducated minds, who do not know what that influence is, but still they dislike it immensely They have a prejudice against this word 'pantheism' Especially the Western people who have been brought up in Western churches and have learned from their childhood that pantheism is against the command of God, have this prejudice. These persons whenever hear of this word 'pantheism', their pride is touched, and they do not want to hear of anything that teaches pantheism

If a person believes that God is omnipotent and He dwells everywhere, then he is called pantheistic Emerson is called so, because he believed in an all-pervading Deity There are many persons who, taking advantage of this misunderstanding, try to persuade students not to study higher philosophy, simply by mentioning the word 'pantheism' a few times, just as has been done by Mrs. Eddy, in whose writings this word has assumed an offensive aspect Whenever they find anything outside of

Christian theology or Christian religion, they call it pantheistic, or by some other name which means the same. As Vedanta philosophy teaches that God is everywhere, infinite and all-pervading, so it must be pantheism, they argue, because it is outside of the Christian cult.

We know that there had been philosophers and thinkers in different ages and different countries, who believed in philosophical pantheism, like that of Spinoza. Dr. A P. Hodge described pantheism as nothing but pure monism which absorbs or reduces the phenomenal world into one absolute substance, and that is God Therefore, according to Dr. Hodge, all is God, and God is all, and that is the real meaning of pantheism This is but another way of expressing the pantheism of Spinoza.

There is another kind of pantheism which is known as scientific pantheism. Fichte, Schelling and many others believe that there is one Reality which is the basis of the universe. According to Haeckel, pantheism teaches that the universal will is one with God. God and the world are one. The idea of the Divine will is identical with the idea of God, or identical with that one substance. It denies the existence of the idea of nature as will and separate it from God, denies the existence of any being outside of this phenomenal universe, and advocates the mechanical theory of the universe that this world is produced by a mechanical process. Haeckel states that pantheism of modern science is neither identical with that materialism which denies the existence of the soul and dissolves the whole phenomenal universe into a heap of dead atoms, nor is it the same as that of spiritism which advocates the spirit of mind as the cause of the universe and rejects the mass of matter as the cause. On the contrary, according to Haeckel, scientific monism advocates the pantheistic ideas of Spinoza and teaches that mind and matter are the attributes of one God. Scientific monism denies the existence of any immortal spiritual being or a personal God ; it emphasizes the non-existence of a supreme God ; it recognizes that this world is living by its own inherent forces. Well has it been remarked by Schopenhauer that pantheism in modern science is a polite form of atheism.

Vedanta teaches that the reality of the universe is beyond mind, matter, force and energy. It is without any kind of

attributes whatsoever It cannot be limited by attributes The reality of the universe, according to Vedanta, is the one infinite ocean of existence, the source of intelligence, the basis of consciousness and the abode of all happiness. This is called the Brahman It is not the same as the *Substantia* of Spinoza It has one peculiarity, and it lies in the recognition that when the Absolute is judged by human minds in relation to the phenomenal world and we consider that absolute Reality as related to the phenomenal names and forms, thoughts, and words and it appears as the creator and the ruler of the phenomenal world That aspect is called in Sanskrit *Isvara,* which means the creator and ruler of the phenomenal universe. At that time, this absolute Being, which has no attribute, appears as independent, omnipotent, omniscient, merciful Father and Mother Then it is the material cause of the universe and also the efficient cause. He projects through the process of evolution and out of his own. That is the cosmic energy which contains potentially all the forms, forces, ideas and thoughts. Then he becomes the ruler of the universe. He is the internal ruler, just the same as the individual may be called the ruler of his own form.

The ruler of our bodies is within us That which directs the movement of the organs in our system, either on the conscious or sub-conscious plane, is the ruler which is inseparable from the life-force of our bodies So, the ruler of the universe is the knower of the universe That ruler is not only outside of nature, but immanent and resident in nature also. He transcends nature as well as lives in nature. He is nothing but that portion of divine energy which has taken so many forms and appears as so many forces. His physical body is the gross physical form of the universe which includes the infinitive variety of the manifestations of forces and powers that we perceive with our senses. The innumerable suns, moons, stars and planets make up the gross physical body of that *Isvara.* He is the all-knowing and all-intelligent cosmic ego. As the individual ego is the knower of the body, he is also the knower of all acts that can be performed by body, mind or senses. So the cosmic ego performs all the acts that are to be observed in this world of phenomena. His mind is the cosmic mind and cosmic intellect is his intellect. He is des-

cribed in Vedanta as the Father as well as the Mother of the universe It is said in the *Upanishad*: "O Lord, thou art the Father of the universe, Father of the animate and inanimate universe. There is nothing in the universe which can be compared to Thee. How can there be anything greater?'

In Vedanta, that aspect of the absolute Reality which appears to be related to the phenomenal names and forms, is known as *Isvara* or the Lord of the universe, the Ruler, and the omnipotent omniscient Creator. He dwells in every object and gives reality to it, but, at the same time, is not the same as the object itself The individual soul is not the same as God. He has all the attributes of a personal God, yet He is impersonally personal. God, according to Vedanta, is both personal, impersonal, and beyond both; these are the three aspects of the one Being which we call God. One principal point, in which monism of Vedanta differs from scientific monism, is this that scientific monism, after reducing the phenomena of the universe into one substance, advocates materialism and denies the existence of the individual soul, while monistic Vedanta reduces all diversities to one stupendous spirit which unites them and makes the insensate energy or substance of monistic science or scientific monism a part. And that is an attribute of that independent being, the Lord of the universe. That which is called the universal cosmic energy of modern science, and that which is recognized as the source of all forms and all forces, is considered as an attribute of *Isvara*. It is the divine energy, and a part of the being that exists as the reality, just as the power of hearing is inseparable from the ear. That energy is inseparable from the being and that being is God. There the difference is. When Vedanta teaches that, how can we say that Vedanta is pantheistic? Vedanta does not teach that all is God, but all is in God, or inseparable from Him. It does not teach that this chair or table is God. It teaches that the existence of the table or chair is possible only on account of God The reality of the chair is inseparable from the reality of the universe. By 'reality' Vedanta does not mean the reality of the form of a thing, but the form of a thing lives in and through the source of existence, which is reality or Reality We also live in and through God. Thus how can we call Vedanta pantheistic, when we know that

Vedanta teaches that God is in everything and in all, but all is not God.

The devotees state that personal God is admitted by Vedanta in its dualistic phase. God who transcends the nature, is also admitted by Vedanta. Vedanta also makes room for those who believe in the immanence of that absolute being, and who believe that God dwells in everything and is the internal ruler of everything For them Vedanta has left room enough, and at the same time, it lifts the soul high above all phenomenal names and forms and makes it one with the absolute essence of the universe. That spiritual oneness on the highest plane is the ideal of monistic Vedanta. These are the three phases in Vedanta How can you then say that the world is one with God, or the source of the world is one substance, whether you call it energy, or mind, or by any other name? But Vedanta does not say that The true nature of the individual soul, according to Vedanta, is the same as the Brahman. That Brahman is not very far from us It is the Soul of our souls, the fountain of all knowledge and intelligence in each individual soul Modern science, after describing the nature of this primary substance of the universe, has destroyed the foundation of all religions, and the spiritual aspirations of human souls, but Vedanta, on the other hand, can lift the individual souls—the true nature, above mind and body, above matter and force, heaven and earth, God and man, and to the highest spiritual plane, to the Brahman, or the *Atman* Vedanta philosophy has taken nothing away from the life of phenomenal beings who live, act and fulfil the duties of this life It has nurtured all aspiration of the human soul which makes us part of that almighty Being, and that aspiration is fulfilled and realized when we see God in everything, in us, and not very far from us. Vedanta philosophy, instead of destroying the foundation of monotheism, has shown that harmony exists amongst all churches in different forms of oneness, although they appear so different There is one harmony that exists among all these different sects, and that harmony has been recognized by Vedanta philosophy. So we cannot call Vedanta pantheistic.

By following modern science we think that the individual soul is a result of the co-operation of the cells or molecules.

of the brain The truth has not been discovered by modern science and modern science does not claim that it has discovered truth. Modern science cannot but be wrong, because the human mind is limited by space and time and law of causation. We are bound by these laws and we can only realize this when we transcend the laws of causation And concentration teaches us how we can become one with the spirit. So Vedanta cannot be called panthetistic.

If the popular idea of pantheism is that God has been changed into matter and force, those who uphold the pantheistic doctrines, worship God, who is changed into matter and force But Vedanta philosophy teaches that God is unchangeable and immutable. Matter and force are not the expressions of God, but the expressions of that divine energy, or that almighty Being who is working in nature. Therefore, we cannot call Vedanta pantheistic.

## CHAPTER IV

# VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY

It is necessary to mention some of the fundamental principles of Vedanta philosophy, so that the reader may be able to learn a little of what this ancient philosophy of the Hindus teaches. The word Vedanta literally means "end of all wisdom", and this philosophy teaches what that end of wisdom is and how it can be attained. Some people may misunderstand the meaning of the above phrase, and may think that, like all sectarian philosophies, it limits the scope of human knowledge by asserting that there is an "end" and that no one can go beyond it. This philosophy never means that; it tells us rather to realize the eternal Truth of the universe and to become one therewith It teaches that revelation is not given once and then left to stand for all time, but that it dwells forth eternally in the heart of man, being ever from within, never from without It teaches that science, philosophy, and logic must not be separated from religion. that which is unscientific, unphilosophic, or illogical, cannot be truly religious.

Vedanta says that religion does not mean a belief in this creed, or in that dogma, in this book, or in that person, but that it is the science[1] of the soul. It gives a scientific and philosophic basis to religion It teaches that every soul is divine and is a child of immortal bliss, that we must become conscious of our divine nature and become perfect in this life, manifesting divinity in and through all the actions of our every-day life It points out the various methods by which we can unfold our higher nature and mould our conduct of life in the highest form It teaches the secret of work, the secret of devotion, the secret of concentration and meditation, as well as the secret of the highest wisdom Vedanta philosophy explains the purpose of life and the method how it can be fulfilled It is based upon the doctrine of evolution and teaches that through the natural process of evolution each soul is bound to

[1] Here the word 'science' has been used in a higher and spiritual sense

attain to the highest stage of spiritual development, and become perfect sooner or later. It recognizes different stages of spiritual evolution of the individual soul of spiritual childhood, youth, and maturity, and explains scientifically the immortality of the individual soul. It teaches that the soul of man existed in the past, exists in the present, and will exist in the future, continuing to exist after death, manifesting again according to its desire, tendency, and powers, either on this earth, or on some other planet. Vedanta philosophy holds that our present is the resultant of our past, and that our future will be the result of our present. It maintains that we ourselves are responsible for all the pleasure and pain, happiness and misery, of our present life; that we make our own destiny and shape our future by our thoughts and deeds It teaches that we are at present bound by the law of action and reaction—of cause and sequence Vedanta philosophy says that God does not reward the virtuous, nor does he punish the wicked; but that reward and punishment are the reactions of our own actions.

Vedanta philosophy has three grand divisions· first, the dualistic; second, the qualified non-dualistic; and third, the non-dualistic or monistic By these three divisions it includes within its all-embracing arms the various systems of religion that exist in the world, together with all their casts, creeds, and denominations It has no quarrel with any system of philosophy or religion. It believes in an intra-cosmic, Eternal Being, who is personal as well as impersonal. The personal aspect of that Being is called *Isvara,* the Creator or the Projector of the universe, who is worshipped by all nations under different names He is worshipped by some as a Father in Heaven; by others as Divine Mother; by some as God; by others as Jehovah, Allah, Brahman, Hari, Buddha, or Lord The impersonal aspect is called "Brahman" by the Hindus, "Will" by Schopenhauer, "The Unknown and Unknowable" by Herbert Spencer, "Substantia" by Spinoza, "The Good" by Plato, and "The Absolute" and "The Noumenon" by others.

Vedanta is not pessimistic like Buddhism It does not teach that the whole visible universe is an illusion, as some people misunderstand the spirit of this philosophy through ignorance and not knowing the real meaning of the word *maya* or nescience Its true meaning is relative, conditioned, or

phenomenal existence, and not illusion. Professor Max Muller understood this when he said: "For all practical purposes, the Vedantist would hold that the whole phenomenal world, both in its subjective and objective character, should be accepted as real. It is as real as anything can be to the ordinary mind It is not mere emptiness, as the Buddhists mean And thus the vedanta philosophy leaves to every man a wide sphere of real usefulness and places him under a law as strict and binding as anything can be in this transitory life. It leaves him a Deity to worship as omnipotent and majestic as the deities of any other religions It has room for almost every religion—nay, it embraces them all".

Vedanta philosophy teaches equality and sameness of true nature of all human beings The one peculiarity of the teachings of Vedanta lies in their universal toleration for, active cooperation with, and acceptance of all the various phases of religious thought in the world. It says that there is one universal religion in the world, which cannot be confined by any name or authority—nor by any personality or book. Christianity, Judaism, Mohammedanism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Jainism, Hinduism, and all other "isms" are but partial expressions of that underlying, universal religion It teaches that all such "isms" are but so many paths leading to the same goal. It says: "As rivers rising from different mountains run, crooked or straight, toward one ocean, so all these various creeds, sects, and religions, starting from different points of view run crooked or straight towards one Infinite Ocean of Truth, which we call "God".

Vedanta philosophy is not confined to any particular book or script, but it embraces all the scriptures of the world. It is neither built around any particular person, nor it is the collection of special revelations. Its ethics includes all the ethical laws discovered by all the great Prophets and religious teachers of the world who are known as Christ, Confucius, Zoroaster, Buddha, and others Moreover, it gives a rational explanation of the moral or ethical nature of man, as distinguished from his true spiritual nature and it explains the moral and spiritual laws that govern the destiny of each individual soul.

## CHAPTER V

# IDEAL OF VEDANTA AND HOW TO ATTAIN TO IT

The ideal of Vedanta is to give the problem of life, to point out the aim of human existence, to make our ways of living better and more harmonious with the universal will that is working in nature, to make us realize that the will which is now working through our bodies, is, in reality, a part and parcel of that universal Will and the body or the pleasures of senses are not the *summum bonum* of human existence, to make us feel that at the present we are living like slaves, bound hand and foot, and to make us search for the emancipation from that slavery Its ideal is to open our eyes to truth or reality that is unchangeable and eternal Its ideal is to show us how we can live in this world without being overcome or afflicted by sufferings and misfortunes that are sure to fall on every human being in some way or other Its ideal is to show how to conquer death in this life, or to embrace death without being frightened in the least. Above all, the chief object and sublime ideal of Vedanta are to make us live the life of unselfishness and purity and to attain to perfection in this life. Although by natural process of evolution each individual soul will become perfect after going through all the stages of that chain of evolution and also gaining experience after experience at each step, yet it is a hard and most tedious process not to be desired by such who know what that process is. Therefore Vedanta tells us how we can escape that chain and how we can shorten the time of attaining to that perfection and can get it in this very life, without coming again and again for reaping the fruits of our own works The ideal of Vedanta is to let us know what powers we possess already and how great and majestic the real nature of man is. Its real aim is to establish true universal brotherhood. I do not mean that kind of universal brotherhood which we so often hear and which, when properly examined, appears to be like an outward garb under which is hidden hatred, jealousy, quarrel, animosity, fight for name and fame, ambition for petty worldly prosperity,

and so forth; but I mean something more than the socalled universal brotherhood, which is a real love for all without seeking anything in return. In fact, I mean that kind of brotherly feeling which proceeds from pure and disinterested life Now what do we mean by the word 'love'? Love means the expression of oneness, and that feeling of love proceeds from the realization of the oneness of spirit that lies within the core of every living being. It should be remembered that the mission of Vedanta is to establish that oneness of feeling and to bring harmony, peace and infinite toleration amongst different religions, sects, creeds, and denominations that exist in this world Again the object of Vedanta is to teach us how we can recognize the rights of all men and women alike from the standpoint of spiritual oneness, so as to give a strong foundation to all kinds of social, political and religious movements of all countries and amongst all nations of the earth. You will notice that each of these ideals of Vedanta is not confined to any particular place, time, or class of people, but it is universal in its aspect, and is as wide as the heavens over our head Such is the grand and all-embracing ideal of Vedanta which is the collection of self-revealing sublime truths of the *Upanishads.*

Now let us see what Vedanta has to say regarding each of these ideals which I have just mentioned In the first place I would like to explain to you how Vedanta solves the problem as well as the mystery of life One truth we learn from Vedanta is that the solution of a problem becomes easy when we understand the universal principle and law under which it acts. As long as an event is isolated or single, it appears as a mystery to us, and then we do not understand it and nor we can explain it. As long as we think our life as an isolated something, or as separate and inexplicable, or the mystery of life remains unexplored. Therefore we take refuge under the shed of Vedanta, which explains our life, by describing its relation to the universal life-principle, which is expressing itself through various forms of nature. Vedanta says that our life is nothing but a symbol of the eternal life-principle, conditioned by time and space. The whole universe is, in truth, an expression of one living substance There is no such thing as dead matter. When that life expresses or manifests itself through time and

space, it appears as different forms, which are all related to one another and also to the whole. That relation is like the relation of a part to another part and also a part to the whole, all difference being a difference of degree and not of kind. So our life being a part of the eternal life, is eternal, and has not come out of nothing as many people believe, nor has it been created by the fiat of some other being, who lives somewhere in the heavens Each of these manifested particles of that eternal life-principle is evolving from lower to higher, from higher still higher and from limited towards the unlimited In this process, it has some definite purpose at each step ; it does not evolve blindly as some think, but to gain some definite object to fulfil the desire that has existed potentially in that particle of life from the beginningless past. It has its aim, and although that aim may vary in particular manifestations under particular conditions, still it is tending from less perfect towards perfection, and, consequently, Vedanta points out that the aim of human life is to reach perfection

Thirdly, as we approach nearer to perfection, the ways of our living become better and better, and by gradual experience we come to know that the best way of living is not to follow the dictates of a narrow and limited will, but to obey the universal cosmic will [1] We start at first with a tiny thin thread of will, which grows stronger and stronger as we rise higher and higher in the scale of our life, and then gradually by passing through different stages of manifestations, we gain more and more experience and begin to see how the thread of the individual will is connected with the universal cosmic will, and slowly understand their relation and ultimately realize that our individual will which we have so long thought to be ours, is not ours, but a part and parcel of that one cosmic will, which is moving the universe from the minutest atom to the biggest solar system, and our bodies are nothing but so many small instruments through which that all-pervading cosmic will is expressing or manifesting itself. But as long as we do not realize this, as long as we think that our individual will is a separate will and is not related to the universal cosmic will, and believe that by following our imperfect will, we

[1] The universal cosmic will is known in Vedanta as *Isvara*

shall gain the highest benefit, the result of this benefit is suffering, misery, and sorrow, which we experience in our everyday life. This idea of separation or mistaken notion makes us think that we are free, while, in fact, we are bound hand and foot like a slave, and, consequently, we do not seek freedom. And it is a fact that when we do not know that we are bound, it is not possible for us to seek freedom. So, first of all we shall have to examine our own nature whether we are free or bound, then we can search for freedom or liberation if we really need it.

Very few indeed can realize in this world that we are living the life of a slave Amongst those who can understand it, very few can get freedom from that dreadful drudgery of a slave, but the majority delude themselves by thinking that they are free, and consequently, they like their present condition and do not care for any other It is very curious to notice that those who are born and brought up as slaves and live constantly in the society of slaves, will rather die there than become free citizens If any one of such slaves fortunately gets the idea of freedom and tries to acquire it, his fellow slaves will think that he is going in a wrong way and will try their best not to allow him to get out of their community. But if his desire for freedom be extremely strong, he will never be dominated by the influences of other slaves around him, he will seek the company of such as are free, as are not bound by the chains of thraldom and as have wiped out the mark of slavery from their forehead Then perhaps he will come to help those who want to be free The community, we are now living in, is exactly like that of slaves. We are born as slaves, brought up as slaves, and we live amongst slaves. If we look around, it will be almost impossible to find a man or a woman, who is truly free If any one gets the idea of freedom in his mind and tries to attain to it, our first attempt will be to find fault with the ideas of that man, or to dissuade him from following his ideal. Are we not slaves to our own desires, passions and senses? Are we not slaves to our own body and to the changes that are constantly going on in that machinery which we call the human body? Are we not slaves of anger, hatred, jealousy, emotion pain, and sense enjoyments? Are we not constantly obeying the commands of hundreds of such masters that are ruling

within us? If any body utters sweet words or kind expressions, we feel ourselves flattered and elated, and how we feel insulted wounded, or hurt when any harsh word enters our ears Is it not a slavery? As long as we are seeking pleasures, are we not slaves to the desire for pleasures? Are we not slaves to the insatiable greed for wealth and the ambition for social and political power and for name and fame? What can be worse than such a state? But how amazing it is to notice that although we are slaves to desires and passions, slaves to pleasures, comfort, and luxury, slaves to ambition, pride and vanity, slaves to beauty which is skin-deep, slaves to sweet words, anger, and hatred, slaves to body and sense enjoyment, slaves to life, death, and every thing, yet we do not feel it and are not conscious of it. Still we never think of any other condition better than this

So we are sleeping unconsciously after drinking, as it were, the cup of frightfully intoxicating liquor of self-delusion The whole humanity is madly pursuing the phantoms of hope which change their colour as we come nearer, and suddenly disappear, then after a moment appear at a distance with new brilliance and fresh colours, which attract our attention again and force us to chase them again and again, and drag us headling in that breathless pursuit. This process is continuously going on in each individual life

Really we have made ourselves slaves to delusion and also to the phantoms of hope How can we have happiness under such conditions? How can a slave become happy? He may delude himself by thinking that he is happy, but after all it is not happiness, but it is a delusion or *maya.* Happiness does not consist in slavery, but it consists in freedom. He who is free, is truly happy, and that happiness, which comes through freedom, is unbounded and eternal. If we want that unbounded and eternal happiness, we shall have to become free and shall have to break down the chain of slavery, and before we become emancipated, we must have to know or to be conscious of the fact that we are at present in bondage. The moment we come to know that we are living like slaves and the moment we begin to see the real conditions of our present life and existence, that very moment we begin to feel the effects of slavery in our everyday life, and then we seek the

company of those who are free and have broken the chains of slavery or delusion. Then we appreciate their sayings and understand their meanings, and if we follow their instructions, we gradually become free as they are From that time we are no longer slaves to passions, desires, and senses, but we gain mastery over all, we control them and we conquer them Then passions and desires no longer bind us, but remain as our slaves This freedom from constant slavery, or this emancipation of the soul from the bondages of delusion, is the highest ideal of Vedanta. It is called in Sanskrit *moksha,* which means liberation or freedom from the bondage of ignorance or nescience. It is emancipation form the bondage of *samsara* or world. Vedanta does not go on speculating and speculating or theorising and theorising like other philosophies, but it starts by taking the present conditions of our lives as they are, and then shows the way out of it, by removing their cause. The cause of such a slavery is nothing but our ignorance of the truth. As Jesus said: "Ye shall know the truth and truth shall make you free", so Vedanta teaches the knowledge of truth will bring that freedom. By knowing the truth, we shall be free. Jesus did not describe the nature of that truth, or the way of knowing it. By reading his sayings too, we do not understand what kind of truth Jesus meant In Vedanta, we find the meaning and the clear rational explanation of that truth and also the way of knowing it According to Vedanta, that truth is one and cannot be many. It is the unchangeable Reality of the universe, and it is our real nature as well. By knowing that Reality of the universe, or by knowing our real nature—who we are and what we are—we shall gain that freedom. Whether we call that unchangeable and eternal Reality God, or the *Atman,* or the Brahman, that does not matter, the Reality remains the same and the difference lies in name only. The dualists call that Truth, God, because they look at it from outside, and those who look at it from within, call it the *Atman,* or the Self within us It depends upon different view points from which we look at that absolute Reality. According to Vedanta, that one universal Reality when looked through the conditions of time, space, and causation, appears as the subject and the object as the knower and the thing known, or as either the sun or the moon, or as heaven or hell,

or as a spook or men, beasts, insects and plants. These are nothing but so many manifestations or appearances of that Reality, which is one without the second. Knowledge of that Truth means the knowledge of the underlying unity of existence Vedanta says that freedom will not come until we know the unity of existence i.e the oneness of the Reality in us with the reality of the universe So until we realize that all these appearances are phenomenal and they exist in relation to our mind and the *Atman* or the Self is behind the mind, so long we cannot go beyond the sphere of relativity and cannot plunge ourselves into the fathomless ocean of the absolute Bliss.

Here you may ask, if we are all slaves, then our real nature must be like a slave and how can it be otherwise? To this asking Vedanta answers, no, our real nature is perfectly free, and it is the Lord of the universe. It is divine and immortal. If so, you may again ask, why are we slaves? The answer is because of our mind. It has been said: *"mana eva manushyanam karanam bandhamokshayoh* i e. it is the mind that causes our bondage or freedom. In fact, when our mind is imperfect, it is attached with phenomenal appearances and makes us their slaves, but when it is purified and learns to go below the surface of things, and also begins to discriminate the real from the unreal, then it becomes the cause of our freedom and then we understand what freedom is. Each individual mind is bound to attain to freedom or perfection through gradual experience (of course it takes ages) by going through the process of evolution That process is undoubtedly slow, tiresome, and most undesirable Wise men do not want to go through that slow method So Vedanta tells us that when each one of us will have to become free and perfect, what is the good of taking that long and tedious journey. Let us shorten the time by trying our best to attain to freedom and perfection in this life. The easiest way is by knowing the Truth in this life i.e. by realizing our true nature, which is the immortal, divine, and perfect *Atman*. The *Atman* or the Self is free from death, disease, and sorrow. The moment we realize this *Atman* that very moment we become unselfish and become conscious how great and majestic we are. Then we know that all the powers of the universe have proceeded from the infinite source of powers, which lies within each individual soul. Then and then alone

we arrive at the foundation of that universal brotherhood, or self-hood, or oneness. Because, if we know our own nature, we will know the nature of the universe and also that of God. Then we will see that each individual soul is perfect, divine, and immortal, and we are living God on earth In such a state there is no such thing as sex, because the *Atman* is pure, sexless, and one. Then the woman's rights and man's rights will be equal. But, as long as we are slaves of the animal nature, so long we see a man separate from a woman, but from the standpoint of the Soul all is Godly. Then we shall be able to reform the social, political and religious evils, that exist in different parts of the world. Then superstition and prejudice which arise from our ignorance of the truth, will no longer reign on earth, and all religious animosities will cease forever. Then will the kingdom of heaven manifest there on this earth Therefore Vedanta tells us that the realization of the *Atman,* or of our true nature, will create a revolution in every department of our life, and the way to such a realization is described in one line· *"atma va are drashtavyah shrotavyo, mantavyo, nidhidhyasitavyah"* That is, first of all hear constantly and repeatedly and over and over again that your *Atman,* or the real nature, is divine, then think of it day after day and night after night, and let each of your nerves and brain-cells pulsate with the idea that you are divine, you are immortal, you are one with the supreme, and then concentrate your thoughts on that central truth of oneness. Through that concentration will come the highest illumination of wisdom and bliss, and then you will be happy both here, hereafter and forever.

## CHAPTER VI

# VEDANTA AND THE TEACHINGS OF CHRIST

The *Bhagavad Gita* declares. 'The Lord said, whenever and wherever there is a decline of righteousness and an uprising of unrighteousness, the Lord manifests himself in human form to establish true religion and to destroy evil' [1] The Divine Being manifests in every age to establish righteousness and to destroy unrighteousness In Sanskrit, such an Incarnation, or the manifestation of God upon earth, is callel an *Avatara,* which literally means, the descent of the Divine Being on the human plane. There have been many such Incarnations amongst different nations of the past, and there will be many more in the time to come God loves all nations, nay, all individual men, women, and children in equal manner, irrespective of their creed or nationality, since His nature is the unbounded love, like the rays of the sun Like the heat of the sun, the rays of the Divine love fall upon the heads of all living creatures, whether sages, or sinners. No individual can claim that God, who is infinite in love and is infinite in wisdom, loves this man or tribe, or this nation alone, and despises or hates the rest. But God's unbounded love and justice cannot be restrained by anything of the world

In order to show to all mankind how God loves all humanity equally and how his justice is impartial, He manifests Himself in human form, sometimes in India, sometimes in Persia, sometimes in Palestine or Arabia, but the object of all these various manifestations of the Divinity is always and everywhere the same The Incarnations come to help mankind, descend in this world to show the mankind the path of righteousness, to teach how to live the ideal life and how to realize the Divinity that is dwelling in each individual soul. The Incarnations show to follow the path of the divine will, and to harmonize our individual will with the Divine cosmic will in all actions and that is the highest ideal of our earthly existence.

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[1] The *Gita,* chapter IV, p. 7

The Divinity incarnates and teaches how to conquer the evil that proceeds from living the life of selfishness, and also teaches how to become free from the attachment to the lower self and earthly possessions and also to enter into the domain of purity and divine love which are everlasting and eternal The peculiarity of these Divine Incarnations lies in the fact that their perception of the Infinite and their knowledge of the higher Truth as well as the spiritual laws that govern our souls are like the inherent properties of their beings From the very childhood, their spiritual eyes are open to the laws of the higher nature From the very beginning they recognize the truth of the union of the individual soul with the universal Spirit, the Father in Heaven Even before receiving any instructions from outside they realize that the individual soul of human beings contains the essence of the omnipotent Divinity, and they feel that the eternal current of the Divine Will is incessantly flowing through the river of life, and that all these individual egos are nothing but eddies of that eternal current They also realize that these physical forms, although limited in power and form, are still guided, directed, and moved by that all-knowing power of the omnipotent Divine Will. They feel it, realize it, and know that whatever they utter are but the expressions of that Divine Will which are working through the human body. In short, they are like the personification of the Divinity on this earth They are the true sons of God, because they never forget their relation to the Universal Spirit. The Incarnations are the Saviours of mankind, because they show all the path to perfection, and their life becomes the ideal life of the masses

Such is the character of the manifestations or Incarnations of God, who have appeared in India and in other places, and who are revered, honoured, respected, and worshipped even today such as Rama, Buddha, Krishna, Ramakrishna, and others It was the character of one who is worshipped in the West as Christ. Through Jesus the Christ, the merciful Father of all living creatures and the Lord of the universe manifested His divine powers just in the same way as He did through Krishna, or Buddha, or other incarnations of God who appeared in India, both before and after the appearance of the Nazarene. That meek and gentle Son of Man who preached in Galilee

centuries ago, taught the same truth which was taught by other Incarnations and *Avataras*. In reading the life and teachings of Jesus the Christ, as given in Synoptic Gospels, we find the same spiritual instructions and ethical teachings and similar methods of attaining to that consciousness of the union of the individual soul with the Heavenly Father, as were inculcated by the great Incarnations and Prophets of India before the time of Christ

By his sweet and gentle expressions Christ showed to the world that he was not a man of this earth. He lived the same life of simplicity and purity and chastity, trusting always in the Divine Will, just as Buddha and his disciples and the great vedic sages of India did. Christ never thought of tomorrow, and he taught his disciples to do the same In the present century, it will not be possible to find such high examples of extreme simplicity, purity, and disinterested love as are found in that wonderful Redeemer, whose life and sayings have transformed the characters of thousands and thousands of men, and have brought the spiritual light and consolation to the hearts of millions and millions of people.

Christ was at first surrounded by a handful of disciples By his unique renunciation he conquered their hearts, and showed them the way to salvation, or perfection, or the highest wisdom He also showed them how to live the life of blessedness, how to be true disciples, how to live in this world and to die for the good of humanity leaving aside all selfish purposes. Through his exemplary character he showed to the world that the highest ideal and aim of religion were the realization of the unity of the individual souls with the Supreme God, the Father in Heaven. That was also the aim of the religion of Christ.

Again, by his wonderful personality Christ impressed the hearts of his disciples he sowed in the hearts of his followers the seeds of charity, self-denial, resignation, unchangeable love, forgiveness, faith in God, and that each individual soul is the son of God in reality These were the fundamental principles in the teachings of Jesus the Christ.

About charity, Jesus asked his disciples and followers to be kind of the poor, to give them whatever they needed He said: 'Give to him that needeth'. 'Give to the poor and thou shalt have

treasure in heaven, give freely to the poor'. About self-denial he said: 'Whosoever shall come after me, let him deny himself, for whosoever shall save his life, shall lose it' What shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul Christ showed by his example and the manner in which he lived, how to conquer and curb the passions and temptations by austerities About renunciaton, Christ said to his disciples: 'Sell all thou hast and give to the poor and come and follow me'. 'Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on; take no thought for the morrow, for tomorrow shall take thought for the things of itself' Very few of the Christians of today accept these teachings of renunciation in their literal sense, but self-renunciation was the ideal of the religion of Jesus the Christ He renounced his family, cut off all ties of the world, and was free Any one who wishes to follow him will have to do the same

Children of wealth did not listen to Christ's teachings and they said, trying to explain those passages 'We cannot accept teachings and give up everything, the teachings are different'. But the true followers of Christ do not listen to such childish talk. They will not also be misdirected or guided by such explanations which proceed from the minds of the worldly people, who are attached to worldly possessions and are not ready for higher spiritual realization. About forgiveness, Christ said: 'Forgive, as ye shall be forgiven' About unchangeable love, Jesus the Christ asked his disciples, 'Love your neighbours as your own self, love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and do evil to no man Be merciful, as thy Father is merciful'. About intense faith he said that everyone must have it in God, and wherever there is that faith, there will be wrought miracles and wonders. Regarding the union of the individual soul with the Universal Spirit, he said. 'I and my Father are one, ye are in me and I am in you,[2] the kingdom of God is within you' About purity, he said: 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God'

Thus we see that these fundamental principles of charity, purity, renunciation, forgiveness, self-denial, and realization of

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[2] Vide The *Gita*, IX, 29

the oneness of the individual soul with the universal Spirit were the highest ideals and the foundations upon which religion of Christ stood During the years of his public life, as a spiritual teacher, Jesus the Christ preached these ethical and spiritual laws amongst the people, and showed, by his living example, how to practise them and to live up to the ideal even in this life But all those grand ethical and spiritual laws, which formed the foundation of the religion of Jesus the Christ, were preached by the Buddhist teachers and were practised by those who lived in Syria, Palestine, Alexandria and Babylon nearly three centuries before Jesus the Christ.

We all know that Buddhist religion is most ethical, and it is a religion of humanity and for humanity. The cardinal virtues of Buddhism are charity, self-denial, renunciation, universal love, and compassion for all living creatures including the lower animals, control of passions, and self-mastery. Buddha said. 'Forsake all evil, bring forth good, and control thy thoughts, this is the path to perfection' He also said: 'My law is a law of mercy for all. Do not hate those who hate you, but love them Hatred cannot be stilled by hatred, but by reconciliation No hatred can be stilled or conquered by hatred, but hatred can be conquered by love This is the everlasting law. Conquer the evil with good and the false with truth, and let unbounded good will prevail among mankind. Let there be no foe or enemy of any living creature'

All these higher truths were preached by Buddha about five hundred years before the Christian era He lived up to the ideals and his disciples did the same His disciples and followers went to different countries—to China, Japan, Persia, Turkastan, and spread this higher religion amongst the masses, without any thought of gain Again, if we read the sayings and teachings of Krishna and Ramachandra, who lived centuries before Buddha, we find the same ethical teachings, the same spiritual instructions, the same laws of righteousness and spiritual realization In their teachings, we also find self-denial, purity, charity, resignation, and all the rest.

In India, the general belief is that these Incarnations of God or these *Avataras,* come not only to give something new to the world, but also to fulfil and re-establish the same truths which were taught before they were born. They come to give

a new life to those old and forgotten truths and, by their exemplary personality and character, they establish them once more amongst the masses and correct the meaning that becomes perverted in course of time. They clothe the old truths with new garments in order to adopt them to the conditions of time, place, and nationality. The same truths we find in the oldest writings of the Vedanta philosophy. In many of the *Upanishads,* the ancient Vedantic sages and seers of truth explain and the same truths in the same manner Those spiritual laws are eternal. Whether they are discovered today or a thousand years ago, it does not make any difference. They exist in the universe from eternity to eternity. The seers always recognized them Even in the remotest antiquity, we find that the sages observed the same truths and asked their disciples to live in the same way as Jesus the Christ did thousands of years later.

We find in one of the *Upanishads* that a disciple asking how we should live the life of righteousness and what the proof of spiritual perfection is The sage replied in three words, each beginning with a letter equivalent to 'D'. (a) the first word from the root *dam* means, 'Conquer your passions, conquer the senses'; (b) the second from the root *da* suggests, 'give freely, give to the poor, and be charitable to the needy', (c) the third word from the root *da* means, be kind toward all living creatures as you love your own self'. Self-control, charity, and to live for all are the three fundamental principles of all ethics and all religions of the world You will find them in the teachings of all the great teachers. You will find the same truths in all the scriptures of the world, whether it be the Koran, or the Old Testament or the New Testament or the Zend Avesta The truths are everywhere the same, because these are universal truths They were not discovered by any particular sage, or Prophet, or Incarnation of God, because all of them refer to someone who preceded them. These truths have been handed down from generation to generation, and they have been explained, preached, and popularized among the masses by different spiritual teachers of different times.

When I was a boy, I read in the first book of Sanskrit: Narrow-minded people say, he is my relative and the other man is a stranger, but the whole-souled one sees the nearest

and dearest relative in all living creatures. There is no one who is a stranger to him. He loves all living creatures as he loves his own dear self. There is another passage. 'The wise man should treat others as he treats himself; should love others as he loves himself, should be kind to others as to his own relatives and friends'. One of the most noticeable facts in India is that the Hindus are extremely charitable They feed the poor and give to the poor. Whoever has gone to India and travelled extensively has found this to be a fact. Some of them have remarked that the Hindus carry their charity to the extent of abuse. Of course, according to those travellers who do not realize the condition, it may be the abuse of charity, but in fact it is not The ideal of Hindu life is to give to the poor, to the masses

Whenever a religious or social ceremony occurs, the poor people are invited and fed sumptuously and garments are distributed to them It is not a matter of giving a cheque to some charitable association That is not charity Feed the poor and give them food with your own hand. That will bring out the latent feeling which will be a great blessing Organized charity is not charity at all, because it never rises from sympathy and never touches the heart and soul of the giver. Sri Krishna said in the *Bhagavad Gita*: 'That gift is of the highest kind in which the giver never thinks of any return'. If a giver thinks of gaining name and fame by giving a few hundred dollars to some organization, that charity is of the lowest kind. But when you give to the poor without letting any one know and without thinking of getting anything in return, that is of the highest kind Very few can do this. In India, those who can do this are honoured and respected by society. People think of that person as extremely virtuous, because the idea there is self-sacrifice. You should not put your money into the bank and draw an income from it. Whatever you do not need, give to the poor Those who have read the *Song Celestial* by Sir Edwin Arnold, will realize that all the teachings of Jesus the Christ, regarding charity, piety and so on including the Sermon on the Mount, were expressed by Sri Krishna in his teachings nearly fourteen hundred years before the Christian era. Read them and see for yourself how wonderful they are, and how well they accord with the teachings of Jesus the Christ.

When the great Incarnations of God use the words 'I', 'Me', 'Mine', they never think of themselves as the human beings, but they always mean the higher spirit of the Divine Self. Thus Sri Krishna says: 'Those who regarding Me as their highest goal and concept worship Me with single-hearted devotion, for them whose hearts are thus fixed on Me, I soon become the saviour from the ocean of mortal *samsara*.[3] Vedanta philosophy accepts all these great teachings and refers them to the eternal laws that lie behind them and answers all the questions of the atheists and agnostics regarding the highest ideal of our life. Vedanta teaches why we should lead a righteous life, and why we should be moral and renounce everything The great Incarnations of God did not give the reasons, but Vedanta philosophy gives the reasons It is like the essence of all the spiritual laws that have been shown to the world by the great seers of absolute Truth. This is one of the peculiar functions shown by Vedanta philosophy. At the same time, it is ready to face all the arguments that have been forwarded by the atheists and agnostics and, accepting all the scientific truths of all ages, makes religion stand upon the solid ground of reason and philosophy

Those who follow the teachings of the great ones can ask questions, but their questions will not be answered by the books. Books do not answer these questions, and also the scriptures do not answer these questions. All these great seers of truth came, and whenever anyone asked them questions, what did they say? They said: 'Let him hear who has ears to hear and let him see who has eyes to see'. They did not bother their heads to give reasons for everything they said They came to give the truth which they realized, to those who want it And those who want it should find rational explanations and not accept anything upon hearsy. For the purpose they should study Vedanta philosophy, because it accepts all the ethics and truths and everything which you can show in any scriptures or in any teachings of the life of any incarnation or prophet and explains them rationally.

According to Vedanta philosophy, morality and spirituality cannot be separated. They go hand in hand. A man or a

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[3] The *Gita*, XII, 6-7

woman, who lives an ordinary life, cannot be called spiritual. Unless that man or woman gives up that sort of life and lives a pure, chaste, and righteous life, he or she cannot advance The first thing necessary for a student of Vedanta is to obey the laws of health and the moral laws He must not steal another person's property, he must not kill or injure any living creature mentally or physically, he must not tell a lie. He should keep the company of those who are righteous, whose ideal is spiritual perfection and not earthly success and prosperity.

We all know the saying: 'If you live with dogs, you will be a dog' So, if we live with those great ones whose ideal in life is spiritual realization and the attainment of spiritual perfection, our character will be transformed according to theirs Their thoughts and ideas will reflect upon our lives, and we will mould our nature according to theirs We must shun the company of those living immoral lives, whose ideal is extremely selfish and of earthly nature. These are only the preliminary truths for those who wish to become perfect and reach the highest ideal in this life.

Having lived for sometime the life of purity, chastity, and morality, he will ask within himself the question: 'Who am I? What am I? Where did I come from? Did parents create my soul? Or is there anything that existed before the birth of my body, and which will continue to exist after the death of this physical form?' He will learn to discriminate the real from the unreal, the changeable from the unchangeable and, having understood that the phenomenal world is temporary, ephemeral, and constantly changing, he will turn his attention from the phenomenal objects and seek that which does not change. He may not think that there can be something which does not change, but there is such a thing in this phenomenal world of changes. There is only one thing which does not change, and to this truth ordinary mortals are blind But that unchangeable truth which they do not know, as their eyes are not opened, is the foundation of this phenomenal world, is the foundation of our existence; and the highest ideal of our lives is to know that truth, to feel it in our souls, and to realize it. He must not forget the aim of his life, and when he is in business, he must realize that this world is transitory; it is only for a few

days This business is not the business of the soul, but of the body.

We have to live in this world and earn our living, but the ideal of life is not to pass our days idly and to enjoy the pleasures of life , but to know who we are, what we are, and why we have come to this world. Has anybody forced us to inherit all this from our parents ? All these questions should be asked and, at the same time, the ideal of life must not be forgotten.

When he is extremely busy with the affairs of life, the mind of the aspirant will be concentrated upon the highest truth and gradually he will be able to overcome all sufferings and anxieties His mind will not be disturbed by anything of the transitory world. If you can only remember that these things are transitory and last for only a few moments, days, or years, and are not eternal, you will feel that the burden of suffering has been taken from your shoulders. That is what is referred to by Jesus the Christ when he said: 'Let not your merit be troubled, be not afraid of' We are too selfish, so try to protect the little self at the expense of others or of the higher self, and that is why we are afraid If anything happens that prevents us from realizing the idea of clinging to life, we are afraid. If we have no clinging to life, and do not fear whether we possess this or lose it, we have no fear.

The student of Vedanta should practise self-control i e control of passions, subjugate the senses, and learn to harmonize the individual will with the universal Cosmic Will The student must feel that there is one force in the universe, which is called by various names. Whether it is called will-power or life-force, it is always the same The force is one and is universal. It is neither yours, nor mine, but it belongs to the universe, and as it belongs to the universe, it is divine, because the universe is the body of the Divinity He should practise forbearance under pain, suffering, and anxiety, without dejection or lamentation and, instead of self-love, cultivate love for humanity Instead of loving this little form, he should love the forms of others, and gradually he will become free from attachment to the body and pleasures of the senses, and these will lead him to renunciation.

That renunciation, which is taught in Vedanta, is the same

as self-abnegation which was taught by Jesus the Christ, when he said 'Sell all thou hast and give to the poor and come and follow me' It is literally true, and he who wishes to attain to the highest wisdom and happiness in this life, will have to renounce all things which are temporary and do not really belong to him We cannot carry them with us after death. That which is eternal and unchangeable, is a part and parcel of our self. It will always remain with us, and we cannot renounce it even if we try All the earnest and sincere seekers after absolute Truth must renounce these things which do not belong to them. Those who worship God, should renounce everything for the sake of God. The lover of God should say, as Jesus the Christ said 'Whatever is thine, is mine, and whatever is mine, is thine' We should be ashamed to think that anything that belongs to us, is permanent It should be remembered that worldly things are always changing and temporary Remember that we are the children of the Divinity. How can we possess these temporary things which remain only for a few seconds, but that which is eternal, is in our possession by birthright. Through renunciation, will come that state of union of the individual soul with the universal Spirit, which was held to be the highest ideal by Jesus the Christ It is also the highest ideal of Vedanta philosophy When we feel that what we call as our own, has melted into the Divine Self and is transfigured into the Divinity

In that state, all the questions of the mind cease, all doubts are answered, and the individual soul rises above all sorrow, suffering, disease, pain, death, and all desires for earthly things, and all imperfections Then the soul becomes free and, uniting the individual self with the Supreme Being, he says: 'I am in the sun, I am in the moon, I am in the stars, I am everywhere'. It is not merely an imagination and it is not mere a loose talk. As we feel we are sitting here, and that it is real, so we will feel that we are in the sun, but not in this body. In truth, this body does not belong to us. We are the Soul, the Spirit

In one of the sayings of Jesus the Christ that have been discovered lately, he said: 'Raise this stone, there you will find me ; cleave the wood and there am I'. Sri Krishna also said the same thing· 'I am in the tree, in the sun, in water, in stone ; by me is provided the whole universe'. As Jesus the Christ said

to his disciples. 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I shall give you rest', so in the *Gita* we find that Sri Krishna said the same thing fourteen hundred years before the advent of Jesus the Christ· 'Giving up all the formalities of religion, come unto me, follow me, take refuge in me, worship me, and I shall give the rest and make thee free from sins , grieve not' [4]

One thing you will notice in the teachings of Vedanta that it teaches that we are not born as sinners and not born in sin and iniquity; but, on the contrary, we are the children of the immortal Bliss and the children of God The Divinity is our true nature According to Vedanta, what we call sin, is nothing but selfishness. When we forget that we are the children of the Divinity, we become identified with the body and the senses and forget our true relation to the universal Spirit, and we say that we are the children of Mr and Mrs so-and-so, and then we become selfish, narrow, and limited This limitation is the result of ignorance and forgetfulness, and that leads to selfishness and then, whatever we do for the good of this petty self is sinful We must not do it That ignorance will be dispelled by the light of wisdom, which is burning constantly As a deer cannot approach a burning mountain, so it is said in Vedanta 'The soul, where the fire of divine wisdom is burning, no sins can approach'.

If we wish to be free from sins, light that fire, and we will find that it has dispelled all our previous actions and the thoughts of our nature, and that we have become free We do not have to go to any messiah or redeemer The redeemer is within ourselves. We do not recognize and realize it, but Vedanta opens our eyes and leads us to see the redeemer in ourselves. Greet that light of divine wisdom, which will burn all sins into ashes Another thing we will notice in studying Vedanta it does not teach that God punishes us for our deeds God never punishes the wicked nor does He reward the virtuous, but we punish ourselves by our own deeds and thoughts Punishment and reward are nothing but the reactions of our own actions They are bound to come upon the actor or doer from which centre the actions proceeded We all are bound by the law of

[4] The *Gita,* XVIII, 66

cause and sequence, or the law of action and reaction At the same time, we must realize that if we wish to be free from this law of cause and sequence or action and reaction, we must realize our true nture which is above all laws

The ideal of Vedanta is not to go to heaven and to enjoy the pleasures of life for an indefinite period of time, but to enjoy freedom. As Jesus the Christ said 'And ye shall know the truth, and truth shall make you free' Ideal freedom means emancipation of the soul from the bondage of ignorance and attachment of the world, and also from ignorance and imperfection of all kinds That freedom comes when we realize our true nature, when we feel that we are one with Divinity, and when we realize that divinity in our soul That divine Being is nearer than the nearest, he is larger than the largest, he dwells in the minutest atom as well as in the largest solar system ; he dwells in each individual heart Whosoever realizes that divine Being as the foundation of his consciousness and basis of his intelligence, attains to freedom and perfection, even in this life.

# CHAPTER VII

# GAUTAMA BUDDHA AND HIS PHILOSOPHY

## I

### Is Buddha Indebted to Kapila?

Buddha, the Enlightened One is worshipped today as one of the Saviours, because the compassionate Buddha rescued hundreds and thousands of men from their deep slumber of ignorance The religion, he preached, was unsectarian and universal, and so it spread all over the world among all the nations and made the people, who breathed the real spirit of religion of Buddha, realize their immortal nature and inherent blessedness Buddha renounced everything for the cause of inner tranquillity or calmness, which is known as Nirvana, and he realized the Truth that removes the darkness of ignorance and makes a man a real man or a God-man His advent made India enriched with the golden treasures of culture, education, art, sculpture, and painting, and the age that was created around his loftiest ideal and sweet memory, was known as the Golden Age in India

Philosophy of Buddha evolved around his dynamic and ennobling personality, and his lofty and sublime thoughts and ideas were given in the forms of sayings or teachings, or dialogues and conversations in pure and simple language His simple thoughts and ideas gradually gave rise to speculative philosophy which was afterwards divided into different aspects and schools, viewing from different standpoints by his disciples and followers His disciples and followers were also divided into many religious sects, and there evolved some religious cults, creeds, and ceremonies among those different sects. But the fundamental principle of his thoughts and ideas on religion, ethics, and philosophy remained the same, though they were interpreted by the followers of different sects and schools in different ways.

Now let us discuss about some of the points and principles of philosophy of Buddha, which differed from those of the *Sankhya* of Kapila If we critically study the philosophy of

Buddha, we find that Buddha did not admit the *Prakriti* of Kapila According to Buddha, that which cannot be perceived or inferred, is non-existent Buddha held that the manifestation of the universe is a mere illusion, and it has no real existence. But, according to Kapila, the universe vanishes when the *Purusha* is liberated, i e. when the *Purusha* disconnects his contact or association with the *Prakriti*. Buddha also agreed with Kapila on this point in a different way. Kapila admitted the existence of the *Purusha* even after his liberation, but Buddha denied the existence of such *Purusha* after his Nirvana. Buddha also denied the existence of an attributeless *Purusha*.

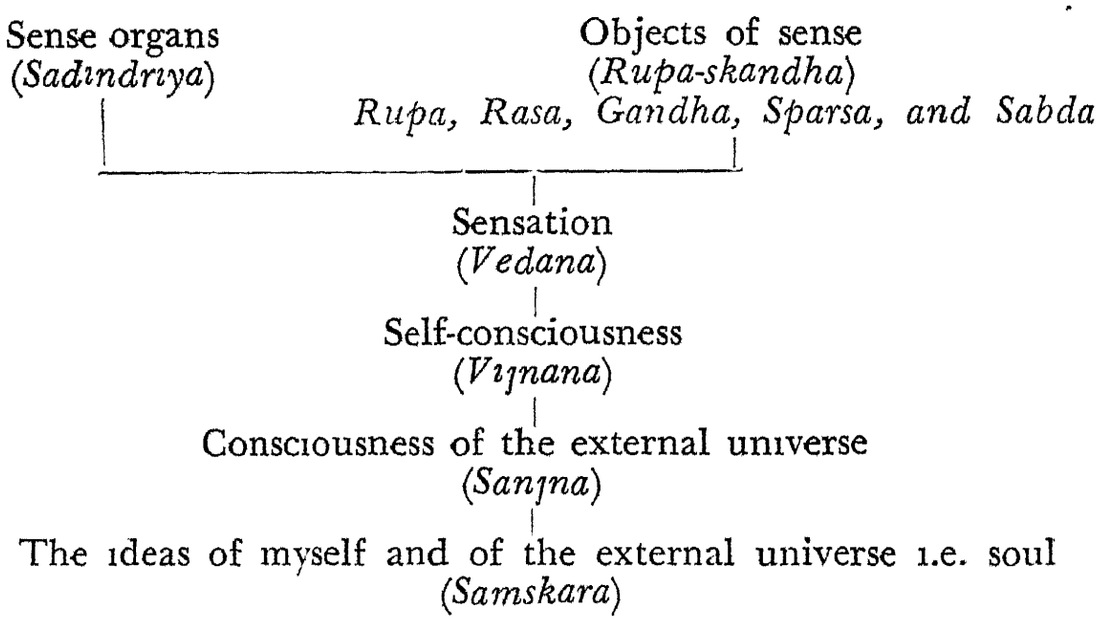
Again, according to Kapila, the universe is the result of the connection or association (*sannikarsha*) between the *Prakriti* and the *Purusha,* and Buddha also admitted a certain relation or connection that makes the universe appear as real To mention about some similar ideas that exist in the *Sankhya* and the *Madhyamika-karika,* it can be said that the *Sankhya* and the *Madhyamika* philosophy agree on the following points

1 Substance (*Prakriti*) and qualities are not separate, but are one ,
2 Cause and effect are identical ;
3 Time and space are the conditions of our knowledge, or forms of our thoughts the Madhyamika Philosophy says. "आकाशस्थितेन चेतसा कालं कुर्वन्ति" । i e , 'men create time by their mind out of space' ;
4. They both deny the existence of *Isvara,* the Creator ;
5 They both deny the authority of the Veda as Kapila says: "वाधितमर्थं वेदोहपि न वोधयति" "i.e contradictory facts cannot be explained by the Vedas', and the Madhyamikas says "यैमिनिर्यदि वेदज्ञः कपिलो नेति का प्रमा । उभौ च यदि वेदज्ञौ व्याऽयाभेदश्च किं कृतः" ।

Buddha himself also denied the existence of God and the authority of the Vedas Now if we study the other systems of philosophy we find that Jaimini, the author of the *Mimamsa,* did not admit the eternal existence of the Vedas, and he also denied the existence of God as the Creator of the world-process. It has already been said that Kapila also denied the existence of God 'ईश्वरासिद्धे' । But after Kapila, Patanjali improved on Kapila's system by introducing God as a *Purusha.*

It is found that Buddha drew materials for his metaphysics from both Patanjali and Kapila Now we find that as Patanjali improved on Kapila's *Sankhya* by admitting God as a *Purusha,* so Badarayana improved on Jaimini's *Purva-Mimansa* by admitting the existence of the supreme Spirit (Brahman) We also find that there were many adjustments and improvements in different philosophical systems of Indian thoughts in different ages.

Now, let us discuss in short the process of evolution in both the systems of thoughts of Buddha and Kapila According to Buddha's philosophy, the process of evolution is like the following:




Now what are the *Sadindriyas* or six organs and the object of sense?

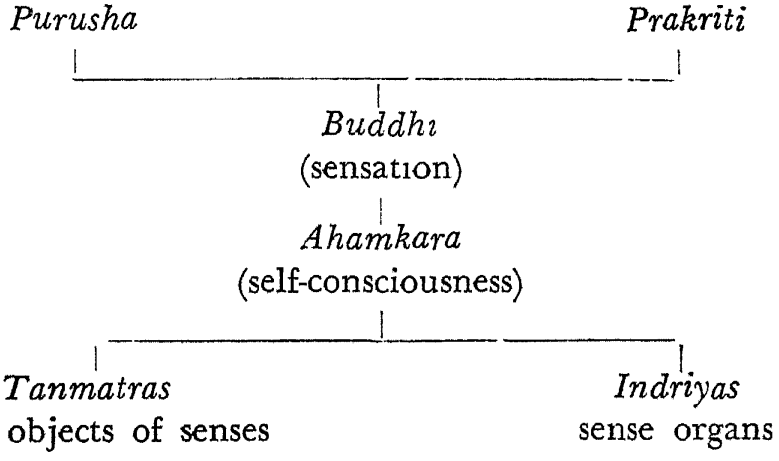
*Sadindriyas* or six organs are *chakshu, etc.,* and *manas* (mind).

*Pancha-skandhas* = Objects of sense ,
*Vedana* = sensation ,
*Vijnana* = Self-consciousness ,
*Sanjna* = Consciousness of the universe comprehended under name and form ,
*Samskaras* = transmitted mental impression

*Rupa-skandha* includes *Rupa, Rasa, Gandha, Sabda* and these are called *Rupa* or *Vishaya* When the sense organs come into a particular relation with these objects of the sense, *Vedana*

(sensation) is produced, out of *Vedana* evolves *Vijnana* (self-consciousness). The outcome of *Vijnana* is *Sanjna* (consciousness of the external universe), which again generates *Samskaras.*

The waves of impressions or ideas transmitted in succession by the relation of cause and effect, make up what is called the soul (*Atman*) The Mahayana school teaches that the whole evolution of the universe including myself, is *maya* or illusion, and we may observe here that the doctrines of the *Prajnaparamita* were derived from the *Sankhya* of Kapila As for example,




Buddha substituted for the *Prakriti* of the *Sankhya* the objects of senses, and for the *Purusha,* the sense organs. Every other step in the Buddhist philosophy remains the same as in the *Sankhya* of Kapila

As soon as the soul or *Atman* is liberated, the objects of senses and the sense organs merge into the principle of the self-consciousness (*ahamkara*) Again *ahamkara* merges into *buddhi* or understanding, and the latter into the *Prakriti.* Then the soul or *Atman* arrives at the absolute knowledge of "I do not exist, I have nothing, and I am nothing": That is, नास्मि नामी नाहं इत्यपरि शेषं केवलं उऽपद्यते ज्ञानम्' (*nasmi nami naham ityapari shesham utpadyate jnanam*)—Sankhyatattva-Kaumudi.

This knowledge corresponds with the absolute knowledge of nothingness or *sunyata* (vide the *Prajnaparamita* of the Mahayana Buddhists). The ultimate goal in both the systems of Buddha and Kapila is the same The soul is liberated,

according to Kapila, when the *Prakriti* vanishes away i.e is disconnected from it. The Mahayanists are more scientific in reducing everything to nothingness (*sunyata*) without unnecessarily admitting the existence of the *Prakriti* and the *Purusha* even after the *Purusha* has arrived at the conviction of "I am nothing, I have nothing" The *Sankhya* says in this point that the sense organs have evolved from the *sattva* quality of the *Prakriti* and the sense objects from the *tamas* quality of the *Prakriti* Therefore the sense organs and the sense objects in the Mahayana system together fill up the place of the *Prakriti* in the system of Kapila The *sattva* quality illumines and the *tamas* quality envelopes, according to the *Sankhya*. The Mahayanists agree with Kapila not admitting *kala* (*time*) as a substance. Time or *kala*, according to both, is a mere condition of knowledge, or the form of thought, as Immanual Kant said in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

Again we find that not only the doctrine, but also the phraseology of the Buddhist philosophy, are borrowed from that of the *Sankhya* philosophy of Kapila. Whoever can understand the distinction between the *Prakriti* and the *Purusha*, by the help of enlightened *buddhi*, he is said to attain to salvation Now the term *Bodhisattva* is connected with the *sattva* quality of the *Sankhya*, and the particle *bodhi* is derived from *buddhi* of the *Sankhya* In the *Prajnaparamita*, the word *bodhi* or *sambodhi* has been used in the feminine gender, corresponding to the gender *buddhi* (of Kapila) The Buddhists thought themselves to be made up of the *sattva* quality and were the *Bodhisattva* or intelligent and illumining substances, or the enlightened person The particle *tanmatra* of the *Sankhya* corresponds to *tathata* of the Buddhists, as for example, *rupa-tanmatra* or *rupa-tathata*, etc From the *Prajnaparamita*, Nagarjuna[1] derived his aphorisms of the *Madhyamika-karika* Nagarjuna also wrote an excellent commentary on the *Prajnaparamita*

Now from the historical viewpoint it can be said that the four noble truths were not introduced by Buddha for the first time. At least two centuries before his advent, Kapila, the founder of the *Sankhya* school of philosophy and father of the evolution theory in India, inculcated the same truths in the

[1] Nagarjuna was born in Vidarbha in the first century A D

same manner, showing that there is suffering in the world, tracing its cause to lust and desire, and describing that deliverance from all kinds of suffering, misery, birth, and death, is the highest ideal of life, and in the end he pointed out the path that leads to such emancipation

The religion of Buddha may, therefore, be said to be an outgrowth of the *Sankhya* system in some different forms. It has been said before that as Kapila denied the existence of a personal God, who is called the Creator and the Governor of the universe, so did Buddha. Buddha was the greatest free-thinker and religious reformer of his time He also rejected the authority of the Vedas and stood against priest-craft, the caste system, and other social evils that prevailed at that time. He denounced the animal sacrifice as inhuman, disdained worship and devotion to God, and ridiculed prayers as useless and unnecessary He avoided the philosophical discussions and the metaphysical debates. Buddha's sole aim was to see his followers walking in the path of righteousness, obtaining control and mastery over passions and desires, and thus escaping the law of *karma* and reaching the destination of Nirvana, which is the cessation of birth, sorrow, suffering, disease, and death. When He was asked by his disciples what the state of Nirvana was like, whether it was a positive or negative state, Buddha said: "There is, O disciples, a state where there is neither earth, nor water, neither light, nor air, neither infinity of space, nor infinity of reason, neither absolute void, nor the extinction of perception and non-perception and neither this world, nor that world and the sun and the moon. That, O disciples, I term, neither coming, nor going, nor standing, neither death, nor birth It is without basis, without procession, without cessation, and that is the end of sorrow, and that is Nirvana"

Can ordinary minds grasp what Buddha meant by such a state? The keenest intellectual and subtlest understanding of a philosopher fail to comprehend the real meaning. Even the minds of the most advanced disciples of Buddha were staggered and confounded many a time in their attempts to get a clear conception of this state of Nirvana, the highest ideal of Buddhism. Some of his followers thought that it must be the state of absolute negation; others believed it to be the total annihilation of everything that exists in the universe Some understood that

it was a state of perfect void, others maintained that it was absolute non-existence or destruction of the self

Buddha described Nirvana thus "Here there is no female, no male, no sentient being, no animal, no man, no soul All these are unreal, all these are non-existent, all these are unreal, or are illusions, all these are dreams, all these are apparitional, all these are like the moon in the water Hearing the words of the Lord, they look upon the world as unreal and do not become attached to it Men create time out of void, they themselves are void Those who understand these, can dive deep into the element of Nirvana which is unconditional".[2] Buddha further said: "Look to the internal objects as being void, look to the external also to be so Void becomes he who contemplates on the void".[3]

The question arose whether Nirvana could be attained In answering this question Buddha himself has clearly explained the doctrine of Nirvana in the following *Gatha*: "The profound object called Nirvana has been expressed by a word, but neither the Nirvana nor the word can be attained to Anirvana· this is also a word and this also cannot be attained to Nirvana has been identified with the void and the dispersion of illusion has also been spoken of as being the Nirvana. Whatever may be the definition of Nirvana, it cannot be attained to. In as much as the *sattavas* are not self- existent, they cannot be said to attain Nirvana, and as the Nirvana (which lies beyond both the existence and non-existence) is not an existent (positive) object, its attainment is impossible The world and the self are both un-

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2 नाम स्त्री न पुरुषो न सत्वा न जीवो न पुरुषो न पुंगलो। वितया इमे सर्वधर्माः। असन्त इमें सर्वधर्माः। विटापिता इमे सर्वधर्माः। मायोपमा इमे सर्वधर्माः। स्वप्नोपमा इमे सर्वधर्माः। उदकचन्द्रोपमा इमे सर्वधर्माः। इति विस्तरः। ते इमां तथागतस्य धर्मदेशनां श्रुत्वा विगतरागान् सर्वधर्मान् पश्यन्ति। विगतमोहान् सर्वधर्मान पश्यानी अक्षवभावान् अनावरणान्। ते आकाशस्थितेन चेतसा कालं कुवीती ते कालगताः समानाः निरुपयिशेषे निर्वाणधातौ परिनिर्वान्ति।—रत्नकूटसूत्र

3 शून्यमाध्यात्मिकं पश्य पश्य शून्यं वहिर्गतम्।
न विद्यते सोऽपि कश्चिद् यो भावयति शून्यताम्॥—रत्नकूटसूत्र

real and as soon as their unreality manifests itself, all the illusions (consisting of the self and the world) vanish away The unreal objects having dissolved into unreality, the real thing remains undisturbed This real (absolute and transcendental) thing which undergoes no change even when the fabric of the world and self passes away, has been described as being the state of Nirvana Thus attainment cannot be predicated as Nirvana, the latter being an eternal and immutable state. This real (absolute) thing which has been identified with the Nirvanic state is not affected by the dispersion of the world and self".[4] In the *Ratnameghasutra* it is said: "The objects that we perceive now were void or nothingness in their nature in the past, and they will dissolve into the void in the time to come. Even at the present moment they have got no basis; they are all mere illusions. Purity and impurity are also of the nature of the sky, i.e. void in their essence".[5] Chandra Kirthi, the author of *Madhyamika-Virta* (commentary on the *Madhyamika-karika* by Nagarjuna) says: "*Sanskrita* has been defined as being that which has origination, continuation and extinction (utpatti, sthiti, laya). But Nirvana or '*sunyata*' has no beginning, continuation or termination, and so it has been called *Asanskrita* None can attain Nirvana, none can enter into *sunyata*" [6]

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4 यथा निर्वाँण गम्भीरं शब्देन सम्प्रकाशितम्।
लभ्यते न च निर्वाणं स च शब्देन लभ्यते ॥
शब्दश्चाप्यनिर्वाणमुभयन्तन्न लभ्यते।
एवं शून्येषु धर्मेषु निर्वाणं सम्प्रकाशितम् ॥
निर्वाणन्निवृत्ति वृत्तं निर्वाणच न लभ्यते।
अप्रवृत्तेषु धर्मेषु यथा पश्चात् तथा पुरा ॥—बुद्धगाथा

5 आदित शून्य अनागत धर्मा
अनागत अष्ठित स्थानविविक्ताः।
नित्यमसारक मायस्वभावाः
शुद्ध विशुद्ध नभोपम सर्वि ॥—रत्नमेघसूत्र

6 अमैकेतु आकाशप्रतिसंख्यानिरोधनिर्वाणानि असंस्कृतानि कल्पयन्ति।
अपरे शून्यतां तथतालक्षणां असंस्कृतां परिकल्पयन्ति ॥—माध्यमिकावृत्तिः

## II

## GAUTAMA BUDDHA'S PHILOSOPHY

Buddha taught his disciples to look to the world from four different standpoints:

(1) अनित्यः सर्व-संस्काराः ;

All is transitory and should be thought or contemplated as such

(2) दुःखः सर्व-संस्काराः ;

All is pain and should be thought as such

(3) नैरात्मयः सर्व-संस्काराः ।

All is like itself and should be thought as such

(4) सान्तम् निर्वाणम् चेति ।

All is void and should be thought as such.

These were called the four facts of virtue (*chatvari dharmah-padani*) Now Buddha's disciples understood such teachings according to their ideas and intellectual capacity. Thus there arose four different schools of philosophy, viz. Madhyamika, Yogachara, Sautrantika, and Vaibhashika The Madhyamika school teaches *sunyatavada* (nihilism or universal voidness) It denies the absolute existence of the external world and of cognition This doctrine was taught in India before and during the life time of Buddha as it was refuted in the aphorism 38th of the 4th chapter of the Nyaya philosophy, also by Vyasa in the second chapter of the *Vedantasutra,* aphorism 28th, section II.

Vadaryana-Vyasa said in the *Sutra* 'नाभाव उपलब्धेः' //2.2.28 That is, non existence is not felt or perceived The Yogachara Buddhists say that the statement, everything is in the mind, and external thing does not exist other than the mind or the form of cognition, is not correct, as an external object manifests in cognition An object which is perceived and also appears in cognition, cannot be non-existent As for example, I am speaking and at the same time I have no lip, it is impos-

sible So the thing which is felt or perceived, exists, and it cannot be known as a non-existence. Sankara also says in the commentary: "न खल्वभावो बाह्यशार्थस्यध्यवसातुं शक्यते। कस्मात्? उपलब्धेः। उपलभ्यते हि प्रतिप्रत्ययं बाह्योइर्थः—स्तम्भः कुड्यः घटः पट इति।"

Gautama also said in the *Nyayadarshana* 'न स्वभावसिद्धेर्भावानाम्" //4 1 39

That is, it cannot be the conclusion that everything is non-existent or illusion which is perceived and is existent. In the 4 1 37, Gautama said. "सर्वमभावोः भावच्चितरेतर भावसिद्धेः" That is, Gautama first represented the view of the *sunyavadi* Saugata that whatever appears as existent is illusion, and then refuted this view in the 4.1 38 *sutra.* However, from these it is evident that the nihilistic ideas were prevalent in ancient India in the Buddhist period

However, the Yogacharis accepted the teachings of their *Guru* and practised Yoga to find out the existence of the cognition and ideas as real mental phenomenon They may be classed as the idealists who deny the existence of the external world as independent of the mental phenomenon. The Madhyamikas accepted the teachings of the *Guru,* but did not question the authority of their teacher by practising Yoga, and, therefore, their system was neither the best, nor the worst, but mediocre The Sautrantikas admitted the cognition and said that although the external world cannot be perceived, still from the testimony of other people we infer the existence of the external world. The Vaibhasikas admitted both the external world and the cognition or mental phenomena as realities Sautrantikas are so called, because some of the disciples of Buddha asked him what was the end (*anta*) of the aphorism (*sutra*) of the univercal *sunyata.* Buddha called them Sautrantikas, because they asked the end of the *sutra.* The Vaibhasikas are those who considered the theory of *sunyata* or *viruddha-bhasha* i e absurdity in language They maintain the theory of direct perception (*pratyakshavada*).

The Madhyamikas admitted two kinds of existence absolute (*paramarthika*) and apparent (*samhatika*). The universe is void (*sunya*) from the absolute sense, but so long as we do not look to the world from the absolute standpoint, we must admit the apparent or phenomenal existence of the world, and as

long as the world appears as real (*vyavaharika-satta*), so long the Brahman is not realized *Samhati* of the Madhyamikas means the illusory knowledge or *samvriti* which literally means 'covering', or the screen which keeps off the view of the absolute and makes it appear differently. The *samvritik* knowledge can be proved to be false by the attainment of the transcendental (*paramarthika*) knowledge. The Madhyamikas hold that the universe is real from the standard of *samvritika* (phenomenal) truth, but false from the standard of *paramarthika* truth which is *sunyata* (void). But, according to Sankara, the transcendental (*paramarthika*) truth is the Brahman Like "I am Brahman" of (*'brahmasmi'*) Sankara, the Madhyamikas hold that Nirvana comes with the knowledge, "I am nothingness itself" (*'aham sunyam*).

Now what is this *sunyata* (void or nothingness) which Buddha taught,[7] and the Madhyamika school preached? According to Mahayana school, *sunyata* (nothingness) means 'profound' "The word 'profound' again, O Subhuti, is synonymous of the word *sunyata*" *Sunyata* is the same as that which has no cause, which is beyond conception and is above contemplation, and which is not produced, and not born of non-existence, nor of extinction" (Vide the *Prajnaparamita*, chapter XVIII).

In fact, nothingness or void is an inconceivable thing beyond all relativity of existence and non-existence. It is neither a combination of the two, nor a negation of the two, as it is said in the *Sarvadarsanasangraha*:

"अस्ति नास्ति तदुभयानुभय चतुष्कोटिविनिर्मुक्त शून्यता।"[8]

"उर्द्धशून्यमधः शून्यं मध्यशून्यं यदात्मकं", etc.

It is called *Bodhi*, or Nirvana. "O Subhuti", said Bhagavan Buddha, "These are mere words as spoken by Tathagata, such as without measure, without number, imperishable, void, without cause, beyond meditation, beyond memory, without origin, without birth, non-existent, resigned, restraint, (sensation, abstract ideas and tendencies are restraints·) extinction".

[7] But it should be investigated whether Buddha himself propagated the theory of nothingness, or it evolved after the demise of Lord Buddha However, there are differences of opinion regarding it

[8] Compare the passage as depicted in Vedanta.

So the word *sunyata* is a mere attempt to express that which is beyond word and thought Another synonym of *sunyata,* said Buddha, is without measure, or that which is without cause, or that which is beyond meditation. He said: "All the attributes are void (*sunya*) Those which are void, are imperishable also" In chapter XVIII of the *Prajnaparamita,* Subhuti asked: "What is this the highest complete knowledge " Buddha said: "Tathata or Truth is the highest complete knowledge. Tathata neither increases, nor dimnishes".

## III

## THE MAYAVADA OF BUDDHA

The Bhagavan said. "धर्मतैषा सर्वधर्माणाम् मायाधर्मतामुपादाय" i e "The objects that are said to exist, are mere illusion[1] or *maya* *Maya* or illusion is the essence of all substances". The Bhagavan made an exposition of *maya* or illusion by citing an example of a magician The Bhagavan said: "Just as a magician can, through his skill in magic, exhibit on the public street the spectacle of a man killing another man where there is in reality no man at all, so also this universe is a spectacle seen through magic This spectacle is *maya* or illusion, and the magic through the instrumentality of which this spectacle appears to us is our *avidya,* nescience or ignorance. He said: "O Sariputra, the objects which do not exist being affirmed of as existing are called *avidya*" As the knowledge of the universal void has been called the *mahavidya* So, on the contrary, to believe the existence of the objects of sense, is called *avidya.* Those who have understood the doctrine of *sunyata,* have been called *parikshina-bhava-samyojana*" and *"chhinna-prapancha",* because they will have not to return to the world again, and

[1] *Maya* is generally translated as 'illusion', and most of the Western scholars have used the word 'illusion' to connote the idea of unreality or *mithya* i e changeable, and impermanent something But from the strict viewpoint of Advaita Vedanta, *maya* should be translated as 'delusion' and not as 'illusion' But, in the Buddhist philosophy, and specially in the Madhyamika philosophy, *maya* or *smvriti* is known as non existent something, and it connotes, therefore, the idea of that which is absolutely non-existent or *asat*

they have cut off the ties of the world And those who have adopted the doctrine of *sunyata* were called *mahayana-samprasthita*"

## IV

## WHAT IS PRATITYA-SAMUTPADA

*Pratitya-samutpada* means dependent origination There are twelve stages in this process of dependent origination They are as follows.

(1) *Avidya* or ignorance is the cause of all ;

(2) On *avidya* depends *samskara* (*avidyapratyayah sanskarah*) ,

(3) On *samskara* depends *vijnana* (*sanskarapratyayam-vijnanam*) ,

(4) On *vijnana* depends *nama-rupa* (*vijnanapratyam nama-rupam*) ;

(5) On *nama-rupa* (external objects) depend six senses including mind (*namarupapratyayam sadayatanam*) ,

(6) On *sadayatanam* depends *sparsha* (contact of the sense organs with objects (*sadayatanapratyayah sparshah*) ;

(7) On *sparsha* depends *vedana* feeling (*sparshapratyaya vedana*) ,

(8) On *vedana* depends *trishna* or thirst (*vedanapratyaya trishna*) ,

(9) On *trishna* depends *upadana,* attachment (*trishnapratyayam upadanam*) ;

(10) On *upadana,* attachment depends *bhava* procreation (*upadanapratyaya bhavah*) ;

(11) On *bhava* depends *jati,* birth (*bhavapratyaya jatih*) ;

(12) On *jati* depends *jaramarana,* decay and death (*jatipratyayahjaramaranh*)

These twelve stand in *pratyaya* or dependence of one upon another This doctrine of *pratityasamutpada* was also called *samudaya* which means the same dependent origination This term *samudaya* was used in the *Lalita-vistara* in preference to *pratityasamutpada.* It may be considered either from top to bottom or from bottom to top. It does not mean twelvefold

chain of causation as Prof Oldenberg and Childers have explained

In the *Madhyamika-sutra,* Nagarjuna explained four kinds of *pratyaya* (*dependence*) which are as follows

(1) *Hetu*—the causal relation as of the seed and the plant. The Buddhists admit only material cause The essence of the seed and that of the plant is the same. The growth of the plant depends upon the cessation of the seed. The plant cannot appear until the seed has disappeared The plant comes into being only when the seed has ceased to exist The essence of the cause has been destroyed to give rise to the essence of the effect. The cause and its effect, such as the seed and the plant, cannot be coexistent The existence of the effect presupposes the non-existence of the cause The Buddhists thus affirm that "existence springs from non-existence" But a wrong apprehension of this doctrine has led the Hindu philosophers to ridicule the Buddhists.

(2) *Alambana*—supporting , as the relation of fire and the fuel The visual perception is also dependent on light in this way

(3) *Anantara* or *samanantara*—immediate , as the relation of two successive acts of knowledge.

(4) *Adhipati*—defining, as the relation of the eye and the colour of the ear and the sound, etc.

There is no fifth dependence or relation. Now the twelve objects of *pratitya-samutpada* do not stand to one another in the causal relation (*hetu* or *karana*), but some of them bear other relations as well, *avidya* is the cause of *samskara,* but *samskaras* bear to *vijnana* the relation of *adhipati* or *adhipateya* (definition). *Samskara* is a false conception left in our mind, such as, this is a tree, this is my mother, that was my enemy etc This is *avidya* or ignorance.

But here it should be mentioned that there are two traditions, Pali or Southern and Sanskrit-Chinese or Northern, and in these two traditions causality has been divided into *prasthana* (*patthana*) and *pratyaya* (*paccaya*) Now the difference between *prasthana* and *pratyaya* is that *prasthana* is limited to non-transitive relations to its direct effects, whereas *pratyaya* covers not only non-transitive relations to direct effects, but also transitive relations to indirect effects. Now, it should be remembered

that these *prasthanas* or *pratyayas* are defined and mentioned in relation to different kinds of *karma* or action It has already been defined that *prasthana* means proper or principal or pre-eminent cause among other causes, and *pratyaya* means an event by which a fruit or effect derived from itself occurs. In tho 7th book of the Pali Abhidharma, twenty-four kinds of *pratayayas* are distinguished These *pratyayas* are applied to four kinds of relations: mind to mind, mind to body, body to body and body to mind The *Abhaidharmathha-samgjraha* adds two more relations, viz. (a) relation between term and concept on one hand and mind on the other ; (b) relation between one group of states of mind-body and another group of states of mind-and-body

In the Northern tradition, the Sthaviravadins and Sarvastivadins agreed on the personal interpretation of causality, as opposed to the Yogacharins When we come to deal with the Northern interpretation of cosmic causality, we find that here the Yogacharins and Sarvastivadins are in agreement as opposed to the totally different account handed down by the Sthaviravadins.

So we find four *pratyayas,* six *hetus,* and five fruits or *phalas*

| *Pratyaya* | *Hetus* | *Phalas* |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Hetu | 1. Karana | 1 Adhipati |
| 2 Samanantara | 2 Sahabhuti | 2. Purusakara |
| 3. Alambana | 3. Samprayukta | 3 Nisyanda |
| 4 Adhipati | 4 Sabhaga | 4. Vipaka |
| | 5. Sarvatraga | 5 Visamyukta |
| | 6. Vipaka. | |

Some schools postulated four additional effects or *phalas* and those are: (1) supported effect, (2) acquired effect, (3) harmonious effect, and (4) trained effect Vasubandhu considered these *phalas* as variations of divisions of *purusakara* and *adhipati phalas* More emphasis has been laid upon the causal relationships between the various types of mental *dharmas* than the material *dharma.* Now, it should be mentioned in this connection that there are differences of opinion about the causal

influence of one *mahabhuta* upon another and similarly the causal influence exerted by various groups of mentals upon one another

Further it can be said that *sadayatana* bears to *sparsha* the relation of support *alambana*; contact cannot take place unless it obtains the support of any of the sense organs The relation that exists between *sparsha* and *vedana,* is mere immediate one (*anantara*), and between *vedana* and *trishna* is a causal one. A feeling arises immediately after the contact has taken place. The feeling and the desire are essentially the same thing Again between *trishna* and *upadana,* or between *upadana* and *bhava,* or between *bhava* and *jati,* or between *jati* and *jaramarana,* is a mere supporting one *alambana* ; and pains cannot arise if there is no body to support them. Thus the twelve objects do not constitute a chain of causation, but they form a mere chain of dependence, relation, or condition.

## CHAPTER VIII

# RELIGION OF VEDANTA

"With our ears may we hear that which is comforting to our souls, with our eyes may we see the Divinity everywhere, as long as we live may we have strength of mind and body, and may all the actions of our lives be devoted to the supreme ideal" Religion of Vedanta has been preached and explained in this city of America for the last seven years by the spiritual teachers from India, and I am glad to say that it has filled the highest spiritual aspirations of many souls and, having answered the questions of their minds, has brought peace and happiness to their minds, has brought peace and happiness to their everyday life It is extremely comforting to those who have outgrown the dogmas and creeds of special religions I am sure that many of the students who are present today, will not hesitate to join the great German philosopher Schopenhauer in saying "Vedanta has been the solace of my life and will be the solace of my death".

The light of Vedanta has dispersed from the minds of the students the darkness of ignorance and superstition, and has made the rays of spiritual life appear brighter and more perceptible Religion of Vedanta is like a huge structure, and its foundation is not laid upon the quicksand of scriptural writings, or on some particular personality, but on the solid rock of logical and scientific reasoning; a structure whose walls are not made of the clay of superstitious dogmas, but constructed of the stones of spiritual experiences artistically placed by the seers of truth, one upon the other. The roof of this superb structure, this religion of Vedanta, is not covered by the celestial dome of an anthropomorphic God, but reaches high above all the heavens that are described in the scriptures It goes beyond phenomenal existence and reasoning, and above all relativity It permeates into the infinite space of absolute Truth, which is the eternal abode of being, intelligence, and bliss (*sat, chit* and *ananda*)

The gates of this palace of Vedanta are not guarded by

fanatics, who carry destructive weapons in their arms, preventing the followers of other spiritual religions from entering into it, but are guarded by those, who in sincerity and earnestness stand as sentinels with open arms to welcome all sincere seekers after spiritual life, irrespective of faith, creed, or other considerations There are many stories in this palatial structure of Vedanta, of which three may be mentioned The first is for the monotheistic thinkers who believe in the worship of a personal God Here they find all the rituals, symbols, and ceremonials, which the dualistic churches are in need of The second floor of this superb structure is for those who have outgrown this belief in a personal God, who have risen above all ceremonials and dogmas, and whose souls are ready to realize God dwelling in nature as well as outside of it, who inter-penetrates every particle of this universe, who is the soul of the universe and is the eternal ruler of the universe, just as the individual souls are the internal rulers of their bodies and are like the parts of that one stupendous whole God of Vedanta is worshipped under different names by different nations. Some worship Him as the Father in Heaven, or Jehovah ; others as Ahura Mazda, the Mohammedans as Allah, the Buddhists as Buddha, and the Hindus worship Him as the Divine Mother of the universe On the third and highest story of this magnificent palace, are those who have gone beyond all relativity and have risen above all phenomenal existence and have realized the oneness of the individual soul with the supreme Being or the absolute Reality This supreme Being is called in Vedanta the Brahman

We see that, as religion of Vedanta includes, on the one hand, all the fundemental principles of the monotheistic and dualistic religions as well as the qualified non-dualistic, so, on the other hand, it embraces all the highest ideals of the greatest philosophers and the best thinkers of all climes and all ages It has been asked again and again: 'Why is it that Vedanta is called a philosophy and a religion at the same time ?' It is exceedingly puzzling for many to understand clearly what this Vedanta philosophy stands for Those, who are brought up with that religion should be separated from philosophy, think that, as Vedanta is a philosophy, so it has nothing to do with religion, so, according to them, religion must always be founded upon some scriptural writings, or upon some particular incar-

nation of God, as we see in all the spiritual religions of the world and also in the religions of Mohammed, Buddha, and others The followers of these religions should study more carefully Vedanta to understand what is meant by the word 'religion' and should see how it can harmonize the ultimate conclusion of science with that of philosophy. In the first place, Vedanta does not mean any particular set of dogmas, or articles of faith, or creed, on the contrary, it tells us that religion is something different from such a belief In fact, religion means a knowledge of the absolute Being or the Godhead and also the attainment of Godconsciousness It is being and becoming one with the Divine, or the realization of oneness of the individual soul with the supreme Spirit This is the meaning of the word 'religion' in Vedanta All sciences and philosophies are nothing but so many attempts of human minds to understand clearly that absolute Truth, or the ultimate Reality. That is also the aim of Vedanta to lead the human souls to the realization of that absolute Being. Vedanta includes all the different branches of that absolute Being. Vedanta includes all the different branches of science and philosophy, and they are, therefore, inseparable As absolute Truth is the goal of such a philosophy, so the same absolute Truth is the foundation. life, and soul of religion of Vedanta Therefore, we can appreciate Max Muller when the said: "Vedanta has been the most sublime of all philosophies and the most comforting of all religions ; it has room for almost every religion ; it embraces them all" Vedanta is the ruler of all philisophies and the fountainhead of all religions If you wish to become a philosopher and, at the same time, a spiritual man or woman, study Vedanta and I can assure you that, in a short time, you will see a change in yourself, provided you follow the teachings of Vedanta practically and earnestly

It is true that there have been many philosophical systems in Europe from the time of Plato to that of Sochopenhauer, but none of them has succeeded in fulfilling the highest spiritual aspirations of the human souls ; none has been able to emancipate human souls from the bondages of suffering and sorrow , none of them has been able to harmonize the highest ideals of philosophy with those of a universal religion ; and none of them has given us a satisfactory reason for putting into practice

the truths that have been discovered by the great spiritual leaders of mankind, such as Krishna, Buddha, and Jesus. All this has been done by the Vedanta philosophy of India.

Immanual Kant, the greatest of German philosophers, tried his best to harmonize his philosophy with religion, but he met with a sad failure in the end. He knocked at the door of the absolute Truth by throwing aside the three great ideas of religion like a personal God, free will, and immortal soul—as things which are beyond all understanding and proof Thus he destroyed the rational foundation of all dualistic religions, but when he tried to harmonize philosophy and religion, he became as dogmatic as a Catholic priest He had to take for granted those very ideas which he rejected at first, and tried to build an ethical religion, but failed in the end. He did not give any reason to justify his position We must not forget that Immanual Kant is a great sceptic, but when he tried to bring his philosophy down to the plane of ethics, he had to assume something Thus this great philosopher failed to harmonize his philosophy with religion

We cannot call the philosophy of Herbert Spencer a religious one His system does not also fulfil the highest spiritual aspiration of the human souls. Ernest Haeckel and other scientists have tried to build the ethical and utilitarian ideals, but they all deny the existence of God and of an individual soul with freedom as its immortal nature Those who try to see harmony between science and philosophy and religion, will watch in vain, whether in these or in any of the advanced systems of philosophy

The Christian theology throws aside philosophy and science. It is built on the authority of a book The students of the Vedanta philosophy find in it that which the Western philosophers have failed to give, the message of Vedanta to the world shows the harmony that exists between science and religion, between philosophy and religion and establishes a religion which may be called universal in the truest sense of the word. The New Thought Movement of today may be called the American religion of Vedanta. It is an attempt of the liberal thinkers of this country (America) to spread the liberal principles of Vadanta without giving credit to the philosophers, and, at

the same time, they mix it up with healing, in order to make it practical in the American sense of the term

Vedanta, both in its aspects of religion and philosophy, is absolutely impersonal It has no founder and is not built around the personality of any Prophet, like Christ, Buddha, or Krishna, but upon the spiritual laws which govern our souls. It is not confined in any particular book, but embraces the teachings of all great teachers who appeared at different times in different countries. These teachings are one in all high principles as revealed through these great spiritual giants The teachers appreciate the harmony that underlies them, and understand the true spirit of these sayings, and never fail to separate the essential from the non-essential in the doctrines of special religions The Vedanta philosophy and religion does not approve any doctrines, consequently, its followers do not belong to any denomination or any particular religion, but they belong to all the sects that exist on the face of the earth. They can worship in a church, in a mosque, or in a temple. To him all churches, mosques, and temples are of equal value. The fundamental principle is the absolute oneness of the individual soul with the universal Spirit Our bodies are like so many instruments through which the Divine will is working. It teaches us that these individual souls are the children of immortal Bliss. The soul is immortal, eternal, beginningless, and endless. It has never been created by any being, whether extra-cosmic or intra-cosmic. It is one with the fountain-head of all forces and all material forms It is the source of consciousness the basis of intelligence, and the cause of our individuality. The *Gita* says: "Fire cannot burn it, water cannot quench it, air cannot dry it, swords cannot pierce it." It is beyond good and evil, free from sin, it is divine, and perfect So we are not involved in sin and iniquity, but by our birthright we are divine. In Vedanta, there is no scheme for saving the souls from eternal perdition. The Vedanta philosophy does not also teach that all these souls will go to heaven or hell after death, depending upon the judgement of some being, or that these souls will remain in a purgatory until the last day of judgement, but, on the contrary, it teaches that each individual soul, being bound by the law of action and reaction, continues to exist after death, and enjoys or suffers the result of its own actions and thoughts.

But it should be remembered that all souls are gradually marching onward toward the attainment of Godconsciousness, and each one of them will become perfect sooner or later No soul will be lost, and there is no such thing as a lost soul in Vedanta

Our earthly life is not the result of an accidental event of nature, but it has its purpose, and for the fulfilment of that purpose, the individual souls manufacture bodies, dwell in them for a certain period, gain experience after experience, and then pass away to re-manifest in some other form. Fear of death vanishes from the heart of the student of Vedanta, because he knows that death means a change of form i.e a change of body only. How consoling and comforting is the message of Vedanta, regarding the condition of the soul after death Vedanta says that the soul continues to exist and is not subject to the whim of any being, but is bound by the inscrutable law of action and reaction The idea of death becomes bright and cheerful when the light of Vedanta shines upon it. The sting of death becomes pleasant when the impenetrable armour of knowledge covers the whole self of the student of Vedanta. Such a soul is happy, even in this life

Religion of Vedanta does not ask anyone to accept, or to believe in anything, which does not appeal to his reason or which is not in harmony with the ultimate conclusions of science and philosophy, because it is rational and argumentative Vedanta is in perfect accord with the religion of today. There is no necessity of stretching the meaning of scriptural passages which describe the story of creation of the universe in six days.

Again it can be said that there is one peculiarity in Vedanta. It does not prescribe one path for all for the attainment of Godconsciousness It recognizes different tendencies of the human mind and sets forth the different methods by which the individual soul can obtain the knowledge of its true nature. Religion of Vedanta also classifies human tendencies into four grades which cover almost all the mental states of different classes of people, and each of these different methods, by which these different people will attain to Godconsciousness, is called in Vedanta a Yoga, which means method or path. The first is Karma Yoga, the method of work This is for working people, for those who are willing to work and ever ready to help others

by doing good works. In short, it is for the active, busy, and every-day working men and women It teaches the secret of work, and tells us how all these actions of our every-day life can be made into acts of worship and the means by which we can attain to Godconsciousness in this life All the work which we are doing—eating, drinking, walking, talking—can be made into acts of worship, if we know the secret of work [2] The second is Bhakti Yoga, the path of devotion and love It is for those who are of emotional nature It tells us how we can transform all those emotions and bringing forth the highest spiritual unfoldment which leads to the attainment of the ultimate goal of all religions. It teaches us how this human love can be made into Divine love for the fulfilment of the purpose of life, both here and hereafter The third is Raja Yoga, the path of concentration and meditation This branch of Vedanta covers the whole psychic field, and tells how we can develop the psychic powers, finer perception, telepathy, thought transference, going out of the body, and performing all the works that are known to the Christian Scientists and such other people. All the psychic powers which were described by Jesus and his followers and all those, which are known to Christian Scientists and Divine Healers of today, were shown and have been shown in India by the Yogis Raja Yoga takes up all these different powers and phenomena, classifies them and makes a science of it It also teaches the breathing exercises. The power of breathing over mind and body is not unknown to many of us here. It is a wonderful power Those who need control over mind and body, should practise under a competent or experienced teacher and will find help within a few weeks At the same time, the Vedanta philosophy warns its students that the exercise of these powers is not the same as spirituality, but, on the contrary, they are great obstacles in the path of attainment of Godconsciousness. This is a great lesson which the Christian Scientists and Mental Healers of this country especially will have to learn from the Yogis of India, because they have seen all the different phases They have been in this line of thought for four thousand years and know all the ins and outs of the psychic powers and the exercise

[2] In the *Bhagavad Gita,* this 'secret' is called as tricks or *kaushala*: *'Yoga Karmasu Kaushalam'*

of these powers They also know the harm in gaining experience through these teachings. Little brains and weak intellectuals turn away from spirituality[3] when psychic powers begin to manifest, and think that they have reached the highest stage of spirituality, when they have got the power of curing certain diseases. This is a very simple thing, but to gain spiritual wisdom, or to attain to Godconsciousness, is a very different thing altogether I cannot now go into the details of this vast field of Raja Yoga The fourth method is Jnana Yoga or the path of discrimination and knowledge It is for those who are discriminative, philosophical, and analytic Those who are in the habit of analysing things, are sure to find out their true nature in this way, and should take up this path, by which they may reach the highest goal of life By following this path, they should understand everything.

So we find that the Vedanta philosophy teaches the fundamental principles of all the methods of spiritual *sadhana.* It also teaches spiritualism and tells us how the spirits can communicate and under what conditions and what becomes of them after some time, but it should be remembered that it does not advocate that kind of cheap spiritism which we find in this Western country Rather it tells us that the earth-bound souls or spirits can communicate under certain conditions, but those earth-bound souls are neither absolutely free, nor have the highest spiritual knowledge They can help us to a certain extent in certain things which they know, but they do not know everything After death we carry with us all the experiences which we have gathered in our life. So Vedanta proves that the soul is immortal and it does not die with the death of the gross material body. Vedanta further proves that the results of the works, done by the souls, are the cause of their reincarnations and the impressions (*samaskaras*) of the present works has imbeded in the depth of the soul, remain unmanifested there, and manifest again to reap the results of the future lives. Vedanta further informs that immortality is the birth-right of the souls The souls are the Divine Self themselves, but they forget that truth for delusion (*maya*), and the knowledge of

[3] 'Spirituality' here signifies the idea of the field of religions and spiritual experience (*adhyatmikata*).

the Divine Self removes that delusion (*maya*) and makes them recognize their freedom that exists eternally with them.

Thus we understand how vast is the scope of Vedanta and its religion. Wherever the teachings of Vedanta have been accepted, there have ceased forever the religious quarrels, fighting, bigotry, and fanaticism, and peace and harmony have reigned there instead of discordance. Religion of Vedanta is not further separated from art, poetry, literature, music, sculpture, painting, architecture, etc, but, on the contrary, it tells us that one can attain to the highest ideal through knowledge of all of them God is described as the greatest artist, the greatest poet, whose poetry is of the beautiful universe, and the greatest musician, whose music is sung eternally in the sphere of the heaven If you hear the celestial song or music through every sound that enters into your ears, you will be divine and otherworldly And indeed that can be done

Religion of Vedanta also establishes a democracy in which the individual souls are their own masters, rulers, and governors. It destroys all anarchistic tendencies of the human minds by opening their eyes to the highest truth, and when the spiritual eyes of them are open, they see the Divinity in all, they are kind to all, and they love all the souls as they love their own selves Then they are friendly to all and have no enemies in the whole world Then are really happy and contented By denying[4] selfishness or ego-centric idea, they are ever ready to help others without seeking anything in return. They are happy and blessed like all who have entered into the realm of the Divinity by following the teachings of Vedanta

[4] The word 'denying' here signifies the idea of suppressing, which has been explained as *nirodha* by Patanjali in the *Yogadarshana* But Sankara has criticized the idea of suppressing (*nirodha*) of the current (modifications) of the mind by force, as Patanjali has said *"Yogaschittavrittih nirodhah"*, and suggests to sublimate or convert the mind into its source, the pure consciousness

## CHAPTER IX

# AN INTERPRETATION OF VEDANTA AND RELIGION

After reading Mr Dresser's article in the October number of *The Arena,* I feel it my duty, as a representative of the Vedanta philosophy in America, to say a few words, with the Editor's permission, on the same subject I also wish to correct some of Mr Dresser's misinterpretations of Vedanta for the benefit of the many American students of this philosophy—the grandest the world has ever produced

In the first place, it is not confined to any book or scripture. It is true that the word 'Vedanta' is a Sanskrit compound, consisting of *Veda* and *anta,* and means 'end of Veda' ; but by word 'Veda' is meant wisdom (*jnana*), and not any book or scripture. The etymology of the 'Veda' is the Sanskrit root-verb *vid,*—to know, from which the English word 'wisdom' is derived. The word *anta* means end. Therefore, Vedanta means 'end of wisdom' Hence, secondarily, Vedanta means the writings that explain what that end is and how it can be attained.

The Vedanta philosophers do not confine themselves to any particular book, but refer to passages from the sayings of the most ancient Vedic sages, so that their opinions may be corroborated by the oldest seers of Truth: since, in writing a philosophy, reference would naturally be made to the sayings of more ancient philosophers, prophets, and spiritual teachers—such as Jesus and Buddha—to show the similarity of ideas or harmony of thought. Professor Max Müller understood this when he wrote: "And here we should mark a curious feature of orthodox Indian philosophy. Though Vedanta appeals to the Veda, it appeals to it not as having itself grown out of it or as belonging to it, but rather as an independent witness looking back to it for sanction and confirmation".

The next point in which Mr Dresser's explanation is in error, and which puzzles most Western minds, is the meaning of the word *'maya'* This term never means 'illusion', in the sense that word is ordinarily used, but means a conditional, or

relative, or phenomenal existence The world, according to Vedanta, is not unreal, but conditional in its existence—the name and form of the world being a constantly changeable phase of reality The most beautiful definition of *maya* is given by Sankaracharya, the great commentator and exponent of the Vedanta philosophy: "*Maya* is the name of that Divine Energy which is inscrutable and beginningless, which produces the phenomenal name and form, or, in other words, the mental and physical phenomena, and contains the three properties of matter and force—inertia (*tamas*), activity (*rajas*), and equilibrium of various forces (*sattva*), and whose existence can be proved by the inductive method of logic. It is neither absolute reality nor absolute unreality; but it is the conditional, relative, or phenomenal reality'. *Maya* is also called the *Prakriti* in the *Upanishads,* and in the *Sankhya* philosophy It is the same as *Procreatrix* in Latin—the Creative Energy of the absolute Brahman.

Mr Dresser says. "Yet the statements of the exponents of the Vedanta are not always consistent". I am sorry to have to contradict our friend on this point; but I must say—what all exponents of the Vedanta have reiterated—that the purpose of the evolution of *maya* or eternal energy, is to help each individual soul or ego to attain to the highest state of spiritual perfection through the realization of its divine nature. Again, Mr Dresser says: "We told that the Vedanta teaches that the Infinite has become finite" Either Mr Dresser has been misinformed or has failed to comprehend the meaning of the passage that led him to think thus. Vedanta never teaches so illogical a doctrine On the contrary, it refutes all such statements and points out their fallacy. It does not teach that there is a degree of reality in *maya.* It holds that there is a difference of degree in the expression of reality, and that difference is because of *maya* or relativity.

Mr Dresser forwards: "From the Vedantist's point of view, then, there is no permanent value in finite experience On the contrary, Vedanta teaches that every experience has a permanent value Every stage of evolution is necessary for the progress of the individual soul At every step of our finite experience we are learning something and helping ourselves in unfolding the higher powers latent within us" The truth,

then, which this doctrine of *maya* seeks to express, says Mr Dresser, "is that all outer or visible things are perishable. What a deep-thinking philosopher he must be who denies the perishable nature of what we taste, or touch, or see, or perceive! Again, he says: "The same illusion or impermanence applies also to rebirth or reincarnation It may surprise some to learn that this theory of rebirth, usually deemed a central doctrine of Vedanta, is not regarded as a part of the real truth of life. It is deemed true only of our sense life Any student of Vedanta can see how greatly confused are the ideas in the mind of this writer. Vedanta never teaches birth, death, or rebirth of the *Atman,* or the divine nature of man. It is the individual ego, or soul, that reincarnates, or manifests its latent powers through the different stages of evolution—to fulfil its desires and to gain experience until perfection is reached and the highest state of spiritual realization is attained The doctrine of reincarnation is not a mere 'working hypothesis'; it is as true and demonstrable as the doctrine of evolution Professor Huxley says "None but hasty thinkers will reject it on the ground of inherent absurdity Like the doctrine of evolution itself, that of transmigration has its roots in the world of realities".

Mr. Dresser says: 'It is also a noteworthy fact that the pessimistic and fatalistic elements of the Vedanta are left in the background. There is a tendency to adopt the more helpful doctrine of the West' From very ancient times, the Vedanta has taught neither pessimistic nor fatalistic doctrines. Its philosophy has inspired such thinkers as Emerson, Thoreau, Schopenhauer, Paul Deussen, and Max Müller Professor Max Müller says: 'Indian philosophers are by no means dwelling forever on the miseries of life. They are not whining and protesting that life is not worth living That is not their pessimism. They simply state that they received the first impulse to philosophic reflection from the fact that there is suffering in the world. They evidently thought that in a perfect world suffering had no place, that it is something anomalous, something that ought at all events to be accounted for, and if possible, overcome. Pain certainly seems to be an imperfection, and, as such, may well have caused the question why it existed and how it could be annihilated But this is not the disposition which we are

accustomed to call pessimism Indian philosophy contains no outcry against divine injustice, and in no way encourages suicidal expedients". So Vedanta philosophy teaches how to enjoy eternal happiness in this life, by living the life of perfection and spiritual realization As regards the fatalistic doctrines, the true student knows very well that the Vedanta teaches that we create our own fate, our own destiny, by our own works This doctrine is not responsible for the pessimistic ideal of Buddhism, nor for Schopenhauer's opinions regarding the 'will to live'

Mr Dresser says. "Max Muller, in his lectures on the Vedanta, says that the self of the Vedanta has but three qualities· It is , it perceives , it rejoices The Anglo-Saxon believes that the self also acts and progresses , that the world belongs to the energetic man, as Emerson puts it". Mr. Dresser ought to learn the difference between the meaning of the Self that Max Muller speaks of and that of the Anglo-Saxon 'self'. Let the Professor explain what he meant When we speak of the Self—in Sanskrit the *Atman*—we should always remember that it is not what is commonly meant by the Ego, but that it lies far beyond it What we commonly call our Ego is determined by space and time, by birth and death, by the environment in which we live, by our body, our senses, our memory, by our language, nationality, character, prejudices, and many other things All these make up our Ego, or chararter ; but they have nothing to do with our Self

Thus we can understand that the *Atman,* or the Self, or the Divine Spirit, of Vedanta, is not the same as the Anglo-Saxon self or ego that 'acts and progresses'. The Vedanta philosophy leaves plenty of room for the activity and progress of the Anglo-Saxon self, which is not the perfect and absolute *Atman* This, according to Vedanta, is one with the Brahman or the Divine Spirit of the universe.

Mr Dresser says: "If I have once accepted the Advaita or non-dualistic philosophy that there is only spirit, which is one without a second, and that 'I am he', there is no incentive to finite action ; no room is left for individual existence regarded as a life ultimate ethical and spiritual value". According to the Vedanta philosophers, it is not easy to accept the non-dualistic position, that the Vedanta teaches as the goal of all

religions. It is not easy for an ordinary mortal, surrounded by all kinds of imperfections, resulting from a life of worldliness and selfishness, to realize that non-dualistic spiritual state that enabled Jesus to declare, 'I and my Father are one', and a Vedantic sage to say, 'I am Brahman', or 'I am one with absolute Spirit" Max Muller says: "And yet, after lifting the Self above body and limited soul, after uniting heaven and earth, God and man, Brahman and *Atman*, these Vedanta philosophers have destroyed nothing in the life of the phenomenal beings who have to act and to fulfil their duties in this phenomenal world On the contrary, they have shown that there can be nothing phenomenal without something that is real, and that goodness and virtue, faith and works, are necessary as a preparation, nay, as a *sine qua non* for the attainment of that highest knowledge which brings the soul back to its source and to its home and restores it to its true nature—to its true Selfhood in Brahman".

The same authority says elsewhere. 'So much to show that the Vedanta philosophy, abstruse as its metaphysics are, has not neglected the important sphere of ethics; but that, on the contrary, we find ethics in the beginning, ethics in the middle, and ethics in the end, to say nothing of the fact that minds, so engrossed with divine things as are the Vedanta philosophers, are not likely to fall victims to the ordinary temptations of the world, the flesh, and other powers'. In fact, the Vedanta philosophy holds as much inducement to the 'human heart eager for personal fellowship, love, and marriage', as Christ held by his life and teachings. Moreover, it encourages 'scientific interest', and stimulates the 'traveller's spirit, inventive genius, and creative impulse'; but, at the same time, it tells sincere seekers after the highest spiritual Truth that all these are on the lower plane of phenomenal appearances.

Again Vedanta does not say 'unqualifiedly that you and I are God'; but it teaches that the divine essence in man is the same as the divine essence of the universe. This is also the meaning of the *mahavakya 'tat tvam asi'*—'that thou art'. Mr Dresser says: "It is thus pure monism or pantheism, the absolute identification of subject and object, with no room for the splendidly elaborate system of Nature as the realm of divine manifestation", etc. Here he has some difficulty in understand-

ing the difference between what he calls pure monism and pantheism The purely monistic Vedanta does not teach that everything is God, but that the reality of every phenomenal object in the universe is one absolute existence To quote again from Max Muller "It is easy for us to call those ancient explorers reckless adventurers, or dispose of them with the help of other names, such as mystic or pantheist, often; but half-understood by those who employ them" The Vedanta philosophy teaches that everything in the universe lives and has its existence in God It holds that the divine reality manifests through the various stages of the evolution of the Nature, or the *Prakriti,* or the Divine Energy The essence of the subject and the essence of the object are one on the highest spiritual plane alone, the fundamental principle being unity in variety of manifestation Thus the absolute monism of Vedanta is not the same as pantheism, which teaches that everything is God, or that has become matter and force.

The Vedanta philosophy subordinates false reasoning—the result of imperfect understanding of the true nature of things—to that reason which leads to the realization of the ultimate truth that is absolute and one According to it, the 'unknown and unknowable' Reality of Herbert Spencer's philosophy can be realized by the *Atman,* or Divine Spirit, but it will always remain unknown and unknowable by the mind

Mr Dresser grasps, to a certain extent, the qualified non-dualistic interpretation of the Vedanta philosophy by Ramanuja; but, when he says that 'the destruction of which (self-consciousness) is the one lesson of the *Upanishads',* our friend is utterly mistaken. The one theme of the *Upanishads* and the Vedanta philosophy is to establish—through reason, logic, and science—the divine origin of self-consciousness and bring every individual soul back to its divine source and make it realize its true divine nature Frederick Schlegel said: "The divine origin of man (as taught by Vedanta) is continually inculcated to stimulate his efforts to return, to animate him in the struggle, and incite him to consider a reunion and reincorporation with divinity as the one primary object of every action and reaction. . . Even the loftiest philosophy of the Europeans, the idealism of reason as it is set forth by Greek philosophers, appears in comparison with the abundant light and vigor of Oriental Ideal-

ism like a feeble Promethean spark in the full flood of heavenly glory of the noonday sun—faltering and feeble and ever ready to be extinguished". Victor Cousin says. "When we read with attention the poetical and philosophical monuments of the East, above all those of India which are beginning to spread in Europe, we discover there many a truth and truths so profound, and which make such a contrast with the meanness of the results at which the European genius has sometimes topped, that we are constrained to bend the knee before the philosophy of the East, and to see in this cradle of the human race the native land of the highest philosophy" [1]

[1] It is a reply to Mr Horatis W Dresser's article entitled *An Interpretation of the Vedanta* which was published in *The Arena,* October, 1899 And the reply by Swami Abhedananda was reprinted from *The Arena,* February, 1900

## CHAPTER X

# DIVINE INSPIRATION, REVELATION AND GOD

'Ineffable is the union of man and God in every act of soul', says Ralph Waldo Emerson 'The simplest man who in his integrity worships God, becomes God, yet forever and ever the influx of this better and universal self is new and unsearchable, ever it inspires awe and astonishment' God of tradition is not real God, and God of rhetoric is not the absolute Spirit, but when we have broken these ideals of man-made God, then the infinite Spirit fires our hearts with divine presence and inspires our souls with Divine wisdom and love.

God of Vedanta is like a circle whose circumference is nowhere, but whose centre is everywhere. Each of these centres is an individual soul or ego, and that circle is the universal spirit The centre lies in each one of us, but the circle is overhead and all around us This unlimited circle is the source of infinite wisdom and love. All the blessed qualities proceed from it, because it forms the background of all individual souls At present we do not know how wise and good we are in reality. We are living like the fools, searching here and there for a ray of the light of wisdom which is shining in its own glory behind our mind, intellect, and heart It takes a long time to discover the light of wisdom that lies behind the veil of the clouds of egotism and selfishness These clouds hide the face of the sun, and so we cannot see it In the majority of people, the clouds of egotism and selfishness are thick and dark, and they, therefore, grope in the darkness of ignorance without perceiving a ray of immortal light They mistake the transitory objects of the senses for the reality They live on the sense-plane, and mistake the body for the soul and matter for spirit Blessed are those whose clouds of egotism and selfishness have become thin and transparent. They can see and bathe in the sunshine of the infinite wisdom. They are the great teachers of the world, but their number is few and far between God, the Divine Being, shines through their souls and speaks through their mouths the message of the absolute

Truth. They are the Christs and Buddhas; they are the Krishnas and Ramakrishnas; they are the inspired Prophets of this world They do not fill their minds with second-hand and third-hand knowledge which comes filtered through the imperfect brains of ordinary mortals They go to the fountain-head of all wisdom and bring from there new light into the world. They teach from within. Their teachings are full of inspiration and revelation, and not like the teachings of ordinary thinkers They do not pass their opinions like the surface scientists and ignorant philosophers, who do not really teach, but give their opinions, making their imperfect intellect the standard of truth and thus they delude the minds of the masses The opinions of ordinary teachers are nothing but the expressions of partial knowledge or imperfect understanding, but the teachings of the inspired ones last throughout eternity They are always the same, because truth is eternal.

Much of the wisdom which we find in this world, is not real wisdom. The knowledge of today will become the ignorance of tomorrow We shall have to throw it aside But real wisdom does not change, it is unchangeable and immutable. The unchangeable eternal wisdom is the infinite Being. Those who follow the teachings of the supreme mind, receive the true wisdom that lies in it. No one except the supreme mind, can teach the lower mind; no one besides the universal Spirit can teach the individual soul. Ordinary mortals may pass their opinions, and these opinions may appeal to us for the time being, but they never go deep into bottom of our soul-being They touch only the surface of our soul and there they end. But the real truth, when it begins to manifest or shine, penetrates the bottom of our souls and enters into the core of the hearts of the beings

There is an old proverb that 'God comes to see us without bell'. That is, God comes in silence and inspires us when our minds are not disturbed by cares and anxieties of the phenomenal world. If you want to hear the voice of the supreme God who speaks within, you will have to go into your closet and shut the doors, as Jesus the Christ told you to do. Here 'the closet' does not mean an external closet, but means the closet of our hearts, and 'the door' does not mean the outside door of a room, but means the door of

the senses When the senses are silent and the mind and intellect are still, then the Lord comes, pays us visit and whispers into the heart There is another saying: 'Let us be silent, for so are the gods' The silence of the senses, mind and intellect is the only condition, in which we receive 'divine inspiration', but this silence does not come until we have gone through many intermediate stages of evolution. These stages are idicated by the struggles of our mind and intellect First of all, we must search after the Truth by exercising our mental and intellectual powers We cannot realize God until we have exhausted the resources which we possess We first try to know God by exercising our intellect. At this stage intellectual perception appeals to us, but later on we find that intellect cannot reveal the absolute Truth Until then we must go here and there, must ask hundreds and thousands of questions and must seek the help of external teachers Through these struggles we arrive at a point, where we find that our intellect fails to reveal the eternal Truth, but still we are making progress all the time These struggles are only the outward signs of the progress of the soul The progress of the soul comes from within It is the gradual unfoldment of the latent powers and wisdom As the bud of a lotus gradually unfolds its petals by a power which is not outside, but within it, so the bud of the individual soul gradually unfolds the powers and wisdom which are already there by going through different stages of mental and intellectual evolution These are necessary for spiritual progress. Mental and intellectual evolutions gradually bring out the wisdom of the soul, which is pure consciousness and feeling

We cannot know what powers we possess unless they are brought out on the plane of our knowledge So long as they are latent on the subconscious plane, we do not feel that we possess them, but, when we are conscious of them, they are ours and become our property And this knowledge or consciousness comes through the process of evolution or unfoldment[1] No one can teach us, but we teach ourselves The external teachers only give us suggestions, out of which whatever appeals to our souls, we receive and the rest we reject.

[1] The world 'unfoldment' suggests the idea of what was unmanifested, as manifested

Such suggestions from the outside teachers are necessary so long as we have not been able to discover the suggestions of from within from the higher Self The higher Self is constantly giving us suggestions, but we remain deaf ears to them and so cannot catch and appreciate them When, however, we have begun to hear the inner voice, we do not need any external teacher, and then we get lessons direct from the divine Being, and that is called 'inspiration' or divine inspiration In divine inspiration, we receive lessons direct from God. There we come face to face with the supreme Being and enter into close communion with the omniscient Spirit Whosoever has received such divine inspiration, does not need any outside teacher But we must not forget to hear the inner voice which comes all the time from the higher Self, and we must make our minds and the senses silent to hear or receive that voice As when we wish to learn something from an external teacher, we make our minds receptive and listen intently, so if we wish to hear the voice of the Divine teacher within us, we must make our minds receptive and turn our full attention towards the higher Self. We must not let our minds be distracted by the external objects of the sense, but must watch intently how the voice comes, and then catch it quickly But how is it possible for us to hear the voice of the Lord, when our minds are filled with the impurities of cares and anxieties and all the temporal phenomenal thoughts and things with which we are absorbed at present. The moment that we try to hear the voice of the Lord within us, our minds are distracted by the sounds and thoughts of transitory things Therefore, we cannot hear it Our power of hearing is not developed, because we are constantly fixing our attention on the objects of the senses We think that these senses are the only gates of knowledge and inspiration, but, in reality, they are not Apparently they bring partial knowledge But if we observe closely, we find that we do not receive any knowledge from outside. All knowledge proceeds from within The objects of the senses will never give us an iota of knowledge, if the knowledge is not there within our soul The sense objects will never reveal anything to us, as we perceive the objects of the senses. And it should be remembered that when we seek knowledge from the external world, we 'put the cart before the horse' through ignorance. So

we should turn our eyes beyond the senses and should see the source from where the senses draw their power or driving force.

The river of knowledge is constantly flowing in our soul, but we do not know whence that river is flowing The source is beyond our sight and also beyond our intellectual perception. In the darkness of ignorance, we think that the source is outside of us on the sense-plane, and so we analyze the material particles in order to get some revelation, but we forget that the material particles do not possess wisdom and that it is the soul which possesses true wisdom And on account of this ignorance, we waste a great deal of our time and energy

The knowledge is our property by birthright No one can deprive us of that knowledge. We must not forget, however, that we ourselves are our own friends when we look within and search within ; but we ourselves become our own enemies when, neglecting our true Self, we go outside in search after knowledge. The book-learning will never teach us and never bring the truth, but true knowledge will come from the soul We may read all the books that exist in the world, but our thirst for knowledge will not be quenched by the book-learning. We need the inspiration of higher Spirit wthin us in order to quench that thirst When we leave aside all books and sit in silence, searching after that knowledge of the supreme Spirit, then we are more learned than all the books can make us If we sit for half an hour in silence, we will learn more than by reading thousands and thousands of volumes It is in silence that God speaks within us. In that state, the higher Soul reveals its true nature and the veil that has covered its face, is then lifted up That is the meaning of 'revelation' or 'flash of Divine knowledge'.

Revelation does not come from outside of us, but it comes from within, i e when it begins to show its own being, it is called revelation. Revelation is also known as divine inspiration Through that revelation or divine inspiration all the questions of our minds are answered. And it should be remembered that answers to our questions in words are not the real answers, they do not satisfy the longing for truth, but the answers, which we get in silence, not only satisfy the longing for truth, but destroy the root of all doubts and bring with them the divine

flash of wisdom, which dispels the darkness of ignorance and illumines the whole inner being. That answer is worth-having God does not answer our questions in words, but He answers by revealing the thing which we want to know His answers are realities and not mere written or verbal words. Ordinary answers to our questions in words may satisfy our mind and intellect, but they do not satisfy our soul. The divine answers that come to our souls in silence, are true inspiration and true wisdom Blessed is he who has received such answers through revealation, and him we call an inspired Prophet His utterances, when codified and written out, become the revealed scriptures to the masses We know that Christ did not write any book He said what he had experienced in his own soul, and his words have become the revealed scriptures for us Buddha did not write any book, but his words and teachings were gathered and collected afterwards and have become the revealed scriptures for the Buddhists. So with Mohammed He was also illiterate, he did not know how to read or write, but he was inspired by the divine Self within him and his utterings became the scriptures of the Mohammedans. Sri Ramakrishna did not also write any book, but his sayings and teachings have become the source of great inspiration to hundreds and thousands of people The great seers and prophets do not care for any academic education Academic education appear as worthless when we receive higher inspiration. It is found that the inspired souls have never been produced by ordinary methods of education They are the discoverers of the spiritual laws, and coming in direct communion with the supreme Being, they receive inspiration and infinite wisdom We have heard of the great saint or inspired prophet of the nineteenth century, who was Sri Ramakrishna It has already been said that Sri Ramakrishna never went to a university, and in his early life, he refused to be taught by the human teachers, because he said that the human teachers were imperfect and not illumined. So, like a child he prayed to his Divne Mother: "O Mother, I am Thy child. Open my eyes that I may see the eternal Truth. O Mother, come unto me and teach me" He prayed in this way and sat in silence for many years, and through prayer and silence, he received the inspiration of the Divine Mother. Afterwards when he came out before the public, the

world recognized him as a divinely inspired teacher, and they came by hundreds and thousands to see him Where did he get his knowledge and wisdom? Not by reading the books, not by taking lessons from an ordinary teacher, and not by going to a priest or by hearing a sermon, but he discovered the Truth from within. So search within yourself and you will get it in your own soul Go and sit in silence, meditate upon Self, and go deep into the innermost corner of your own being, and you will receive the absolute Truth which shines all the time within you

When we have become simple like a child, then we are ready to receive inspiration. Jesus the Christ said: "Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not in wise enter therein, for such is the Kingdom of God' ". We have lost our simplicity and also have lost our innocence by coming in contact with the sense world The sense world has degraded us and made us what we are not in reality But if we wish to receive divine inspiration, we must be simple and innocent like a child, and then the Kingdom of God will be ours Therefore we must neither seek for knowledge from the external objects, nor from the external teachers, but must search within and try to hear that eternal voice, which is constantly speaking within our souls Once that voice is heard or realized, we have become perfect. Academic education will only put obstacles in the path of real knowledge It will distract our minds and give us hundreds and thousands of opinions, but cannot solve the real problem of life So we must not become like the phonographs of other people's thoughts, but we must learn to think ourselves to solve the problem of life It has become very hard for us to keep our minds fixed on one particular object even for a minute. We have lost the power of concentration and also the power of vision We have become fickle and listless, and, therefore, we do not hear the voice of the Lord. We must not think that divine inspiration comes to a particular soul who is elected or chosen by God That is not correct. We are all worthy of getting that divine inspiration ; we are all worthy of receiving that revelation But at present we do not follow the right path and, therefore, we are living like the fool Being children of immortal Bliss and possessing the treasure of infinite

knowledge, we have made ourselves the hungry beggars But Vedanta tell us that your beggary is only self-delusion ; do not remain self-deluded Wake up and learn the Truth , break up the fetters of false knowledge or ignorance (*avidya*), and come in touch with the infinite Being, and there you will find everything to satisfy your hunger and thirst Knowledge of the absolute Brahman is the only thing that makes us free from the chain of desires and delusion, and when we will be free from delusion, we will get within ourselves divine inspiration or revelation

## CHAPTER XI

# GOD IN EVERYTHING

From ancient times, various attempts have been made to harmonize divinity with God Again and again it has been asked how can we get out of all this misery and suffering which we constantly have during our earthly existence? Answers have been given. And we will examine these answers presently

All the dualistic systems of religion unanimously declare that there are two existences, the one in God and the other in the world God dwells outside of the world, and the world is governed by some evil powers, or by the demon or the Satan. In the Christian Bible, God is described as the Ruler of this world and the prince of this world is the Satan Christ said: 'Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world' 'If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him'. Indeed, it is true that this world is full of wickedness, misery, suffering, sorrow, disease, and death For a grain of sense enjoyment, we are suffering from all kinds of misery. It is true that in the struggle for earthly existence, we cannot, for a moment, be absolutely happy We cannot get any result of our work which is not mixed with sorrow, suffering, disease, or some kind of anxiety somewhere What are we going to do about it? Can we remove all these sufferings? It is almost impossible Is there any remedy? Some of the religionists will tell you that, if you believe in an incarnation of God who gave everything for us and died for us, then, through that belief, you will be free from this world of sorrows and sufferings, but centuries have gone by, nation after nation has passed away, has the world changed? Is it any better now where this belief prevails? I have come from a country where the majority of people do not believe in such a person or incarnation who died for humanity, and have come here to this new world where ninety per cent of the people do believe in this being. Is there any difference between the old world and the new one?

There is just as much lying, hypocracy, and suffering in the new world as there is in the old one

If we examine the characters of those, who are supposed to have a belief in that being or the Saviour of the world, what do we find? We find in many cases more wickedness than amongst those who do not believe. Therefore that is not the proper medicine for this disease Belief or unbelief makes no difference Nearly twenty-five centuries ago, Buddha discovered that this world was full of misery, sorrow, disease, and death. He tried to find some remedy He was much distressed in his mind at the sort of suffering and misery of the people. His heart melted away He could not eat, drink, or sleep and could not enjoy the luxuries of a princely life. He renounced the world and went into the forest in search of a remedy. After going through all kinds of hardship, he discovered the remedy, came out into the world, and described it to the suffering people

Now what is that remedy? The remedy is to give up the world Really this world is created out of our desires and the author of the *Yogavasistha* told that mind is the creator and governor of the world Sankara also said that this world of appearance is the product of manifestation of desires of the mind, *"characharam bhati mano-vilasam."* Buddha realized this truth and so he said that if we can put to death the desires, then we can go beyond the snare of attachment of the world. So he renounced the world He made hundreds and thousands of disciples and gave them instructions to give up the world of desires and they became monks and nuns, went into caves and the forests, and lived a life of peace and happiness. Buddha thought that, if he could turn the whole world into a community of monks and nuns, that would be the salvation of the world. There would no longer be any suffering and misery that exists, and all persons would eventually reach Nirvana and enter into the abode of blessedness But, in spite of all his earnest endeavours and attempts, did he succeed in driving away from this world all desires, sins and diseases? No. The monks began to live together and formed a commnity living in the monasteries But in those monasteries crept all kinds of vices, hypocrisy, lying. disease, suffering, and sorrow, just as we find today

in the Roman Catholic monasteries, which are nothing but the imitations of Buddhist monasteries So, only giving up the world would not be the remedy for all There requires something else

Some, who profess to be very practical, give this remedy. They say that this world is very bad indeed, but do not bother your head about it, but make the best use of it Shut your eyes against all the suffering, misery, etc as they are unavoidable. In plain words, they tell us not to see the things which exist, but to solace ourselves and shut our eyes to those things that are happening before us. But, is that the real remedy? Of course it is very good to shut our eyes and deny evil as long as there is no presence of evil, but when the evil begins to come with tremendous force, we cannot deny its existence, we cannot be the Christian Scientists at every moment of our lives When the evil comes, we try to cover that evil with flowers, but do we succeed? How can carrion be covered with roses? It is not possible Again, those who say that make hay while the sun shines are very short-sighted indeed They have no foresight of what is going to happen on foggy days and dark nights ,They do not make any provision for such cases. It is very good for them to carry out their principles as long as they have the possibility of getting everything that they want But, when such persons lose their youth, wealth, and all the sense powers or sense pleasures, they do not find anything which they can hold to. They try to get round all this suffering, sorrow, and disease by cutting themselves off from the world. So they think that this is the remedy for becoming free from all the sufferings that are in the world But is this the best remedy? No It is like the remedy which was adopted by a foolish person when he tried to get rid of a mosquito bite. A man suffered a great deal from the mosquito bite, and he became so nervous that whenever he heard the name of a mosquito, he was frightened. One day he found one on the forehead of a friend and gave it such a blow that both the mosquito and the friend were killed So, that kind of remedy is not proper for getting rid of the suffering that exists in this world But, is there no hope for getting a real remedy? There are people who say that there is such a thing as God who dwells outside of this world and if you can go to Him, He will give you peace and happiness, and there you

will find no evil experiences of the world. Those who say such things, are indeed mistaken, because we cannot get out of this world, until and unless we completely extinguish the fire of desires (*trishnas*) from our mind So wherever we go, we carry the world within us If we try to go into the forest, giving up family, relatives, and cutting off all connections with the world, do we find that to be the proper remedy? No. America was a vast forest when the Puritans landed there Now we see what that forest has become If you should go into a forest and live a forest life, that would be just like the life we are living here. We should remember that the world is not outside of us, it is within us So by going into a forest, we cannot get outside of the world, as we carry within us the idea of the world It is inseparable from us, and as long as that idea of the world will remain, there cannot be any remedy for the sins, sorrows, and troubles, with which our life is beset We cannot harmonize the world with God As long as we see that this world is separate from God and we have a belief that God dwells outside of this world and it is the result of some wickedness or evil intention of some Satanic spirit, so long we cannot harmonize this world with God and we cannot find any remedy for the sufferings which will continue to exist as long as these phenomenal appearances will continue to exist.

That question was raised centuries before the birth of Christ and the very first words of the first book of the Vedanta philosophy treats of this very question and tries to answer that question through common sense, reasoning and logic, and scientific knowledge which the seers of truth had in those ancient times: 'Cover this world with the Lord himself and live in this world , enjoy all the things of the world, giving up the world at the same time' In the first place, we will have to cover this world with the Lord himself Now what this Lord is? God of Vedanta is not like the being who dwells outside of nature and created this universe in six days and rested on the seventh. But God is immanent and resident in nature ; He is all-pervading, He is all in all, and He is here, there, and everywhere. He is infinite and His energy is the source of all phenomenal appearances. All the manifestations of forces are nothing but the expressions of one universal force, which may be called the Divine or Cosmic Will. The whole physical universe is his body. He is the one

stupendous power and everything is a part of that one infinite power Our bodies are parts of that universal body, our individual mind is a part of the cosmic mind, our individual intellect is a part of the cosmic intellect, and our individual will is a part and parcel of the Divine will So if we understand in this way the nature of this being, which is infinite, eternal, and the support of the phenomenal universe, we will see that, nothing which has a form, can exist even for a second, being separated from that stupendous infinite whole. As a part can never be separate from the whole, so no name or form can ever be separate from that infinite source of all names and forms If we understand this secret, we will realize the nature of God, as described in the *Upanishad* or Vedanta *"Isha vasyam idam sarvam yat kencha jagatyam jagat"* i.e everything of the world is covered (ie saturated) by that one stupendous Spirit, the Atman. The Atman is in the whole, the whole is in the Atman The Atman is in you, it is in me, and everywhere You cannot live for a second as a being separate from the Atman This idea has been beautifully described in another *Upanishad,* when it says: "O Lord, thou hast become manifold ; thou art the man, thou art the woman ; thou art the father, the mother, the son, the daughter ; thou art the old man tottering on his staff ; thou art everywhere" The moment we realize this all-pervading nature of the deity, the Atman, that very moment we begin to see the harmony between the world and God or the Atman. who has been existing from the beginningless past Vedanta philosophy is the only philosophy which describes that harmony has been existing always and will exist all through eternity. Vedanta also tells that if we do not see that harmony, it is not the fault of God, nor of any other being, whether divine or demonic It is we who are responsible for our non-recognition of that harmony. If a man does not see the rising sun, will the fault be in the sun? If we do not see the harmony which is already existing between God and the world, will the fault be with God or with the world? No, the fault is ours. At present we have on our eyes the spectacles of ignorance, and through these glasses we have been seeing the phenomenal world and also the dark side of things. But let us take off these spectacles and put on the glasses which will let in the divine light, and through them we can see the Divinity in all living creatures everywhere If we

see the Divinity in all living creatures, we do not see any suffering, or misery, or sorrow anywhere

Vedanta does not tell us to solace ourselves with that kind of optimistic ideas of denying evil and seeing good in everything, but it tells us to see the Divinity everywhere. God does not suffer, He is never miserable, He has no sorrow, and, if God is all in all where does sorrow exist? If you can show me a spot where God does not exist, then I will admit the existence of misery, sorrow and suffering If God be everywhere and all in all, then misery, sorrow, suflering cannot exist. There is no room for all these things which we see today. Why do we exist? We do not know First, try to see the Divinity everywhere, then the question will be solved, and that is the only remedy

At the same time, we will have to enjoy the things of the world, giving up the world, while living in it. This sounds like a paradox But, what does it mean? We will have to give up the world, live in the world, and enjoy the things of the world! Giving up the world does not mean that you will have to cut yourself off from the world, or through your wives and children out into the streets That is not what is meant in Vedanta. That is the idea which was started by Buddha. He promulgated that idea of cutting ourselves loose from family ties and connections, but Vedanta teaches that giving up the world is giving up the familiar idea that makes us see the world separate from God Instead of looking at your family as wives, husbands, and children, see God there. Instead of claiming them as your own wife, husband and the child, see them all as instruments of the Divinity, and you will find that you live in the world without forgetting that everything that exists in the world is permeated with the Divine Being. If you can do this, nothing wll make you unhappy in this world How can you expect to have a claim upon somebody you call your wife, or husband, or child? That somebody does not belong to you It is a child of God And the moment you begin to see him or her as a child of God, all the sorrows and sufferings that are connected with the relation that exists between the wordly husband or worldly wife, or father and child, are done away with. This world becomes heaven at that very moment

It has become heaven to all such persons whose spiritual

eyes are open to this truth, who can see the Divinity everywhere, and the Vedanta philosophy stands for them 'Giving up the world, enjoy the things of the world' Work constantly, but, at the same time, realize that you cannot do anything for results How can you work for the results, when you are not separate from God? God does not work for the results, because He is perfect, and all His desires are fulfilled. If He had any desire, He must have been imperfect. Desire means wanting, and then God must have been wanting, if He had any desire But that could not be true, because God cannot have any desire He is the self-satisfied (*aptakama*) supreme principle Just remember that if you are a part of God, how can you have any other desire, or work for the fulfilment of desire? Let your body work, let your mind work, but not seek the results Let body and mind work constantly for these are the instruments in the hands of the Almighty. Instead of saying that this world is the creation of a demon, or Satan, say that it is the manifestation of the Almighty, or it is the projection of the cosmic Will The wives, children, husbands, and parents are like so many instruments, through which the Divine will is working If you can work without seeking the results of works, constantly remembering that you are the instruments in the hands of the divine will, or the particles of the almighty will, and if you direct all the activities, mental and physical, toward the realization of the Divinity everywhere, then you are neither bound, nor enslaved by deeds and by the fruits of the works that are done by your body and mind In such a person, there is no bondage, no tears, and no suffering That person lives in the world, but lives being uncontaminated by the world He is like a lotus-leaf that stays in water, but is never stained by water. So, such a person who has the power of seeing the Divinity everywhere, has been born in this world and and lives in this world, but is never contaminated by the world. His soul is always pure and unstained by the miseries and sufferings of the world You wll have to give a new interpretation to the sorrows you see around you. See divinity instead of seeing suffering and sorrow. Jesus the Christ did this If you can do this, you have become Christ He is born in you, and when you are one with Christ, you are with the Father in Heaven. That is the secret of all religions, but this secret has not been divulged by any other religion, theology,

or philosophical system And that is one of the reasons why religionists do not like the Vedanta philosophy.

It raises questions every moment and never says that to ask a question is blasphemous but says, ask questions, as many as you can, and get the answer ; do not take anything for granted, unless it appeals to your reason ; and if it be not logical or scientific and if you do not get down to the truths given by the great seers of truth in all countries and all ages, do not accept it , and if it does not help you in analyzing the truth in your own special way, it is of no use to you. My way may be good for me, but it may not be good for any one else. So every individual soul must have his own way of realizing the truth And the Vedanta philosophy admits that It also embraces all the different systems and all the methods and gives you facts and truths and reasoning which cannot be confined to any book, or personality, or authority, or creed

However, we must see God in everything and, if we do succeed in seeing God in everything, then we have found the remedy which the world is looking for A religion which does not give that remedy, is not worthy of its name A religion which tells you to give up the world and to throw your wives and children into the streets, is not religion, but is a mere creed of the devils But Vedantic religion teaches one to be better. But that religion, which teaches us to see God in everything, is a true religion Those who do not see the Divinity everywhere, will go to the realm of the demons In Vedanta, demon is nothing but ignorance. This is the cause of the non-recognition of the divine in every being A person who is worldly, does not see the Divinity everywhere, and, therefore, he is in ignorance and he will stay there on the plane until, through the natural process of evolution, his spiritual nature will be unfolded. He who has not realized his own true nature, is the destroyer of his own self. By that it is meant that he keeps himself down on the plane where he does not belong, but he who has seen the Divinity everywhere, has become the greatest friend of his soul.

In the *Bhagavad Gita,* we read that the *Atman* is the greatest friend, and when we do not recognize that Atman, or the Divinity, which is dwelling in us, we put obstacles in our path through ignorance These desires which make you worldly, these things which make you attached to the things, that do

not belong to your true self, these things which make you live on this plane of worldliness, and which force us to act like hypocrites, are the greatest obstacles in the path of the realization of the Truth, and the cause of all these obstacles is nothing but ignorance.

What is the true cause of that ignorance? Nobody can trace what is the cause of darkness. It is only less light. Not absolute negation of light ; there is no such thing. So ignorance is less knowledge. There is no such thing as absolute ignorance, if we learn the method of knowing things better by limiting the obstacles that prevent us from seeing things as they are.

*Tamas* is the greatest obstacle When intellect is in a lower degree of vibration, then it does not reveal things which are revealed by the intellect which has higher vibration, and in order to make the vibration stronger and quicker, we must learn the methods given in the practical side of the Vedanta philosophy It is within your reach, and we can develop this understanding to such an extent as to be able to see and realize that which is beyond the reach of the senses Then we can go to the source of the phenomenal universe and to that absolute truth which is the foundation of all things If we train our intellect and also our true nature and our understanding, which has a higher vibration, towards our true nature by the methods of introspection, concentration, and meditation, then we rise to that plane of subconsciousness, where all these things that exist on the higher plane, all the truths that cannot be known by ordinary inellects, are revealed, and then we begin to see God in everything. He who has seen God in everything, is never sorrowful, miserable, and unhappy. We must learn to see that oneness We must know that unity of existence, which is the principal attribute of the Divinity, or the principal characteristic in that Divine Being You must see unity in variety. There are so many different manifestations of force, but all these forces can be reduced to one universal force and that universal force is the true expression of one infinite energy, which is divine. That which exists in your body, belongs to the universe, and that which exists outside of your body, belongs to outside of the universe. You have no right to say: 'This is my body'. You cannot have anything as exclusively yours. You get attached to something and say, 'I cannot live without this

thing'. And you claim all this as yours. How can you have anything as yours, when you are a part of that infinite being, a part of the stupendous whole As a part you cannot possess anything, but you belong to the whole Do not forget this, and never try to be separate from it And then you will find happiness through all the sorrow you are having today ; you will be happy even after death. But, again, what is death? Death means change of the old body and birth means to enter into a new one. So death or change of the body cannot touch you, if you are one with that Infinite being, which is beginningless and is eternal How can you suffer from death? Is it possible for you to die? People ask the question whether the soul is mortal or immortal? That question never rises in the minds of the students of Vedanta, because they know that it is a foolish question Shut your eyes and think of yourselves as dead, and you will find that you are looking at the body you call dead You are seeing something before your eyes you call dead, because it does not move , but you cannot think of yourself as dead It is natural to be immortal, you do not have to gain immortality by going somewhere You cannot but be immortal They are trying to solve that question which troubles the minds of all the Western spiritists The question, whether spirit can exist after death or not was asked in India and the Indians considered it to be a childish question. Such question cannot be asked by sensible person, because it is so true that nobody questions it It is taken for granted, just as it is taken for granted that we exist in the universe and the earth is moving and we are in the universe. As this is true, so immortality is true 'When you have learned to see that one being everywhere, how can you have death or delusion, how can you see suffering of any kind?' There can be suffering, when there exist many things One can suffer from another, but when there is one thing in the universe, from what can he suffer? Can we lose anything? No, because it is everything. What do you wish to have? You have already got everything you want Open your eyes and see that it is true

Being the children of the Emperor of the universe, how can you dare to live like a beggar? Give up this weakness, be strong, and wherever there is spiritual strength, that

strength makes us feel that we are the children of immortal bliss, and that strength we need The Vedanta philosophy teaches us how we can acquire that strength and be strong in this life 'Live in this world, enjoy everything that comes in your way without seeking or wishing to gain anything in return Work constantly and at the same time see divinity everywhere Learn that everything is in God and God in everything', says the scriptures of India Similarly the *Upanishad* says: 'He who sees God in everything and everything in God, is a Yogi, and he is considered to be the greatest sage, spiritual teacher, and also an incarnation of the Divinity on earth'

## CHAPTER XII

# SOUL AND GOD

The most important thing for all the students of religion and philosophy, nay, for all seekers after truth, is to understand clearly the true nature of the individual soul and its relation to God. All religious systems and philosophies of the world show that they are nothing but so many attempts of human minds to understand the true nature of the individual soul and God and also of the relation which our souls bear to God and the universe The problem regarding the nature of the individual soul and its relation to God is as old as the most ancient religious systems of the world. Necessity and real value of true religion cannot be felt until the world's problem is solved and the proper solution of that question is thoroughly understood. Of course, our query into the proper solution of that problem depends upon the existence of the soul and of God. If we do not admit a thing as God in the universe, then there is no necessity of trying to understand their relation. Those, who do not believe in their existence and hold that we are nothing but accidental appearances through the mechanical process of the insensate forces of nature which are constantly acting without any aim or purpose, think that it is only a loss of time and a waste of energy to discuss such useless and absurd topics. They would rather devote their time and spend their energy in obtaining the best things of the material world for the benefits and enjoyments of the soulless body. They do not believe in the existence of any such thing as soul, mind, or spirit as apart from the functions and organisms of the material body When the physical form of the body dies, everything comes to an end. As it is with the body, so it is with the material universe Such materialistic thinkers are not merely the product of the twentieth century, but they have always existed from ancient times. In India, such thinkers existed side by side with those who believed in the existence of the soul Think of the Charvakas, the followers of Brihaspati, who denied everything other than the

material body and sense pleasures. The Charvakas maintained that everything of the living beings are destroyed with the death of the material body. The Naiyayikas, the Vaishesikas, Sankhyians, the Mimansakas, the Vedantists, the Jains, and even the Buddhists refuted the materialistic view of the Charvakas The materialistic thinkers, like modern agnostics and atheists, having made the standard of their knowledge that we can get through sense perception i e. admitting sense perception alone as the source of valid knowledge, denied the existence of that which could not be proved with their senses or sense-knowledge. They denied even the soul and said that the soul is the product of the material body

But the other class of thinkers believed in existence of something which we may not perceive with our senses and went below the realm of sense perception They ultimately established the existence of the soul of man and also the soul of the universe. These thinkers can be divided into three classes: firstly, the dualists or monotheists; secondly, the qualified non-dualists, and thirdly, the non-dualists or monists The dualists think that this world is separate from God and the Creator is outside of the universe. They think that God is extra-mundane and extra-cosmic one, and He creates the phenomenal forms out of nothing, gives names to the phenomena, and afterward becomes the governor of the universe. He is eternally separate from the world and all living creatuers, just as the potter is separate from the pot which he makes, or the carpenter who stands outside of the table or the chair which he creates God of the dualists is conceived with human attributes. Now, it is a fact that at first we the human beings try to think of God as a human being with the human attributes, but, at the same time, we call Him infinite in powers. We magnify these powers and attributes to the infinite, saying He is always merciful, just, and all-powerful. Then afterwards we think that God is an extra-cosmic Being, or Creator, or Ruler, or Governor, of the universe, as we find in the conception of God amongst the Hebrews or the orthodox Christians.

If we read the Old Testament, we find in the Genesis that Jehovah is described as walking in the garden of Eden Adam and his wife, Eve, hid themselves from the presense of God in

the garden of Edens In Exodus, we read Moses and seventy elders saw God Johovah walked with Moses, and Moses saw Him. We also read that Jehovah ate with Abraham, and He was very pleased with the sweet savour of Noah's sacrifice, and He walked with Noah. We also find many passages which show that God had human form, God could speak, God had appetite and God was pleased when some good offering was given to him, and He had human attributes and personality In the ideal God of the orthodox Christians of today, we also find the belief in the same Jehovah, who is sitting on a thorne in Heaven, somewhere outside of the universe, and His eyes are red with anger and revenge, holding a rod in His hand to punish the wicked with eternal fire. This human God, who is the Creator of the universe and all living creatures, created the human souls out of nothing, and the relation of these human souls which He created, is just like that of a creature with his creator, like a subject to an absolute monarch, or like that of a slave to his master We will have to worship Him in order to get His mercy How should we worship such a personal Being who is the Creator and Ruler of the universe? The orthodox Christians say that we should worship Him by obeying His commands, just as a subject, in order to please a despotic ruler, should obey absolutely the commands which he gives So all human beings should obey Him implicitly, otherwise they will be punished and will be sent to eternal hell This kind of relation of the individual soul to the Creator of the universe is to be found amongst all the dualistic systems of the world. All the dualistic systems which existed in Asia or Africa in ancient times, described that the relation of the individual soul to God was like that of the creature to his creator, or like that of the subject to the governor It is true that we find in the Old Testament that man was created in the image of God, but what do we understand by that expression 'image of God'? The popular belief. that man was created in the image of God, means nothing but that the first man had some divine powers, before he was tempted by the Satan, and afterward he became a sinner and, of course, we have inherited that sin from the first man, and practically we have lost that image. Some believe that we are all images of God. Still others say that God is the Father of the universe,

His image is in man, but the true image of the eternal Father is found in Jesus the Christ It is not found in any other human being other than Christ, but whether Jesus the Christ meant, or claimed, to be the only begotten son of God, exclusive of all other human beings, is a problem yet to be solved Supposing that all the individual souls are the images of God and the question rises, why is it that God punishes so mercilessly His own sons, as is described in the parable of the marriage of His son. It is said: 'The King said to his servants: bind him hand and foot and take him away, cast him in outer darkness, for many are called but few are chosen'. Again, we find the the passage· 'Ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?' Now it can be asked then how can we expect to be the image of God, and how can we believe that the merciful Father can punish his own son with fire and damnation?

According to popular belief, the individual souls are related to the Creator, or to the Ruler, of the universe, not like the being whose image it is, but like that of a subject to his despotic ruler, or like that of a creature to his creator, or that of a slave to his master. We know that the Christian belief is that God created these souls out of nothing along with the universe. and that He plants these souls at the time of birth in the human forms As long as this idea of creation of the universe and the human souls out of nothing is preached, so long our relation to God will remain like that of a creature to his creator, or a slave to his master

In India, there are also dualists and monotheists who believe in the extra-mundane personal God, who is omnipotent and all-loving and who creates the universe, not out of nothing, but from the materials of nature He dwells outside of nature, He is the efficient cause, and nature is the material cause of the universe. Some thinkers believe that nature is eternal, souls are eternal, and God is eternal, and the individual souls remain in a potential state in nature for sometime, and at the time of the beginning of a cycle of evolution, they come out of their casual state, take forms one after another, and by going through the different stages of evolution, fulfil their desires and purposes, gradually reaching higher stages of evolution, until they reach perfection They

believe that the souls existed in the past and will exist in the future. After reading the New Testament, one can hardly get any different conception of the human soul or its destiny But, in the dualistic systems found in India, we read that the nature of the individual soul is like an infinitesimal paritcle of nature containing a spark of intelligence or divine power in an infinitely small degree, and those souls existed in nature before the beginning of this cycle, as though in a dormant state, and came into different forms through the process of evolution of nature. The duty of these individual souls is to worship God through good works, thoughts, and good deeds and love.

God loves all human souls equally and can be loved in return. Those who worship this personal God of the dualists through unswerving devotion and unselfish love, will gain freedom from ignorance, selfishness, and other imperfections. Thev will continue to exist and live a life of bliss and perfection after death in the presence of the eternal God, the Ruler of the universe This is what is known by devotion. This is not to go to heaven and enjoy the pleasures of the senses for eternity. They believe in a heaven which is considered to be a realm where individual souls go to reap the results of good deeds, and at the end of the period of such celestial enjoyment, such souls come down from heaven and are born again on this earth, take newer forms, and continue to exist, and rise higher until they reach a state which takes them beyond such a heaven, which does not provide eternal bliss

Similarly the wicked ones will have to suffer, not by going to a place of eternal fire and punishment, but by being born again and again on this earth, reaping all the time the results of wicked thoughts and wicked deeds, because all are bound by the law of action and reaction These dualists do not believe that God will punish them, but they believe that the wicked punish themselves They do not believe in the Satan, or in a place of eternal punishment or hell-fire They do not blame God, nor do they charge Him with partiality. They do not blame even the Satan for their sins, but they take the whole blame upon their own shoulders They say that the cause of suffering is within themselves, and they are ready to reap the results. Again these dualistic thinkers believe that

wherever there is life, there is manifestation of divine intelligence, however small manifestation may be and however imperfect the expression of intelligence may be Therefore, they do not hate any living creature, but try to revere the divine spark in all living creatures, from the minutest insect to the highest *deva,* or God, or angel, or divine Spirit Everywhere there is the manifestation of this eternal Being, who is considered to be the eternal Sun, and each one of these living beings possesses a ray of that divine sun. The relation of these individual souls to God is like that of a ray of light to the sun.

Sometimes God is compared to a gigantic magnet and individual souls are so many heads or points of needle As a magnet can attract a needle, so these individual souls are attracted by the great God who magnetizes them with divine love and makes them perfect According this dualistic belief, each individual soul is separate, but at the same time, is related to God in a similar way. The soul, according to them, is like the individual ego with all the attributes and human qualities and character, mind and intellect, sense powers and the finer particles of ethical matter, which form the foundation of the individual form These individual souls continue to exist until perfection is reached

Now it should be remembered that God can be worshipped in different ways Some may worship Him as the Master, other as the Father, or the Divine Mother. Some may worship Him through the relation of brother, or friend, or husband, depending upon the characteristics of the worshipper If a worshipper likes a certain relation, or if it attracts the mind of the worshipper, that relation is good for him. They say that as one man in a household can be called father in relation to his children, and master, friend, or husband in relation to others, so the great God can appear in so many different forms. There can be various relations, according to desires, tendencies, and moods of thinkers or worshippers of God The individual soul, however, is related just as the ray of light is related to the source of light

Next to these are the qualified non dualists, who try to go a little deeper below the conception of the dualists. They

start from the ultimate conception of these thinkers in search after the true relation, which the individual soul bears to the finite Being and find that God does not remain outside of nature God is not merely the Ruler of the universe standing outside of nature, but He dwells in nature He is immanent and resident in nature He is not only, therefore, extra-cosmic, but is also intra-cosmic. He is the internal Ruler of the universe His creation is constantly manifesting His powers The physical body of this Being is the gross material universe. He has an infinite number of eyes, an infinite number of ears and heads. He sees through all the eyes that exist in the world, beginning with the lowest animalcule and ending with the highest, and the sum total of all these eyes make the all-pervading omnipresent eye of God. He has an infinite number of ears, and He hears through all the ears which exist in the phenomenal universe His mind is the sum total of all the individual minds, and, therefore, it can be said that there is one ocean of mind or mental force which pervades the universe, and that is neither yours, nor mine, but belongs to God. His intellect is the cosmic intellect, and His ego is the cosmic ego He is the Creator of the universe, but He does not create anything out of nothing He does not create from the materials which exist outside of his body, but He is the efficient and material cause of the universe He projects the whole phenomenal world from His own body, wherein dwells an infinite number of forms of the phenomenal appearances. Again nature is not separate from Him, but nature is His divine energy and is inseparable from His self.

God is all-pervading and when evolution of the phenomenal forms begins in that process of evolution, an infinite number of individual souls which dwelt in His body before the beginning of the cycle, takes forms, and, by going through different stages of evolution, fulfils the purpose of life and ultimately reaches perfection. God of the qualified non-dualists is personal and yet is infinite He pervades every atom of the nature or the universe and at the sametime transcends the nature or the universe He dwells in nature, yet is outside of it. He has no particular form, because form means limitation in space by time. So God is above time and beyond space. His personality is not like our personality, but is something beyond

our conception of personality. Again He is impersonally personal.

But it is difficult to grasp the idea of impersonally personal Because, whenever we think of a personal God, we project our personality to some being who is great and is worshipped But the personality of God is much greater. Yet all the forms that can be seen in the phenomenal universe, exist in his body, and at the same time He can appear in any form. If a worshipper likes to see that divine Being in any particular form, He appears in that form to satisfy the desire of the devotee, and yet that form is not His only form If one wishes to see the form of Christ, he will see it. If another wishes to see the form of Buddha, he will see it Therefore all these forms exist as ideas in our mind which is the part and parcel of the universal cosmic mind or nature The forms are nothing but the expressions of the ideas that exist in the cosmic mind or nature. These qualified non-dualists believe that each individual soul has its own personality and individuality, and is thus separate from all other individual souls of the universe, and yet they all have one God

Thus we know that qualified non-dualistic system teaches unity as qualified by variety. In this unity exist the individual souls If we can imagine that each soul has its individuality and all these inseparable souls form one personality or individuality, then we can also imagine that all these human souls and all living creatures exist in the all-pervading body of God and have their own individuality, yet at the same time they are not the same as God The individual soul cannot be called God. Sometimes it is believed that after emancipation (*mukti*), the individual souls attain the status of God But that is not possible, because God is a unique one and no soul can attain that unique and universal position of God

The believers of qualified non-dualistic theory maintain that God is like a tree and we are like so many branches, God is a stupendous whole and we are the parts Our intellect is a part of the cosmic intellect Our will is only a partial expression of that will, which is manifesting itself through the various forms of the phenomenal universe. Our ego is a part of the cosmic ego. We have, therefore, a material form a mental form and a soul which is the ruler of the body.

Now it is a fact that whatever exists in the macrocosm, exists in the microcosm The individual souls have character, mind, intellect, and sense powers, just like the individual egos. At the time of death of the body, the soul contracts its powers. All powers which are manifested today through our bodies, will be contracted at the time of death, and they will remain potential, just as all these powers are contracted at the time of deep sleep So, the souls have the power of contracting and expanding these powers. At the time of birth, these powers will be expanded again, and all these impressions which we gather in one form of existence, will be reproduced, and nothing will be lost.

Next to these come the monistic thinkers who believe in the unity of existence. They go a little farther than these qualified non-dualists They do not stop there, but march still farther, and push their investigations on and on, until they reach that one absolute Truth which does not change. They adopt all the logical and scientific methods and apply them in solving the most abstract problems of life and death, and they are at last successful.

The monists, or the non-dualists, say that the individual egos are subject to change. The personality of every soul also changes. But is there anything in the individual ego which does not change? Vedanta says that there is something which does not change amidst the changes. The non-dualists try to find that unchangeable something and will not stop until they reach it. In their struggle for the attainment of that unchangeable something, they discover that there is a very subtle substance which forms the background of the individual egos. They call that substance the *Atman* Now there is no English equivalent for the word Atman It is not the same as spirit, because, by the word spirit, we understand many things But, if we give any meaning to the expression 'Divine Spirit', that can be applied The *Atman* is the source of intelligence It is the basis of existence It is the foundation of all knowledge and is the unconditional Reality. We owe our existance to this all existant something. In fact the *Atman* is the existence of each one of us It is not the same as mind or intellect, but it is higher than them. Mind and intellect cannot reach it, yet existences of mind and intellect depends upon it. Now it can be asked as

to who has realized it? Who can go deep enough to grasp that unconditional absolute Reality of the individual egoes? It is not the same as a part of the cosmic Ego, but is one with the essence of the cosmic Ego It is sometimes interpreted as self, with a capital 'S', but that word produces confusion in different minds. Some mistake it for ego, and we have seen that Horatio Dresser mistook it for Anglo Saxon ego. But it means something higher and deeper which ordinary minds cannot grasp It should be remembered that the Divine essence of the universe is higher than ego. The cosmic Ego owes its existence to that Divine essence, and that Divine essence is called in Sanskrit the Brahman, which means the vast and all-pervading existence of the unchangeable Reality: *vrihatvat iti Brahman'*.

Vedanta says that the true nature of the individual soul is the *Atman* It is the support or substratum of the universe and the individual souls It is the essence of the cosmos. We are one with that infinite source of the Divinity on the highest spiritual plane. When we rise to that plane, all duality vanishes, all phenomenal names ad forms disappear, the world of relativity marges into one infinite ocean of unconditional Reality. But where do they go? Nobody can tell, because in that state, there is no idea of evolution or involution. All changes, which are described as manifesting through the process of evolution or involution, stop from appearing before our mind The mind itself grows quiet Then we rise above the realm of thoughts and relativity. But do not think that we lose our individuality by rising above the realm of thoughts and relativity In that transcending state, we simply attain to our true individuality. Try it once and you will appreciate what I mean to say Bear in your mind that in that state of transcendance, all ideas of differenciation and relativity stop forever The divine essence of God pervades the universe, and that divine essence also forms the background of all phenomenal appearances In that ocean of absolute existençe, intelligence and bliss, the waves of phenomenal names and forms arise or appear for a certain time, then go down again, and rise once more in the same way, and this process of evolution (*sristi*) and involution (*pralaya*) goes on all through eternity. Creation of this world of phenomena is the beginning of the appearance of these waves in the ocean of the absolute Reality. Individual

souls are like so many bubbles that rise in that ocean, play their parts, and live in company with other bubbles As the bubbles are inseparable from the waves of the ocean, so these individual souls are inseparable from the ocean of Reality

These individual egos again take the light of intelligence from the *Atman,* the absolute Reality When a bubble rises, it catches this light of intelligence and then it manifests itself as a thinker, a knower, and a worker This bubble has desires and tendencies and can get certain impressions and retain them. The *Atman* within us is the source of the supreme light, and the ego contains the reflection of that light. It is beautifully described in one of the *Upanishad*[1] that in the cave of our hearts have entered the two, the one is the eternal source of light, the *Atman* and the other, the individual ego or the soul. One dwells in the cave of the heart, the other on the summit of the heart The one witnesses the other, and the individual ego drinks the reward of its own work. We may call the one, the light, and the other, the reflection or image or shadow Here we can understand the true meaning of the image of God in man This idea was expressed in India several thousand years before the birth of Christ and also before the time of Moses The Indian seers knew the true relation between the Divinity within us and the reality behind the universe, and called this relation the true source of light. Again, we find another passage in the same *Upanishad* where the two are described like two birds sitting on the tree of life The one is the witnesses, the other enjoys the fruits of the tree of life. Both of these are with beautiful plumage of the same colour, the same form, and the same shape. The one watches silently what the other one does The other one sometimes eats the sweet fruit of this tree, sometimes eats a bitter fruit and suffers, and is very miserable Then he looks upward and finds his friend calm and quiet and restful, enjoying eternal peace. Then he longs for that state of serene calmness, and comes nearer to see what he is like, and how he can keep this quiet peaceful state. As he comes nearer to his friend, he disappears and becomes one with the original friend Because the one who is eating, is the reflection of that bird who is sitting quietly

[1] The *Katha Upanishad,* I 3 1

and witnessing sufferings. So, the individual soul who is reaping all the fruits of his works and thoughts, when looking forward, sees that there is something which is enjoying eternal peace and happiness, and then he longs for that happiness, comes nearer to the *Atman,* and there finds eternal peace and rest. As a reflection (*pratibimva*) of a thing cannot remain independent of the source of light, so the reflection of this *Atman* cannot exist for a second without the source of existence and happiness. So it is declared that the true nature of the individual ego is the *Atman,* upon which it depends and to which it owes its existence But we are all one with the Divine essence of the universe, the *Atman,* by our true nature and absolute existence, and that absolute existence is always one. We are all one in spirit and all one in the universal Being. We must realize that oneness and then we shall be able to understand what our true relation is to the absolute Reality of the universe.

The Vedanta philosophy accepts all these various explanations and says that the relation of the individual soul to God appears higher, and finer, as our conception of the individual soul and God becomes higher and finer Starting from the gross material body, when we march onward in search after the absolute unconditional Reality of the universe, we pass through many intermediate stages, and in each stage, we understand something better and higher until we find that absolute unity which is the ultimate goal of all religions as well as the ultimate ideal of all philosophy. We do not go from error to truth, but we go from truth to truth We may not understand it perfectly at present, but as we march onward towards the ultimate Reality, we realize the truth

Now, in conclusion, it can be said that the believers in the doctrine of non-dualism or monism first try their best to remove the mistaken notion or false knowledge about truth, because in ordinary life they take unreality as reality and reality as unreality They, therefore, take the help of discrimination (*viveka* and *vichara*) *and* discriminate the real from the unreal, and realize the real and cut asunder the chain of ignorance (*ajnana* or *avidya*) that deludes them Then they go deep into the bottom of the mystery of the world and find solution by realizing the innermost essence of their own exist-

ence At last they come to know that the *Atman* is the only reality, and everything other than the *Atman* is unreal. Then they attain to the absolute freedom and all their questions are answered, doubts are removed, and knots of the heart or soul are unfastened, and the attainment of the absolute freedom is no other than the Divine realization of the absolute Brahman.

## APPENDIX I

*Q* Was Buddha born of a virgin?

*A.* Yes His mother's name was Maya Devi, the same as Mary When Buddha was six days old, his mother passed away She who has borne the Enlightened One, could not bear any other children She should not live. That is the most wonderful ideal that they had at that time

*Q.* Will the resurrection of Christ benefit man?

*A.* It might convince some people who do not believe in resurrection But there is no other special benefit from it

*Q.* Will the world be spiritualized when Christ will return to earth?

*A.* It will be no more spiritualized than it was when he came for the first time. World will go on in its own course. One manifestation like Christ, if he comes today, he will be put in the lunatic asylum, or perhaps be shot. People do not want Christ. They want their own ways, to gratify their desires, to gain everything on this material plane, so long as they know this is real For that reason, Christ said ; let them hear who have ears, let them see who have eyes. How many saw him? Only twelve disciples accepted him, and out of those twelve one denied him and the other betrayed him They will do the same thing over again if he comes. But only the enlightened ones, those who are already spiritual, will be able to recognize the Incarnation in Christ if he comes, not everybody Because, in order to appreciate the highest spiritual manifestation, we must have spiritual eyes Otherwise we cannot see it Just as in order to appreciate good music, you must have music in you ; otherwise, you could not appreciate The same way in the spiritual life

*Q* Is grief necessary for progression on this plane?

*A* No, grief is an obstacle.

*Q.* What are the first steps towards the attainment of God-consciousness?

*A.* The first step is self-control, concentration and dispassion, then discrimination and the attainment of the enlightenment. The third eye must be opened in order to attain to

God-consciousness. I have described more fully in my printed book on Spiritual Unfoldment, where the chapter on God Consciousness will help you.

*Q.* Why is the advice given not to impart the wisdom given in the *Gita* to those who have not subdued the emotion?

*A.* Well, I do not believe it is particularly mentioned "who have not subdued the emotion", but who do not believe, who do not have any inclination or desire to know the truth It would be the same thing as throwing pearls before swine. Just as Christ said, do not throw pearls before swine They would not appreciate. Unless we appreciate a thing, we cannot make any progress. There must be appreciation, and in order to appreciate, we must have it within us. The highest truth, when it is spoken, those only can appreciate it who have it within them, who have their eyes open Otherwise, others would laugh and ridicule, and perhaps would say mean things about the science or the philosophy or the teacher Only those who have their spiritual eyes open can appreciate it.

*Q* Is God a static substance to be thought upon by the individual-

*A* God is not a static substance, because that which is static may change into dynamic But God is the absolute reality, the soul of our souls, the life of our life In him we live and move and have our existence We cannot move our hands without God In fact, we are all Gods , there are no human beings Those who believe there are human beings are deluded. They are not human beings, they are all Gods. They cannot make any mistake unless they delude themselves and forget they are Gods. The moment you realize you are divine, you are God, you cannot make any mistake, you would be perfect from that moment, and all your wrongs, all your sins would drop off and you would be free from all sins That is the reason it is said in Vedanta that if anyone for one hundredth of a second can realize the superconscious state, the Godconsciousness, that very moment the sins of hundreds of previous incarnations will be burnt up and destroyed and he will be freed from all sins Christ never said such a thing. No such comforting word you find in the Bible. They tell you to lament and repent and beg forgiveness But on the contrary, realize that you are divine,

you are one with God, and that very moment you are free and perfect.

*Q.* How do you interpret the scripture passage, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die?

*A* Well, that was an old idea that the souls could die The writer of this passage did not have the understanding that the soul is eternal, the soul is birthless and deathless. Our conception of soul is different from that which the writer of the scripture had They believed that the soul was created out of nothing and it could die, it could be destroyed But Vedanta teaches that the soul is never born, never was created. It is eternally part of the Divine Being Himself It cannot commit any sin at all All sins are errors

*Q* How can we tell how many times we have been re-incarnated?

*A* We cannot tell. There is no way of telling how many times. But if we can shut off our present consciousness, go to subconscious plane and dig out all the impressions and ideas and experiences that are pigeon-holed in our subconscious state, we can remember a few of them There is an instance where Buddha remembered five hundred of his previous incarnations, but he had many more.

*Q.* What do you mean by saying one is a very old soul?

*A* Not one is a very old soul, but they are all old. They are eternal But when we say one is an old soul, we mean that one has been in the form of a human body. There are other soul that are coming up from lower animal. They might be in the human plane for the first time That would make a little difference, but as far as the existence of the soul is concerned, it was long before Abraham was born, long before this earth was formed.

*Q.* What is realization, and are there degrees?

*A* Realization means the attainment of God-consciousness, instead of human consciousness, and there are degrees Specially, there are seven degrees.

*Q.* For what purpose we came in this world?

*A* That is what we are trying to find out. Many people have no purpose of life at all. They commit suicide, and they consider their life worthless Very few have realized that they have a mission, a purpose in life. Some think that enjoyment

of pleasures in this world is the highest purpose of life. Others have other ideas Wealth, prosperity, success in business, having a lot of children, having a large family, a good wife or a good husband all these are considered as purposes of life. But the true purpose of life is to realize who are we in reality, why we came to this world, to solve all the questions that constantly rise in our mind True purpose of life is the attainment of perfection. "Ye shall be perfect as the father in heaven is perfect" That is the true purpose.

*Q.* Is a good or an evil thought a deed?

*A* A good or an evil thought is the first state of the deed. Thought rises in the mind. That is the state. Then, out of the fullness of the heart, the mouth speaketh and hand worketh. Therefore deed must be backed by the thought. Thought by itself is less criminal than the physical action, if it be an evil thought or evil deed, but it is the first stage of the deed.

*Q* Can return to the world be avoided by a consistent desire not to return?

*A* Yes, it can be avoided But the best way to avoid it is not to think of the return at all, but to think of yourself as perfect, as divine, and commune with the Divinity Because when we have any kind of desire, that desire itself is a bondage. Therefore in the *Bhagavad Gita,* you will find Krishna says: "He who attains to me becomes free from birth and rebirth" He does not return, but he who desires for heaven, celestial pleasure, or any other kind of desire, his desire would bring him down and force him to reincarnate. Therefore the best way is to be free from desire by thinking of that absolute spirit which is beyond all desires.

*Q.* Please instruct me how to overcome dryness

*A.* Is this dryness or drowsiness? It is spelled d-r-i-g-h—I think there is no such word. If it be dryness, then you will have to send for a prescription.

*Q.* What is conscious evolution?

*A.* Conscious evolution is that the process of evolution through which we are going, we begin to know it, begin to be aware of it. Just as what changes you are going through unconsciously, if you know them that would be a conscious evolution. For instance, your body is constantly changing. If you know that it is changing and stand like a witness, then you will

be conscious of the evolution of the body So with the mind ; so with the intellect But you must remember that the spirit is not subject of evolution It is beyond evolution It is always the same

*Q* Is it possible to reincarnate on a lower plane than that which we now seem to manifest?

*A.* Yes, it is possible, but generally we don't reincarnate on a lower plane unless we have done something that will drag us down to the animal plane, or if we are too anxious about any pets At the time of death, if we think of an animal that we are very fond of, then that might be the cause of our being born on the animal plane, because the thought that is most prominent at the last moment will lead the subtle body according to that thought to the different planes of consciousness

*Q* Swami Vivekananda predicted before he died that he should be born again on the Pacific Coast in the United States of America in certain month and certain year in a Hindu family Therefore in the same month and in the same year a baby is born in San Francisco

*A* Well, I don't believe Swami Vivekananda made such a statement as that, but I heard him say that he would come again, and towards the West—he pointed out. That does not mean that he has come already, so the baby that is born in San Francisco may be the reincarnation of somebody else.

*Q* If everyone tries to attain God-consciousness, then how material progress can be made?

*A* We don't have to worry our head about it. The world will take care of itself. We need not worry that everybody will attain to God-consciousness at the same time It cannot be Just as two faces are not alike, so two minds are not on the same plane of evolution. It takes time One may try, and may attain to God-consciousness within a certain period Others may take longer or shorter period So the world will be progressing just the same

*Q* Is the material progress not necessary before we attain God-consciousness?

*A* Yes, if by material progress you mean the realization of Divinity in matter But material progress doesn't mean anything, unless you consider wearing good clothes and getting

more luxuries and cheating the poor people If that means material progress, then it is worthless It does not help in the attainment of God-consciousness Because you must begin to see that Divinity is in the poor man and you are not in any way better than the poor man. Therefore all incarnations of Divinity were friends of the poor Did not Christ say it would be hard for the rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven? Why? because the rich man does not realize he is sucking the life blood out of the poor and he thinks he is superior He is not superior. We are all equal, all children of God. Then material prosperity does not mean anything from the standpoint of spirit It means waste of time. But from the standpoint of matter and misery and suffering, it is a blessing. There is a standpoint of misery and suffering and a standpoint of spirit. Spirit is perfect, and material progress cannot improve the perfection of the spirit which the spirit already has But the material progress might be for the physical good. Now, for instance, there are a great many diseases. People are suffering from these diseases. If we know the causes of those diseases, like the microbes, and learn the method by which we can kill those microbes and make people happier, that would be a real material progress. Science is improving Science is doing a great deal towards material progress, but it is abused. That knowledge is abused, for selfish purposes, for profiteering purposes That does not help us All that method which is absolutely commercial is degenerating to the soul By that I do not mean that you should not take care of your commerce, that you should not have your trade But always adopt honest means, and regard your fellow brethren as children of God and you have no right to cheat and rob them to enrich yourself. That is not right That kind of progress is degeneration.

*Q.* Please tell us what is the difference between Theosophy and Vedanta Philosophy.

*A.* Vedanta Philosophy is the source of Theosophy. All the highest truths that theosophy can teach are taken from Vedanta. If you take away Vedanta principles from Theosophy, Theosophy would drop dead. There is nothing in it except some psychic phenomena. Communication with the Mahatmas means the same thing as spiritualistic communication in seance with some departed spirit. You might ask, then, why should

we not study Theosophy. Theosophy has taken a great many of the ideas that were given out in the Buddhistic writings, and then mixed up the Buddhistic teachings and pure Vedanta teachings and spiritualistic teachings into a conglomeration where you cannot separate one from the other, and for that reason it creates a great deal of confusion For instance, read the description of the law of Karma. When I read Mrs Basant's book on Reincarnation, I could not understand what she was talking about, although I have been taught about reincarnation and read all the books and all the ideas given in Sanskrit in the Vedanta Philosophy. It is a great confusion. First when I read the Secret Doctrine by Madame Balvatsky, it was so confusing, you do not know what she is talking about. Of course, there is truth in it, but what is the use of wasting so much of our time in order to find out that grain of truth that is there covered up with mistakes and psychic phenomena, psychic powers? Of course, there are occult powers But that doesn't help us very much If you are going to be an antiquarian and study what the Egyptians thought, and what is taught in the Book of the Dead, and all this occult side—well, it is nice to study those things if you can spare the time. But if you want to attain to God-consciousness, you will not find it easier through Theosophy, because that would mislead you on the psychic plane. Quite a few have come to me for help because they could not sleep in the dark ; they see elementals dropping from the mantelpiece I knew a lady who is very prominent in New York, who came to our country place. We had an old-fashioned farm house at West Cornwall, Connecticut, where we had a retreat In the room which we gave her there was an old-fashioned window with six or eight lights in each sash, and these were small glasses, and the corner of one glass was broken and the putty was off It was an old house. And there was a hole in that glass—about a pin-hole She examined the room very carefully, and her eyes were attracted to that little pin-hole in the glass. She said she could not sleep in that room We asked why She said, all the elementals would come through that hole and keep her awake and she would be frightened to death. These are absolute facts So we pitied her We could not give her another room, but we had to put another lady with her to hold her down and drive the elementals out.

*Q* Is there a different spirit in each incarnation, and does the former spirit remain in the astral plane?

*A* No, there is not a different spirit. It is the same spirit, only we get a different body, physical body. The astral plane is the thought form We travel through different planes, but the spirit is the same You might dream of different things and different states Just you may imagine that after death you will go through a dream state. Dreams are all mental, and they are real, just as real when we are dreaming, but they are unreal when we wake up and come to another plane of consciousness. So the astral plane is real so long as we are in the astral plane, and the other planes, which are just like dreams, will be just as real Only sometimes some people would have nightmares, and that is the suffering of the other regions, the lower regions, hell But these nightmares come from different causes, from evil and guilty conscience, and so forth. But the spirit remains the same all through

*Q* Is the soul transmigrated from one body to another?

*A* That was the old belief of the Egyptians Plato believed that, and Pythagorus believed that But that idea is not accepted now. I have shown the difference between transmigration and reincarnation in my book entitled "Reincarnation" You will find in the last chapter.

*Q* I heard a psychoanalyst say that there was nothing in the subconscious mind of the person that he did not put there at some previous time

*A* That is absolutely correct, because subconscious mind is just like a pigeon-hole. When we put it there it is retained there. All subconscious activities presuppose conscious activities

*Q* Do you consider this true? If not, what outside influence can act as stimulus to subconscious mind?

*A* Well, I have explained the point There may be outside influences. Suggestion would bring out the subconscious impression upon the conscious plane.

*Q* Are the spiritual medium of India the main cause to bring the Vedanta Philosophy about, or are they only partly so?

*A*. Well, you know, the Vedanta Philosophy came at a very early period of human progress. We do not know how it came. It came like revelation in the most ancient times, because

we find in the Vedas, as far back as we can go in our thought. For instance, Rig Veda teaches us—that is the oldest scripture in the world, older than any other written book or any kind of scriptures which have been handed down to us Now, there in the Rig Veda, we find "That which exists is one, men call it by various names" It is the oldest truth, and that is the foundation of Vedanta. So, in the Vedas we find that this knowledge was not received through any medium, but it came out from the Infinite Spirit like the breath of life, and it was breathed in the soul which was pure Now, you see, if you could make your soul pure, you would receive that revelation. Revelation does not mean that some outside being will talk to us, but it is the disclosure of the higher, the divine self within us. And they were pure; they were not full of wickedness Those pure souls saw this truth, realized this became conscious of it, and they are called rishis or the seers of truth, and these seers of truth were the first teachers of Vedanta It is the oldest system, and all their teachings, like Christ's teachings or Buddha's teachings, are based upon these principles which are the oldest and which came in that way to this world, and it is going to be the future principle? All these cults are only stepping stones, but Vedanta is the background, and science is helping in proving the truths of Vedanta. There is one life, one spirit, one mind That oneness would be the final There is nothing beyond oneness How could there be anything beyond oneness? If you are one with God, what will be the future state beyond Then you go beyond God You could not do that. You become the absolute. When all the diversity is reduced into oneness, it cannot go any further For instance, chemistry When chemistry will reduce all the elements into one element, there it is finished. It cannot go any further. Now there are about eighty elements, but it will all be reduced into one. And that is the tendency, and when that one is discovered. it cannot go any further. From many we are going to one. As from one we have come into many, so we must return.

Q I have heard it said, but I do not believe it, that there is supposed to be people in India who can move mountain without any mechanical aid or power. Could Jesus do it, Not that I know of, or anybody else I do not think we can move anything

A. Well, I never heard such a thing that they moved a mountain without the aid of any powder or mechanical method. But that is to be taken not literally, but it is metaphoral, that faith is so strong it can move the mountain. That is what we call the way to impress upon the mind that it is so powerful That is one of the methods in rhetoric by which they describe any exaggeration Of course, in metaphorical sense, it is all right, but you should not take it literally. If Christ meant literally he would have shown by doing it. He did not do it.

Q. Is it true that there are ghosts,

A Yes, there are ghosts.

Q Has the spirit any control over human being?

A It can have

Q Has spirit any effective suggestion powers?

A Well, the disembodied spirit can give suggestion and can control the minds, can put the mediums into hypnotic sleep, just as human beings can do.

Q Does the word Nirvana implies denial or existence of God?

A No, it does not

Q. Is a deep, pure, personal affection on the . . plane a bane to spiritual development?

A No, it is not You see, the affection is very helpful. It is the expression of the soul. and all affection is based upon love It might be love misdirected, but when we go through certain experiences, then that direction of that love is corrected. But so long as love is there at the bottom, that love is divine. When you love your sweetheart for instance, you are loving God, but you do not know it You are loving the physical body. You might be deluded. You might be attracted by the physical body of your sweetheart, but your soul does not love that physical body. When a mother loves her child, she does not love the material body of the child. although she is attached to it but her love is to the soul When the wife loves her husband, she loves the soul of her husband, but she does not know it. When you do it consciously, then you become divine, and get the full benefit of love. But when you love unknowingly, unconsciously, the result is that you must suffer, because all ignorance leads to suffering, disappointment, unhappiness. But when you know it, that you are loving the soul, you could

not be disappointed,; and you will make that soul love you just the same, because it should be mutual in order to be true love, but beyond material body. You see, we are clothed with the material garment Suppose you loved the dress, the clothes of your sweetheart, but you would not care for your sweetheart when she is without the clothes That would be foolish That would be idiotic You must regard this physical body just like the clothes, and you must begin to see the inside, behind the clothes of the physical body, both men and women, and then that would be the divine consciousness, and the world be made much better, and then all wickedness would vanish That is the ideal state. but it is very difficult to attain to it. The parents must realize that first and impart that knowledge to their children. They are responsible for their children's conduct, but they should set an example first in themselves You see, therefore, to get married means to carry a great deal of responsibility on the shoulder, because the moment you become father or mother, your responsibility begins In fact, before the child is born, the responsibility begins, from the very minute that they are tied by the wedlock And in order to fulfill these responsibilities, one should learn the truth, and not go about ignorantly, to draw ignorant spirit, ignorant souls, or such souls that would make their life miserable They would have to create good thoughts, create a good atmosphere, so that you would be able to attract good souls Otherwise, all these animal souls would come, cripples, etc., who would make you suffer and make the life miserable Such souls do come whenever they find the proper environment So, the physical conditions are not the only ones that are to be considered, but the mental and the spiritual forces which radiate from us are to be considered a great deal, in order to make our life a blessing.

*Q.* Will you repeat briefly about the eggs and hare—the origin?

*A* Well, that I explained yesterday at the Eastern service. The eggs were a religious symbol from very ancient times. It was sacred to the Egyptian priests The goddess Isis was of an egg, and Osiris was also born of an egg. Egg is a religious symbol, and because it was sacred to the Egyptian priests, they never ate eggs. It is the same with the Hindu and Buddhists priests in India today They would not eat eggs

because they contain the germ of life And they have another belief that before the evolution began, the whole matter, the material of the universe appeared in the form of an egg That is what they called Brahmanandam, the egg of Brahman, and in that egg was the first born Lord of the universe. The Hiranya-garbha, the golden being was encased in that egg It included all the sun, moon and stars, and the whole universe, the planetary systems. And when the egg was ready to produce the different stages of evolution, then it opened, and the one half went above, and the other half came below, and this world-soul became the creator. It is a beautiful idea Eggs are regarded as the religious symbols from very ancient times. The Chinese have an idea, a tradition rather, that the first man was born of an egg which was thrown down from heaven by the God.

It is the same idea as we find in other nation, people might laugh at that as a superstition But modern science is tellisg us that all human beings are born of human ovums, which, though invisible, are just in the shape of eggs So, after all, we have all come out of eggs. It is true And for that reason they regarded it as a great religious symbol It was not accepted by Christianity until the time of Pope Paul V, who introduced it in the Easter ritual.

And you know the story of the hare The winter king was lingering and did not want to go The frost was still on the ground, and Prince Spring came and wanted the throne He wanted to announce that Spring has come and wanted to send a message to the people in civilization, and he didn't know anyone to send He looked at the birds Birds were busy laying eggs and building nests Flowers were blooming on the trees and plants He could not send a mouse, because people would be frightened. So he looked around, and he found a hare a little being, and the Prince Spring called this little being, and asked him whether he would be the messenger He agreed, and then Prince Spring gathered all the little eggs from the nests of the birds, and so on, and filled the basket, and asked the hare to take it to the city But the hare was timid He did not like to meet the grown-up people, and when he found the little ones. the little boys and girls in the street, he went near them and gave the message that the spring has come

and here is the egg, and he presented the eggs The children were delighted, and carried the eggs home and told their parents that the spring has come. And for that reason, now they give sugar hares to the children and painted eggs It is a nice story, to show that it is a natural thing, that in the spring of the year nature wakes up from sleep And real Easter means that The meaning of Easter is from the spring goddess Ostara So Easter has nothing to do with the resurrection of Christ. It is the resurrection of nature, and it is a pagan festival Long before the Christians had it, amongst Romans, Greeks, Jews, Hindus and Chinese, it was observed as the spring festival after the vernal equinox about the 25th of March

## APPENDIX II

# SCIENCE AND RELIGION

'The Swami Abhedananda, a cultivated Sannayasin monk from India, is one of the lectures in the Monsalvat School of Comparative Religion, which holds its session under the beautiful Lysekloster Pines at Greenacre, and there he delivers a course of addresses on the 'Vedanta Philosophy and Religions of India'. He is also included in the general lectures course, and to him was assigned the above topic, which he has just spoken upon. As this was the first time he had spoken at Greenacre, in his opening sentence, he alluded to the broad platform which had been established here, from which he and representatives of other forms of religious faith could freely speak, and set before the people what of truth had been discovered, and assist others to appreciate the important fact that truth had been discovered, and assist others to appreciate the important fact that truth is not found in one system of religious or philosophic thought alone, but in many.' At such a place, it was permitted to show to the world how harmony was found among the followers or members of widely different sects, creeds, and denominations. The unity of faith could be achieved not by finding fault with or condemning others, but by being ready to accept what others had to give, and exchanging goodwill and blessing all round. The tendency of human thought was becoming more and more like the course of the rivers which take their rise in different mountains, but finally flow towards and lose themselves in the one great ocean and become united there There were those who still believed that religion, science, and philosophy were opposed to each other, and consequently, they were inclined to quarrel and fight over petty distinctions in their opinions. In the Western world there were two great tendencies arrayed in opposition and injuring each other One was the tendency to decry religion, because it was not in harmony with science ; the other tendency was the harmonizing of religion and science.

By those who decry religion it was maintained that the object of religion was not to find out the truth or to explain

the phenomena of the universe It had been a failure because it taught the existence of a being who was extra-cosmic ; who was the creator and governor of the universe and that the universe had been created out of nothing. This doctrine or belief had been rejected by modern science ; consequently, those who found fault with religion and did not see the harmony that existed between religion and science, said: 'What was the good of such crude theological explanations and what benefit could be derived from the acceptance of such ideas as made men superstitious, narrow, and bigoted?' They declared that they found better explanations in science, therefore men should follow science and neglect religion, for its truths were unnecessary and useless. They insisted that man could not know God if He existed, neither could they know the nature of the soul if it exist Further, it were impossible to know the nature of the soul if it exist. Further, it were impossible to know the relation between the soul and God, therefore religion was impracticable and absurd ; yet, in the same breath, they asked men to take to the study of ethics, to do good in the world and to be moral

But the question arose: Why should we do good in the world? Why should men be moral? In answering such questions various reasons and arguments were advanced, one of which was that men should be moral for the sake of posterity, that those who come after might be virtuous and moral. But such arguments failed to satisfy the rationalistic mind, which urged that its own pleasure and happiness were of greater consideration than the welfare of posterity. In reply to such a reason it should be declared that pleasure and happiness should be sought for in seeking the happiness and good of other

There was another class of people who sought to harmonize religion and science. To attain that end some tried one way, some another In dealing with scripture some gave hidden meanings to passages which they did not possess , others endeavoured to stretch the meanings of certain texts so as to make them harmonize with the teachings of modern science, but such persons rarely, if ever, knew just where they stood in these matters. These were the people who believed that the earth was created out of nothing in six days ; but science taught the truths and processes of evolution. Some men tried to prove that the Bible taught evolution too. How did they proceed? They declared

that the six days of creation were six cycles or six ages of evolution , and so with the rest of the scripture. They regarded most texts as if they were elastic bands that would bear infinite stretching, forgetting that such bands had a limit to their elasticity ; and so it were impossible to stretch six into six cycles.

Some tried to build up a religious system by accepting only certain portions of scripture and rejecting the rest When it came to studying the life and work of Jesus, their understanding of his acts of healing without applying medicine or any external means, some people considered that should determine the character of their religion. But it should be remembered that there were those in the world who could and did heal disease without the application of any remedy, as did Jesus, and yet such persons were not so highly spiritual as were Jesus and his disciples So the possession and exercise of such powers had no connection with religion. These powers were known to be possessed by people in India long before the time of Jesus, and men exercising the powers of healing may be found among races of men who never heard the name of Jesus

From time to time sects and parties had originated in various parts of the world, the members of which had tried to give a scientific basis to religion. To a greater or less extent some had succeeded, while others regarded it as impossible to base religion on science, philosophy, metaphysics, or logic. That religion which made men narrow and bigoted was not needed in the world any more. No religion at all was better than that, and science was more useful The question with many was: Is a scientific religion impossible? Some thought it was Among advanced thinkers, theories were now being put forward about a universal religion which would harmonize all existing sects, creeds, and denominations, and it is at last being discovered that there can be a common basis for both religion and science,

Herbert Spencer had said that the most abstract truth contained in religion and that contained in science should be made to harmonize. To bring them to be regarded from the same point of view and made useful should deserve the best effort to accomplish Such abstract truth should not be the particular phase of truth discovered by a particular branch of science or by a particular sect or creed, but it must be one which has a common point, where all the different branches of truth

meet and is common to all sects and creeds If such truth can be found as the basis of religion, then there will be harmony between science and religion. Attempts at a true solution of this great problem had been made from time to time by the great thinkers of different nations. To some extent they had succeeded, and the world had been helped. The subject continued to agitate men's mind, and the solution was still being sought by the best men of the age. It should be remembered that truth is the basis of religion, as it is of science. There was, then, unity between the two, as there was a unity in all existence, and when men fully realize that great truth, then they would become one with the race, one with Jesus and the great prophets of all ages and races of mankind —*The Boston Evening Transcript.*

## APPENDIX III

# THE MOTHERHOOD OF GOD

Let us be hospitable to all who bring out from the treasury 'things new and old,' the 'pearl of great price,' or the questionable grain of gold Especially let us be hospitable to the interesting thinkers who increasingly remind us of the ancient proverb. Wisdom comes from the East.

It is now something like sixty years since the first of a band of liberal thinkers came from India with a remarkable blend of rational and spiritual religion, giving at once a hand to the ancient religions of India and to Christianity. Rammohun Roy surprised and delighted multitudes in this country with teachings as tenderly spiritual as they were sweetly reasonable ; and good judges saw in him, with deep delight, the meeting of waters. After him came the Brahmo Samaj and the highly inspirational teachings of Keshub Chunder Sen and his disciples, followed later by Mr Mozoomdar, Swami Vivekananda, and his friends, and Mr. Nagarkar, to say nothing of mysterious messengers from the Himalayas If all these could be brought together, it would probably not be long before that which has befallen Christians in the West would befall 'the wise men from the east.' And yet, as with Christians, so with these teachers from India, there are certain characteristics which belonged to them all The Western man is concrete and creedal ; the eastern is abstract and mystical The western man loves a shell ; the eastern loves freedom. The western man is a practical philosopher when he is not a philosophical theologian , the eastern is essentially poetic and idealistic The western man dearly loves a boundary and an orthodoxy ; the eastern delights in boundless vistas or infinite haze But the eastern has been rapidly learning how to be concrete, simple, and practical, and may yet surprise his western brother as a guileless but subtil logician.

A rather good specimen of this blend of mysticism, logic, and simplicity appears in that thoughtful Indian paper, *Prabuddha Bharata* in the form of a lecture by the Swami Abheda-

nanda, on 'The Motherhood of God,' a subject which, apart from its working out, is sufficiently suggestive of unconventionality. The Western man may expect eccentricity or even a touch of flippancy, but his mistake would be fundamental The lecture is serious, logical awakening, and one can hardly help feeling that only 'use and wont' prevent us from recognizing that the phrase, 'The Fatherhood of God,' is really assailable

In the word 'Nature' we find that the clue which leads to the idea of 'The Motherhood of God'. Nature is the produced, or better still perhaps, the producer, the born or that which bears We know nothing of the mode of being of God, and it is quite arguable—we believe it has long been held in India—that Nature has been the Mother of God, in any sense in which God is conscious The universe, says Swami Abhedananda, is a cosmos, one harmonious whole , and behind every step of evolution, there is some orderly hidden purpose and energy It is that purpose. that energy, which gives birth to all forms of life and intelligence 'Thou art the *Para Prakriti,*' says an ancient Indian writing, 'the divine energy of the supreme being. Of Thee is born everything of the universe ; therefore Thou art the Mother of the Universe 'Wherever is the expression of any force or power in the universe, there is the manifestation of the eternal *Prakriti* or the Divine Mother—Mother. because that energy contains the germ of the phenomenal universe, projects it into space and preserves it when it is born Brahma himself is Her child, and the Hindus have worshipped Her for time immorial In the *Rig Veda,* the most ancient of the Hindu Scriptures the Divine Mother is made to say·

'I am the Queen of the universe, the giver of all wealth and fruits of works, I am intelligent and omniscient Although I am one, by My powers I appear as manifold I cause war for protecting men, I kill the enemy and bring peace on earth. I stretch out heaven and earth I have produced the Father. As the wind blows by itself, so I produce all phenomena by My own will I am independent and responsible to none I am beyond the sky, beyond this earth. My glory is the phenomenal universe; such am I by My power'

'Thus', says Swami Abhedananda, 'we see the Divine Mother is all in all. We live and move and have our existence

in that Divine Mother'. The influence of this fundamental idea is felt, says the Swami, all over India:

As woman represents motherhood on earth, therefore all women, whether married or unmarried, are representatives of that almighty divine Mother of the universe It is for this reason that women are so highly revered and honoured by the Hindus. India is the only country in the world, where God, the supreme being, is worshipped in the form of a woman as the Divine Mother of the Universe. In India the wives do not adopt their husbands' name, they do not merge their individuality into their husbands', as they do in the West, but they keep their own name separate. If a wife's name be Radha, and her husband's name be Krishna, and if we say them together, we should say Radha-Krishna and never Krishna-Radha. The wife's name must be said first. We have long needed a little more of this 'superstition' and sentiment in 'this happy English isle'.

But, after all, it will perhaps be time enough to cease talking of 'The Fatherhood of God', when we have truly mastered it and truly believed in it At present we are, as a rule, not much beyond the old Israelitish notion of Jehovah: and here we find this enlightened Indian's teaching specially rational and wholesome. The Hebrew religion gave us the picture of a Jehovah, stern, arbitrary, and exacting as an eastern autocrat Says the Swami:

As a ruler punishes his disobedient subjects, so Jehovah punished those who disobeyed Him or His laws. The duty of a subject was almost the same as that of a slave to his master. As a slave serves his master through fear of punishment, so the Hebrews served Jehovah. The transition from such a relation to that of a father to a son was indeed a grand step. It was no longer an eternal relation to power and strength, but it became a kind of kinship, a kind of internal or blood-relation, which exists between the earthly father and his son.

But 'the same Jehovah when considered as the Father of the universe by Jesus and his followers, did not lose this extra-cosmic nature. Even today the majority of the Christians cannot go beyond this idea of an extra-cosmic God'. And that is where we are today for the most part. What if the profound eastern idea of the Motherhood of God, allied to our already

fruitful idea of the Immanent (instead of the transcendent) God, should turn out to be the practical emancipation of the Western mind, delivering it from the anthropomorphic images that cluster about this 'extra-cosmic' God, and introducing it to a thought of God which will bring Him absolutely near? The leading Editorial of *Light,* London, July 8th 1899.

# PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

## IN PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS, AT TOWN HALL, 1937

## PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

In connection with the Celebration of the first Birth Centenary of Bhagavan Sree Ramakrishna Paramhamsa, which was organised by a committee of representative men of all shades of religious opinions and irrespective of caste, creed, colour and nationality with Sir M. N. Mukherjee Kt as its President, a Parliament of Religions was held at the Town Hall of Calcutta from the 1st to the 8th March which was attended by savants, philosophers, religious teachers and cultural leaders of most important countries of two Hemispheres.

The Swami Abhedanandaji Maharaj was the President on the second day at its after session

I

# WELCOME ADDRESS

On March 1st 1937, Sir Brajendra Nath Seal was elected general President of the Parliament of Religions at the Town Hall of Calcutta. After the reading of his opening address the President invited His Holiness Swami Abhedanandajee Maharaj to take the chair and left the hall.

The Swamiji occupied the chair in the midst of deafening applause and said·

Sisters and brothers, I thank the Centenary Committee for honouring me to take the chair of the President and for giving me the opportunity to address this representative assemblage.

I stand here not as a delegate from any Institution, not as the President of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society of Calcutta, but as the humble spiritual son of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna and the last surviving *Gurubhai* (spiritual brother) of the world-renowned Swami Vivekananda, whose mantle fell on my humble self, to carry on the works started by him in England and America in 1896 A.D. I had the good fortune to live with the great Swami Vivekananda in the three continents of Asia, Europe and America For over twenty-five years, I successfully conducted the pioneering Vedanta works, the fruits of which are visible this evening at the representations from far and abroad It is a source of immense joy to me to see that the message of my great Master is being more and more recognised and appreciated throughout the world.

In the name of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna and of Swami Vivekananda, in the name of the Ramakrishna Mission as well as on behalf of the Ramakrishna Order, I welcome all the delegates who have come from far and near and offer my cordial greetings to them

Nearly four thousand years ago, Bhagavan Sri Krishna declared:

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम्।
मम वर्त्मानुवर्त्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्व्वशः॥

'Whosoever comes to me through whatsoever path I reach him. All men are struggling in the various paths of Religion which ultimately lead to one Almighty Lord of the Universe.' But this declaration could not be fulfilled in that remote antiquity when there was only the *Sanatan Dharma*—one Eternal Religion and when different sectarian religions did not come into existence. After Sri Krishna came Buddha who was the founder of Buddhism, Zoroaster, the founder of Zoroastrianism in Persia, Lao-Tze and Confucious in China and Jesus the Christ the founder of Christianity. After Jesus arose Mahomet, Sankaracharya, Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism and other religious prophets. At last in the 19th Century Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishan came to fulfil that declaration by practising the religious methods of various creeds and living like the consummation of all the prophets, seers and Incarnations of Divinity that appeared before His advent

I hope that this Parliament of Religions will sound the death-knell of all communal strife and struggle, and will create a great opportunity for promoting fellowship among the various Faiths

रूचीनां वैचित्र्यादृजु-कुटिल-नानापथजुषां ।
नृणामेको गम्यस्त्वमसि पयसामर्णव इव ॥

'As rivers rising from different mountains run crooked or straight to one ocean, so the various religions of the world rising from different standpoints of view run toward one Infinite Ocean of *sat-chit-ananda*—existence, intelligence and absolute bliss

## II

## PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

May He who is Ahura Mazda of the Zoroastrians. Jehovah of the Jews, Father-in-Heaven of the Christians, Allah of the Mahomedans, Divine Mother and Brahman of the Hindus, Grant unto us peace and blessings! Peace, Peace, Peace be unto us all and to all living creatures!

In this age when material prosperity and commercial supre-

macy are the ideals and ruling powers of a civilized nation, when each nation distrusting its neighbours is armed to the teeth with infernal weapons to protect its self-interest and to massacre its neighbours with unimaginable violence as it is manifested in a civilized country like Spain in Europe, when the insatiable greed of a civilized nation led by its most powerful Dictator has subdued and conquered by means fair or foul, to gain supremacy over a weaker nation as it has been the case in Abyssinia, when human beings are regarded as soulless machines fitted to become the fodders of cannons and machine guns, when the ministers of Christian Churches are sending off their souls with the help of poison-gas and bombs to the Christian Heaven with Hallelujah for they are not worthy to live in this mundane world on account of their unpreparedness to combat the hordes armed with mechanised tanks, aeroplanes and scientific ammunitions, when in the East similar strife and conflict are rife, and when the religious communalism is sucking the heart's blood like the mythical Vampire in India, it is high time that the message of peace and goodwill and love for one's enemy as was taught two thousand years ago by the meek and gentle Son of man in Galilee should once more be re-iterated and emphasized with full spiritual force to suit the conditions according to the time, place and nationality To fulfil this great purpose, to establish righteousness and to destroy evil, the Almighty Lord has manifested Himself in the human form of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna in whose Centenary this Parliament of Religions is convened

The present upheaval of the spiritual tide, the waves of which traversing nearly one half of the world have touched the shores of America, was produced by the Christ-like character and divine personality of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Who is recognised throughout India as the greatest saint of modern India and revered and honoured to-day by all classes of Hindus as the Ideal Manifestation, *Avatara* of the Divine glory. His life was so wonderful and unparalleled that within ten years after His departure from this earth, it attracted the admiration, respect and reverence, not only of all classes of people of India, but of many of the distinguished English and German scholars of the Nineteenth Century, who happened to know something about Him.

III

## LIFE OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA BY EUROPEAN SCHOLARS

A short account of the life of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna appeared for the first time in the January Number of the 'Imperial and Quarterly Review' of 1896 under the title of 'A modern Hindu Saint' It was an able article penned by Prof. C. H Tawney who was for many years the Professor of Sanskrit in Calcutta University and the distinguished Librarian of India House in London. This article aroused the interest of great many European scholars among whom late Prof. Max Muller showed his appreciation by publishing in the August Number of the 'Nineteenth Century' of 1896 a short sketch of this Hindu saint's life entitled 'A Real Mahatman' In this celebrated article, which was for sometime the subject of most severe criticism both in England and India among many of the Christian Missionaries and the Theosophists, the noted Professor showed the difference between the imaginary Mahatmas of the Theosophists and the real Mahatman or the Great soul of India, Who had reached God-consciousness and had manifested Divinity in all the actions of His daily life He gave a brief account of the extraordinary life of Sri Ramakrishna paying Him the highest tribute of honour and respect that a Christian scholar could give to a Divine manifestation in the so-called Heathen land. Later, in 1896, he compiled and published 'Ramakrishna, His Life and Sayings' collecting more facts about the life and sayings of this exemplary character perfumed with the fragrance of Divine personality

In 1903 A.D. the Vedanta Society of New York, U S.A published in a separate volume the sayings of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, and the 'Gospel of Ramakrishna' with an introduction by the present speaker in 1907 A D. The unsectarian and universal teachings of Sri Ramakrishna attracted the attention of the sincere and earnest seekers after truth among the Christians of America and Europe and the same Gospel of Ramakrishna (New York edition) was translated into Spanish and was published in Buenos Aires in South America in 1915 A D It was also translated into Portuguese and published

from Brazil, South America. In Europe it was translated and published in Danish, Scandinavian and Czechoslovakie languages.

The well-renowned artist late Frank Dvorak of Prague, Austria, after reading this Gospel was so deeply impressed that he painted the life-size portrait of Sri Ramakrishna and sent it to the present speaker at the Vedanta Society of New York where it was worshipped by the American devotees and earnest students of Vedanta Now, the same masterpiece portrait is placed upon the Alter of the newly-built Temple at the premises of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society in the heart of North Calcutta which was the Centre of spiritual activities of the Bhagavan

In 1925 A D. the Life of Sri Ramakrishna with an introduction by M K. Gandhi, was published by the 'Advaita Ashrama' of Mayabati in India. Later on the celebrated French savant Romain Rolland wrote 'The Life of Ramakrishna' in French in 1928 A.D which was translated into English by E. F. Malcolm Smith and was published by the 'Advaita Ashrama' in 1930 A.D In this volume Romain Rolland said: 'Allowing for differences of country and time Ramakrishna is the younger brother of our Christ'

## IV

## PROF. MAX MULLER'S APPRECIATION

Prof Max Muller was deeply impressed by the originality of this great Saint and real Mahatman Who was not brought up within the precincts of any University and Who drew the waters of His wisdom neither from any book nor scripture, nor from any ancient prophet, but directly from the eternal Fountain-head of all knowledge and wisdom He reached the goal of all religions, not by following the path that was laid down by any religious prophet or spiritual teacher of any country, but His path was original. and untrodden by any of the Saviours of the world. Prof Max Muller was also struck by the broad liberal and absolutely unsectarian spirit which pervades the utterings of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. Indeed the life and sayings of the Bhagavan have given a death-blow

to the sectarian bigotry and fanaticism of the so-called religious world. Whosoever has read His sayings is impressed with the universality of His spiritual ideals, which embrace the ideals of all mankind.

From His childhood Sri Ramakrishna fought against all sectarian doctrines and dogmas, yet at the same time, He showed, that all sects and creeds were but the paths which lead sincere and earnest souls to the one universal goal of all religions. Having realised the highest ideal of every religion, by following the methods and practices of the various sects and creeds of the world, Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna gave to humanity whatever spiritual experiences and realization He had acquired through *Sadhana*. Every idea which He gave was fresh from Above (the Divinity) and unadulterated by the product of human intellect, culture or scholastic education Each step of His life from baby-hood to the last moment, was extraordinary Every stage was like the unfoldment of a chapter of a new scripture, especially written out by the unseen Hand to befit the minds of the East and the West and to fulfil the spiritual needs of the twentieth century.

This Great Sage showed in His life how to cultivate the search after God and proved by His example, that wherever there is extreme longing to see God, there is the nearness of the realization of the Absolute Truth The life of this great Real Mahatman has been the grand testimony to the fact that even in this age, Divinity can be reached and that Divine perfection can be acquired by those who are pure in heart, chaste, simple and who can devote their whole heart and soul to God for spiritual realization alone, and not for any material gain

## V

## IDEAL MAHATMAN

We have neither seen nor heard of a character purer, simpler, more chaste and more godly than that of this ideal Mahatman, Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna He was like the personification of purity and chastity, and embodiment of truthfulness. His life was a life of absolute renunciation and He never cared for the pleasures and comforts of earthly existence. The only

comfort, pleasure, or happiness which He felt in His life was at the time when He was in the blissful state of *samadhi* or Godconsciousness, and when His soul being liberated from the bondage of physical body soared high in the infinite space of the Absolute and entered into the abode of everlasting peace and blessedness.

He could separate His soul from the cage of the physical organism at His will, and He had perfect control over this great Yoga power, (*Bibhuti*). He never recognised earthly relations, but God was His father, mother, brother, sister and everything.

Ramakrishna taught that every woman, old or young was the representative of the Divine Mother on earth. He worshipped God as the Mother of the Universe, and the Divine Mother, as He often used to say, showed Him that all women represented the Divine Motherhood on earth. For the first time, in the religious history of the world, this idea was preached by a Divine Incarnation and upon it depends the salvation of men and especially of women of all countries from immorality, corruption and all vices which prevail in a civilised community. It was Ramakrishna Who by His own example established the Truth of spiritual marriage on the soul plane alone, and not on the physical, even in this age of sensuality He had a wife whom He always treated with reverence and whom He always looked upon as the representative of His Divine Mother He never had any sex relation with her, nor with any woman, on the physical plane. His wife, the Blessed Virgin, Sarada Devi, lived like an embodiment of Divine Motherhood with innumerable spiritual children around her. She in turn, always regarded the Bhagavan as her Blessed Mother-Divine in a human form

Up to the last moment of His earthly career the Bhagavan was absolutely pure, chaste and a perfect child of the Divine Mother of the Universe Furthermore, He uplifted the ideal of womanhood on the spiritual plane, by accepting His 'Guru' preceptor in a woman form No other Saviour or spiritual leader has ever given such an honour to womanhood in the annals of religious history.

## VI

## HIS MISSION

The mission of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was to show by His living example how a truly spiritual man, being dead to the world of senses, can live on the spiritual plane of God-consciousness, it was to prove that each individual soul is immortal and potentially Divine His mission was to establish harmony between religious sects and creeds For the first time it was absolutely demonstrated by Ramakrishna that all religions are like so many paths leading to the same Goal, that the realization of the same Almighty Being is the highest Ideal of Christianity, Mahomedanism, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, as well as of all other smaller religions of the world. Sri Ramakrishna's mission was to proclaim the eternal Truth that God is one but has many aspects, and that the same one is worshipped by different nations under various names and forms, that He is personal, impersonal and beyond both; that He is with name and form and yet nameless and formless. His mission was to establish the worship of the Divine Mother and thus to elevate the ideal of womanhood into Divine Motherhood. His mission was to show by His own example that true spirituality can be transmitted and that salvation can be obtained through the grace of a Divine Incarnation. His mission was to declare before the world that psychic powers and the power of healing are obstacles in the path of the attainment of God-consciousness.

Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna possessed all the Yoga powers but He seldom exercised those powers, especially the power of healing diseases. Moreover, He always prevented His disciples from either seeking or exercising those powers. But one power which we have seen Him frequently to exercise was the Divine power to transform the character of a sinner and to lift a worldly soul to the plane of superconsciousness by a single touch He would take the sins of others upon His own shoulders and would purify them by transmitting His own spirituality and by opening the spiritual eyes of His true followers.

The days of prophecy have passed before our eyes The manifestations of the Divine powers of One who is worshipped

today by thousands as the latest Incarnation of Divinity, we have witnessed with our eyes. Blessed are they who have seen Him and touched His holy feet. May the glory of Sri Ramakrishna be felt by all nations of the earth ; may His Divine powers be manifested in the earnest and sincere souls of His devotees of all countries in all ages to come—this is the constant prayer of this spiritual child and humble servant of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna.

निरञ्जनं नित्यमनन्तरूपं,
भक्तानुकम्पाधृतविग्रहं वै।
ईशावतारं परमेशमीड्यं,
तं रामकृष्णं शिरसा नमामः॥

ॐ शान्तिः। ॐ शान्तिः॥ ॐ शान्तिः॥॥

# SONGS DIVINE

*A Bouquet of Hymns to Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi and some Vedic Chants with English Translations*

*Translated by*

P. SESHADRI AIYER, B A, M L

*Preface by*

DR AMIYA CHAKRAVARTY, M A., D PHIL. (OXON.)

# SONGS DIVINE

## CONTENTS

Foreword, Preface, Translator's Note, A Homage, ब्रह्मानन्द परमसुखदं A Hyman to Sri Ramakrishna, Salutation to Sri Ramakrishna, A Hymn to Sarada Devi, *Hymns to Sri Ramakrishna: Hymns to Sarada Devi·*

श्रीरामकृष्णध्यानम्, श्रीरामकृष्णप्रणामः, श्रीश्रीरामकृष्णस्तोत्रम्, श्रीश्रीरामकृष्णस्तवराजा श्रीश्रीरामकृष्णाष्टकम्, श्रीश्रीरामकृष्णस्तोत्रामृतम्, श्रीश्रीरामकृष्णगुणमृतम्, श्रीश्रीरामकृष्णावतारस्तोत्रम् ।

*Hymns to Peace Eternal:*

श्रीसारदादेवीध्यानम्, श्रीसारदादेवीप्रणामः, श्रीसारादेवीस्तोत्रम्,

*Divine Prayers:*

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं, ॐ आप्यायन्तु ममाङ्गानि, ॐ सह नाववतु, ॐ भद्रं कर्णेभि, ॐ वाङ्मे मनसि प्रतिष्ठिता ॐ श नो मित्रः शं नो वरूण., असतो मा सद्गमय, नासदासीन्नो सदासीत्, हिरण्यगर्भः समवर्त्तताग्रे, विश्वस्थ धाता पुरुषस्त्वमाद्यः, निरञ्जनं नित्यमनन्तरूपं, प्रकृति परमामभयां वरदां ।

Six Stanzas on Nirvana, A Hymn to Peace Divine

*Appendix—Glossary.*

## TRUE PRAYER :

*"True prayer is the mental and verbal expression of the highest spiritual ideal It consists not in trying to get anything from outside, but unfolding the higher powers that are slumbering within the soul. It is the expression of that determination of the individual soul for reaching the highest goal of life ; it is the constant desire, or constant aim, or constant thought of attaining to the highest spiritual realization*

*"True prayer is said to be heard by the Supreme Being when we remember our spiritual nature * * When an earnest soul longs for spiritual illumination and prays for the manifestation of higher powers that are latent, then the Divine Spirit, which is the Soul of our souls, is said to hear that prayer from within and not from outside; and then it manifests its nature*

*"A true prayer is the expression of that attitude of the human mind which arouses the divine nature in man and makes it govern the lower, selfish or animal nature by which we are directed in our ordinary life to perform selfish acts. According to Vedanta lip-prayer is no prayer at all True prayer is always mental It is the earnest longing of the heart*

*"Whenever we think in words, and when we mentally repeat the name of the Ideal concentrating our mind on it, that prayer is the true prayer It is another form of meditation And when such a meditation or true prayer leads to the realization of the Divine Spirit, then it is said that prayer is heard. True prayer is like a ladder by which the individual soul ascends to the domain of transcendental Reality"*

# PREFACE

SONGS DIVINE is the English translation of the *Stotra-Ratnakara,* an anthology of Sanskrit hymns composed by the revered Swami Abhedananda in his early youth. These hymns are addressed to Sri Ramakrisha and Sri Sarada Devi. These English translations of Sanskrit hymans have been collected to gether and appeared in book form

The origin of these Sanskrit *Stotras* needs particular mention In addition to a natural poetic grace, richness of words and an easy-flowing rhythm these hymns have an inner significance of their own. They are the spontaneous outpourings of a holy heart where Divinity was enshrined There is also, in these verses, the firm imprint of the Swami Abhedananda's great intellectual powers and outstanding scholarship.

Early in his youth when Swami Abhedananda was under the spiritual training of his blessed Master Sri Ramakrishna at the hermitage of Dakshineswar, he had an ecstatic spiritual vision (*samadhi*) In that vision the Swami saw that he was within a large luminous hall where Ramachandra, Sri Krishna, Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, Sankara, Sri Chaitanya and other prophets and Divine incarnations were seated. In the centre of that hall was seen Sri Ramakrishna standing as an effulgent figure of immense height. Shortly afterwards, the prophets and incarnations got up one by one. As they came close to Sri Ramakrishna each of them seemed to mingle and become one with him This realization afterwards inspired the Swami to compose the *Sri Ramakrishna Avatar-Storam,* showing therein that all the incarnations and prophets of old were Sri Ramakrishna's previous appearances on this earth

Later on, when after the passing away of his Master, Swami Abhedananda was engaged with his brother-disciples in severe austerity at the monastery in Baranagar in the year 1886, he composed along with other hymns the *Sri Ramakrishna Stavaraja.* This is the first hymn to Sri Ramakrishna, and it used to be sung at that time every evening as the *Aratrika* song of Sri Ramakrishna at Baranagar Math.

It was the intense desire of the revered Swami to present

an English version of his original Sanskrit hymns to the devoted reading public. But to our misfortune the Swami did not remain any longer on this earth to see that desire of his fulfilled Now after a long time we have been able to publish this book Sri P. Seshadri Aiyer, B A., M.L , the Superintendent in the Department of Publications, in the University of Travancore has gladly complied with our request to translate all the Sanskrit hymns of the Swami into English. And this he has done so quickly and successfully that we feel that our object of bringing the message of the Swami to a wide public will be fulfilled We owe him a debt of gratitude for the great service he has rendered us

We have to thank Dr Amiya Chakravarty, M A , D PHIL. (Oxon.) of the Post-graduate Department, the University of Calcutta, for the keen interest he has taken in this publication Even in his busiest hours, and in the midst of various activities he was always found ready to furnish us with necessary instructions and help The preface from his gifted pen will help the readers to realize the deeper beauty underlying these hymns

Swami Abhedananda had translated some of the *mantrams*, hymns, verses and prayers from the Vedas and from the Upanishads, and they also have been incorporated in this book. The Swami himself translated two of the *Stotras* and they appear at the beginning of the book. These two were at first printed and published by Sister Shivani, an American disciple of the Swami, residing at Abhedananda Acres, Los Angeles, California, U S.A Afterwards they were printed in the *Prabuddha Bharata* in 1932

A glossary of the *shastric* and philosophic terms has been annexed for the convenience of the readers The explanatory notes of these philosophic terms have been mainly gleaned from various writings of Swami Abhedananda.

SWAMI PRAJNANANANDA

# FOREWORD

When Sri Ramakrishna left this world, the *Sannyasins* who belonged to his order settled down in a quiet spot in Baranagore near Calcutta, and spent some years in prayerful seclusion During that period, beginning with the year 1886, Swami Abhedananda, the great disciple, composed some religious odes dedicated to his Master, and to Sri Sarada Devi. These odes, or *Stotras* reveal the inner message of Sri Ramakrishna's life and teaching, while the intense glow of devotion can be felt in each line of verse giving the poems the full value of experienced reality

For a long time these verses, written in Sanskrit, had remained unpublished; a few of them appeared later in a small collection which is no longer obtainable. Swami Abhedananda returned to India in 1921, after a long residence of twenty-five years in the United States, and established the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society (in 1923) The renewal of old contacts and the spiritual urge to communicate his experience to a large number of Bengali readers impelled him to translate his devotional odes, and this he did in a language which combined lucidity with a religious fervour. In 1924 he published a book of worship in which along with other texts meant for the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, these Bengali verses also appeared for the first time Swami Abhedananda had also intended to publish an English translation but his many duties. and the time he devoted to meditation, did not leave him with much margin for literary work

Since the death of Swami Abhedananda in 1939, many attempts have been made to translate the odes into English The version which follows is the work of Sri P. Seshadri Aiyer. B A., M L; it attempts nothing more and nothing less than a faithful transference of thought into another language. Those who have no direct access to either Sanskrit or Bengali will be grateful to the translator for having guided them to a world of Yogic contemplation; these verses will also help us in coming closer to the simple and universal sublimity which are for ever associated with the great Indian saint Sri Ramakrishna The

world needs the inspiration of saintly humanity in order to exist at all and to survive the present ordeal.

Sanskrit verses have been printed in *Devanagri* script, along with the English translation, for the benefit of a large number of readers

AMIYA CHAKRAVARTY

## TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

यस्यास्ति ज्ञाननिष्ठस्य ब्रह्मात्माभेददर्शनं।
अभेदानन्ददेवाय नमस्ते गुरुसेविने॥

The *Stotra Ratnakara* of Swami Abhedananda grips the mind as the poetic testament of a gifted child of Sri Ramakrishna For sincerity of both feeling and expression it has few rivals in modern devotional literature. The purity of its diction, the sweetness and variety of its melody, and above all the lofty seriousness of its purpose make the work the delight and sustenance of the human mind which is in tune with the Divine.

A glance at a few outstanding facts of the author's life will afford the key to the secret of the remarkable success of this lovely little work From the days of his childhood Kali Prasad, (Later Abhedananda) used to revel in the immortal classics of Sanskrit Literature while the period of his Parivrajya or itinerancy was utilised in a notable measure for the scientific cultivation of the Sanskrit language and its literature The master who equipped him with this higher training was loud in the praise of his *Alaukiki Prajna*—Superhuman genius The manifold activities of a crowded career spread over continents were never allowed to stifle the genial current of his soul—his inherent love of Sanskrit Add to all this the potent blessing of Sri Sri Sarada Devi who, moved by the eloquence of a hymn to herself, declared: "May the Goddess of Speech (Sarasvati) ever dwell on your tongue"

Now let us have a brief look at each of these hymns *Sri Sri Ramakrishna Stotram* is the expression of sincere and deep piety couched in a direct, lucid, and universally appealing style Its classical diction is not marred by a piling up of too many epithets, and the verses present a notable synthesis of Upanisadic simplicity and loftiness on the one hand and the characteristic modern breadth of outlook no doubt a reflection of the character of its theme This opening hymn has an austere beauty of its own.

*Stavaraja* seems to have been inspired by some of the verses of the eleventh chapter of the *Gita* both in point of metre and style. Its contents, of course, are drawn from the profound reaction of the loving disciple to the influence of the divine Master. Again, the hymn is an eloquent proof of the saturation of the composer's mind with the idiom and style of the sacred literature of India. Besides, it is an interpretation in verse of Sri Ramakrishna's life and ideals The poetic garb serves to make the appeal of this latter even more irresistible. To be sure, the outpourings of a devotee's heart lovingly dwelling on its intimate association with the Ideal made flesh will move kindred minds most The devotional temperament will welcome these sweet, simple and serene verses not only as expressing its own mute yearnings, but also as a never-failing prop to its drooping aspirations

The success .with which the strands of the philosophical and religious speculations of the Hindus have been woven into the shining details of Sri Ramakrishna's fascinating life, takes the shape of the lovely *Astaka,* the next hymn

The *Stotramritam* mirrors the most exuberant mood of the poet In the eloquent exhortations of this hymn, the inspired enthusiasm of the poet is afire with devotion and lits into a blaze sympathetic imagination of the reader and devotee Thus it fulfils the highest function of devotional poetry.

The verses of *Gunamritam* act upon the mind as a chastening influence due to the moving reflection in its pellucid diction of the self-effacement of the poet

Perhaps the *Avatar-Stotram* reveals the most remarkable combination of dignity of style, loftiness of conception, and force of appeal Not a little of its obvious charm is due to the consummate adaptation of style and metre to ideas. Its refrain has a haunting music of its own.

The concluding hymn to the Mother stands in a class by itself, both on account of its theme and treatment The love and devotion which have historically been evoked in the heart of the Hindu devotees by the Mother-concept of God find their most melodious and moving expression in this piece of superb charm and abandon The identification in the mind of the poet of the Mother of the universe with Sri Sarada Devi is com-

plete, and the sentiments flowing from it are true, deep, and spontaneous

On the whole it can confidently be asserted that this bouqet of hymns to Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sarada Devi is the lovely offering of the deepest loyalty and love of the author to his spiritual parents Swami Abhedananda is the poetic exponent of the beauty of Sri Ramakrishna's divine Life.

पूर्वस्मिन्नेव योगी जनुषि वरतपा वेदशार्षप्रतिष्ठो
भक्तिज्ञानादिनिष्ठो भरतभुवमटन् पश्चिमांश्च प्रदेशान्।
दिव्यप्रज्ञोऽतिबुद्धिर्गुरुवरमधिकं प्रीणयन् सेवया त-
ल्लोकातीतापदानान्यमरभणितिथिः कीर्तयन् यः समिन्धे ॥
सोऽभेदानन्दयोगी परमकरुणया सारदाया जनन्या
वाग्देवीनृत्तरङ्गायितनिजरसनः पण्डितौधप्रकाण्डम्।
सिञ्चन् श्रीरामकृष्णं निजगुरुममृतैः स्तोत्ररलाककरस्थै-
स्तुष्यंश्चानन्दयंश्चाखिलविबुधजनान् भाति तस्मै नमोऽस्तु ॥

P. SESHADRI AIYER

*The Giver of Supreme joy and unending Bliss, the infinite wisdom incarnate,*
*Beyond all relativities, vast as sky, and living emblem of 'Thou art That' and other dicta divine,*
*The ultimate One, eternal, pure immovable and Witness of all intellect*
*Transcending all thoughts and the three Gunas,—*
*To such all-wise Guru I ever salute.*

---

## A HYMN TO SRI RAMAKRISHNA

### I

Thou art the first cause
The Lord as well ,
Pervading all Thou art,
Thy state none can tell
O Ramakrishna! ever cast Thy
glance of grace
On him, who hath not devotion's trace

### II

Thou, the primeval Lord,
Thine equal there's none ,
Creator of all Thou art,
Protector, Destroyer, still in one
O Ramakrishna! ever cast Thy
glance of grace
On him, who hath not devotion's trace

### III

Thou playest Thy sport,
Thine loving souls to free,
Under Maya's 'mystic veil'
In many a form Thou holdest Thee
O Ramakrishna! ever cast Thy
glance of grace
On him, who hath not devotion's trace

IV

Like a man in form
Down the earth comest Thou,
To speak the secret
Words to Truth in religion how!
O Ramakrishna! ever cast Thy
glance of grace
On him who hath not devotion's trace.

V

Thy penance, unforeseen
Sacrifice there's none to parallel,
Inspire the wise
To salute Thee,—why not, tell?
O Ramakrishna! ever cast Thy
glance of grace..
On him, who hath not devotion's trace

VI

Verily Thy name
Maketh devotee of Thee,
We still lack
In love even though we see
O Ramakrishna! ever cast Thy
glance of grace
On him, who hath not devotion's trace

VII

Omnipotent Thou art!
Truth, Peace, beginning Thou hast none
O Birthless and Deathless
All we pray Thy compassion
O Ramakrishna! ever cast Thy
glance of grace
On him, who hath not devotion's trace

VIII

What art Thou?
We know not, the 'Greater Teacher,'
What Thy measure,
The depth of wisdom or nature.
O Ramakrishna! ever cast Thy
glance of grace
On him, who hath not devotion's trace.

## SALUTATION TO SRI RAMAKRISHNA

Salutations to Bhagvan Sri Ramakrishna, the perfect Embodiment of the eternal Truth which manifests Itself in various forms to help mankind, and the Incarnation of the supreme lord who is worshipped by all

---

## A HYMN TO SARADA DEVI

I

O *Prakriti Supreme* in human form,
Bestower of boon and bliss!
Distress of souls removest Thou
And grantest them content and peace
Thy servants, who surrender all to Thee
Thou makest them contented and free
O Great Mother of the world,
Be my salutations ever to Thee!

II

Through mercy do Thou save
Thy sons bound in Maya's chain,
Who hath virtue none to say,
Full of crimes and ever vain
O, Thou art the only ship,
To ferry them across the earthly sea!
O Great Mother of the world,
Be my salutations ever to Thee!

III

Renounce, my mind-bee,
The sense-flowers of the earth,

Drink the nectar of 'Lotus-feet'
Enjoy, thus, in peace and mirth
In charm of 'Delusion'
Then shalt Thou cease to be
O Great Mother of the world,
Be my salutations ever to Thee!

IV

Pity, please, O merciful Mother!
Thy sons bowing to Thee anon
Grant them refuge at Thy feet,
Take their salutes ever and on.

V

O Sarada, gracious Mother!
Giver of Wisdom in 'Modest veil',
Protect us, please, I salute Thee,
Ever since from sin and ail.

VI

Thy heart to Ramakrishna doth remain,
To hear His name is joy to Thee.
O Embodiment of His thought alone,
I salute Thee ever, over again.

VII

Noble, Thou hast a character,
Pure is Thy life divine
Ever I bow to Thee, O Mother,
Thou Incarnate, Purity fine.

VIII

O Sarada, Goddess Holy!
Killer of misery in souls resigned,
Saviour of Religion in every age,
By Jogindra[1] worshipped, O mother kind
Givest love and wisdom Thou
Grace Incarnate, to Thee I bow.

IX

Through tie of 'Love' divine
Bound Thou hast the heart of ours,
Granting e'er Thy lap benighn
O Wonder! how Thy mercy showers!
By grace hast Thou made us holy
To virtue changed our endless folly

X

Be loving and gracious to Thy sons
O Mother! I humbly beseech,
Sprinkle in their hearts arid,
A drope of love, to enjoy peace!

XI

O Ramakrishna, the Teacher of all,
And Mother Sarada, Goddess divine!
In bosom holding Their Lotus Feet,
Salutations to both be e'er of mine

---

## A HYMN TO THE MEDITATION ON SRI RAMAKRISHNA

1 Shining in the lotus of the heart, assuredly,
Beyond all changes, real or unreal;
One and compact, untouched by Prakriti.
Or her evolutes; the eternal image of Bliss,
The spotless Swan supreme, Ramakrishna, We adore.

2 Beyond compare, extremely subtle,
Outside the Cosmic flux, impulseless,
Vast as the sky, the supreme Lord,
Whose home is all beings, the very Brahman,
Above the realm of the triple Gunas,
The best refuge, the spotless Swan supreme,
Ramakrishna, we adore.

3. Born to spread Knowledge, Devotion, Peace,
Whose heart love melted,
Who would never bear to see the world
Suffer ; who spontaneously,
Stays in Samadhi, of tender build
And filled with God's spirit, Ramakrishna,
The spotless Swan supreme, we adore

## SALUTATION TO SRI RAMAKRISHNA

### I

Rid of taints, eternal,
And of forms infinite,
Moved by love of worshippers,
He takes a human form ;
Incarnate God, the supreme Lord,
Ever adorable,
Him Ramakrishna, with heads bent down,
We meekly salute.

### II

'I bow down to Ramakrishna, who established the religion, embodying in himself the reality of all religions and being thus the foremost of divine Incarnations.'

## A HYMN TO SRI RAMAKRISHNA

*Om Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna*

1 The Lord of the universe, whose form is Spirit,
Resplendent in His supreme abode,
Intent to save the souls sunk in the sins of Kali Yuga,
Resorting to *Maya's*[2] might, came down here below.
Salutations to Him, Ramakrishna, the Teacher divine.

2. Habiting a holy body and born in a worthy
Brahman's home
With play-fellows in divine childhood,
He made them all happy;
In youth, averse to worldly pleasures and
free from *Maya's* bonds,
Though by nature ever free to promote the
world's welfare

3. Only to the world teach, performed He
the austerities hard
For full ten and two years more, foregoing
sleep and food.
Visioning in *Samadhi*[3] His real form of
light and bliss,
Compassion's abode, eternal bliss, He
taught the aspirants
To shatter their ignorance, and led them to
the Self supreme;
Salutations to Him, Ramakrishna, the
Teacher divine.

4 Practising all religions fully, with full faith in them all,
He reached the conclusion that all religions are true;
Salutations to him, Ramakrishna, the Teacher divine

5. The Lord of the universe who led the
devotees on Bhakti's path,
Through the liquid words of love, thus
winning over their hearts
Revealing ecstasies of love which yield the bliss supreme;
Salutations to Him, Ramakrishna, the Teacher divine

6 By whom were led the knowledge-seekers to
tread on Jnana's path,
Salutations to Him, Ramakrishna, the Teacher divine

7 He confirmed the faithful in their respective paths,
Reverencing the views which fixed them originally there;
Also did He further their efforts in their Sadhanas;
Salutations to Him, Ramakrishna, the Teacher divine

8. For ever did He honour the adherents of all sects
He censured not the sects, though outside their pale he was,
Salutations to Him, Ramakrishna, the Teacher divine

9 Always through sportive zeal He permeates this universe
Gaiety incarnate, delight eternal, to Ramakrishna I bow

10. Originator of all religions, who, dispels Dharma's gloom,
Friend of the good, the supreme Good,
and Peace to Ramakrishna I bow.

11. Who kindles in ignorance dark the blaze of illumination
And, born amidst mankind gives delight devoid of taint,
Salutations to Him, Ramakrishna, the Teacher divine.

12. Helmsman in this sea of terrors, this fleeting life on earth,
Salutations to Him, Ramakrishna, the Teacher divine.

13. Thou art Vishnu, Brahma Thou, divine Siva art Thou,
Thou art Sakti,[4] beyond qualities, eternally present
Who can praise Thee, free from taints
and far beyond the mind?
Lord and Self of all, Ramakrishna reverence to Thee.

14 All in all, beyond everything, of the form of all,
Divested of limitations, to Ramakrishna, Hail!

15. In the guise of supreme *Maya,* dispeller of delusions deep,
Beyond the range of *Maya,* Peaceful, to Ramakrishna, Hail!

16 Rid of taints, eternal, and of forms infinite,
Moved by love of worshippers, He takes a human form;
Incarnate God, the supreme Lord, ever adorable,
Him, Ramakrishna, with heads bent down,
we meekly salute

## THE SOVEREIGN HYMN TO SRI RAMAKRISHNA

*Om Salutations to Lord Ramakrishna*

1. The Truth of Om, the ancient Man
Mind's witness of all living beings,
Knower of all, Himself unknown,
The supreme Self, Ramakrishna here.

2 Beyond the Vedas, beyond the Yogas,
Of meditations, Mantras, stern disciplines,
Beyond the ken; hence hast descended here,
The seat of Mercy, Thou, O! Ramakrishna on earth.

3. To lead the devotee of pure mind
To Thy eternal Seat, salvation's Truth,
Thou, Knower of whole Truth, Ruler of the world,
Teacher here on earth in manner true

4 Manifested are two paths out of world's strife
Leading to salvation;—Devotion, and Knowledge,
Thou leadest surely those who tread these paths,
Thou, cause of liberation, Ramakrishna here.

5. Thou, the sole solace of world's blind souls,
Before creation, Thou, infinite Spirit!
So wilt be in dissolution; so art now,
Thou, the Supreme Lord, os earth. Ramakrishna

6. The theme of meditation of the wise sages,
Renouncers, with minds steeped in light;
Peaceful, rid of society's bonds
Art thou, the same, Ramakrishna on earth.

7 With but a touch unveilest their Self,
Effulgent, encased, essential Truth,
Inducing *Samadhi* in men at once
And savest; on earth, Sri Ramakrishna

8 Aright hast thou descended here on earth,
Ramakrishna, possessed of pure light;
A vision of Thy gentle Self, taintless,
And never more are men birth's slaves.

9. The substrate, rid of origin and end, on which
Reclining Thy *Prakriti*[5] generates
Marvellous effects, *Mahat*[6] and others:
Thy *Prakriti*, perennial and primordial:
That Brahma Thou art; on earth, Ramakrishna.

10 Impotent atoms, the creatures of the world,
Their hearts consumed in sorrow's burning fire,
Reaching Thee, abode of peace, become
Tranquillised themselves; So Thou art
The dispenser of peace on earth, Ramakrishna.

11. The Yoga with six steps is none too easy,
The seekers of Knowledge too is rare;
Hence, in Kali Yuga is devotion grander,
Which teachest Thou on earth, Ramakrishna.

12 I seek not heaven, source of pleasures eager,
Nor splendid power; compassionately,
Seat Thyself for ever on my heart's throne;
This my lowly prayer, Ramakrishna on earth.

13 Whom Brahma and Vishnu, Siva and deities,
Meditate on, belaud, for ever salute;
By them implored, Thou comest down to the world;
Two-handed, supreme Avatara,[7] Ramakrishna here.

14 Reverence to the seed of the world one, integral,
Reverence to the world's Lord, by gods waited on,
Reverence to Him who cures life's maladies,
Reverence to the self-same Sri Ramakrishna here.

15. With heart-felt devotion and incessantly,
Who adores Ramakrishna, Light and Bliss;
His mind grows pure, and thus it happens
That he gains Truth, in blessed ease.

## EIGHT VERSES TO SRI RAMAKRISHNA

*Addressed to the ardent devotees of the Lord*

1. Cosmic Ruler, Thou, and ancient Man,
Replete all this is with Thy hidden form,
Lord Ramakrishna, ever look with love,
On me devoid of devotion to Thee.

2 The world's protector and its creator
The primeval Lord and its destroyer;
Lord Ramakrishna, ever look with love
On me devoid of devotion to Thee

3. Wedded to *Maya* Thou sportest thus,
Myriad formed, to save Thy adorers,
Lord Ramakrishna, ever look with love;
On me devoid of devotion to Thee.

4 Disguised as man, indeed, by Thee has been
Proclaimed the Law, the deepest mystery,
Lord Ramakrishna, ever look with love,
On me devoid of devotion to Thee.

5. Thy austerities and renunciation matchless
Watching, how can the wise refrain from worship?
Lord Ramakrishna, ever look with love,
On me devoid of devotion to Thee.

6. Hearing Thy name, others become devotees;
Thy sight notwithstanding, we have no devotion
Lord Ramakrishna, ever look with love,
On me devoid of devotion to Thee.

7. True, mighty, peaceful and beginningless,
I seek to please Thee, unborn and so, unending;
Lord Ramakrishna, ever look with love,
On me devoid of devotion to Thee

8. I know not, Master, Thy exalted Truth,
Nor Thine own form, nor manifold being,
Lord Ramakrishna, ever look with love,
On me devoid of devotion to Thee.

## THE NECTAR OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S LAUDATIONS

1. Poor deluded man, why cling to pleasures ?
Stupified, you reel on life's path long ;
Seek you perpetual calm in seas of bliss ?
Adore Ramakrishna, Queller of Life's miseries.

2. Consumed by life's dread, irresistible flames,
On low instincts you move in search of weal
To ignoble objects ; Why ? if rest is sought,
Adore Ramakrishna, Queller of life's miseries

3 Why heed you Sastras, not with Self as theme,
Sophistries' tissues ; negations of words
Of the Teacher, with no conclusions sound ?
Give them up, dullard and adore
Sri Ramakrishna, Queller of doubts and delusions.

4. Addicted if you to lust and gold for ever,
Never shall your thirst for these by any means be quenched.
Knowing them fetters, cause of worldly life,
Adore Ramakrishna, renouncer of gold and lusts.

5 His wife, endowed with virtues and devotion ;
And other women, slaves to Kama's rule.
As mother revered He, the conqueror of lust
Him Ramakrishna! adore, free from taint of sin.

6. The touch of metal shook His gentle frame ;
He fainted, as it were, His fingers cramped,
His senses ceased to function, He was petrified
Him, renunciation's Lord Adore.

7. The cream of Love, spotless and fair,
Selfless as the wise declare,
This, would you have ? adore the Lord Ramakrishna,
Who melts devotee's heart, with noble Love.

8. Love of mother father. or of brother,
Is not selfless ; the Love peerless,
And motiveless, if you seek, adore
Sri Ramakrishna the very sea of Love.

9. As a loving woman enraptured in
The presence of her lord, whose parting her
Depresses ; So Ramakrishna to His devotees,
A veritable Lover ; Him adore.

10 Ardours of devotion, tortured by rigours,
He purifies with helpful speech and sympathy's gestures,
Daily are seekers of life's end consoled ;
Adore Ramakrishna, Giver of Freedom and Law.

11. The fruits of Yogas and endeavours,
The bliss of mind's control,
Worship of His feet confers ;
Adore Ramakrishna, Yielder of Peace and Bliss.

12 Every man as Narayana He sees,
Every woman as world's divine Mother ;
So, though Lord of all, He serves the world ;
Adore Him, Ramakrishna, free from narrow pride.

13. Not versed in Shastras, He does know them all,
Untaught in Vedas, whose essence He knows,
Never learned he Tantras,[8] yet a Law-giver—
To Kaulas[9] ; adore Ramkrishna, the Teacher of Truth

14. Rid of desires, yet ever seeking others' good,
Freed from action's bonds, yet ev'r serving all ;
Untouched by sorrow's strokes, yet sharing ills—
Of others ; behold Him ; Ramakrishna, adore

15. Ever attended by disciples loving,
Singing, smiling, with Lord's words pleasing,
Moon-like, star-attended, bearing brilliance,
Him adore, Ramakrishna, Giver of heavenly Peace.

16 Saktas deem Him Sakti, Saivas, Lord Siva:
The best of Vaishnavas
Sri Krishna's Avatara;
The wise call Him Jnani, Paramhamsa,[10]
Him, behold! Ramakrishna, and adore.

17 Born in many wombs and in many forms,
In wealth, lust, enjoyments, found no joy,
Ever the friend of the meek I know Thee
The giver of Peace and Joy, averse to all,
I pray for strong devotion to Thy feet.

18 Accept me, Lord, sense-mad, petty of mind;
Shield me falling into depths of grief;
Rains of mercy pour on my parched life,
Supreme detachment give and discretion.

19 With high devotion who adores the Lord
Ramakrishna, destroyer of delusions,
Doubtless is freed from life's nets at once

## THE NECTAR OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S VIRTUES

1. As a babe knows of naught but its mother,
So I know of nothing but my Lord Ramakrishna;
He alone is ever mine, mine own.

2 Now a Yogi, now tasting of pleasures,
Again the foremost of wise He is;
Sometimes a lover of God, sometimes a Sakta;[11]
Again He is an adorer of Vishnu.

3. In the ecstasies of supreme God-intoxication,
He is shaken by the tempest of Love,
Sometimes He is held fast in the trance
Of non-differentiation.

4-6 The supreme Lord of the worlds shines bright,
In the fullness of Light, Life and Bliss absolute,
Sri Ramakrishna divinely sports,
And dons a body for devotees' sake.
His varied and exhaustive aspects mirror forth
Virtues and powers: They are manifold;
Having seen and heard reports of them,
To ascertain and define who would strive?
Ramakrishna, form of Light, Reality, Bliss!

7-8. If you mercifully deign, O loving Lord,
To reveal to your devotee's heart,
The truth and character you mysteriously bear,
Then shall he know them; then gain Peace supreme,
Whence he immortal grows.

9 Lord Ramakrishna, I know not your Truth,
Sea of Mercy! whatever may you be,
To such I salute, I salute!

## LAUDATION OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA THE AVATARA

1. Shining in the lotus of the heart, assuredly,
Beyond all changes, real or unreal;
One and compact, untouched by *Prakriti*
Or her evolutes; the eternal image of Bliss,
The spotless Swan supreme, Ramakrishna, we adore.

2 Beyond compare, extremely subtle,
Outside the cosmic flux, impulseless,
Vast as the sky, the supreme Lord,
Whose home is all beings, the very Brahman,

Above the realm of the triple *Gunas,*[12]
The best refuge, the spotless Swan
Supreme, Ramakrishna, we adore.

3. Intent on salvaging the treasure of wisdom,
The Vedas, submerged in *Pralaya's*[13] tides,
You destroyed the strange, huge, demon, Samkha;
Assumed the peerless, mighty form of the fish;
Ramakrishna, we adore, the spotless Swan supreme.

4 On the spiritual tortoise-figure, peerlessly vast,
You bore by sheer endurance's might,
This entire cosmos; How may the petty mind
Describe your prowess? You, Ramakrishna,
The spotless Swan supreme, we adore

5. The white Boar bearing the huge earth on his vast tusks,
Who, armed with strong teeth and disc slew the demon-chief;
Rich in might, immeasurable, refuge of gods,
Ramakrishna, the spotless Swan supreme, we adore.

6 The dread Man-lion,[14] of terrific teeth and face,
Long dangling tongue, and mountainous body,
Red-claws, who wiped the grief of gods outright,
And shone with the lustre of myriad suns;
We adore Ramakrishna, the spotless Swan supreme

7. Descended, it would seem, to trick the demon-king
Vali, as Vamana,[15] with three short steps
Of your lotus feet, you covered the three realms,
Heaven, atmosphere and earth:
The universal Being, primeval Man,
Son of Kashyapa[16]; Sri Ramakrishna,
The spotless Swan supreme, we adore.

8 Armed with the sharp axe, of Ksratriya brood and scourge,
Coloured as the fresh cloud with water laden,
The formidable scion of the Bhrigu,[17] terrible
Like death himself. the sin of Jamadagni,[18] great,
The same He as Sri Ramakrishna,
The spotless Swan supreme, we adore.

9. The lordly protagonist of Raghu's[19] race,
Sita's life and soul, warrior great,
Ravana's adversary, Sri Rama Chandra,
Truthful, of righteousness stern bulwark,
Attended by the Hanuman, Lakshmana,
The same as Sri Ramakrishna,
The spotless Swan supreme, we adore.

10. Armed with plough, brilliant-white blue-apparelled,
The foremost god, a furious hin, peerless
In vanquishing demons,
The son of Rohini,[20]
The same as Ramakrishna, the spotless Swan supreme,
We adore.

11. The cloud-hued son of Vasudeva,[21]
Bent on sports in Vraja's[22] groves,
Full of sweet, bewitching gaiety,
The life-breath of the cowherdesses,
Whose style of dress charms Madana,[23]
The wisest who proved death to Kamsa,[24]
The same as Sri Ramakrishna,
The spotless Swan supreme, we adore.

12 The Sakya-lion, the giver of wisdom,
The Avatar who abolished
The dread animal sacrifices,
Enjoined by the Vedas, Shastras,
Who opened the novel path to Nirvana,
Of non-duality ; Ramakrishna,
The spotless Swan supreme, we adore.

13. In speech sweet and simple, teaching
The truth of God, crucified yet immortal,
The Son of God, most pure, unequalled,
Of Mary-born, world's friend,
The same as Ramakrishna,
The spotless Swan supreme, we adore.

14 If Muslim worship, the rites, of Allah, the truths,
Teaching the seekers, in the book, Quran,
Divinely inspired, born Prophet Mohammed,
The same as Sri Ramakrishna,
The spotless Swan supreme, we adore.

15 Of world-conqcering fame, Sri Samkara
The Commentator, born to dissipate
The delusions of Jina's[25] doctrines,
Tangled and manifold ; who firmly
Established the Vedic Path ; the same as
Ramakrishna, the spotless Swan supreme, we adore.

16. Sri Krishna Chaitanya, the gold-hued Sannyasin,
With staff and begging bowl in hand,
Who sang asood the names of Sri Hari,
The cure of Kali's ills ; who is a boat—
To cross the sea of Samsara,[26] the same
The spotless Swan supreme, we adore.

17 Born to spread knowledge, devotion, peace,
Whose heart love melted,
Who would never beat to see the world
Stay in Samadhi, of tender build
And filled with God's spirit, Ramakrishna.
The spotless Swan supreme, we adore.

18 Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva all these gods,
Your many expressions are ; fashioning
Through *Maya's* power, countless, peerless
Forms, of untold virtues, mysteries
Unfathomable and actions merciful
Thou Ramakrishna, only Thou,
The spotless Swan supreme, we adore.

19. Hail, all Hail, Sea of compassion,
Bridge of liberation and foe of lusts ;
Hail, all Hail, Lord of all the worlds,
Treasure of knowledge and self-subsistent One

Hail, all Hail, you supreme Self, save me,
Even me rid of devotion to Thy pure Being,
Hail, Rescuer from this worldly life,
Ramakrishna, in Thy human form.

20. World-Teacher, I am dumb and lack
In skill to praise Thee ; and yet a little
Of Thy divine grace stirs me again,
And yet again, to inspired song.

## A HYMN TO THE MEDITATION ON SRI SARADA DEVI

1 Meditate always, O man!
In the full-blown lotus of thy heart, the merciful Mother, seated in blessed ease with Her face benignant and eyes steadfast

2. The long hair from Her head is sweeping over on one side of Her majestic breast Her gracious figure covered half with a white piece of cloth and bedecked with the fine ornaments of gold.

3. Verily She is the betower of unending wisdom and love divine Her hands are gently placed on the lap
The Mother shines with the beautific light and She rescues all from the bond of miseries

4. To Sri Ramakrishna She has fully consecrated Her soul and She ever loves to hear His holy name
Her whole being is tinged with the unearthly hue of the sacred thoughts on Sri Ramakrishna and She is in reality the divine Mother of the whole universe

5 The Mother Sarada is the same as Sita and Radhika only appearing in other form. She is the welfare in its fullness manifested. The living image of pure consciousness and the eternal dispenser of grace, favour and Salvation—what really She is!

## SALUTATION TO SRI SARADA DEVI

Seeking refuge at the lotus feet of
Divine Mother, Sri Sarada,
And world's Teacher, Ramakrishna,
I salute Them again and yet again!

## LAUDATIONS TO SRI SRI SARADA DEVI

1 The Supreme *Prakriti,* who chases all fears
And grants all boons, clothed in human form,
Who soothes mankind, and affords delight
To all Her trusting devotees ; the world's Mother, I salute.

2. Elevate your children now, compassionately,
Who are shorn of all virtues, deeply sinful,
And prey to illusions , You boat to cross
The sea of Samsara, Mother supreme
Of the world, I salute

3. Thou, bee of the mind, ever avoid the flowers
Of sense objects ; but drink nectar
Immortal, Peace-giving, of the lotus-feet
Of Mother, the cure of this life's fell disease.
I salute the supreme Mother of the universe

4. You home of compassion, supreme Goddess,
Grant the refuge of Your feet and show
Mercy to us, your lowly children ;

5 O Sarada! the Giver of wisdom, ever veiled
In modesty, compassion's Home, save us
Always from sins ; reverence to you.

6 Salutations again, yet again, to you,
Whose life is Ramakrishna ; who
Loves to listen to His name and whose
Form is radiant with His thoughts and moods.

7. Of pure life and actions, the very form
Of purity, the Mother, we ever salute.

8. The gracious Deity, the Destroyer of ills
Of the devotees, and adored by Jogindra,[1]
Who safeguards the Dharma of this Age,
The compassionate, who spreads wide
Devotion and wisdom, Sri Sarada,
Ever I salute.

9. With love bind our hearts; all vices turn
Into shining merits; shown, without reason,
Mercy on us, sinners, folding us
In your Mother's love surpassing great!

10. Lowly I supplicate; Mother,
Be gracious and kind; evermore
Love us Your children; touch our heart
Long parched, with a drop of your love,
Compose its tremors, transquillise!

11. Seeking refuge at Your lotus feet
Divine Mother, Sri Sarada,
And world's Teacher, Ramakrishna,
I salute Them again and yet again.

[1] Vide Glossary

# VEDIC HYMNS AND VERSES

*Translated by*

SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

Let us meditate on that glorious self-effulgent light of the divine Sun ; may He enlighten our *Buddhi* or understanding.

## HYMNS TO PEACE ETERNAL

May He Who is Ahura Mazda of the Zoroasterians, Jehovah of the Jews, Father-in-Heaven of the Christians, Allah of the Mohammedans, Divine Mother and Brahman of the Hindus, grant unto us peace and blessings! Peace, peace, peace, be unto us all and to all living creatures!.

The infinite and eternal Truth, Brahman, pervades the whole universe, the visible and invisible. The Infinite (effect) is the evolution of the Infinite (cause). If the visible be taken away (if the perceptible phenomena be destroyed), that which will be left is the Infinite. May we realize the Infinite in this life ; may we attain to that Truth and enjoy peace for ever!

May all the functions of our minds, works of our bodies and activities of our senses please the almighty Brahman, Who is described in the Vedanta ; may we not forget Him ; may we realize His presence in us ; may we not be forsaken by Him ; may all Divine qualities adorn our souls and bring peace to our minds!

Om Peace, peace, peace, be unto us all!

May the divine Self protect the teacher and the student. May He feed our souls with the nectar of eternal Truth. May He grant us spiritual strength May our studies bring the realization of the Absolute.

Om Peace, peace, peace, be unto us and to all living creatures!

May we hear that which is auspicious to us. May we see Divinity within and around us May all thoughts of our minds

and acts of our bodies be directed to the Almighty One who is the goal of all religions. Peace, peace, peace to all living creatures!

May my speech be established in my mind ; may my mind be fixed in my speech. O divine Word! Thou hast manifested Thyself in the form of wisdom. Do Thou spread Thy powers through my words. Do not deprive me of the Truth May I always dwell in the Truth. My salutations to the fire of wisdom, to the Seers of Truth and to the Devas (bright spirits)

O divine Word! Be propitious to us ; stay in our spiritual space and be happy. Like the Lord of light (the sun) constantly purify our hearts and to our eyes that which is auspicious for us. Do not leave us Peace, peace, peace to all living creatures!

May Mitra bless us ; may Varuna bless us ; may Aryama bless us ; may Indra and Vrihaspati bless us ; may Vishnu of far-stretching steps bless us! Salutation to Brahman, and salutations to Thee, O Prana! Thou art alone the visible Brahman. I shall address Thee alone as the visible Brahman. I shall speak what is right Let Him protect me (pupil) and let Him protect as well as the teacher (or speaker).

Om, Peace, peace, peace!

# DIVINE PRAYERS

O Soul of our souls! O Light of the universe! Lead us from unreal to Real, from darkness to Light, from death to Immortality! Be always present before us! O Destroyer of all evil! Protect us with Thy compassionate face, remove all obstacles that prevent the manifestation of Thy Divine power and do not let us forget that our true nature is one with Thee forever and ever!

## HYMNS OF CREATION

Before the beginning of evolution of the world there was neither non-entity nor entity, neither atmosphere nor sky beyond. Death there was not, nor, therefore, Immortality; nor day and night That One breathed breathless by Itself in essence. There was nothing different from It nor beyond It From this germ burst forth mighty productive powers, nature below and Energy above! Who has seen the First-born? Where was the life, the blood and the soul of the universe? Who can declare whence this creation? The gods (Devas) cannot, as they came later Who can know what its source is and whether created or not? He who rules it in the highest heavens knows, or perhaps He knows not.

## HYMNS TO HIRANYAGARBHA

1. In the beginning there arose the Prajapati, the first-born Lord of all that exists He holds by his power the heavens and the earth To Him we should offer our prayers and sacrifices.

2. Prajapati, the Lord of all creatures, who gives life and strength to all that exists, from whose body emanate the individual souls like sparks from fire ; who is the purifier of all souls ; whose commands all creatures revere and obey; whose shadow is immortality and mortality ; to Him we should offer our prayers and sacrifices.

3. Who by his power and glory became the one King (without a second) of all men, of beasts, nay, of all animate and inanimate objects ; to Him we should offer our prayers and sacrifices.

4. Whose greatness is manifested in the snow-capped ranges of mountains and in the waters of the rivers and the oceans, whose arms are spread on all sides ; to Him should we offer our prayers and sacrifices.

5 Who made the sky strong and the earth firm, who established heavens in their places, nay, the highest heaven ; who measured the light in the air ; to Him we should offer our prayers and sacrifices.

6 To whom heaven and earth, standing firm by His help, look up, trembling in their minds, and by whose support the rising sun shines forth. To Him we should offer our prayers and sacrifices.

7. When the great waters went everywhere, holding the germ and generating fire, thence He arose who is the sole life of the bright spirits (Devas) To Him we should offer our prayers and sacrifices.

8 Who is the one Lord of all living beings and God above all gods , who by His might looked over the causal waters at the time of dissolution. To Him, we should offer our prayers and sacrifices

9. May He not injure us, He who is the Creator of the earth, heavens, and bright and mighty waters, Who is the foundation of truth, righteousness and justice! To Him we should offer our prayers and sacrifices.

10 O Prajapati, no other but Thou hast held together all these phenomena ; Whatever we desire in sacrificing to Thee, may that be ours , may we be the lirds of all wealth

## SIX STANZAS ON NIRVANA

1. I am neither mind, nor intellect, nor ego, nor senses: I am neither earth, nor water, nor air, nor fire, nor ether, but my true nature is absolute existence, knowledge, and bliss. I am He (Siva). I am He.

2 I am neither the organic activity nor am I the elements of the body, neither the sense of knowledge nor that of action, but I am absolute existence, knowledge, and bliss I am He, I am He.

3. I have neither hatred nor love, neither greed nor delusion, neither egotism nor pride nor vanity, neither creed nor faith, nor aim nor desire for freedom. I am absolute existence, knowledge, and bliss I am He, I am He

4 I have neither virtue nor vice nor sin, neither pleasure nor pain, neither scriptures nor rituals nor ceremonies. I am neither food nor am I the eater I am absolute existence, knowledge, and bliss. I am He, I am He.

5 I have neither death nor fear of death, nor birth nor caste distinction ; neither father nor mother, neither friend nor foe, neither master nor disciple I am absolute existence, knowledge, and bliss. I am He, I am He.

6 I have neither doubt nor question. I am formless and all-pervading. I am the eternal Lord of nature and the master of the senses. I am neither bound nor free I am one with Brahman I am omnipresent Divinity, I am the immutable Lord of all I am absolute existence, knowledge and bliss I am He, I am He.

## A HYMN TO PEACE DIVINE

May peace radiate there in the whole sky as well as in the vast ethereal space everywhere.
May peace reign all over this earth, in water and in all herbs, trees and creepers.
May peace flow over the whole universe.
May peace be in the supreme Being Brahman
And may there always exist in all peace and peace alone.
Om, Peace, peace and peace to us and all beings!

ब्रह्मानन्दं परमसुखदं केवलं ज्ञानमूर्त्तिं
द्वन्द्वातीतं गगनसदृशं तत्त्वमस्यादिलक्ष्यम्।
एकं नित्यं विमलचलं सर्व्वधीसाक्षीभूतं
भावातीतं त्रिगुणरहितं सद्गुरुं तं नमामि ॥

## श्रीरामकृष्णध्यानम्

हृदयकमलमध्ये राजितं निर्व्विकल्पं
सदसदखिलभेदातीतमेकस्वरूपम्।
प्रकृतिविकृतिशून्यं नित्यमानन्दमूर्त्तिं
विमलपरमहंसं रामकृष्णं भजामः ॥१

निरुपममतिसूक्ष्मं निष्प्रपञ्चं निरीहं
गगनसदृशमीशं सर्व्वभूताधिवासम्।
त्रिगुणरहितसच्चिद्ब्रह्मरूपं वरेण्यं
विमलपरमहंसं रामकृष्णं भजामः ॥२

वितरितुमवतीर्नं ज्ञानभक्तिप्रशान्तीः
प्रणयगलितचित्तं जीवदुःखासहिष्णुम्।
धृतसहजसमाधि चिन्मयं कोमलाङ्गं
विमलपरमहंसं रामकृष्णं भजामः ॥३

## श्रीरामकृष्णप्रणामः

( १ )

निरञ्जनं नित्यमनन्तरूपं
भक्तानुकम्पाधृतविग्रहं वै।
इशावतारं परमेशमीड्यं
तं रामकृष्णं शिरसा नमामः ॥

( २ )

स्थापकाय च धर्म्मस्य सर्व्वधर्म्मस्वरूपिणे।
अवतारवरिष्ठाय रामकृष्णाय ते नमः ॥

—स्वामी विवेकानन्द

# श्रीश्रीरामकृष्णस्तोत्रम्

ॐ नमो भगवते रामकृष्णाय।
लोकनाथश्चिदाकारो राजमानः स्वधामनि
कलिकल्मषमग्नानामुत्तारणचिकीर्षया।
मायाशक्तिं समाश्रित्य योऽवतीर्णो महीतले
नमोऽस्तु रामकृष्णाय तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥१

सद्ब्राह्मणकुले जातो दिव्यदेहं समाश्रितः
बाल्ये यो दिव्यभावेन वयस्यैर्मुदमावहत्।
विरक्तो यौवने तीव्रं मायापाशविवर्जितः
नित्यमुक्तस्वभावोऽपि लोकानुग्रहकामतः ॥२

लोकानामेव शिक्षार्थं तपस्तप्त्वा सुदुष्करम्
निद्राशनं परित्यज्य वर्षाणांद्व्यधिकान् दश।
स्वस्वरूपं समाधाय सच्चिदान्दविग्रहम्
दयामूर्त्तिः सदानन्दो जिज्ञासूनुपदिष्टवान्।
तेषामज्ञाननाशाय लाभाय च परात्मनः
नमोऽस्तु रामकृष्णाय तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥३

सत्यबोधतया साङ्गान् सर्व्वधर्म्मान् ममाचरन्
धर्म्ममात्रन्तु सत्यं वै येन सम्यक् सुनिश्चितम्।
नमोऽस्तु रामकृष्णाय तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥४

यो भक्तान् भक्तिमार्गे तु निनाय जोकनायकः
आकृष्य मानसं तेषां भक्तिभावार्द्रया गिरा।
दर्शयित्वा महाभावं परमानन्ददायकम्
नमोऽस्तु रामकृष्णाय तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥५

ज्ञानिनो ज्ञानमार्गे च येन सम्यक् प्रवर्त्तिताः।
नमोऽस्तु रामकृष्णाय तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥६

यैर्म्मतैर्धार्म्मिका यस्मिन् धर्म्ममार्गे व्यवस्थिताः
तेषां तन्मतमादृत्य भक्तिस्तत्र दृढीकृता।
प्रोत्साहिता यथान्यायं येन तत्साधनेष्वपि
नमोऽस्तु रामकृष्णाय तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥७

पूजिता येन वै शाश्वत् सर्व्वऽपि साम्प्रदायिकाः
सम्प्रदायविहीनो यः सम्प्रदायं न निन्दति।
नमोऽस्तु रामकृष्णाय तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥८

शश्वल्लीलाविलासेन येन विश्वंमिदं ततम्।
लीलारूपं सदानन्दं रामकृष्णं नमाम्यहम् ॥९

सर्व्वधर्म्मप्रणेतारं धर्म्मग्लानिविनाशकं।
साधुमित्रं शिवं शान्तं रामकृष्णं नमाम्यहम्।१०

अज्ञानतिमिरे यस्तु ज्ञानालोकप्रदीपकः।
विमलानन्ददानाय प्रादुरासीन् महीतले।
नमोऽस्तु रामकृष्णाय तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥११

संसारार्णवघोरे यः कर्णधारस्वरूपकः।
नमोऽस्तु रामकृष्णाय तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥१२

त्वं हि विष्णुर्विरिञ्चिस्त्वं त्वञ्च देवो महेश्वरः
त्वञ्चैव शक्तिरूपोऽसि निर्गुणस्त्वं सनातनः।
त्वां स्तोतुं कोऽत्र शक्तः स्याद्भावातीतमनामयम्
भगवन् सर्व्वभूतात्मन् रामकृष्ण नमोऽस्तुते ॥१३

सर्व्वाय सर्व्वपाराय सर्व्वभावस्वरूपिणे।
सर्व्वभावविहीनाय रामकृष्णाय ते नमः ॥२४

महामायास्वरूपाय महामोहविनाशिने।
मायातीताय शान्ताय रामकृष्णाय ते नमः।२५

निरञ्जनं नित्यमनन्तरूपं
भक्तानुकम्पाधृतविग्रहं वै।
इशावतारं परमेशमीड्यं
तं रामकृष्णं शिरसा नमामः ॥२६

# श्रीश्रीरामकृष्णस्तवराजः

ॐ नमो भगवते रामकृष्णाय।
ॐ-कारवेद्यः पुरुषः पुराणो
बुद्धेश्च साक्षी निखिलस्य जन्तोः
यो वेत्ति सर्व्वं न च यस्य वेत्ता
परात्मरूपो भुवि रामकृष्णः ॥१

न-वेदगम्यो न च योगगम्यो
ध्यानैर्न जापैर्न तपोभिरुग्रैः।
ज्ञेयः कदापीह ततोऽवतीर्णो
दयानिधे त्वं भुवि रामकृष्णः ॥२

मो-क्षस्वरूपं तव धाम नित्यं
यथा तदाप्नोति विशुद्धचित्तः।
तथोपदेष्टाऽखिलतत्ववेत्ता
त्वं विश्वधाता भुवि रामकृष्णः ॥३

भ-क्तेस्तथा शुद्धज्ञानस्य मार्गौ
प्रदर्शितौ द्वौ भवमुक्तिहेतू।
तयोर्गतानां ध्रुवनायकोऽसि
त्वं मोक्षसेतुर्भुवि रामकृष्णः ॥४

ग-तिस्त्वमेका जगतां जड़ानां
पुरा विसृष्टेश्चिदखण्डरूपः।
तद्वल्लये स्था अधुनासि तद्वत्
त्वमादिदेवो भुवि रामकृष्णः ॥५

ब-र्णाश्रमाचारविहीनशान्ताः
संन्यासिनो ज्ञानविधूतचित्ताः।
ध्यायन्ति यं नित्यमभेददृष्ट्या
स एव हि त्वं भवि रामकृष्णः ॥६

ते-जोमयं दर्शयसि स्वरुपं
कोषान्तरस्थं परमार्थतत्त्वम्।
संस्पर्शमात्रेण नृणां समाधिं
विधाय सद्यो भुवि रामकृष्णः ॥७

रा-गादिशून्यां तव सौम्यमूर्त्तिं
दृष्ट्वा पुनश्चात्र न जन्मभाजः।
स्थाने यदादाय विशुद्धसत्त्व-
मिहावतीर्णो भुवि रामकृष्णः ॥८

म-हाविचित्रं महदादिकार्य्यं
लब्ध्वाप्यधिष्ठानमनाद्यनन्तम्।
करोति नित्या प्रकृतिस्तवाद्या
तद्ब्रह्म सच्चिद् भुवि रामकृष्णः ॥९

कृ-शाणुवत् तापविदग्धचित्ताः
संसारिणः शान्तिनिकेतनं त्वाम्।
संप्राप्य शान्ता हि भवन्ति तेषां
त्वं शान्तिदाता भुवि रामकृष्णः ॥१०

ष-ड्ङ्गयोगो न यतः सुसाध्यो
ज्ञानाधिकारी सुलभो न यस्मात्।
गरीयसी भक्तिरतः कलौ स्यात्
तज्ज्ञापकस्त्वं भुवि रामकृष्णः ॥११

ना-कादिलोकं सुखदञ्च दिव्यं
सुरम्यमैश्वर्य्यमहं न याचे।
हृदासने त्वं कृपया सदा वै
वसेति याचे भुवि रामकृष्णः ॥१२

यं-ब्रह्म-बिष्णू गिरिशश्च देवाः
ध्यायन्ति गायन्ति नमन्ति नित्यम्।
तैः प्रार्थितस्त्य परावतारो
द्विबाहुधारी भुवि रामकृष्णः ॥१३

वन्दे जगद्बीजमखण्डमेकं
वन्दे सुरैः सेवितपादपीठम्।
वन्दे भवेशं भवरोगवैद्यं
तमेव वन्दे भुवि रामकृष्णम् ॥१४

रामकृष्णं चिदानन्दं यः स्तौति भक्तिमान् सदा।
तस्य चित्तं भवेच्छुद्धं तत्त्वज्ञानं स्वयं ततः ॥१५

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## श्रीश्रीरामकृष्णाष्टकम्

श्रीमद् रामकृष्णपादाब्जसुधापानोन्मत्ता रसिका भावुकाः
पिवन्तु सर्व्वकल्याणकरं तन्नामामृतं मुदा।
विश्वस्य धाता पुरुषस्त्वमाद्यो-
ऽव्यक्तेन रूपेण ततं त्वयेदम्।
हे रामकृष्ण त्वयि भक्तिहीने
कृपाकटाक्षं कुरु देव नित्यम् ॥१

त्वं पासि विश्वं सृजसि त्वमेव
त्वमादिदेवो विनिहंसि सर्व्वम्।
हे रामकृष्ण त्वयि भक्तिहीने
कृपाकटाक्षं कुरु देव नित्यम् ॥२

मायां समाश्रित्य करोषि लीलां
भक्तान् समुद्धर्त्तुमनन्तमूर्त्तिः।
हे रामकृष्ण त्वयि भक्तिहीने
कृपाकटाक्षं कुरु देव नित्यम् ॥३

विधृत्य रूपं नरवत्त्वया वै
विज्ञापितो धर्म्म इहातिगुह्यः।
हे रामकृष्ण त्वयि भक्तिहीने
कृपाकटाक्षं कुरु देव नित्यम् ॥४

तपोऽथ ते त्यागमदृष्टपूर्वं
दृष्ट्वा नमस्यन्ति कथं न विज्ञाः।
हे रामकृष्ण त्वयि भक्तिहीने
कृपाकटाक्षं कुरु देव नित्यम् ॥५

श्रुत्वात्र ते नाम भवन्ति भक्ताः
दृष्ट्वा वयं त्वां न तु भक्तियुक्ताः।
हे रामकृष्ण त्वयि भक्तिहीने
कृपाकटाक्षं कुरु देव नित्यम् ॥६

सत्यं विभुं शान्तमनादिरूपं
प्रसादये त्वामजमन्तशून्यम्।
हे रामकृष्ण त्वयि भक्तिहीने
कृपाकटाक्षं कुरु देव नित्यम् ॥७

जानामि तत्वं न हि दैशिकेन्द्र
किन्ते स्वरूपं किमु भावजातम्।
हे रामकृष्ण त्वयि भक्तिहीने
कृपाकटाक्षं कुरु देव नित्यम् ॥८

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## श्रीश्रीरामकृष्णस्तोत्रामृतम्

रे भ्रान्त भोगविषयेषु कथं हि रक्तो
मोहं गतो भ्रमसि वर्त्मनि दीर्घकालम्।
विश्रान्तिमिच्छसि यदि ह्यनिशं सुखाब्धौ
सन्तापसंसृतिहरं भज रामकृष्णम्।१

दुर्वारघोरभवदावविदह्यमानो
जङ्गम्यसे मलिनवासनयाऽसुखाप्तैश्च।
नीचाश्रयं कथमहो यदि शान्तिकामः
सन्तापसंसृतिहरं भज रामकृष्णम् ॥२

शास्त्रेष्वनात्मसु कथं हि तव प्रवृत्तिः
दुस्तर्कजालमिह देशिकवाग्विरुद्धम् ।
सिद्धान्तहीनमपि सन्त्यज मन्दबुद्धे
सन्देहविभ्रमहरं भज रामकृष्णम् ॥३

स्त्रीकाञ्चनादिषु सदा यदि तेऽनुरक्ति-
स्तृष्णाक्षयो न भविता कथमप्यमीषु ।
विज्ञाय तान्निगड़वद् भववन्धहेतून्
सन्त्यक्तकामकनकं भज रामकृष्णम् ॥४

भार्य्यामशेषगुणभूषितभक्तियुक्तां
योषाञ्च कामवशगां सकलां तथैव ।
दूरात् प्रणम्य जितवान् य उ मातृबुद्ध्या
तं कामगन्धरहितं भज रामकृष्णम् ॥५

संस्पृश्य धातुनिचयान् परिकम्पिताङ्गं
संज्ञाविहीन इव यो विकृताङ्गुलिश्च ।
सद्योऽभवज्जड़वदिन्द्रियवृत्तिशून्य-
स्तं त्यागपारगमहो भज रामकृष्णम् ॥६

प्रेम्नः स्वरूपमिह यद्विमलं पवित्रं
निःस्वार्थमित्यभिधया कथितं सुबोधैः ।
तत् प्राप्तुमिच्छसि यदि प्रणयार्द्रचित्तान्
कुर्व्वन्तमाश्रितजनान् भज रामकृष्णम् ॥७

स्नेहो हि मातुरिह कारणसन्निबद्धो
भ्रातुस्तथा पितुरयं न च हेतुशून्यः ।
यत् प्रेम हेतुरहितं न हि केन तुल्यं
तं प्रेमसिन्धुसदृशं भज रामकृष्णम् ॥८

प्राप्ते यथा प्रियतमे ललना प्रसन्ना
दूरं गते भवति भावविकारयुक्ता ।
आरादगते प्रियतमे च तथा स्वभक्ते
प्रेष्ठायमानमिह तं भज रामकृष्णम् ॥९

येनातिदुःखविकृता भंजनानुरागाः
शुद्धीकृताः प्रियकथाकरुणाकटाक्षैः।
आश्वासिताः प्रतिदिनं पुरुषार्थकामा-
स्तं धर्म्ममोक्षदमहो भज रामकृष्णम् ॥१०

योगैश्च साधनशतैः फलमाप्यते यत्
यद्वा सुखं भवति चित्तनिरोधनेन।
यत् सन्निधिं मुहुरुपेत्य पुमान् भजेत्तत
तं शान्तिशर्म्मदमहो भज रामकृष्णम् ॥११

नारायणं हि पुरुषं पुरुषं प्रतीतं
दृष्ट्वा शिवाश्च रमणीं रमणीं प्रतीताम्।*
भृत्यायतेऽप्यखिलभूतमहेश्वरो य-
स्तं स्वाभिमानरहितं भज रामकृष्णम् ॥१२

नाधीतशास्त्र इह योऽखिलशास्त्रवेत्ता
नाधीतवेद इह यः श्रुतिसारविज्ञः।
नाधीततन्त्र इह यः कुलधर्म्मवक्ता
तं तत्त्वबोधकमहो भज रामकृष्णम् ॥१३

नारायणं हि पुरुषेष्वखिलेषु पश्यन्
नारीषु चापि सकलासु जगत्प्रसूतिम्।
निर्व्वासनोऽपि सततं परमङ्गलार्थी
निष्कर्म्मकोऽपि सततं परकर्म्मकर्त्ता।
निर्दुःखलेशमपि त सततं परेषां
दुःखेषु कातरमहो भज रामकृष्णम् ॥१४

भक्तैः सदा परिवृतो निजपार्षदैर्यो
गायन् हसन् भगवतः सुखयन् प्रसङ्गैः।
तारागणैरिव विभुर्द्यतिमत्र धत्ते
तं स्वर्गशर्म्मदमहो भज रामकृष्णम् ॥१५

शाक्तैः शिवेति शिव इत्यपि शम्भुभक्तैः
कृष्णावतारः इति वैष्णवज्ञेखरैश्च ।
ज्ञानीति यः परमहंस इतीह धीरैः
संज्ञायते च तमहो भज रामकृष्णम् ॥१६

भ्रमन् नानायोनौ बहुविधशरीरं परिगंतः
सुखं नाल्पं लेभे कनकयुवतीभोगविषयैः ।
इदानीं ज्ञात्वा त्वां प्रणतसुहृदं शान्तिसुखदं
विरक्तोऽहं याचे तव चरणयोर्भक्तिमचलाम् ॥१७

गृहीत्वा भ्रान्तं मां कुमतिविषयाशापरिवृतं
सदा रक्ष ब्रह्मन् कुपथगमनाद् दुःखगहनात् ।
कृपासारान् प्राणे वितर सततं शोकदलिते
विवेकं वैराग्यं परममपि मे देहि भगवन् ॥१८

यो भजेत् परया भक्त्या रामकृष्णं भवान्तकं ।
भववन्धात् स निर्म्मुक्तो भवेत् सद्यो न संशयः ॥१९

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## श्रीश्रीरामकृष्णगुणामृतम्

न जानेऽन्यद्विना देवं रामकृष्णं कदाचन ।
यथाऽर्भको न जानाति किञ्चिद्धि भातरं विना ॥१

कदा योगी कदा भोगी कदा वा ज्ञानवित्तमः ।
कदा भक्तः कदा शाक्तो वैष्णवश्चापि वा कदा ॥२

महाभावे कदा मत्तः प्रेमविह्वलमानसः ।
समाधौ वा कदा तिष्ठन्निर्व्विकल्पकसंज्ञके ॥३

पूर्णब्रह्मस्वरूपेण राजते यो महेश्वरः ।
परानन्दात्मनस्तस्य चैतन्यघनरूपिणः ॥४

लीलारूपहरेरेवं भक्तार्थं देहधारिणः ।
रामकृष्णस्वरूपस्य नानाभावसमन्वितान् ॥५

अशेषांश्च गुणान् दृष्ट्वा संश्रुत्य च पुनः पुनः ।
कीदृशो रामकृष्णोऽस्ति सच्चिदानन्दविग्रहः ।
ज्ञातुं सम्यक् स्थिरीकर्त्तुं कः शक्नोत्यत्र मानवः ॥६

यदि त्वं कृपया देव ज्ञापयस्यन्तरात्मनि ।
यद्रूपं यं स्वभावञ्च धारयस्यात्ममायया ॥७

तदा तत्तद्विजानाति त्वद्भक्तो भक्तवत्सल ।
समाप्नोति परां शान्तिं यल्लाभादमृतो भवेत् ॥८

तत्त्वं देव न जानामि रामकृष्ण तव प्रभो ।
यादृशोऽसि कृपासिन्धो तादृशाय नमो नमः ॥९

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## श्रीश्रीरामकृष्णावतारस्तोत्रम्

हृदयकमलमध्ये राजितं निर्व्विकल्पं
सदसदखिलभेदातीतमेकस्वरूपम् ।
प्रकृतिविकृतिशून्यं नित्यमानन्दमूर्त्तिं
विमलपरमहंसं रामकृष्णं भजामः ॥१

निरुपममतिसूक्ष्मं निष्प्रपञ्चं निरीह
गगनसदृशमीशं सर्व्वभूताधिवासम् ।
त्रिगुणरहितसच्चिद्ब्रह्मरूपं वरेण्यं
विमलपरमहंसं रामकृष्णं भजामः ॥२

प्रलयजलधिमग्नं वेदराशिं दिधीर्षु-
र्दनुजमतिविशालं हसि शङ्खं विचित्रम् ।
तमपरिमितवीर्य्यं मीनरूपं दधानं
विमलपरमहंसं रामकृष्णं भजामः ॥३

अतुलविपुलदेहे चिन्मये कूर्म्मरूपे
वहसि सकलमेतद्विश्वमाधारशक्त्या ।
तव खलु महिमानं कोऽल्पधीर्वर्णयेत् त्वां
विमलपरमहंसं रामकृष्णं भजामः ॥४

दशनविधृतपृथ्वीं शूकरं श्वेतकायं
दलितदितिजराजं दंष्ट्रिणं चक्रपाणिम्।
अमितविभवशक्तिं पालकं देवतानां
विमलपरमहंसं रामकृष्णं भजामः ॥५

विकटदशनवक्त्रं लोलजिह्वं प्रचण्डं
गिरिवरसमकायं रक्तहस्तं नृसिंहम्।
प्रशमितसुरखेदं कोटिसूर्य्यप्रकाशं
विमलपरमहंसं रामकृष्णं भजामः ॥६

छलयितुमवतीर्णो वामनस्तं वलिं वै
त्रिचरणकमलेन क्रामसि स्वर्भुवो भूः।
परमपुरुषमादिं काश्यपं विश्वरूपं
विमलपरमहंसं रामकृष्णं भजामः ॥७

निशितपरशुधारं क्षत्रसन्तानकेतुं
नवजलधरवर्णं भार्गवं भीमवीर्य्यम्।
शमनसदृशघोरं जामदग्न्यं विशालं
विमलपरमहंसं रामकृष्णं भजामः ॥८

रघुकुलवरमीशं जानकीप्राणनाथं
समरकुशलवीरं राघवं रावणारिम्।
हनुमदनुजसेव्यं धार्म्मिकं सत्यपालं
विमलपरमहंसं रामकृष्णं भजामः ॥९

हलधरमतिशुभ्रं नीलवस्त्रं सुरेन्द्रं
दनुजदलनकार्य्ये पारगं मत्तसिंहम्।
यममिव यमुनाया भीतिदं रौहिणेयं
विमलपरमहंसं रामकृष्णं भजामः ॥१०

ब्रजविपिनविहारे श्यामलं वासुदेवं
सुमधुररसकेलिं गोपिकाप्राणनाथम्।
मदनरमणवेशं कंसकालं कवीशं
विमलपरमहंसं रामकृष्णं भजामः ॥११

पशुवधमतिघोरं चोदितं वेदशास्त्रैः
शमयितुमवतीर्णं ज्ञानदं शाक्यसिंहम्।
प्रकटितनवमार्गाद्वैतनिर्व्वाणकल्पं
विमलपरमहंसं रामकृष्णं भजामः ॥१२

मधुरसरलवाक्यैरीशतत्त्वं प्रकाश्य
क्रुशगतपरिशेषोऽपीशपुत्रोऽमृतो यः।
तमतिशयपवित्रं मेरिजं लोकवन्धुं
विमलपरमहंसं रामकृष्णं भजामः ॥१३

यवनभजनरीति नीतिमिश्लामशास्त्रं
उपदिशति विनेयान् तत्त्वमाल्लाभिधस्य।
परमपुरुषनुन्नो यो महम्मद्पुस्तं
विमलपरमहंसं रामकृष्णं भजामः ॥१४

श्रुतिनिगदितमार्गस्थापनायावतारं
जिननवयवहुवादभ्रान्तिमुन्मूलयन्तम्।
भूवनविजयकीर्त्ति शङ्करं भाष्यकारं
विमलपरमहंसं रामकृष्णं भजामः ॥१५

कलिमलहरनाम्नः कीर्त्तन घोषयन्तं
करधृतजलपात्रं दण्डिनं हेमवर्णम्।
भवजलनिधिपोतं कृष्णचैतन्यरूपं
विमलपरमहंसं रामकृष्णं भजामः ॥१६

वितरितुमवतीर्णं ज्ञानभक्तिप्रशान्तीः
प्रणयगलितचित्तं जीवदुःखासहिष्णुम्।
धृतसहजसमाधिं चिन्मयं कोमलाङ्गं
विमलपरमहंसं रामकृष्णं भजामः ॥१७

हरिहरविधिदेवा मूर्त्तिभेदास्तवैते
निरुपमवहुमूर्त्तिर्मायया कल्पयन्तम्।
अमितगुणचरित्रं दीनवन्धुं दयालुं
विमलपरमहंसं रामकृष्णं भजामः ॥१८

जय जय करुणाब्धे मोक्षसेतो स्मरारे
जय जय जगदीश ज्ञानसिन्धो स्वयम्भो।
जय जय परमात्मंस्त्राहि मां भक्तिहीनं
जय जय भवहारिन् रामकृष्ण द्विबाहो ॥१९

मूकोऽहं नाभिजानामि तव स्तुतिं जगद्गुरो।
तथापि त्वत्कृपालेशाद्वाचालोऽस्मि पुनः पुनः ॥२०

## श्रीसारदादेवीध्यानम्

ध्यायेच्चित्तसरोजस्थां सुखासीनां कृपामयीं।
प्रसन्नवदनां देवीं द्विभुजां स्थिरलोचनाम् ॥१

आलुलायितकेशार्द्धवक्षःस्थलविमण्डितां।
श्वेतवस्त्रावृताङ्गीं हेमालङ्कारभूषिताम् ॥२

स्वक्रोड़न्यस्तहस्ताञ्च ज्ञानभक्तिप्रदायिनीं।
शुभ्रां ज्योतिर्म्मयीं जीवपापसन्तापहारिणीम् ॥३

रामकृष्णगतप्राणां तन्नामश्रवणप्रियां।
तद्भावरञ्जिताकारां जगन्मातृस्वरूपिणीम् ॥४

जानकीराधिकारूपधारिणीं सर्व्वमङ्गलां।
चिन्मयीं वरदां नित्यां सारदां मोक्षदायिनीम् ॥५

## श्रीसारदादेवीप्रणामः

जननीं सारदां देवीं रामकृष्णं जगद्गुरुं।
पादपद्मे तयोः श्रित्वा प्रणमामि मुहुर्मुहुः ॥

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## श्रीश्रीसारदादेवीस्तोत्रम्

प्रकृतिं परमामभयां वरदां
नररूपधरां जनतापहराम्।
शरणागतसेवकतोषकरीं
प्रणमामि परां जननीं जगताम् ॥१

गुणहीनसुतानपराधयुतान्
कृपयाऽद्य समुद्धर मोहगतान्।
तरणीं भवसागरपारकरीं
प्रणमामि परां जननीं जगताम् ॥२

विषयं कुसुमं परिहृत्य सदा
चरणाम्बुरुहामृतशान्तिसुधाम्।
पिब भृङ्ग मनो भवरोगहरां
प्रणमामि परां जननीं जगताम् ॥३

कृपां कुरु महादेवि सुतेषु प्रणतेषु च।
चरणाश्रयदानेन कृपामयि नमोऽस्तु ते ॥४

लज्जापटावृते नित्यं सारदे ज्ञानदायिके।
पापेभ्यो नः सदा रक्ष कृपामयि नमौऽस्तु ते ॥५

रामकृष्णगतप्राणां तन्नामश्रवणप्रियाम्।
तद्भावरञ्जिताकारां प्रणमामि मुहुर्मुहुः ॥६

पवित्रं चरितं यस्याः पवित्रं जीवनं तथा।
पवित्रतान्वरूपिण्यै तस्यै कुर्म्मो नमो नमः ॥७

देवीं प्रसन्नां प्रणतार्त्तिहन्त्रीं
यौगीन्द्रपूज्यां युगधर्म्मपात्रीम्।
तां सारदां भक्तिविज्ञानदात्रीं[1]
दयास्वरूपां प्रणमामि नित्यम् ॥८

स्नेहेन बध्नासि मनौऽस्मदीयं
दोषानशेषान् सगुणीकरोषि।
अहेतुना नो दयसे सदोषान्
स्वाङ्के गृहीत्वा यदिदं विचित्रम् ॥९

1 शुद्धपाठः—'भक्तिविमुक्तिदात्रीं'

प्रसीद मातर्विनयेन याचे
नित्यं भव स्नेहवती सुतेषु।
प्रेमैकविन्दुं चिरदग्धचित्ते
विषिञ्च चित्तं कुरु नः सुशान्तम् ॥१०

जननीं सारदां देवीं रामकृष्णं जगद्गुरुं।
पादपद्मे तयोः श्रित्वा प्रणमामि मुहुर्मुहुः ॥११

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## VEDIC HYMNS AND VERSES

*(Sanskrit)*

ततूसवितुर्वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि धियोयोन प्रचोदयात्।

( १ )

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते।
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः!

—ईशकेनकठप्रश्नमुण्डमाण्डूक्यतैत्तिरीयैतरेयछान्दोग्यबृहदारण्यकोपनिषत्

( २ )

ॐ आप्यायन्तु ममाङ्गानि, वाक्प्राणश्चक्षुः श्रोत्रमथो बलमिन्द्रियाणि च सर्व्वाणि। सर्व्वं ब्रह्मौपनिषदं। माहं ब्रह्म निराकुर्य्यां मा मा ब्रह्म निराकरोदनिराकरणमस्त्वनिराकरणं मेऽस्तु। तदात्मनि निरते य उपनिषत्सु धर्म्मास्ते मयि सन्तु, ते मयि सन्तु ॥
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः!

—केनकठप्रश्नमुण्डमाण्डूक्यतैत्तिरीयैतरेयछान्दोग्यबृहदारण्यकोपनिषत्

( ३ )

ॐ सह नाववतु। सह नौ भुनक्तु। सह वीर्य्यं करवावहै।
तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै॥
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः!

—कठतैत्तिरीयोपनिषत्

( ४ )

ॐ भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवाः। भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः
स्थिरैरङ्गैस्तुष्टुवांसस्तनूभिर्व्यशेम देवहितं यदायुः॥
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः!

—प्रश्नमाण्डुक्यमुण्डकोपनिषत्

( ५ )

ॐ वाङ्मे मनसि प्रतिष्ठिता, मनो मे वाचि प्रतिष्ठितमाविरावीर्म्येधोऽभूर्वेदस्य मत्साऽनीत्र्मृतं मा. मा हिसीरनेनाधीतेनाहोरात्रात् संवसाम्यन्न इड़ा नम ऋषिभ्यो मन्त्रकृद्भ्यो मन्त्रपतिभ्यो नमो :बोऽस्तु देवेभ्यः शिवा न शंतमा भव सुमृड़ीका सरस्वती मा ते व्योम साद्दशि। अदघ्वं मन इषिरं चक्षुः सूर्यो ज्योतिषां श्रेष्ठो दीक्षे मा मा हिंसी।

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः!

( ६ )

ॐ शं नो मित्रः शं वरूणः। शं नो भवत्वर्यमा। शं न इन्द्रो बृहस्पतिः। शं तो विष्णुरुरुक्रमः। नमो ब्रह्मणे। नमस्ते वायो। त्वमेव प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्मासि। त्वमेव प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्म वदिष्यामि। ऋतं वदिष्यामि। सत्यं वदिष्यामि। तन्मामवतु। तद्वक्तारमवतु। अवतु माम्। अवतु वक्तारम्॥
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः!

—तैत्तिरीयोपनिषत्

( ७ )

असतो मा सद्गमय, तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय, मृत्योर्माऽमृतं गमय, आविरावीर्म एधि। रुद्र यत्ते दक्षिणं मुखं तेन मां पाहि नित्यम्॥

( २ )

( नासदीयसूक्तम् ऋक्० १०म २२६ सूक्त० )

नासदासीन्नो सदासीत्तदानीं नासीद्रजो नो व्योमो परो यत् ।
किमावरीवः कुह कस्य शर्मन्नम्भः किमासीद् गहनं गभीरम् ॥
न मृत्युरासीदमृतं न तर्हि न रात्र्या अह्न आसीत् प्रकेतः ।
आनीदवातं स्वधया तदेकं तस्माद्धान्यन्न परः किं चनास ॥

* * * *

को अद्धा वेद क इह प्रवोचत् कुत आजाता कुत इयं विसृष्टिः ।
अर्वाग् देवा अस्य विसर्ज्जनेनाथा को वेद यत आबभूव ॥
इयं विसृष्टिर्यत आबभूव यदि वा दधे यदि वान ।
यो अस्याध्यक्षः परमे व्योमन् सो अङ्ग वेद यदि वा न वेद ॥

( ३ )

( हिरण्यगर्भसूक्तम्, ऋग्वेद १०म १२१ सू० )

हिरण्यगर्भः समवर्त्तताग्रे भूतस्य जातः पतिरेक आसीत् ।
स दाधार पृथिवीं द्यामुतेमां कस्मै देवाव हविषा विधेम ॥१

य आत्मदा वलदा यस्य विश्व उपासते प्रशिषं यस्य देवाः ।
यस्य च्छायामृतं यस्य मृत्युः कस्मै देवाय हविषा विधेम ॥२

यः प्राणतो निमिषतो महित्वैक इद्राजा जगतो बभूव ।
य ईशे अस्य द्विपदश्चतुष्पदः कस्मै देवाय हविषा विधेम ॥३

यस्येमे हिमवन्तो महित्वा यस्य समुद्रं रसया सहाहुः ।
यस्येमाः प्रदिशो यस्य बाहू कस्मै देवाय हविषा विधेम ॥४

यं क्रन्दसी अवसा तस्तभाने अभ्यैक्षेतां मनसा रेजमाने ।
यत्राधि सूर उदितो विभाति कस्मै देवाय हविषा विधेम ॥६

आपो ह यद् बृहतीर्विश्वमायन् गर्भं दधाना जनयन्तीरग्निं ।
ततो देवानां समवर्त्ततासुरेकः कस्मै देवाय हविषा विधेम ॥७

यश्चिदापो महिना पर्यपश्यद् दक्षं दधाना जनयन्तीर्यज्ञं।
यो देवेष्वधि देव एक आसीत् कस्मै देवाय हविषा विधेम ॥८

मा नो हिंसीज्जनिता यः पृथिव्या यो वा दिवं सत्यधर्मा जजान।
यश्चापश्चन्द्रा बृहतीर्जजान कस्मै देवाय हविषा विधेम ॥९

प्रजापते न त्वदेतान्यन्यो विश्वा जातानि परि ता बभूव।
यत्कामास्ते जुहुमस्तन्नो अस्तु वयं स्याम पतयो रयीणाम् ॥१०

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## श्रीशङ्कराचार्यकृतम् निर्वाणष्टकम्

मनोबुद्ध्यहङ्कारचितानि नाहम्
न च श्रोत्रजिह्वे न च घ्राणनेत्रे।
न च व्योम भूमिर्न तेजो न वायु-
श्चिदानन्दरूपः शिवोऽहं शिवोऽहम् ॥१

न च प्राणसंज्ञो न वै पञ्चवायु
र्न वा सप्तधातुर्न वा पञ्चकोषः।
न वाक् पाणिपादं न चोपस्थपायु-
श्चिदानन्दरूपः शिवोऽहं शिवोऽहम् ॥२

न मे द्वेषरागौ न मे लोभमोहौ
मदो नैव मे नैव मात्सर्यभावः।
न धर्मो न चार्थो न कामो न मोक्ष-
श्चिदानन्दरूपः शिवोऽहं शिवोऽहम् ॥३

न पुण्यं न पापं न सौख्यं न दुःखं
न मन्त्रो न तीर्थं न वेदा न यज्ञाः।
अहं भोजनं नैव भोज्यं न भोक्ता
चिदानन्दरूपः शिवोऽहं शिवोऽहम् ॥४

न मृत्युर्न शङ्का न मे जातिभेदः
पिता नैव मे नैव माता न जन्म।
न बन्धुर्न मित्रं गुरुर्नैव शिष्य-
श्चिदानन्दरूपः शिवोऽहं शिवोऽहम् ॥५

अहं निर्विकल्पो निराकाररूपो
विभुत्वाच्च सर्वत्र सर्वेन्द्रियाणां।
न वा बन्धनं नैव मुक्तिर्न भीति-
श्चिदानन्दरूपः शिवोऽहं शिवोऽहम् ॥६

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## शान्तिपाठः

ॐ द्यौः शान्ति-रन्तरिक्षं शान्तिः पृथिवी शान्ति-रापः शान्ति-रोषधयः शान्तिः। वनस्पतयः शान्तिर्विश्वे देवाः शान्ति-र्ब्रह्म शान्तिः सर्व्वं शान्तिः शान्तिरेव शान्तिः सा मा शान्तिरेधि ॥

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः!

## Appendix I

# GLOSSARY

1 Jogindra: The author of this hymn has meant here his brother-disciple Swami Yogananda who was the first attendent (*Sevaka*) of the Holy Mother, Sarada Devi

2. Maya: The Cosmic Energy. "This inscrutable power of *Maya* dwells in the infinite ocean of Reality or Brahman from eternity to eternity" (Swami Abhedananda: *Divine Heritage of Man,* pp 51-52). "According to Vedanta, *Maya,* called also the Undifferentiated, is the divine Energy. It is beginningless and endless". (Swami Abhedananda: *Path of Realization,* p 17 ). Vide also the Swami's article on Vedanta Philosophy in the *Contemporary Indian Philosophy,* Edited by Prof J H. Muirhead and Sir S Radhakrishnan.

3. Samadhi: The state of superconsciousness. In it one realizes that one's true Self is one with the universal Spirit (*Vide* Abhedananda: *How to be a Yogi,* pp. 77-78). "The state oc ecstasy ; superconsciousness or Godconsciousness which can be reached through the path of Raja Yoga or concentration upon the supreme Spirit with higher breathing exercise". (*Path of Realization,* p. 166). It is mainly of two kinds: *Savikalpa* and *Nirvikalpa.* "Nirvikalpa Samadhi is described in the Raja Yoga as the highest state of Samadhi in which the soul rises above the sense of *'I'* and the plane of all thoughts, ideas and emotion, and reaches the realm of the Absolute". Swami Abhedananda: (*Memoirs of Ramakrishna,* pp. 117-118).

4. Sakti: The motherly aspect or the creative Energy of the same stupendous whole, Brahman.

5. Prakriti: *"Prakriti* (Latin *Procreatrix*) or cosmic Energy which means the creative Energy Some understood by this term, Mother, and some called it *Maya,* the eternal Energy or substance of the universe". (*Path of Realization,* p. 17) "According to Kapila, *Prakriti* or undifferentiated causal energy, is uncreated and eternal, but insentient It is the

state of equilibrium of all forces which are correlated to one another, and are its expressions" (Swami Abhedananda: *Cosmic Evolution and Its Purpose,* p. 7).

6. Mahat: The first manifestation of the *Prakriti* in the Cosmos. It may be called the intelligence.
7. Avatara: Incarnation of God. The Incarnation of God means the embodiment of Divine qualities and Divine powers. He appears whenever and wherever such a manifestation is necessary (Vide *Divine Htritage of Man,* pp. 155-158, and *Great Saviours of the World,* pp. 20-32).
8. Tantra. A sacred treatise which advocates the particular system of worship of God as Divine Mother "Tantras are sacred writings of the Shiva and Sakta sects among the Hindus". (*Memoirs of Ramakrishna,* p 27).
9. Kaula: The initiated followers of the Tantric Sadhana They worship God as the Sakti, the Divine Energy.
10. Paramahamsa. A man of Self-realization Just as a swan can eat up the curd from the watered milk, so when a man takes up the real from the unreal, i e , realizes the world as unreal and Brahman, the World-Ground as real, he is called the Paramahamsa. "Having attained to the supreme God-consciousness, he lives in the world like an eternal witness of all mental and physical changes". (Vide also *Path of Realization,* pp. 49-51).
11. Sakta: A worshipper of Divine Mother, the Sakti.
12. Triple Gunas: Inner constituents of the *Prakriti* or the primordial Energy They are called the *Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas.*
13 Pralaya: The state of cosmic involution
14 Man-lion· The fourth Incarnation of Vishnu or Narayana in the form of *Narashimha,* half man and half lion. This form of Incarnation, the Lord of the universe, manifested to kill the demonking Hiranyakasipu, the father of Prahlada.
15. Vamana. The fifth Incarnation of Vishnu, born of Kashyapa and Aditi to win over the demon king Vali
16. Kashyapa: The son of the Rishi Kashyapa, Vamana,
17. Bhrigu· A great Rishi of ancient India.
18. Jamadagni: A Rishi and the father of Parashurama.
19. Raghu: The great grandfather of Ramachandra and the son of the king Dilipa of the solar dynasty

20. Rohini: The mother of Valarama and the step-mother of Sri Krishna.
21. Vasudeva: The father of Sri Krishna.
22. Vraja: A beautiful and sacred grove in Vrindavan where Sri Krishna in his boyhood used to play his divine sports with the Gopinis.
23. Madana: The son of Brahma, born of his mind. He was the personification of lust and was burnt to ashes with the blazing fire of Siva emanated from His third eye in wrath
24. Kamsa: The maternal uncle of Sri Krishna. He was the King if Mathura and afterwards was killed by His nephew Sri Krishna.
25. Jina: An epithet of Buddha.
26. Samsara: The world of *karma,* where men come to fulfil their desires and to play their individual parts This has been regarded by the Hindu Shastras as the place of enjoyments and sufferings. It makes men to forget their divine nature and ensnares then into its ties. Men are set free when they overcome its temptations and realize their own divine Self.

# SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS
# OF
# SWAMI ABHEDĀNANDA

# SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS OF SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

## I

When the conviction that the Lord's will alone prevails is firmly planted in the mind, then we surrender ourselves wholly and whole-heartedly to that Divine will, and perfect peace abides for ever in our heart.

The rare spiritual treasures you desire to get cannot be gained all of a sudden in a day. The Puranas and other scriptures tell how the sages of old had to perform very hard austerities to get them. If you desire to have firm and unshakeable faith and devotion to the Lord, you should also take to *tapasya,* hard austerities. *Tapasya* does not mean aimless wandering hither and thither, it really means regular and steadfast *japa,* meditation and self-contol.

Keep your health by means of regularity in food and other ways In places of pilgrimage, you cannot get wholesome food if you live on alms and hence you are liable to fall ill. That is why we have established monasteries and hermitages. If you associate with the holy men living there and serve them, the impurities of your mind will be cleansed and you will become pure. As long as the mind is impure it will be unsteady as well. When the mind remains unsteady, there will be no taste, no inclination to do *japa* or perform meditation. As such times, engage the mind in doing *japa* and *puja,* serving the holy and reading the *Gita* and other holy texts ; also pray to the Lord with a yearning heart. You can know from a study of the Life of Sri Ramakrishna that he had to pray intensely, weep bitterly and yearn whole-heartedly before the Divine Mother granted Her vision to him.

If one pays with a yearning heart to the Lord to get devotion and faith, He grants it. So, pray in this way: "O! Lord, be graciously pleased to bless me with unswerving devotion and unshakeable faith. May my mind and heart be ever attracted to Thy Lotus-feet, and may it not wander from there in any other direction". The Lord is the *Antaryamin,* the in-dweller and so He hears your prayers and blesses you. Sit in the holy

sanctuary every morning and evening, repeat the name of your chosen Deity (*Ishta-devata*) 2000 or 3000 times and pray. When the mind becomes steady in the process of *japa* (reverent repetition of the Divine Name, meditate on the form of the Lord. After that, do with devotion your duties. Always, do the work you have to do with love and devotion and with your whole heart This is *tapasya*, ture austerity If you do this kind of *tapasya* for three years consecutively with regularity and steadfastness, your mind will become steady and pure Afterwards, you will be fit for attaining your heart's desire, the realization of the Lord, seeing whom you will sot need to see anyone else and your lust and anger will be burnt out

## II

You write that you are being involved more and more in domestic affairs and so you have no time for performing *japa* and other spiritual practices I would advise you to do your work physically and keep up mentally the remembrance of God. Know and realize that the family is not yours, but the Lord's Let Him do with it what He wills. When you attend to your children, look upon them as the Lord, and maintain the spirit that you are serving Him. When you retire for sleep in the night, surrender the results of the day's work to the Lord and be at peace Pray always to Him for faith and devotion. If you live thus in the world, you will get peace and bliss, otherwise there will be no end of suffering, misery and sorrow

## III

I had asked you at the time of initiation (*diksha*) to repeat the name of your chosen Deity ten times both in the morning and evening. Do so and also pronounce a loud "Hari bol" (call upon Hari) a hundred times, clapping your hands. If you practice in this way, the sins of the mind will leave you for good Then you will get peace and bliss Write to me after regularly practising in this manner for a month.

## IV

The pleasure that man gets in the world is but very momentary and transient. What one seeks, that one gets. You have

got what you wanted. When you really hanker after God, He will raise your mind from things of the world and grant you His vision. But as long as you are attached to the world and are strongly inclined to the things of the world, can you yearn for the Lord with all your heart? The Lord fulfils the heart's desire of everyone You wanted a boy and you have got him. Be satisfied for the present with that gift.

## V

If you get a child, you should take proper care of it ; otherwise, it is likely that the child is afflicted with various kinds of diseases A good deal of expense has to be incurred to bring up the children until they are fit to stand on their own feet. Ordinary folk do not take account of these facts, marry without proper consideration and find themselves enmeshed in all sorts of troubles, diseases, sorrows anl the like. This is the play of *maya.* Everything in this world is fleeting and vanishing, God alone is eternal and true. If you cling to Him, you will get peace and bliss.

By serving the Lord, the mind becomes pure So, you should do work without attachment. There is no need of other hard *tapasya,* austerities, in Kali-yuga Sri Ramakrishna used to say that human life in this age depends on food. For the followers of the Yoga path, there is need of what is ordinarily meant by *tapasya,* hard austerities, to control the turbulent senses and gain victory over lust, anger, greed and other deadly foes of the spiritual life But you are all Bhaktas, devotees of the Lord, and not Jnanis, the followers of the path of knowledge who repeat "I am He". Hence, the way taught in the *Gita* to surrender yourselves wholly to the Lord and take refuge in Him alone, giving up all other means is the one to be followed by you. Know that there is no other *tapasya* superior to this. Practice to be like the kitten, calling on the mother, and remain with joy and satisfaction in the place and state in which She, the Divine Mother, puts you This is my constant advice to all of you Complete resignation to the will of the Divine Mother is what is wanted. You must become ever joined with the Lord wholly without any distraction. Pure and absolute single-minded devotion to the Lord is what you should cultivate.

It is enough that you cling to the Lord. I am His child "He who hath seen the son, hath seen the Father". Pray to the Lord with such a faith: "My Father is in me and I am in Him. I and my father are one".

Consider whatever you do as service to the Lord This is the work without attachment, the Karma Yoga for you The mind will attain purity by this means. This is your *tapasya* and *sadhana.* The mind will become pure by this, and egoism will disappear. Then alone will you be able to surrender yourself wholly to the Lord.

I know that you are suffering much and I am very sorry for it. But know that the Lord is making you do *tapasya* in this way There is no need of any other *tapasya,* meditation, *japa,* reading of the Scriptures and such things for you. The work that you are doing is itself your *tapasya.* Know that it is superior to *dhyana* and *japa* Do not disturb the mind with distracting thoughts. Be satisfied with what comes unsought by His grace. You will be blessed by dedicating your life to His work "To work thou hast the right, but not to the fruits thereof"

To forget oneself is the characteristic of a holy man.

## VI

The Lord is particularly gracious to you. So He grants you His vision in various ways at the time of *japa* and in dreams. You will have many more such visions in the future by His grace. Why do you seek to get an intellectual explanation for these visions! Be content with believing that all He shows you is true If you begin to question about them or allow any doubt to arise in the mind with regard to them, the visions will cease to manifest themselves Do not pay your attention to anything supernatural which you see in this manner, rather fix your mind on your *japa* When the mind becomes steady, the Sadhaka gets various kind of visions Do not reveal them to others, also do not question about them. If you have anything to ask, pray to the Lord and tell Him about it.

You have asked who Sri Sarada Devi is and why I have initiated you is her *mantra* My answer is this: pray to the

Mother and She will reveal Her real nature to you at the time of your meditation Ramprasad has sung.

"Who knows the nature of Kali! Even the six *darshanas* (schools of philosophy) cannot know Her Nature . . . . . .
"Even Shiva, the great Lord, became mad when He sought to know Her nature"

"To the Sadhaka, devoted to God with form, Thou art with form, the formless, to the devotee of the fomless Some say that Brahman is full of Light and Thou, O! Tara, who existeth eternally, art that Brahman also. As far as one's conception goes, so far he conceives and speaks of the supreme Brahman. Beyond that is the Fourth State (*turiya*), the Indescribable and That also art Thou, who encompasseth the three worlds".

If you can realize this, you can know who Sri Sarada Devi is You cannot understand her by means of mere intellect. Just as the fire and its power of burning are not different, so are Brahman and *maya*—Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sarada Devi. They are One *Maya* is the power of that Supreme Lord, manifesting in the twofold forms of *vidya* and *avidya* (knowledge and ignorance) ; that is, they manifest in the two-fold forms of the pure mind and the impure mind. *Avidya* (ignorance) has two powers, the *avarana* (veiling) and the *vikshepa* (disturbing).

"Thou are Prakriti, veiling Brahman, in the form of *maya*, deluding the three worlds . . . . .".

Without the grace of Sri Sarada Devi, the delusion of worldly *maya* will not leave us and we will not get the eye of knowledge Hence, we should take refuge in Her, worship Her. When She is gracious, She will grant us the vision of Sri Ramakrishna Hence we should pray for Her grace.

## VII

It is not at all necessary to know where your husband has gone and how he is Pray for the welfare of his soul, then he will get peace. Give up the ideas of 'my husband', 'my child', 'my family', and the like. Fulfil your duties with the conviction that they are all the children of the Lord and that it is His

family. You need not rack your brains with the thought whether your son will earn anything. Each one reaps the fruit of his own actions. None else have any hand in it Meditate with the idea that the Lord of the universe is your Lord Human beings, swayed by the influence of *maya,* establish such relations as husband, wife and the like, and reap joy and sorrow These relations are transient You have fallen under the influence of entangling *maya.* Hence it is that you are not able to raise your mind from the thought of your human husband, the worldly husband.

Think of the Lord of the universe and pray to Him To consider a human being as husband through delusion is ignorance. That will not cut off your bondage Think of the Lord of the universe and you will have peace and bliss. (To a woman devotee).

## VIII

I have travelled all over the world and seen and learnt that unless one has inner peace and contentment, one will find restlessness and suffering wherever one goes Raise a wall all around your mind by your discrimination. Do not allow the distractions of external curcumstances to enter your mind. Know that this is *sadhana.* You cannot find in the world any place after your heart. Learn to turn unfavourable circumstances into favourable ones. The mind is all in all You cannot hear the rumbling sound of the carriage if you withdraw your mind from your ears. Keep to your helm, and pray to the Lord. He is our only help and mainstay

Know that I also have been struck to the core of my heart by your letter. Your sorrows and miseries make me sorrowful and miserable I love you as my very self.

You are an emotional race and so you give up the helm, and try to fly away if you get a little unrest. Is it proper? How many storms pass over the tops of the trees! Practise patience like the tree, and increase your power of endurance. Sri Ramakrishna used to say: "Endure time and again". Try to bear and forbear. Do not allow the mind to be restless. You must practise these precepts of the *Gita*:

"Be even-minded in praise and blame and hold peace",

"Do not disturb others and do not be disturbed by others", etc

## IX

Mother Durga does not want pomp and splendour, She seeks only pure devotion She will be graciously pleased with whatever you offer with devotion At the present time, people in general have forgotten the real *sattvika puja* as they are enamoured of the glittering *rajasika puja* of pomp and splendour We do not want that sort of *rajasika puja.*

Know that you will not at all be tormented by mental unrest if you, without being sentimental, dedicate the good or reverse results of your actions to the Lotus-feet of the Lord. There is no need for you to be impatient for doing *japa* or meditating and flying to solitude for that purpose. Sri Ramakrishna used to say,

"Meditate in a corner or in a forest or in the mind"

The Sadhaka, who lives in a city, can sit inside the mosquito curtain and easily do his *japa* and meditation in the night without distraction Then, there will be no disturbance and none would hinder you. When I was staying in my house at Calcutta, I used to sit on my bed at night and meditate according to the directions of Sri Ramakrishna. It was at that time that I had visions of all the Gods and Goddesses and also *vaikuntha.* Wherever you go with your little mind, that mind will also accompany you and abide with you Why should you be afraid of doing work? If the mind is not purified by work, one cannot attain true knowledge Try to do the work I had assigned to you, even against all odds That will surely purify your mind , no doubt of that

I am very gland to learn that you are doing *japa* and *dhyana,* as far as you can You may perhaps remember that I once prayed to fall ill while I was at Hrishikesh and that I got bronchitis and dysentry, which made me bedridden for 3 or 4 months. At that time I used to think such thoughts as, "I am the soul and without disease", etc I would even cut jokes all the time with Gupta Maharaj, who attended on me. This took place in the house of Vamsi Dutt at Kashi. Afterwards, learning that Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) was suffering from in-

fluenza, I went in that convalescent state to Pramada Mitra's house where Swamiji was staying and attended on him. After he was cured, I was in a critical state, at death's door, being attacked by influenza for a further period of 3 months. Even then, the mind was dwelling on the thought,
"I am the *Atman,* which has no disease".

By such contemplation, I recovered

## X

You have established a shrine of Sri Ramakrishna and you have been all the time worshipping Him Know for certain that you have obtained His grace thereby Since you have resolved to receive initiation from me and from none else, I am writing the *mantra* for you. Repeat this thrice with devotion and do *japa* with this *mantra* ten times while contemplating on Sri Ramakrishna's form. With this *mantra* you can perform the daily worship, offering flowers, fruits, etc After the *puja,* do *japa,* with this *mantra* repeating it ten times In the evening also, repeat this *'mantra'* ten times, and mediate on His shining form in your heart In the *puja* with devotion, there is no need of any external paraphernalia like the sacred water-vessel, etc.

Know that you have thus received, in brief, initiation with the *mantra.* Later, when we meet at Calcutta, I shall instruct you in detail on the other items. For the present, conduct worship as I have mentioned above, and repeat the hymns. I bless that your faith and devotion may increase and that you may have spiritual progress

In the morning, after finishing your daily routine including bath, etc, conduct the worship having made yourself pure After the *puja* take your meal It is best not to take any food before the *puja.*

If you are not able to do *japa* and meditation just at dusk, you can do it later on, say, after an hour or two, but it should be done before you take your meal. Also think of the Lord before going to bed, mentally dedicate the fruits of the actions of the day to His lotus-feet, and pray to Him In other words, you have to dedicate to Him the results of all the works you have done on that day. Try to keep up this idea ever in your

mind that you are serving the Lord through these works. Think of the Lord as soon as you wake up in the morning

## XI

The nature of the mind is to be restive. In the *Gita,* Arjuna asked Sri Krishna about the means of steadying a similar mind as yours Only by practice and non-attachment can it be made steady When other thoughts enter the mind at the time of *japa,* drive them out at once, and think of the Lord. If you practise this regularly every day, concentration will duly come to you at the right time Pray for that always.

I am happy to learn that you have had the vision of Sri Sarada Devi in your dreams Pray to Her. When you see Sri Ramakrishna's form at the time of meditation, pray to Him for pure devotion and faith I am also glad that your are regularly carying on your *japa* by means of the rosary.

The answer to your question is this: the *Guru* takes the burden of the disciple for the good of the latter. But, if the disciple has no firm faith and unswerving devotion to the *Guru* and follows his own inclinations, then the *Guru* can do nothing at all If disciple does not perform the *sadhana* and worship as enjoined by the *Guru,* he cannot make any spiritual progress. It is true that Sri Ramakrishna is in the highest plane, but the Sadhaka, also has to rise to that plane Hence he should exert his utmost for that purpose. So say sincerely with your whole heart,

"O! Lord, grant me unswerving devotion and firm faith;
Grant me the desired vision of my chosen Deity"

It is equivalent to prayer First of all, meditate on the *Guru* and then meditate on the chosen Deity Perform this *japa,* meditation worship, reading of the sacred scriptures, etc., daily both in the morning and evening

If you can control the mind, evil thoughts will not arise. Always, nourish good thoughts. If evil thoughts arise, drive them out by means of discrimination It is by the power of habit that evil thoughts rise in the mind Form a contrary habit by continued practice, and gradually the habit of evil thoughts may not arise in the mind. Read the *Gita,* the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* and other Scriptures,**. Bad

thoughts gain strength by association Hence, associate with the good and give up evil company Live on *sattwika* food alone.

I am glad to learn that you are now practising *pratyahara* and finding delight in meditating on God with form. By such meditation on God with form, the mind becomes easily steady, and that meditation is a part of *Yoga sadhana.* There is a *sutra* in *Patanjala-darshana* that,

"*Japa* is the contemplation on the import of the *mantra.*"

When the mind becomes steady by the continued practice of *japa,* meditation is accomplished of itself.

You write that your *vasanas* (inborn tendencies) have entered your very marrow Drive out big *vasanas* by the process of discriminating between the real and the unreal. Little *vasanas* would be exhausted by satisfying them It is the *vasanas* of many births that have brought these repeated rounds of births Ramprasad has sung:

Burn up the *vasanas* and all their powers will be turned to ashes Purify the mind and all troubles will cease to be. The mind will be cleansed of all dirt".

Birth and death are ruled by the laws of God The individual soul takes birth to exhaust the fruits of past actions, and when they are exhausted, the soul passes away. When all have to obey this law, what is the use of lamenting under the influence of delusion or *maya*! Depend on the will of God and do your task This is the only way and no other

He who flies before a storm, seeking his own comfort and convenience, is a coward. I do not wish to see any one of you as a coward. Endure boldly all the sufferings and miseries, and never give up the helm, lest the ship may sink. If the ship sinks, the Captain must perish along with it. If he leaves the ship to save his own life, he cannot show his face to anyone. Do what is good, associating with all.

The Lord is making you ripe by various kinds of storms (trials and tribulations). Cling to Him, hold fast to Him and everything will be all right. Have firm faith in your heart. Rome was not built in a day.

With the firm conviction that I am always with you, do all works with energy, knowing that they are His works.

It is not wrong to study music The mind becomes con-

centrated by songs on God and you forget everything else. Knowing that this is also a path in *yoga,* practise singing as a *sadhana.*

If by my blessing, you will get God-realization, and if you have firm conviction, I bless you with all my heart The *Upanishad* says:

"For the great soul, who has supreme devotion to God and the same devotion to the *Guru,* these truths are revealed".

If you are tormented by hunger and the body falls a prey to illness, there is no use in observing such fastings, etc.

Pray to the Lord with a yearning heart for removing all the restlessness of your mind. By His grace, the mind will become steady

Since you are performing worship with devotion, that is not mere ceremonial worship, there is no hard in doing it even in the state ceremonial impurity (prescribed by the *Smritis* at the birth or death of a near relation). Sprinkle Ganges water on your head, and feel that you are pure, then perform the *japa* of the *mantra,* meditate, pray and dedicate yourself to His feet This is the *puja* (worship with devotion).

## XII

In this transient world, you have to fulfil your duties But you will get peace and bless only by driving away all ideas of 'I' and 'mine', and by thinking my children etc Men take birth to reap the fruits of their own actions. No one is really the child of another. All are the children of the Lord The duty of the parents is to serve the children 'The results depend on the Lord ; His will be done' Realize this and then you will get peace and bliss.

Practise what you have learnt by a study of the *Philosophy of Work*! Realize the idea that you are the witness of the mind Lust, anger, and other deadly enemies are the attributes of the mind and so they cannot touch the soul. Raise your mind to the *ajna-chakra* (centre between the eyebrows), and ponder over the truth that lust, anger, and the rest are not the attributes of the soul. Meditate on this idea Repeat the great truth: 'I am Brahman', and contemplate on the Soul

who is the Witness, the Inspirer, the Absolute, the One without any attribute. Do not fall under the thraldom of the mind. Practise this daily, and in due course, the restlessness of the mind will disappear. Pray to the Lord to get the power of self-control as well as peace. Study the book, *Spiritual Unfoldment,* and practise the instructions contained in it. Gradually you will understand all the subtle spiritual secrets. Pray to the Lord and He will instruct you to grasp them Lust, anger and the like are the individual characteristics of a soul. They are not blamable of themselves The real evil is to be a slave to them. They will increase if you increase them, and decrease if you decrease them. You will get the result of what you practise There are two paths, the path of *pravrītti* and the path of *nivritti;* you can realise God through either of these paths. You are followers of the path of *pravritti.* If you repeat the name of the Lord with devotion and faith once in a day, even that will be enough, you need not worry about it

Unless you think of your *Guru* as God, nothing will be gained. Do not pay any heed to what any one says Keep yourself aloof

## XIII

I am very sorry to learn that you are suffering from mental unrest and various kinds of troubles and turmoils Your duty for the present is complete resignation to the will of God Since your petty will is not being fulfilled, give it up and drift, wholly depending on His Divine will, then you will get peace. Realise that you had no son at any time and you will not have. Know that He, whose child it was, is taking care of it. Do not disturb your mind by the prattle of worldly people

Knowing that the Lord will take you beyond the shoreless ocean of *samsara,* pray to Him for peace. He will grant you peace and bliss. You have come here alone and you will go alone There is no one in this world who is your very own. Depend wholly on the will of God and pray to Him.

## XIV

Meditate as far as you can There is no need to do too much Have *japa* of the Lord's name. If the mind does not become

steady, pray to the Lord. It is impossible for a householder to meditate much. Meditation is not easy even for *Brahmacharis* and *Sannyasis*. What to speak then of you! By the repetition of the Lord's name, the singing of His glories and *japa*, you will get the result of meditation.

That you are feeling the bondage of the world and finding no peace is in itself a means of progress in the spiritual path. If you are to live in the world (as a householder), you should be unattached, and dedicate the fruits of your actions to the Lotus feet of the Lord Bear in mind always that "you have the right merely to the work and not to the fruits thereof". If you do your duties in the world, giving up the desire for the result thereof, your mind will become pure, and you will be freed from the bondage of *karma*. Pray to the Lord for peace.

But you have as yet no wife or children. Can you realise how little of peace and bliss you will have if you have to carry their burden also? Realising that the work you have taken in hand is worship, keep in mind the idea that you are serving Him and dedicate the fruits of the work to Him. If you practise resignation to the will of the Lord, you will get peace of mind.

"He who is attached to the fruits of work is bound". Bondage is inevitable if you hanker after the results of your works It is difficult to renounce or conquer lust and other enemies. If you live in the company of the worldly-minded, your mind will be affected by their ideas, and you will have to follow their path If you enjoy the senses, discriminating along with it between the real and the unreal, the spirit of renunciation will dawn on you, then you can follow the path of *nivritti* Reverse the course of lust, anger and the rest, and turn them Godwards Look upon all women as the forms of the Mother of universe.

When lust attacks you, think in this manner. Turn anger by applying it to your own mind since you are not getting peace and pray for peace.

During the period of impurity, the mind will be in the lower plane, and so you are not getting visions as before. Don't be worried about it.

When you worship the Holy Mother under the aspect of

Kali or Durga, do not offer her *Tulasi* leaves; the proper thing to offer is *Vilva* leaves, *Java* flowers, red sandal paste etc On the other hand, when you worship her as Narayani, Lakshmi, Radha or Sita, then offer *Tulasi* leaves and white sandal paste.

## XV

Sri Ramakrishna is within me Know that those, who have taken my refuge, have really taken refuge in Him, since I dedicate to His feet everyone of those to whom I have given initiation. He will clear the path for them, I am but an instrument.

The *Guru* and the *Ishta-devta* are one and the same If you meditate on the *Guru,* He will reveal to you your *Ishta devata* If you pray to Him with an earnest heart to get the vision of the *Ishta-devata,* He will certainly grant it. Yearning and faith are essential.

You need not have any fear or anxiety Know that you have taken refuge in the Lord, and that if you have no attachment for sensual pleasures and wealth, you will have no more rebirth.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### I

You have written that the philosophy of so and so has been compiled, while that of Sri Ramakrishna remains to be written; and you ask the reason thereof. About this matter, I have to say this. I have not studied the philosophy of that person and I have no desire to study it In comparison with it, the philosophy of Sri Ramakrishna is a deep ocean of infinite aspects Swami Vivekananda has said that in trying to speak about Sri Ramakrishna, we shall be belittling Him by our imperfections, since, He was so great, so perfect.

To understand Sri Ramakrishna, a knowledge of all the Scriptures, the Vedas, the *Upanishads,* the *Puranas,* the Tantras as well as of Eastern and Western Philosophies is needed. Though I have such a knowledge, I do not venture to write about His philosophy. Hence I have said thus in my hymn to Sri Ramakrishna·

> "O! Lord, Divine Ramakrishna, I do not know Thy real nature,
> Ocean of mercy, I prostrate again and again before Thy real nature, whatever it might be."

I am very glad to learn of your desire to study the philosophies etc. Study intensely. But if you have no realisation, the study of Eastern or Western philosophy will only put your brain in confusion. How can you decide as to which system is correct amongst the various conflicting systems of philosophy? I had this doubt in the beginning and I was about to become an atheist Then I began to seek the standard of truth, setting aside all these systems of philosophy. Afterwards, by the grace of Sri Ramakrishna, I got the measure, the standard by which I could assign the proper place to each philosophy. Then all my doubts vanished. As the *Upanishad* says:

"The knots of the heart are rent asunder, all doubts are solved, and the fruits of works are destroyed when one sees the Lord who is the nearest of the near and the farthest of the far".

This is the answer to your question The *Paramatman* (supreme) soul or Brahman is one and non-dual in His state of the Absolute, without attributes *Isvara,* the *devas* and the *devis* (good spirits), the *jivatman* (the individual soul), the *pretatman* (the departed soul) are all with attributes, separate and distinct If the attributes and qualities are taken away from them, there will be only the one Brahman, the Perfect In that Brahman, there is neither the patient nor the physician nor medicine. In the realm of *maya,* these, the patient, the physician and the medicine, all will remain distinct

## II

The good spirit, the helper is a soul with the *sattva* quality, who can tell the medicine etc., for the good of the individual souls It is only a difference in the manifestation of power He is wholly distinct and separate from the soul of the patient, the individual soul.

First of all, you have to understand unity in variety Though Brahman is one only, He manifests as many by the power of *maya.* Just as electricity, though one and the same force, manifests in various ways as heat, light, motion of the fan, tramway etc., and sheds light in various places through innumerable bulbs so the one Brahman manifests through the power of *maya,* as manifold, the *jivas* (individual souls), the world, animals and birds, insects, moths, the *devas,* the *devis,* good spirits, evil spirits, etc , the meaning of *so'ham* (I am He) is that I and *Isvara* are one.

## III

I know that all of you have got the ability to deliver lectures, write articles, etc. Only self-confidence is lacking. Say what you know without paying attention to the opinions of the audience. If you tell the truth, the opinions of others does not matter. I hope that you will be brave, gird up your loins and spread the message with enthusiasm.

Read the book on *Self-knowledge* again and again. You cannot enter into it by one or two readings When you find it difficult to understand a paragraph, meditate deeply on that subject It is not easy to gain the knowledge of the self.

You can get sufficient knowledge by studying the *Nyaya-darshana* of Gautama, with the commentary. It will take a very long time to grasp the subtle intricacies of the Navyanyaya

## IV

I am sorry to learn that so and so is suffering from cold If he keeps up the thought that the *Atman* has no disease, death or sorrow, he will very soon regain his health and strength The *Atman* does not catch cold nor the dead body. Then who has caught cold?; ask him to solve the problem

Before performing your daily rituals, you partook of the *prasadam* of the Lord. There is no harm in that. You have committed no wrong. Know that the injunction of the *Shastras* is that you should partake of the *prasadam* as soon as you get it.

Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti

## GLOSSARY

1. *Japa*—The repeated utterances of the name or *vija-mantram* of a chosen deity.
2. *Puja*—The act of worship of a deity
3. *Tapasya*—Austerity or penance.
4. *Antaryamin*—One who knows the internal thoughts and ideas of people.
5. *Ista-devata*—The choosen deity
6. *Diksha*—The spiritual initiation.
7. *Hari bol*—The utterance of the name of Hari, the Lord Krishna.
8. *Maya*—Delusion or false knowledge
9. *Jnani*—The follower of the path of discrimination and knowledge.
10. *Sadhaka*—One who undertakes the method of spiritual practice.
11. *Dhyana*—Meditation
12. *Darshanas*—Philosophies, i e., the books that instruct how to see God face to face
13. *Avarana*—Veil or cover.
14. *Avidya*—Delusion or ignorance.
15. *Sattvika Puja*—The act of worship with real devotion and love
16. *Rajasika Puja*—The act of worship with pomp and grandeur.
17. *Vaikuntha*—The highest region of eternal peace and freedom.
18. *Gupta Maharaj*—Swami Sadananda.
19. *Mantra*—The name of a deity in a seed form or the *vijamantram* that makes the Sadhakas free from the bondage of delusion or *maya* when contemplated or uttered
20. *Guru*—The spiritual teacher.
21. *Sattvika food*—The food that soothes and elevates the nervous systems of the body.
22. *Vasanas*—Desires.

23 *Ajna-chakra*—The plexus or place in between the two eyebrows The Yogis conceive it as a lotus with two petals.
24 *Pravritti*—The desire that binds men with attachment.
25. *Nivritti*—Non-attachment.
26 *Samsara*—The changeful world of desires and attachment.
27. *Iswara*—The Lord of the universe The Vedanta recognises Him as the first divine manifestation of the absolute Brahman.
28. *Prasadam*—Tranquility and peace.
29. *Vikshepa*—Disturbing Repeated.
30. *Pratyahara*—Removal of internal obstacles to meditation.

# ABHEDANANDA IN INDIA
# IN 1906

(LECTURES & ADDRESSES)

# PREFACE

Swami Abhedananda returned to India, his motherland once in 1906, after a hard toil of ten years in the West. For seven months he made an extensive tour throughout India, from Colombo to Calcutta and from Calcutta to Bombay. During his journey he was greeted by the people at every step. Everywhere the people accorded him the heartiest welcome and spontaneous receptions. No other Indian except Swami Vivekananda, received such a high honour from the people The description of his tour, the addresses of welcome presented to him, and his lectures in reply to them first appeared in the columns of the various newspapers, such as, *the Hindu, The Mysore Standard, The Indian Mirror, The Bombay Chronicle, The Brahmavadin, The Prabuddha Bharat,* and several others

Swami Abhedananda appeared before the public, for the first time, as a speaker in 1896 Prior to that he was an unknown Hindu Sannyasin who travelled throughout the length and breadth of Hindusthan from the Himalayas down to Rameswaram and from Jagannath to Dwaraka, barefooted, without touching money, without thinking of the morrow and with one blanket as his bed and garment. Before his appearance in London in 1896 as a speaker and teacher of Vedanta his was a life of severe austerity, constant meditation and study

His life took a new course when a call came from Swami Vivekananda to help him in his work in London. He threw away the loin-cloth of a Sannyasin, dressed himself in coat and turban, and sailed for England A few days after his arrival in London, Swami Abhedananda: gave an excellent address on the *Philosophy of Panchadsi* at the Christo-Theosophical Society at Bloomsburry Square on the 27th October, 1896 Swami Vivekananda was present on that occasion and was highly pleased at the success of his spiritual brother. "Even if I perish out of this plane, my message will be sounded through these dear lips and the world will hear it." These were the beautiful words with which Swami Vivekananda expressed his joy The utterance was prophetic. Swami Vivekananda's message is being sounded, since his absence from the West, through 'these dear lips', and the world is hearing it for over a quarter of a century.

In December 1896, Swami Vivekananda left England for India giving Swami Abhedananda the entire charge of his work in London Swami Abhedananda held regular classes, delivered public lectures and devoted much time in answering questions and objections "arising either from the lecture or the position of Vedanta generally". Thus Swami Abhedananda ably carried out the Vedanta work in London during the absence of his revered and beloved brother Swami Vivekananda.

When he was working hard to give a permanent footing to the London Vedanta Society, all of a sudden a call came to him from the other side of the Atlantic. He was obliged to disband his work in London and sailed for America. In August, 1897, he reached New York to organize the Vedanta Society which was then in its infancy. He established himself there by the end of September, by holding regular classes and delivering public lectures on every Sunday. In six months, he delivered ninety lectures in Mott Memorial Hall alone and made the Vedanta Society self-supporting. He also opened a *Bhagavad Gita* class for the first time in America, and by his clear and highly instructive lectures on the philosophy and religion of the *Bhagavad Gita,* he created an absorbing interest among his students for the study of Sanskrit language to gain the first-hand knowledge of the *Bhagavad Gita* and other Hindu scriptures.

After the end of the New York session, Swami Abhedananda went to Washington D.C. for a rest But at the request of the people who were eager to hear him, he gave lectures and addresses in the public halls, parlours and studios He was introduced to President McKinley of U.S.A. and was kindly received. He also met John Brady, the Governor of Alaska and was the guest of Dr. Elmer Gates, the celebrated scientist and Psychologist. He then went to Boston to lecture before the Free Religious Association of America. At the invitation Prof William James, the great psychologist, he delivered a lecture before the students of the Harvard University Next he visited Milford, Newton Highland, Salem, Montclair and Eliot and delivered lectures in all those places He stopped in Greenacre and worked there for four weeks. At last he went to the White Mountains in New Hampshire, where he enjoyed rest.

The New York session began again in November 1898.

He lectured for five months during the session of 1898-99 and again spent the summer in travelling and lecturing in New England and other parts of the country. In October 1899, the Head Quarters and the Office of the Vedanta Society of New York were established This gave a new impetus to the work, the rooms being opened daily for the sale of Vedanta literature and for class instruction The public lectures were given in Tuxedo Hall The Vedanta Society was incorporated duly under the laws of New York State On Easter Monday he initiated four American Brahmacharins among whom Brahmachari Gurudas (Swami Atulananda) is well-known in the Ramakrishna Mission.

Throughout the spring and summer of 1900, Swami Abhedananda lectured in New England and the Middle States, while at the close of the following winter Swami Turiananda came from India to help him. By his untiring energy, unfailing courtesy, his readiness in answering questions, his erudition in Sanskrit language and his knowledge of modern science and philosophy, Eastern and Western, Swami Abhedananda firmly established Vedanta in the States, before Swami Vivekananda came to visit America for the second time. Vedanta was accepted by this time as an established fact by prominent persons and even by many ministers of Christian Churches During the absence of Swami Vivekananda, Swami Abhedananda not only kept alive the movement, but also through his untiring exertions he pushed it further. And Vedanta spread into wider fields and gained firm foot-hold in the lives of the American people.

His lectures made a deep impression upon the public. The best papers of the State such as: *The Sun, The New York Tribune, The Critic, The Literary Digest The Times, The Intelligence,* and *The Mind,* published highly appreciative accounts of his teachings and personality. He met representative thinkers in the world of arts, science and religion, and awakened a "friendly interest in his mission and teachings. His activities created an ever-growing interest in the Vedanta movement. He was widely known throughout the intellectual circles in U.S.A He made acquaintances with many celebrities of the States such as Profs. William James, Josia Royce, Lanmann, Fay, Mr. Edison, the inventor, Dr. Elmer Gates. the

celebrated scientist and psychologist, Joseph Jefferson, the great actor, Mr. Sweat Marden and Mr. Patterson, the New Thought writers, Mr. Ralph Waldo Trine, the great thinker, William Dean Howells, the novelist, Profs. Herchel, C. Parker, Howison, C C. Everett, D. D., Dr. Logan, Rev. R. H Newton, Rev Bishop Potter, and the professors of the Columbia, Harvard, Yale, Cornell, Berkeley and Clarke Universities

In the July of 1899, Swami Vivekananda reached New York. He was glad to learn that the Vedanta Society had permanent Head Quarters and remarked: "Thrice I knocked at the door of New York but it did not respond. I am glad that you have established permanent head quarters. This is the first time I have found our own home in New York" Swami Abhedananda, who was away from New York on lecture tour, was soon wired to meet him and report all about the Vedanta work in New York He met Swami Vivekananda and made reports concerning his work in America, Swami Vivekananda learned with great satisfaction that Vedanta made a striking progress during his absence. He insisted Swami Abhedananda to stay in America at least for ten years when the latter requested the Swami to make over the charge to somebody else, and to instruct him to return to India. In reply Swami Vivekananda wrote:

"My dear Abhedananda,

Many thanks for your nice words I am just where you left me as about health. I have no directions to give, I leave the work entirely to you . . .

With love Yours,
VIVEKANANDA"

In 1900-1901 Swami Abhedananda resumed the work in New York. The classes were held and public lectures delivered on Sundays. His speeches and writings made such a profound influence upon the minds of American people that he was invited to speak before the Societies, Churches, Associations, Clubs, and Universities During the session of 1900-1901, he spoke before the council of Jewish Women in a Synagogue on invitation, on the festivities of the ancient Hebrews. He was invited to speak before the Cremation Society, Spiritualistic

Societies, Free Religious Association of America, Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Science, the Universities of Harvard, Clarke. Berkley and Columbia. He was also requested by the Council Board of Unity Church (California) to conduct the Sunday Service

In the session of 1901-02, besides holding classes and delivering public lectures every Sunday, Swami Abhedananda lectured in Boston, Washington, Eliot, Greenacre, Milford, Newton Highlands, Salem, Worcester, (Massachussets), New Port, Chesterfield, (Indiana) and several other places.

A similar series of lectures began again in 1902-03. He delivered twenty-two lectures in Carnegie Lyceum During the month of April religious services were held on Sunday mornings in the Vedanta Society House and the attendance soon excelled the capacity of the room

In the winter of 1903-04, Swami Abhedananda delivered twenty-two lectures in Carnegie Lyceum, followed through March and April by Sunday morning services with lectures in Society House. At the request of some of the students two lectures were also given in Assembly Hall during the month of March In May, on invitation of one of the members, the Swami paid a visit to St Louis Exhibition and the Society's publications were exhibited in the palace of Education in World's Fair The result of the exhibition was especially gratifying since through it hundreds from all parts of the country were made aware of the Vedanta work in America and led to recognize the practical value of its teachings. Later on Swami Abhedananda sailed for Europe and at the urgent solicitation of friends and students in England, he took the preliminary steps towards the re-establishment of a London Centre.

Early in 1904, more spacious quarters were established at 62, West 71st Street. After taking possession of the new Head Quarters, the Swami carried the regular weekly classes and Sunday service. In 1905 Swami Abhedananda delivered a course of lectures on *INDIA AND HER PEOPLE* in the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Science. As a result of the interest aroused by public lectures delivered in Brooklyn by the Swami, a raja-yoga class was organised there and regular weekly meetings were held throughout the season. In the Spring of the same year Swami Abhedananda was invited by some of the Associate

members to lecture in Washington and preliminary steps were taken towards the formation of a New Branch in that city.

On May 16, 1906, Swami Abhedananda after ten years of hard toils in the field of religion and philosophy in foreign land, sailed from New York to England and thence by the Peninsular and Oriental Steamer *S S Multan* for Colombo in Ceylon where he landed on June 16, 1906 The feeling of profound gratitude which he has awakened in the hearts of the many to whom he has brought new light and peace is significantly shown in the farewell address presented to him by the Vedanta Society on the eve of his departure from New York H H. Maharaja and H H Maharani of Baroda were present when the farewell address was presented to the Swami

### FAREWELL ADDRESS TO SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

"Revered and Beloved Swami,

"Although we hope that you will be with us again before the year is gone, it is none the less in a spirit of sadness and reluctance that we now come to offer you this farewell expression of our profound reverence, love and devotion.

"For nine years you have laboured tirelessly among us, enduring hardship, opposition, even enmity, yet pushing on your course undaunted and unchecked When you came to New York, out of all those who had gathered so eagerly around Swami Vivekananda, you found scarcely a handful of earnest students With these you began your labour. True to your Sannyasin spirit, in the heart of this commercial Metropolis, asking aid of no one, and with the infinite wisdom, patience, courage and tenacity which have characterized your efforts at every step, you began to build, stone by stone, the solid structure of the Vedanta Society as it stands today. Only those who know the conditions of New York can appreciate how great have been the difficulties and how noble is your achievement

"You are now returning to India bearing with you the fruits of many years' experience in this new and more vigorous country, and we believe that your visit will prove rich in results, both for India and for America. It is this alone that makes it possible for us to look forward with some degree of courage to the long months of separation which stretch before us

"You have been to us an ever wise and ever loving Master and Teacher. Many of us who came to you ill in body and mind are today strong in limb and full of new life. Others who crept into your presence bowed down with grief and despair, now walk with raised heads and joyful eyes. Not one has come to you in vain. Everywhere you have brought hope, gladness, strength and spiritual light Never can we pay the mighty debt we owe to you, except in striving, day by day, nay hour by hour, to embody in our lives the lofty truths you have taught us, and to remain stanch and loyal to the work to which you have devoted your life As you go forth to carry further your Mission, we can but pray with our whole hearts to the Divine Mother and your own Divine Master, Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, that your journey may bring not only blessing to others, but to yourself a fresh store of peace, joy, strength and inspiration with which you may bear ever onward the banner of Vedanta in America and over the whole world"
addresses of welcome and Swami Abhedananda's replies-cum-Addresses of Welcome and Swami Abhedananda's replies-cum-lectures. The lectures, delivered in reply to different addresses of welcome, will speak themselves their voices and essence The lectures, which were delivered, were the *Aim of Religion, Female Education, Vedanta Philosophy, The Caste System, Advice to the Young Men, University Relivion, University of Vedanta Religion, Practical Vedantism, The Responsibilities of Indian Students,* etc All the lectures and replies of welcome addresses were instructive and enriched with religious and philosophical thoughts and ideas. The last lecture in India in 1906 was delivered in Bombay and the subject matter was *Practical Vedantism.* In this lecture, Swami Abhedananda laid stress upon the study as well as on the universal ideal of the Vedanta philosophy of India He said: "Vedanta will make you live the right kind of life, will bring freedom to your soul, and ultimately will make you happy throughout eternity" The Swami lived the life of Vedanta and so it was possible for him to intuit the real and sublime ideal of Vedanta.

On November 10, 1906, Swami Abhedananda, accompanied by Swami Paramananda, sailed again for London.

SWAMI PRAJNANANANDA

# LECTURES AND ADDRESSES

## CHAPATER I

## COLOMBO

The return of Swami Abhedananda to his motherland after his long stay in Europe and America created great enthusiasm throughout India. Everywhere people waited eager to welcome him and express their deep appreciation of the noble work which he had accomplished in spreading the lofty spiritual teachings of India throughout the Western world All who have read his books and followed his labours during these years can not but admire his unselfich and tireless service to humanity

Great excitement prevailed in the city of Colombo when his coming was made known. Placards announcing it were to be seen in the streets, lanes and other public places Everyone was joyously awaiting the arrival of the Swami. All unknown to the Swami, preparations had been made to receive him He was about to leave the ship alone and unnoticed, when a brother disciple, Swami Ramakrishnanda with Swami Paramananda, the youngest disciple of Swami Vivekananda, both of whom had travelled from Madras to meet him, accompanied by Dr. Vekatarangam and some Hindu gentlemen of Colombo, came on board detaining him until four o'clock in the afternoon, the hour set for his formal reception. At that hour a party of leading citizens of Colombo appeared in a steam launch to escort him ashore while thousands of Hindus and others crowded the docks to greet him.

As the Swami stepped on land he was garlanded by Mr Thyagarajah, barrister-at-law, and president of the Reception Committee In the large crowd on the pier the Swami quickly noticed the yellow robe worn by his old friend Mr Dharmapala, the well-known Buddhist preacher who had come to welcome him to his native land. The Swami was then led to an open carriage and with the president and other Swamis proceeded in slow procession through the streets, the crowds along the way cheering and shouting the national cry, "O Lord! Glory to Thee." At the gate of "Kotahina" the dwell-

ing set apart for his use, the Swami was again garlanded and a procession was formed to the house; native music was played while the Swami walked on white cloth spread on the ground, a huge temple umbrella was held over his head, and rose petals and rose water were showered over him along a path richly decorated with arches, festoons and flags At the steps of the garden house he was once more garlanded by his host, Mr. Namasivayam, as a mark of welcome to his house. When the party had taken their places on the verandah the following address, beautifully illuminated in water-colours, was read and presented to the Swami:

To Srimat Swami Abhedananda

Revered Sir,

We, the Hindu residents of Colombo, beg to offer you a very hearty welcome to our Island on your return from America after ten years of unremitting labour in the cause of India and Hinduism

We cannot adequately express our appreciation and deep gratitude to you for the valuable services which you, as head of the Ramakrishna Mission in America, have done for your countrymen and co-religionists, in so ably and successfully carrying on with unique zeal and single-hearted devotion, the noble and holy work started by Srimat Ramakrishna Paramahansa and continued by your immediate predecessor, the late lamented Srimat Swami Vivekananda. As a tangible prof of the far reaching influence of your mission we may be allowed to mention The Colombo Vivekananda Society and the Jaffna Vivekananda Sabha which, however humble they may be, are supplying a long and much-felt want

It is our fervent prayer that you may long be spread to continue your labour of love and self-sacrifice and that Isvar may prosper you and your work

*16th June, 1906.*
Colombo,

Yours faithfully
We remain, Revered Sir,
On behalf of
The Hindu Residents of Colombo,
Sd. Thyagarajah.
*Chairman, Reception Committee.*

IN REPLY THE SWAMI SAID

"Friends and Gentlemen, I thank you for your address very heartily and I feel very deeply, so deeply that I cannot express in words, the enthusiasm and the feeling and the devotion which you have shown to the great cause which was, and will continue to be, the great work of the worthy disciple of Ramakrishna Paramahansa One thing I noticed in the address, you have mentioned the late lamented Swami Vivekananda who is not dead but is living He is here with us all. He is in you and in me. He is not in the body, the body physical in which we have seen him He is spiritual and invisible before us He is more powerful now, a thousand times, than when he was in his body. He used to tell me when he was in his physical body "This body is too small for me, it cannot hold me. The tabernacle of human flesh and human blood is too feeble for my spirit, I am the Brahman, the Infinite, the *Atman.*" He is still with us. It was he who first called me to England ten years ago Swami Vivekananda gave me the charge of his mission and his work in London, and for one year, one long year, I worked and lectured and taught this wonderful religion, this religion which is the salvation of the world, and which the world is longing for. It brought salvation in the past and it has salvation for all future generations. This religion is universal and all-embracing as the heavens over our heads. It is broad enough to embrace all the sects and religions of the world That is the religion I preached in London. The English people listened to it and admired it They followed it to the letter. The next year I was invited to New York, I went there and worked continuously for nine years Swami Vivekananda came to me in New York—that was his second visit to America—and he told me that that was the first time he had found a home in New-York He had hard work in America Nobody can appreciate what he had done for the good of our community. No body can tell how much he had done for the good of humanity He has turned their thoughts into a new course, a spiritual course, and I know that spiritual power is rushing through that channel stronger and stronger at every moment. With all my work I have gained experience, experience long enough to

give you an idea of how much the world needs the religion which we have inherited from our forefathers. We worship Siva, the universal Being No matter what names you give Him—Vishnu, Buddha, Brahma. Let the name be what it may He is the one universal Being. We know that in the earliest writings of the Hindus—of the Vedic period—there is a passage with which you are all familiar *"ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti"* "That which exists is One, men can call it by various names." This was the truth long before the dawn of civilisation broke upon the horizon of many countries. Centuries and centuries before Jesus the Christ and Buddha this was known. This truth is eternal All the sciences and philosophies of the world acknowledge unity in variety The name only varies. Siva and Vishnu are one and the same, one infinite Being, and we are bound to worship him He is not far away from us He dwells within us. Through Him we exist, and without Him we can be nothing. You see these plants and animals, and human beings—all life-force comes from one Infinite Being and Him we worship as Siva, Him we worship as Vishnu, Him we worship as Buddha The Christians call Him Father in Heaven; and the Mohammedans Allah. Who is Allah? The infinite Being, the eternal Being, who dwells in our hearts. That vital force, that spiritual power—that we worship—that the world has learned from the Hindus. He is the one Being, but He can be worshipped under different names. There were no persecutions, no religious quarrels, no bloodshed in this religion which the world needs People talk of peace and good-will, but in various religions of the world except one Buddhism, the first message was preached with fire and sword. Buddhism was the only proselytizing religion which escaped that and Buddhism was a child of our own Vedic religion. It preached peace and goodwill and blessing to men. Wherever its preachers went they founded hospitals for the poor, for men, women and children, nay, even for aimals There were very few nations who built hospitals for animals They learned humanitarian ideas from the soul of India The humanitarian ideas came from the religion of the civilized Asiatics and went from them to the uncivilised West. Look at Japan. Where lies its greatness? In its religion, that is Buddhism. We must not forget here that Buddhism is the

child of our religion, Hinduism or Brahmanism or the Vedanta. You know that Buddhism was introduced into Japan in 552 A.D., first into China in 61-65 A D. and into Tibet in the sixth century after Christ. Now all these ancient preachers went out from India and preached the truths which they had received, among other nations and civilised them It is the same thing we read to-day. If we read the history of Europe, especially of Greece we find that at the time of Aristotle Hindu philosophers lived at Athens, Alexandria, Syria and Sinai. The rest of the world was not civilised It was barbarous. The civilised portion of the world was Asia and Europe as far as Greece Now teachers went on from here to different places, built their temples and founded their communities

Chritianity existed before Christ was born, and I have shown that many a time in America There is nothing new in Christianity We have everything it has in the Vedanta. I do not call our religion by any particular name It is the nameless religion It embraces all the religions of the world—Buddhism, Christianity, Mohammedanism and every religion that will exist in future We are the followers of this universal religion. It gives us the one great truth that our individual soul is immortal, is divine, is a part of the Infinite Being and we must realize that, we must know that we must have faith in our souls. Believe not in your bodies but in your souls. We are the *Atman* ; we are Siva, Let us however, respect, adore and worship Siva and go on worshipping Him. The time will come when we shall receive salvation and that salvation means freedom. My friends, our time is limited and it is getting very hot and oppressive. Again I thank you for the very hearty welcome you have given me today."

The Swami retired for a brief rest. After a while he again came out to meet the eager souls, anxiously awaiting him. When he was seated the devotees fell prostrate at his feet, metaphorically kissed the dust and reverentially held their hands out for a pinch of sacred ashes which the Swami was distributing from a silver cup placed before him They took this, put a portion into their mouths, some of it on their foreheads, the rest their arms and withdrew profoundly satisfied. Many not knowing English could not understand his words, but wanted simply to touch his feet and receive his blessing,

for the Hindus believe that the true Swami who has renounced everything in the service of the Lord and of Humanity, who always lives in divine communion with his words, deeds and thoughts directed towards God, can impart divinity on a touch ; and they feel that the worship offered to him goes directly to the feet of the Lord.

On Monday, the 18th of June, Swami Abhedananda was received by the members of the Vivekananda Society at their society house where he gave a short talk. He also delivered two public lectures under the same organisation. The first was on Sanatan Dharma or eternal religion. He delivered his second lecture on "The aim of religion" in the Price Park Theatre, Pettah. Mr. Ramnatham presided and the hall was full from end to end. The Chairman in course of his opening address explained how the Swamis Vivekananda and Abhedananda went to America "It was," he said, "the result of the Parliament of Religions There Swami Vivekananda delivered a short speech, captivated all hearts and people listened and felt that from the life of the Swami emanated rays of illumination which took the hearts of everyone That was the source of the great reputation Vivekananda enjoyed. He showed that religion has a living force which might be developed in the heart People had grown tired of hearing every week from tthe pulpit "Be good, be good, be good." They wanted to know what goodness was and who were corrupt could attain incorruption. Awakened Christians called for some solution. They had no idea as to what the spirit within each man's body is, or what God is, therefore, when Vivekananda preached the doctrine of Vedanta, he electrified intelligent and thinking America." The Chairman went on tto show what the word 'Swami' meant. It was allied to tthe Latin "suns" meaning owing no bondage to corruption. He finished his discussion, introduced the Swami and thanked his countrymen for their hearty reception of the Swami at the jetty ad their courtesy as hosts while he stayed there n

The Swami in reply began with the following Sanskrit verse—which he chanted with all the mystic tones which that language is capable of :

Bhadram karnebhi shrinuyama devah,
Bhadram pashemakshabhir yajatrah ;

Sthiraiangais stustuvansha stanubhir,
Vasema devahitam yadayuh.
Shanti, Shanti, Shanti

"May we hear that which is auspicious to us May we see divinity within and around us. May all thoughts of our minds and acts of our bodies be directed to the Almighty One who is the goal of all religions

Peace, peace, peace to all living creatures"

He started with the historical circumstances which brought the term 'Hindu' into existence. The Persians, he said, always pronounced 'S' as 'H,. So when they invaded India and crossed the river Sindhu (Indus), they gave the name "Hindu" to the people who lived to the east bank of the Sindhu The name Hindu has lost its significance now as there are other religionists such as the Christians, Mohammedans and other who live to the east bank of the Indus So our religion is not Hinduism or Brahmanism—it is Sanatan Dharma, the eternal religion or the Aryan religion. We must call our religion as the Vedic religion or the Aryan religion.

The eternal religion has no founder like the sectarian religions of the world—hence it can, of all religions of the world, claim to be universal. The founders of the different religions of the world represent the diffrent ideals to be realised by different individuals. Each of them expresses only a part of the one eternal religion which is nameless and formless and which is not limited by doctrines and dogmas. It is impersonal at the same time embraces all the prophets, saints and saviours who lived in the past and will embrace all those who will come in future.

This is the ideal of the universal religion and Vedanta, of all religions of the world, can claim to be universal It has no doctrines and is not limited by any dogma It only deals with the principles that underlie all the sectarian religions It shows men, irrespective of their castes and colours, the path to self-realization which is the goal of all religions According to this Sanatan Dharma or eternal religion there are four different paths for men of different tastes to reach the same goal These paths are called Yogas there are four Yogas—

Raja Yoga, the path of concentration and meditation, Jnana Yoga—the path of knowledge, Bhakti Yoga the path of devotion and love, Karma Yoga—the path of work

So in the universal religion of Vedanta, the mystic, the philosopher, the devotee and the worker each and all have place. It has no quarrel with any religion rather it tries to harmonise the sectarian religions of the world by pointing out the fundamental principles which are universal. It preaches no hell-fire doctrine There is no place for the Satan in eternal religion of ours.

This eternal religion of ours is in perfect harmony with the conclusions of modern science It is based upon sound logic. It preaches the message of hope, strength and freedom. It teaches that we are the children of immortal bliss and that we are divine

The Swami concluded his speech by thanking the people for giving him an opportuniy to speak and for their sympathy and patience.

## THE AIM OF RELIGION

Mr. N. Thyagarajah presided, and in his opening speech, said in part:

"Srimat Swamī Abhedananda, whom I have the privilege and honour to present to you this evening, needs no intriduction He is well known through his writings though he is not personally known to most of you. His books on the ancient Hindu religion and philosophy, or as we may call them, the Sanatan Dharma, are valuable contributions to the religious literature of the present day. These writings disclose a lucid exposition of the subjects of which he treats, a sound reasoning, forcible expression, persuasive powers, and above all an earnestness and zeal with which he labours for the cause of humanity. Such teachers are rare in these days of growing materialism. Ten years ago the city Colombo had the good fortune and honour to receive the Swami's eminent predecessor, the late lamented Swami Vivekananda who was the pioneer, as it were of eastern thought and philosophy in the western

world. Moreover, he was the Hindu representative at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago The present Swami is the worthy successor of Swami Vivekananda. The mere fact that he is the successor of such an eminent personage is sufficient testimony to his qualification and worth as a teacher and *Guru*.

By the way, I may mention the Swami spent ten years in America preaching the truth of Vedanta and Sanatana Dharma, or eternal religion. Now it remains for me to call upon the swami to address you and I am sure you will all appreciate it."

The Swami then arose and spoke for an hour and fifteen minutes on *The Aim of Religion* We give below the short excerpts of his speech:

All religions are but so many attempts of the human mind to reach the Infinite Being, but the highest happiness that is to be found through the teachings of any religion is in the attainment of Godconsciousness. The Christians, Mohammedans and Zoroastrians are under the belief that celestial pleasures are the highest ideals of life, but Vedanta goes deeper and explains that celestial pleasures are not eternal In the Sanatan Dharma it is laid down that going to heaven or Brahmaloka is not the highest ideal Its principal theme is the realisation of the great truth. The Hindu Dharma has no creeds, doctrines or dogmas These are non-essential to a religion The Dharma is as free as the air we breathe and anybody can easily study it In the Vedic period the question was asked "What is the highest truth ?" And the answer was given: "That from which all animate and inanimate objects come into existence, in which they exist and unto which they return." It is the Infinite Being unknown and unknowable. When the heart is purified, when all thoughts and selfish desires are removed from mind, then the presence of that Infinite Being can be felt. In our present state, when our hearts are impure through selfishness we cannot conceive the presence of that Great Being. To attain that we should practise *Viveka* or discrimination. The body is the production of a living substance known as the soul, and the soul manufactured the body. In America, there is a spiritualistic movement which is giving a death-blow to materialism. This movement is showing that the soul that have departed from this world are happy and can communicate with us The Christians believe that Christ was the first

one to teach the immortality of the soul. That is untrue. History shows that long before Christ, Buddha existed and that he preached immortality. Long before Buddha the Vadas taught the same truth. We must not believe the foreigners who do not understand our philosophy and the Vedas when they say "You will go to eternal hell if you do not believe in this." In America thinking people no longer believe in eternal punishment or hell. The intelligent classes do not go to Church because the Churches preach eternal hell-fire doctrine They are now in doubt and that doubt can never be removed except by philosophy and the teachings of Vedanta. According to Vedanta God never punishes the wicked, but it is not so in Christanity. If we are all creatures of God why should we be wicked ? It may be said that—Satan's influence. Who created Satan ? Why did not God destroy Satan who brought all evil and wickedness on humanity. That explanation does not appeal to us. Vedanta distinctly says that God does not punish the wicked, nor does He reward the virtuous. The punishment of the wicked comes upon them as results of their own thoughts and deeds. If a man put his finger into the fire it will be burnt. Does God do it ? No, it is the fire. It is the law of nature. Similarly if one commit murder, tell a lie or rob some one he will be punished by those very actions. Every good fortune is the result of our good thoughts and good deeds and every misfortune is the result of evil thoughts and evil deeds. If we do good Karma, perform virtuous deeds and are unselfish. charitable, hospitable ; if we cultivate love, friendliness to the poor, have compassion and are possessed of purity, charity, morality, and all those virtues which purify our hearts, then we shall reach the ideal.

In the Vedas there are different stages of spiritual growth First, childhood, then youth and next maturity. In the first stage God is far, far away and beyond our reach. The Christians. Mohammedans and Zoroastrians are in this stage. In the second stage we do not find that God is outside the universe, but that He is in the universe, that God is one stupendous whole and we are but parts. In the third stage, we become conscious of God, we feel the Divinity within us We feel that He is omnipotent, all in all, the absolute existence of the universe The Yogi, who has reached that stage feels

that the Lord is living in him and realizes this sameness and oneness with all living creatures

We need not feel that going to heaven is the ideal. We must go forward and reach the stages that are higher and attain to Godconsciousness When we attain that all our desires will be fulfilled. All selfish motives will be torn asunder, all doubts will be removed and law of *karma* will vanish and we shall be made free.

Talking of worldly possessions the Swami said that only their character would go with them when they left the world. Attachment to worldly possessions was due to ignorance. By discrimination they could get rid of it. They they would obtain right knowledge and freedom They had heard of salvation from sin. That did not merely mean going to heaven. discrimination they could get rid of it They would first be free from everything, free from bondage and wordly attachment, and then they would get freedom and realize the ideal.

When the Swami finished, Mr. Coomaraswamy passed a vote of thanks to the lecturer, which was carried with acclamation. In the evening the Swamis drove to the Theosophical Lodge where they had been invited by Mrs. Higgins, an American lady in charge.

During his stay the Swami, with his brother Swamis, visited the various temples of Colombo, at each of which he was formally received by the priests of the temple and by a large crowd of enthusiastic devotees. In the large Buddhist monastery the Siamese Prince Jinavaraja now a monk, served as their guide and showed them the sacred relics and a reproduction of the remarkable colossal reclining figure of Lord Buddha carved out of the solid rock to be seen in a cave near Colombo.

In his leisure moments the Swami gave instructions in Yoga to many earnest students of the Hindu community. He was entertained by several prominent gentlemen of the city in their homes, among them was Mr. Ramanathan, the then Advocate-General of Colombo. Many came from long distances to offer him fruits and flowers. Torchlight processions, Sankirtan parties, boys unharnessing the horses of his carriage and drawing it themselves. deafening cheers, presentation of

addresses of welcome, showing of flowers and enthusiastic cries of "Bandemataram" and "Hari Hara." etc. the thronging together of people of whole localities and other expressions of oriental spiritual enthusiasm were the order of the day. The depth and intensity of religious ardour displayed in these demonstrations of appreciation and honour to this gift workers in the cause of Vedanta in the West, were probably surpassed only by those that had been shown to the Swami Vivekananda when he first returned to India after his victorious campaign in the West The great rousing of the religious consciousness in the hearts of the people by his noble presence promised to leave some permanent results.

On Thursday afternoon June twenty-first, the Swami left Colombo with his brother Swamis for Kandy, a beautiful spot in the Island of Ceylon, some 2,000 feet above the sea-level Ceylon is famous for its Botanical Gardens and still more for the Tooth Temple of Lord Buddha in which is preserved a tooth of the Great Teacher brought from India by the Emperor Asoka's son at the end of the third century B.C. The news that the Swamis were to pace through the country had preceded them and at the different stations along the way people came with offerings of milk, fruits and flowers The party including the Swami Abhedananda, Swamis Ramakrishnananda and Paramananda of Madras Dr Venkatarangam of Mysore, Mr. Madhava Rao of Madura, and Mr. V M. Muttucumaru, Secretary of the Colombo Vivekananda Society arrived in Kandy on the evening of the twentysecond They were received at the station by Mr. W. Weerasingam the leader of the Tamils in Kandy Messrs V M. Saravanamutta A. Veloopillar, Charles Stover, F M. Nayagam, Periyatambu and Dr Sivasithamparam Pilley. Soon after the arrival, the whole party drove in carriages, the Swamis going in a Victoria, to Walter Lodge, the residence of Mr. Proctor and V M Saravanamuttu. Here all the Swamis were garlanded by Mr Weerasingam and rose water was sprinkled. They were then conducted to special seats. Besides those mentioned above the following were present:

Messrs. S. Suppiah, R Aiyathuray, S. Chellappa, T Chintamani, S. Chellaturai, A Vallipuram, Ariyanayagam, K.. Rajaratnam, J. S Nagallugam, A, Sinnatamby and E. A. Siriwardene

Mr. V. M. Saravanamuttu read the address of welcome, to which the Swami answered at length:

To

SRIMAT SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

Revered Swami,

We, the resident Hindus of Kandy, beg reverently to approach you and to express our joy and thankfulness at the opportunity that has been given us of receiving you in our midst, and of listening to your words of piety and wisdom.

We have watched with interest, the great work you have been doing, disseminating the sublime truths of our ancient faith among the nations of the West Our minds have been instructed and elevated by your lucid and scholarly expositions and discourses. We have drawn inspiration from your life of sacrifice and devotion, and have experienced an awakening inspiring us to learn and understand more of our renowned religion

Allow us to offer you our most heartfelt gratitude for the honour of this visit—a visit, we fervently hope, will be of incalculable benefit and spiritual advancement to us

May God Almighty spare you long to continue your noble work.

We beg to remain, Swami,
Your obedient Servants,
The Hindu Residents of Kandy.

*Kandy, June 21st, 1906.*

The Swami spoke briefly, thanking the people for their kind reception. The next morning the entire party set out to visit the noted Buddhist Temple, picturesquely situated on the shore of a clear lake surrounded by low-wooded hills. The Swami and his friends were received with due reverence by the Buddhist priests and were shown the jewels and relics. Then they went to the Botanical Gardens where they were entertained at luncheon by a Hindu engineer having under construction a bridge in the Gardens.

In the evening Swami Abhedananda delivered a public lecture on *Reincarnation* at the Dharmaraja College Hall which

not only a large gathering of Hindus attended but many Buddhists and Christians were also present. Mr. Saravanamuttu, who presided, introduced the lecturer in a few words whereupon the Swami once more expressed his gratitude to the people of Kandy for their cordial reception.

*Extracts of Swamiji's Lecture*:

The subject *'Reincarnation'* is of deep importance to all thinking minds The idea was brought to Ceylon in the time of Asoka, the first Buddhist Emperor who reigned in India about 250 B C. It was preached by Gautama Buddha. His followers and disciples accepted the idea of reincarnation. The great Asoka made Buddhism the first proselytizing religion in the world. The idea of Re-incarnation however, was not preached for the first time by the Buddhists but it had existed as a fundamental truth of the Vedic religion.

Reincarnation means re-birth and re-manifestation Does the soul continue to exist or does it become extinct after death ? People everywhere in America, England and other parts of Europe are still trying to solve this momentous question, whether death is the end of their existence or otherwise. Christians take it for granted that the soul continues to exist, and that some go to heaven and some to hell. This is the popular belief among the Jews, Christians, Mohammedans and others but with the Buddhists and Hindus, it is quite different. We do not believe in eternal heaven or hell nor in the last day of judgment. The thoughtful Christians of America and Europe do not believe it. One span of life is nothing compared with eternity. The effect must be similar to the cause If one is finite then the other must be finite. If one is eternal then the other must be eternal.

Scientists say that the whole world is living; there is soul in atoms, in plants, in herbs and in trees. There is no such thing as dead matter. Life is everywhere. The protoplasm or germs of life are not created suddenly but have been in existence since the very beginning of evolution In fact evolution started from these germs of life They do not lose their innate tendency or their innate power. A grain of corn kept for 100 years in a bottle will grow when placed in the proper medium. The power of growth can remain latent for a long period.

The diversities of attainments in a family cannot be

explained by the heriditary transmission theory. For the parents are not the creators of souls but they are the channels through which the germs of life are manifested And also the acquired habits cannot be transmitted

Again, the fact that twins living under the same conditions and in the same environment develop different characters, cannot be explained by the law of heridity Those who believe in the pre-existence of souls say that these souls possessed tendencies in their previous lives and have come in this life to manifest their powers which after death are retained according as these tendencies and desires have been strengthened.

The soul cannot go back to the lower stages of evolution—lower forms of animal e.g the dogs and cats, after having assumed a higher form it cannot take a lower Buddhism denies the existence of an individual soul. Buddha never meant that, but his followers have given a different interpretation to his teaching. Even in this life each individual soul could attain Christhood or Buddhahood The purpose of evolution was fulfilled when perfection was reached, there re-incarnation ceased. As the body of a child undergoes different forms until maturity is reached, so the soul of man attains further development after death The soul appears in another form after the death of the grosser and material body. As a garment when useless is discarded so the soul after fulfilling the purpose of life throws the body away and takes on a new one Reincarnation includes a belief in pre-existence as well as in the continuity and identity of the soul

The speaker related how a girl when hypnotized recollected three of her previous lives He concluded the interesting and instructive lecture by saying the wicked punish themselves and the virtuous reward themselves God is above all praise and blame God is beyond virtue and vice He is the embodiment of love We should not blame God, parents or Satan for our *karma*

The lecture lasted an hour after which the Chairman proposed a vote of thanks which was heartily carried. On Saturday afternoon, the Swami with his party reached Jaffna. Here a large gathering met him at the station—receiving him with great enthusiasm. Later—at about half past eight, an imposing torchlight procession of several hundred people with

native music was formed to accompany the honoured guest to the lecture hall where a public meeting was arranged. As he set out enthusiastic students unhorsed his carriage and amidst constant cheering dragged it the mile and a half, which separated his residence from the Hindu College Hall At the doors of the different houses along the route, offerings of flowers and garlands were placed as a token of universal welcome to the city. On arriving at the hall an address of welcome was read by a prominent citizen of Jaffna, and the Swami in expressing his appreciation of the warm reception accorded him, spoke for about fifteen minutes The address to the Swami follows:

To

HIS REVERENCE SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

Revered Swami,

We, the inhabitants of Jaffna, professing the Sanatan Dharma beg leave to offer you a most hearty welcome to our land, the chief centre of Sanatan Dharma in Lanka. You are one of the holy Swamis engaged in the Ramakrishna Mission work, and the Ramakrishna Mission in the West, of which you are the respected head, has been the means of disseminating the eternal truth of our religion among a people alien to us in habits and customs, thoughts and feelings Your labours in the materialistic West rebound not only to your credit but to the credit to the land where the holy religion which you have been preaching was formulated The doctrines taught by the *Maha-Rishis* of Aryavarta crystalized in the Vedanta have permeated and are permeating modern thought in the West, and the universality of Vedanta has been demonstrated beyond all doubt. After Swami Vivekananda, who was immediately the greatest figure in the Chicago Parliament of Religion, it is to you the success of the Vedantic work in America is chiefly due. We have watched with very great interest your noble and disinterested work in the cause of our religion for a period of ten years, and we have rejoiced at the success which has attainded it. We avail ourselves of this opportunity to express our gratitude for carrying the light of truth as the followers of the Aryadharma understand it, to the remote West and thereby disabusing the Western mind of the wrong ideas and notions enter-

tained about our religion which has withstood the onslaught of modern science The greatest truths of our religion, consistent as they are and as they always will be with the greatest truth of science, possess a permanence and universality not to be found in other religions; this fact more than any other, you have succeeded in impressing on the Western mind and have thereby arrested to a great extent, the materialistic tendencies of the age.

Your illustrious predecessor Swami Vivekananda and yourself have been called into being at epoch-making periods in the history of religion, and both of your have made epochs in that history. Your labours have borne fruits and the agnosticism and materialism of the West you have kept at bay May Maheswara continue to bless you and your work as He has already done Lastly, we, who in common with you profess the religion of the Vedas, thank you and other revered Swamis who are in our midst to-day for readily responding to our invitation in paying a visit to this distant part of Lanka And may we hope that this visit is the precursor of many more visits to come to enliven and encourage us by both your holy presence and holy teaching.

Jaffna, June 23, 1906

On behalf of the Hindoos of Jaffna
(Signed) M T. Kanagaspai
*Advocate,*
V. Kassipilai
*Procurator S C.*

The following address was presented to the Swami.

श्रीः

नमो हंसाय सदा

ॐ तत्सत्

(1) अभेदानन्दकर्मन्दिन्

अभेदं लेदबौधितम्।

उपदेष्टा भवानेको

लोके, तस्मात्रमाम्यहम् ॥

(2) साक्षात् द्रष्टुं न शक्तोऽहं
सुखाभावेन हेतुना ।
रामकृष्णानन्दयति
रत्नं च प्रणमाम्यहम् ॥

वन्दी
मु, सर्वेश्वर शर्मा ॥

On their return from the hall the Swamis went to the Temple worshipped, received Prasad (consecrated fruits, flowers and ashes) from the priests and then returned home.

The next morning they drove through the old Dutch Fort, visited the town, and at noon went to the Vivekananda Girls' School, where the scholars entertained them by singing songs in praise of its founder, Swami Vivekananda, after which Swami Abhedananda gave them his blessing. In the evening the Swami delivered a public lecture on Vedanta which lasted for over an hour and a half and was afterwards translated into Tamil. In this lecture the Swami showed the harmony which exists between the Teachings of Shaiva Shiddhanta and those of Vedanta ; he also made a strong appeal to the audience to try and understand the one common ideal of all the sectarian denominations of the country.

Then on the morning of June twentiffth the party proceeded to Anuradhapura, where they arrived at half past eleven. They were met at the station by a number of gentlemen and driven to a private residence for a short rest. They were then taken to see the famous Bo-tree, a branch of the original Bo-tree brought over from Buddha Gaya in Northern India and planted by Mahinda the son of Asoka in the third century B.C. This city now contains the ruins of the Dagobas enormous circular structures nearly one thousand yards in circumference which contain early sacred Buddhistic relics The Swamis visited the ruins and sacred places of pilgrimage.

This occupied the afternoon and in the evening a public meeting was held to present to the Swami an Address of Welcome, to which he replied at length, speaking for an hour:

To

SRIMAT SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

Venerable Swami,

We, the Hindu inhabitants of Anuradhapura, beg to offer you a most hearty and respectful welcome to this ancient city, religiously important to Buddhists all over the East

Although your teachings have been in the West for past ten years, we have been carefully watching the progress of your mission there

We are all very thankful to God for the remarkable success that attended your religious mission in the West,—a success, we venture to say, that has earned an undying glory for you and for your motherland.

By your able exposition of the truths contained in the sacred Vedas of the Hindus and by your exemplary life, you have shown that the true Hindu religion consists not alone of rules and rituals but contains philosophic principles so broad and catholic that they exalt and harmonise all ideals of God and of human spirituality.

You have placed us under a great obligation by your visit to this historic and ruined city Your stay, though unavoidably short, will, we hope, be pleasant to you and of invaluable help to the spiritual advancement of all of us

May God spare you long and give you strength to continue to bless and spiritualize mankind

We beg to remain,
Swami,

Anuradhapura,
June 25th, 1906

Your obedient Servants,
The Hindu Residents of
Anuradhapura.

After the lecture, native Tamil music was played both at the hall and at the house. With this the visit to Anuradhapura closed On the twenty-sixth the return journey to Colombo was made where preparations were at once begun to leave Ceylon

## CHAPTER II

Swami Abhedananda accompanied by Swami Ramakrishnananda, Swami Paramananda and several friends sailed by a Swadeshi steamer for India on June Twenty eighth. Mr. Thyagaraja entertained the party at dinner prior to their departure and a large crowd gathered at the pier to see them off. During the twelve days the Swami had spent on the Island of Ceylon everything had been done to make the sojourn agreeable and beneficial to others Everywhere he had been received with warm enthusiasm, and notwithstanding the short period of his stay, classes had been held in Yoga, individual instruction given, and early and late the Swami had seen the hundreds of eager devotees who flocked to him for help and inspiration.

The same hearty welcome was now awaiting him at Tuticorin, the Indian port at which he landed on the morning of the twenty-ninth Mr Chidambaram with other leading men of the city came out on a steam launch to take the Swamis and their friends ashore. A large crowd were waiting to greet him at the dock and forming into a procession with flags and native music accompanied him with his companions to the residence set apart for them. An interesting feature of this procession was a Swadeshi party wearing a special uniform and shouting at every step Bandemataram (Hail to the Motherland). Owing to the excessive heat nothing was planned for the afternoon but in evening there was an outdoor meeting in the compound of the Cosmopolitan Club at which nearly four thousand people assembled listening with rapt attention to the Swami as he told at length of his experience in the West. The lecture was delivered in response to an address of welcome. When the Swami finished, a native scholar rose and gave the purport of the Swami's words in Tamil for the benefit of those who did not understand English On the following morning a meeting was held to organize a Vivekananda Society at Tuticorin and later the Swami dined with Mr. Ramchandra Aiyer, who presided at the gathering on the previous evening.

At two o'clock the journey was resumed and at five Tinnevelly-Bridge was reached Leading Hindu Citizens with

great cordiality met the party. They were then driven to the club-house where the Swami was presented with an address of welcome. After reading the following address the Deputy Collector introduced the Swami to the large audience of respectable citizens and zemindars:

To

HIS HOLINESS

SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

Dear Swamiji,

With undoubted feelings of reverence and joy, we, the citizens of Tinnevelly, most heartily welcome you to this ancient and historic town. We have watched with great interest the progress of your mission on the TransAtlantic shore and are happy to meet the Holy Personage who has devoted his life to the furtherance of the Ramakrishna Mission

Eighteen months ago, we were happy to receive Swami Ramakrishnananda in this town on his way back from *Narasinganallur* after presiding at a meeting of the Sadhus and had the rare pleasure of listening to his clear expositions of the doctrines of the Vedanta Philosophy. Since then we have been looking forward with anticipation to your advent. Now that the Swami has accompanied your Holiness, our joy knows no bounds. The visits of such Holy masters, though like those of angels few and far between, are blessings in these days of rampant commercialism.

We, therefore, thank the Almighty for giving us blessed opportunities and pray that the holy mission undertaken by you so whole-heartedly may be blessed with all success and prosperity.

Tinnevelly

*1 July, 1906.*

We beg to remain,
Dear Swamiji,
The Citizens of Tinnevelly

In reply the Swami delivered a stirring lecture on "Universal Religion which lasted for one full hour.

From Tinnevelly Bridge the party drove to the town two miles distant. A vast throng of people numbering many

hundred with elephants, banners and music, came far out on the road to meet the Swamis, and forming into a procession, conducted them back amidst shouts and beatings of drum. On the way they had joined a temple procession, it being a day of festival, and accompanied by sacred elephants, camels and native music with a line of priests chanting the Vedas, waving lights and burning incense and camphor, they passed through the town in solemn state. The Swami and his party drove around the famous Temple of Siva, the high stone walls of which enclose a large area of ground and then stopped at the beautiful house of M. Sanachalam Pilley who was their host

Immediately after their arrival the Swamis were garlanded and an address of welcome was read to which Swami Abhedananda replied speaking for nearly twenty minutes. Another meeting of the citizens was held in the afternoon at 4 o'clock Many questions about Vedanta work in America were asked and the Swami's answers were most convincing After this meeting the Swami left Tinnevelly on a five o'clock train for Kottallum, arriving at the station at nine in the evening, they drove the remaining three miles on a Bullock-Transit, reaching their destination at midnight After the fatigue of constant travelling and lecturing in the intense heat, it was deemed advisable for the Swami to rest, so on the invitation of Mr Sanachalam, he and his brothers retired to Kottallum a quiet resort in the hills not very far from Tinnevelly beside a beautiful waterfall. Here a bunglow had been secured for them and two days of complete rest were spent in wandering over the hills and bathing in the waterfall.

Thus refreshed, on the third of July they came down to Tenkashi, where they were met by a number of people and taken to the public library near the Temple of Siva An address of welcome was then presented to the Swami The address is as follows:

To

HIS HOLINESS SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

Most revered Srimat Abhedananda Swamin,

We, the inhabitants of the town of Tenkasi, welcome you back to India with the greatest pleasure and reverence, after

ten years of strenuous labour in foreign lands spreading the truths of the Vedic religion among the people there We highly value the results of your work in as much as a true appreciation and estimate of the sublimity of Aryan wisdom and thought and of Aryan s spiritual teachings cannot but raise the Aryan race as a whole in the regard of the civilised nations of the world Now that your Holiness has come back to our beloved Motherland, we trust that your labours will further dispel the darkness brooding over the minds of our countrymen and impart fresh vigour and earnestness to the study of our ancient and true religion and the correct—understanding of its subtle and profound truths and to a revival generally of the Aryan civilization.

May Providence spare you long in order that this beloved land of *Rishis* and *Munis,* and the birth place of true religion and the cradle of human civilization, may march nearer than ever to the full restoration of its ancient glory and blessedness.

We beg to remain,
Venerable Swami,
Your most obedient Servants,
The Citizens of Tenkasi.

Tenkasi,
*July 3rd, 1906.*

In reply, the Swami spoke for about half an hour and at the close his remarks were reported in Tamil Sometime was also allowed for questions and answers. The Swamis then went to the temple, worshipped and returned home.

On Wednesday, July fourth the party arrived in Madura about half past three in the afternoon A very warm reception met the Swami here Messrs. P Narayana Iyer, Jagadisar and some others met the Swami at the platform and an improvised address prepared after coming to the station, was read by Mr P Narayana Iyer. They were then taken to the hall of Theosophy in the coach supplied by Mr A Rangaswami Iyer, B A., B L There they made a halt of about twenty minutes to take some light refreshments Thence they were taken to the commodious Bodinaikanur Bungalow prepared for their lodging. In the evening a lecture was delivered by the Swami Abhedananda on *Vedanta the Universal Religion* in the Madura Hindu

College Hall, in response to an address of welcome read by Mr V Swaminatha Iyer B A., B L , Sub-judge of Madura-West who presided at the meeting The improvised address presented at the Railway Station follows:

To

HIS HOLINESS SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

Dear Swamiji,

We welcome you to our Motherland from your arduous work in Western countries in spreading the gospel of that Universal Religion which is called in our country the Vedanta In Europe and America, for ten years you have been labouring, following the footsteps of our revered Swami Vivekananda and have made to some extent, the thoughtful people of the West respect the ancient Rishis, our forefathers.

We have been watching your self-sacrificing labour on behalf of this ancient land through the medium of your lectures and Vedanta class-lessons in New York and other places of culture in the United States of America Mother India welcomes back her heroic son after his spiritual conquests in foreign lands You have, by your work, laid the golden cable of spiritual brotherhood which in the fulness of time, will be vibrating with sentiments of love and regard for all humanity, breaking the narrow limits of religions and creeds

We wish you a long and beneficient life of work, in the words of the Immortal Gita—Nishkama Karma—for welding the East and the West in one Golden bond of mutual regard and mutual love.

We remain, Dear Swamiji,
Your humble fellow countrymen,
P Narayana Iyer and Others
At the Railway Station, Madura

Madura,
*July 4th, 1906*

On Thursday morning the Swamis were taken around the Temple After breakfast they left for the sacred Rameswaram, doubly sacred to the Ramakrishna Mission for

"Over whose acres walked those blessed feet" of the Swami Vivekananda on his first landing on the sacred soil of India, the Punnyabhumi, escorted by Jagadisa Iyre

The Swamis arrived there in the evening and took their bath in the holy-sea. After worshipping the gods Sri Ramanatha Swami and Pravatha Vardhini they returned to Madura on Friday evening. There the regular address which was printed in the meanwhile was read by Mr. Rangaswami Iyer in the College hall. The address runs as follows:

To

HIS HOLINESS SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

Revered Sir,

We, the Hindu Citizens of Madura, beg to accord you a hearty welcome on the occasion of your visit to our ancient and historic town after a strenuous work for a period of more than ten years in Western-lands in the cause of Aryan religion and philosophy.

The Parliament of Religions at Chicago formed an important epoch in the history of Indian religion and philosophy. Up to that time the teachings of the Vedanta were no doubt appreciated by some thinkers of the West—men like Schopenhauer and Emerson. But Sanatana Dharma did not then stand before the non-Indian world and present to its citizens its message of high hope and earnest endeavour, enshrined in its philosophy of the Vedanta. Then it was that the late Swami Vivekananda and the representative of India, at the World Parliament of Religions, threw out the challenge that India's contribution to the religious thought of humanity was grander and more comprehensive than any other system, and that in the present condition of the material advancement of the world and the high cultivation of the physical sciences, it was the system which would survive and satisfy the deepest yearnings of the divine spirit in man. How far that challenge has been carried to a success by Swami Vivekananda has become a matter of history.

The mantle of the late Swamiji fell on your worthy shoulders, and the work commenced and carried out by the

Swami Vivekananda has been continued with equal success under your guidance and control; and the estimation and regard, with which not only the Hindu religion and philosophy but also Indian aims and aspirations in general are regarded in Europe and America, are in a marked manner due to the devoted work of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission in those lands.

We cannot but be sufficiently grateful to you, Sir, for the great work of love and self-sacrifice which you have undertaken; and we fervently pray that under blessings of the gods that work may be attended with greater success in the future than in the past, and that success may react with greater effect upon the progress of Hindu philosophy and religion in our own land.

With profound feelings of respect and esteem.

We beg to remain,
Revered Sir,
Your most obedient Servants,
Sd. P. Narayan Iyer.
Chairman, Reception Committee.
M. Gopal Krishna Iyer,
Sd. A. Ranga Swami Iyer,
Secretaries, Reception Committee.

Madura,
July 5th, 1906

The Swamiji made the most appropriate reply, and at the same time took the Madurians to task for their tall talk and lethargy. He said that hitherto, Bengal has been the foremost in carrying Mission's work, and that in far off lands the people are yearning for enlightenment. More centres should be opened in America. He wanted more intelligent graduates trained in the study of comparative religion and science to present the truths of Vedanta in a rational way, and he bemoaned the dearth of men—men in the truest sense, willing to renounce the world and work for humanity.

Then a *conversation* was held in the same hall and a number of questions about America and the Mission were answered The Swamiji said that the shrewd American people knew how to respect those who deserve respect and that their treatment of him and men like him was marked with sympathy

and kindness and that he had been requested by no less than four University centres to deliver courses of lectures on Vedanta philosophy and comparative religions

When the Swami visited Madura it was a sight to see, hundreds and thousands of illiterate and middle class people with their hands reverently clasped above their heads awaiting the blessing of the Swami The enthusiasm and devotion shown on this occasion by Sri Karunananda Swami and his disciples gave ample proof that India was a land essentially of religious men, inspite of the handful of so-called cultured, English educated, ultra-selfish Mammon worshippers. But for men like Messrs P Narayan Iyer, the retired Sadhu like Vakil, M Jagadisa Iyer, Karunananda Swamigal, M Gopal Krishna Iyer, Secretary Vivekananda Union and a few others, and the timely help of the minor Raja of Ramnad, who on the score of religious devotion is the worthy son of his worthier father, the Swamis reception on the occasion of their surprise visit would not have been so happy and successful The Swami and his party were entertained by Mr P Narayana Iyer who is a noted Vakil of the city

The party left Madura for Trichinopoly in the early morning of July 7th, the same afternoon they reached Trichinopoly Junction where they were received by a delegation of Hindus and an hour later they proceeded to Trichinopoly fort. Here a large crowd met them with native music and followed their carriage in a long procession to Srirangam where a Bunglow had been kept reserved for them Later Swami Abhedananda spoke for one hour and a half before an audience of over one thousand people in the Hindu National School on "Hinduism in America —the lecture being a reply to the first address of welcome presented to him

## SRI ABHEDANANDA SWAMIJI
## OF
## THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

Revered and Dear Swamiji,

We, the citizens of Trichinopoly and Srirangam, feel proud and happy to welcome you to our town after your arduous

labours as a Hindu Missionary in the West. That the religion and philosophy of India are receiving an increasing measure of eager attention in America and Europe is solely due to the self-sacrificing spirit of the Ramakrishna Mission whose name is indissolubly associated with the saintly memory of Sri Rama krishna Paramahamsa and his illustrious disciple and your late lamented colleague Swami Vivekananda In the short space of welcome address it is impossible even to briefly recount the fruits of your work in America and elsewhere Suffice it to say that a country which generally suggests the Almighty dollar and multi-millionaires, has risen to a perception of the grand truths and problems which concern life and its mysteries Letters of distinguished Americans to their friends here and the reports which from time to time appear in the newspapers give us an idea of the wonderful spiritual influence you are exercising over our brethren across the Atlantic, and bear eloquent testimony to the significance of the popular saying that "Light Travels from east to West"

At the same time we are aware it is but a poor satisfaction that the new world should become alive to the grandeur of our religion and philosophy, if we in India should drift from our religious moorings and prove ourselves unworthy of our past.

But we have no reason to entertain apprehension. It must be evident even to the most casual observer that forces have been at work for the last decade and more which have opened our eyes to the great religious possibilities of this country and evoked in us a sense of that self-respect which has drawn us more than ever to all that is noble and elevating in our Mother-land. Your presence at the juncture in our midst is bound to give a powerful impetus to these forces and encourage us in our onward march We shall only assure you, Swamiji, that we shall always be ready to sit and learn at the feet of teachers like yourself and try to translate into our everyday lives the lessons with which we are privileged.

With renewed assurances of our hearty welcome

We remain,
Your admiring fellow-religions,
(Sd) T. K. Balasubrahmanyam,
A Gopalachari and Others.

*July, 7th, 1906*
Trichinopoly,

The next morning the Swami took a bath in the river Cavery. Then a visit was paid to the great Vishnu Temple of Srirangam, one of the largest and richest in Southern India, and to another remarkable Temple dedicated to Shiva—known as the Jambukeshvar In the afternoon the Swami delivered a second lecture on Vedanta in front of the Srirangam Club Building, for an hour and a half in the open air. This lecture was a reply to the following address of welcome, beautifully illuminated with gold and green which was presented by the members of the Srirangam Club:

To

SRI ABHEDANANDA SWAMIJI OF
THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

Reverend and Dear Swamiji,

We, the members of the Srirangam Club, beg leave to offer you a most hearty welcome to this our ancient and historic island. We esteem it a very rare privilege to pay Your Holiness our heartfelt homage here, in Srirangam, the scene of the labours of the great Sri Ramanujacharya of blessed memory

We take this opportunity to express our gratitude for your noble and disinterested labour in the cause of our Religion in disseminating the truths of the divine philosophy of India in America and England and in acquainting the Western world with the truths of Hinduism thereby bringing the West into closer touch with the East You have by your wise exposition of the Sacred Truths contained in the Vedic literature, disabused the enlightened minds of the West of their prejudices entertained against our ancient faith convincing them of the universality of the Vedanta.

In you, we realize a living example of the Hindu Sannyasin who, renouncing all worldly ties and attachments leading to the gratification of the lower self, is worthily engaged in the noble duty of living for others and endeavouring to raise the spiritual condition of man.

We fervently pray to God Ranganatha Who is the Almighty Father, the Lord of the universe, to bestow on you long life and full success which ever deserve to shine on the brow of

immortal truths Assuring you Swamiji, once again, of our most hearty welcome,

We remain,
Admiring Followers,
The Members of the Srirangam Club.
(Sd) S O Narayan Swami,
S. S. Vyasa Rao and Others.

Srirangam,
*July, 8th, 1906*

After the lecture there was a fine display of fireworks and a torch-light procession, the camels and elephants of the famous local Temple leading the way, and the whole crowd with the Swami following Notwithstanding his expostulations horses were unyoked, and the carriage was dragged by the boys singing songs in praise of Krishna, Rama, Sankara, Vivekananda and other spiritual heroes of India.

The same students gathered to the number of five hundred on the following morning and again dragged the Swami's carriage around the famous Rock-Temple situated in the centre of the fort. The procession lasted for two hours, after which a halt was made again at the Hindu National School and sometime was spent in answering questions

At four o'clock the Swamis, Abhedananda and Ramakrishnanda, set out for Pudukotta, the capital of the native state of the same name, about thirty-three miles from Trichnopoly. The Swamis were invited by His Excellency the Dewan Bahadur as State-guests The State-Coach with Royal escorts carried the Swamis along the State-road surrounded by picturesque sceneries Horses were changed at every ten miles. At the last station for changing horses about seven miles from their destination, an unexpected accident happened causing great delay and discomfort to the passengers. The horses refused to be yoked to the carriage at that late hour in darkness of tropical evening and broke the shaft of the Royal-Coach. The Swamis were fortunately uninjured. There was no way of repairing the broken shaft at that station, consequently a man had to ride back to the city to get another carriage for the guests. It took nearly four hours before the second carriage arrived and the Swamis waited on the roadside without food or drink It

was half-past one in the morning, Pudukotta was reached, the crowd headed by the State-Officers and members of the Royal family, which had gathered to greet the Swamis, growing weary on account of this long delay had with great disappointment dispersed and all plans for the torchlight procession through the main streets of the city were discarded

A local correspondent writes in the *Indian Patriot* the following account of Swamis visit:

## SWAMI ABHEDANANDA IN PUDUKOTTA

"In this town of Pudukotta, situated in an out of the way corner of the world, where the spirit of conservatism still reigns supreme notwithstanding the advancements in the political, social and commercial activities of the day, the people had the fortune and happiness to accord a grand reception to the Swami Abhedananda, the day before yesterday, a fortune and happiness denied to the people of many other cities of greater importance. It was purely the sense of humanity and the feeling of generous sympathy towards the inhabitants of this town that actuated the Swamis to visit this small place, undergoing all the privations and troubles generally attendant on the travel between stations unconnected either by rail or tramway At the request of the members of Pudukotta Vedanta Society, the revered Swamiji consented to include this town in the list of his touring station, and the fact that he was entertained as a State-guest may well indicate the degree of reverence this State and its people have for the Swamin and of the eagerness and longing they had to hear his teachings.

According to original arrangements the Swamis should have reached the town at 7 p m on Monday last; but owing to some carriage accident about seven miles from Pudukotta our Swamin did not reach the town until 1 a m Swami Ramakrishnanda, the privilege of whose sweet and learned preachings the people of this place enjoyed last year, and Mr. Narayana Rao Naidu, a member of the above Vedanta Society, from Trichinopoly accompanied the Swami. During the day they stayed with us, the Holy Swamins were entertained at State expense in the bungalow occupied by the late Chief Medical

Officer, the apartments of which were well furnished and decorated with ever greens and flowers Since the time of his arrival in the town up to the hour he went to the Theatre Hall in the College in the evening to deliver a lecture, some earnest and sincere seekers after truth in the Hindu religion flocked to the Swami who readily answered their eager questions

Next morning the Dewan Bahadur called at the Bungalow, formally received the State-guests and accompanied them on a visit to the Royal Palace and through the various public buildings The brother of His Highness called in the afternoon to honour the Swamis After a short drive through the public park the Swami Abhedananda was taken to the spacious hall of the Hindu High School.

Before six o clock, Tuesday evening, the appointed time for the lecture, the Theatre Hall of the College was overcrowded with educated gentlemen and the officers of the place and also the College students, the chief of them being the Dewan, the Council, the Commandant, the Treasury officer, the Second and the Third Judges of the Chief Court, the late Director of Public Instruction, the Principal, the State Engineer, the Assistant Engineer, the Huzur Clerk, Secretary Sanitary Board, the Apothecary, Survey Superintendent, the Professors of the College, Hospital Assistants and others Precisely to the hour the Swamis drove to the Hall and took their seats on the platform with the others. The late Director of Public Instruction, Mr S Narayana Swami Iyer, B A, proposed the Dewan Bahadur S. Venkatarama Das Naidu, B.A, B. L., to the chair, who in a short speech introduced Swami Abhedananda to the audience as a member of the Ramakrishna Mission, who was working with heart and soul, in foreign countries of Europe and America in the cause of the Vedanta Religion of the Hindus inculcating its sublime principles among the other nations of the world. The meeting was then opened with prayers read both in Sanskrit and Tamil. The former by Pandit Krishna Sastrial and the latter by Mr Chidambaram Iyer, B.A. The late Director was called upon to read the address of welcome:

TO

HIS REVERENCE SWAMI ABHEDANANDAJI

Reverend Swami:

We, the Members of the Vedanta Society, and the inhabitants of the state of Pudukotta, beg to offer your reverence a most hearty welcome to this place, the capital of the Tondaman Raj, and venture to approach you to express our humble gratitude for your noble work in America during the last ten years in disseminating the truths of the Vedanta Philosophy, that has made India famous as the home of spiritual culture

We are glad to state that since the visit of Swami Ramakrishnandaji to this town, religious institutions, under the auspices of the Ramakrishna Mission, have been started, at Keeranoor and Ponnamaravati, and we hope ere long to extend the study of our ancient Vedantic truths throughout the State

We take the opportunity of expressing our deep gratitude to the Government of His Highness the Maharaja, for having so kindly entertained you as a State-guest This native State has always been famous for its charity and hospitality towards the Sadhus of India The prosperity of the State is owing to the tutelary protection of Sri Dakshinamoortti and the special blessing of Sadasiva Brahman

In conclusion, we devoutly pray to the God of all nations to bless your Reverence with long life, good health and strength to carry on the sacred work left you as a noble heritage by the late lamented Swami Vivekananda

We beg to remain, Holy Swamin,
Yours most Obediently and Reverentially,
The Citizens of Pudukotta.

Pudukotta,
July 10, 1906.

In reply the Swami spoke for over an hour After thanking the audience for the kind and cordial reception accorded him and his brother Swami, Swami Abhedananda spoke on *Vedanta in America.*

He advised the audience to practise when young, the breathing exercises enjoined in the Pranayama and Raja-Yoga as a sovereign panacea for the cure of many ills to which the

flesh is heir He said that he knew of skilled American medical practitioners who had studied Vedanta, prescribing breathing exercises for their patients He dwelt at great length upon the catholicity of the Sanatana Dharma, and spoke against the custom of early marriage, intending to tie young people to their homes and militating against their usefulness to society He spoke of the good arising from the study of the *Bhagavad Gita* and said that he knew of many Americans being helped in the pursuit of business by following the principles of Karma Yoga, and carrying in their pockets a copy of the *Bhagavad Gita*. The lecturer concluded his speech by informing his hearers that a school may very likely be started for training young unmarried graduates who would be willing to follow and assist the members of their Mission. The Chairman after thanking the Swami for his instructive lecture, brought the meeting to a close, Mr. P V. Ramachandra Rao, B A , then proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman, three cheers to the two Swamis and three cheers to our beloved Rajah. The Swamis and the Chairman were thereupon garlanded and the meeting terminated with deafening applause.

During the course of his eloquent speech a heavy shower fell ; the rain pouring in torrents and brought joy and happiness to the minds of all who had for two months been suffering from the evil effects of drought throughout the State. The unexpected occurrence created a deep impression upon the hearts of those who believe in the old Hindu proverb "Where a true Sannyasin goes he scatters blessings to all and removes their grief"

The next item in the programme of the evening was the presentation of an address by the members of the Young Men's Hindu Religious Association in the Vedanta Society Hall

After supper the Swamis were taken to the Hall and a cordial reception given them by the members of the Association The Address was read and presented by Mr P. V. Narayanaswamy Rao, one of the grandsons of the late Rajah Sir T. Madhava Rao.

## TO HIS HOLINESS SWAMI ABHEDANANDAJI OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

Most Respected and Revered Swamin,

We, the members and sympathizers of the Young Men's Hindu Religious Association, Pudukotta, beg leave to approach Your Holiness on the occasion of your visit with this address of respectful and hearty welcome.

We venture to submit to Your Holiness that the Sri Ramakrishna Mission has conferred on us untold blessings in moulding our character and directing our mind Godward.

The visit last year of the Swami Ramakrishnananda to this place, has given a strong impetus to the carrying on of our work assisted by the valuable advice of our good and esteemed President and Vice-President and the noble band of co-workers associated with them

We cannot, in this place adequately express our sincere admiration and deep gratitude for the great and noble work you have done in America and Europe in spreading the Truths of the Vedanta—the Mother of all the religions of the world

We beg to request Your Holiness to convey our kind and affectionate greetings to our young brothers and sisters in America.

In conclusion, we fervently pray to the God of all nations to bless your Holiness with sound health and long life to enable you to carry on this holy work.

We beg to remain, most respected and revered Swamin

Members and Sympathisers of Y.M.H R A.
M. Chidambaram Iyer, B.A.,
*President.*
P. V Ramachandra Rao, B A.,
*Vice-President.*
A Sashiah,
*Secretary.*

Pudukotta,
July 10th 1906

In response the Swami Abhedananda gave an informal talk lasting for half an hour on the "Practice of Yoga"

At the close, the Swami was garlanded by Narayan Rao.

A Hindu Sastri composed a few verses in Sanskrit praising Swami Abhedananda dwelling upon his unselfish work in foreign lands for the propagation of the truths of the Sanatana Dharma or the eternal religion of Vedanta The evening ended with native music and fire-works, and torchlight procession headed by a State elephant with bells and decorations hanging on his neck

On July, the eleventh, a return journey was made to Srirangam and the same afternoon Swami and his entire party proceeded to Tanjore.

At Tanjore on Wednesday night, a large gathering of townsmen invited by a notice issued by Mr Sadasiva Rao and Mr. N. K Ramaswami Iyer assembled at the station to receive the distinguished visitor. Upon his arrival, Swami Abhedananda, accompanied by two others of his Mission, and escorted by Mr. T K Balasubramania, B.A., of Srirangam, who had looked so well to the visitors' comfortable and happy stay while there, were conducted to the platform and introduced to the assembly Mr. E Suryanarayan Iyer, then read a short address welcoming this great preacher of the Vedantic religion in America and elsewhere, praying that he be spared many years to carry on the noble work which he has so unselfishly and successfully embraced. The national band playing, the assembly marched to the station portico where the garlanded Swamis took carriage amidst loud cheers.

The address runs as follows.—

## TO HIS HOLINESS SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

May it please Your Holiness,

We, the citizens of Tanjore, beg leave to approach you with this our humble Address of Welcome.

Led by the great spirit of self-sacrifice and love for the elevation of humanity, Your Holiness has been preaching the Religion of the Vedanta for more than ten years in America

The establishment of the Vedantic Schools and Mutts proclaim loudly to the world the disinterested and unselfish work Your Holiness has been doing for the cause of Vedanta.

May the Great Isvara spare Your Holiness for many years to come that yor may continue to carry on the work.

In conclusion we beg permission to thank Your Holiness for your kindness in honouring us with this visit

Tanjore,
July 12th, 1906

Yours Most Obedient
Citizens of Tanjore.

From the Portico to Mr. T. D. Swaminatha Iyer's spacious bungalow in South Rampart Street the carriage slowly moved on, all the assembled following the torch-light procession throughout. Among them were noticed the Zemindar of Papanad and Mr. Madhi Hussain Saheb, besides of course, many enthusiastic students

The following morning was spent in visiting the famous temple of Tanjore with its colossal stone bull ; and the palace library where the Swami was especially interested in seeing the remarkable collection of Sanskrit manuscripts, some 8,000 in all, written on palm leaves. Later he stopped at the High School and then returned home to rest before the meeting at 6 o'clock in Besant Hall, where he lectured for one hour and a half on *Vedanta in the West.*

The Swami pointed out that the term Hinduism as applied to Hindus is unmeaning, its origin is purely geographical, being derived from the river 'Sindhu' Indus. He then dwelt upon the sublime truth contained in the Vedanta and the Jnanakanda portion of the Vedas. According to him the commentaries of Sankaracharya, Ramanujacharya Madhavacharya were all correct and not inconsistent with one another. The great merit of the Vedas and the Vedic religion is that it does not depend upon the personality of one man or some men. Even if the lives of Rama and Krishna were not found in the Vedic Religion, it would remain as grand and unassailable as with their lives. But Christianity, Mohamedanism. Zoroastrianism and Buddhism are all centred in the personality of some single individual without whom each of these religions would crumble to pieces He pointed out that the greatness of the Vedic religion was being recognized in varous countries in the world. America, he said, appreciates the teachings of the Vedanta and in

proof whereof he referred to the existence of a number of societies started for the purpose of Vedantic study. Almost all of the modern philosophical theories and truths were pointed out and discussed many centuries ago in the Shastras. The teachings of Herbert Spencer and Darwin could not be new to the careful students of the Vedanta. One has not got to go to any other country to learn these modern philosophical discoveries. He greatly regretted that the Indians do not bestow the full attention upon their religion which it deserves. He emphatically brought home to the minds of the audience the necessity for religious workers and Sannyasins like himself going out to different continents chiefly America, and preaching the Vedic religion. This India which is the Punyabhumi could easily conquer the whole world spiritually, would only the sons of the soil be alive to the greatness of their religion. He was sorry that he was not able to get workers prepared to enter upon this religious mission. He said political greatness would, of its own accord. come to a nation which was spiritually great. A Sannyasin had nothing to fear in any country. He was not bound by fetters of any kind ; he can go all over the world quite contented and quite happy. He then exhorted those present to take keener interest in their religion in future. At the close of the lecure the Swami was garlanded.

The next evening after a bath in a branch of the river Cavery and a drive, the party resumed their journey arriving at Kumba Konum at half past five. A large number of people with a band of music greeted the Swami at the station and accompanied him in procession to the bungalow set apart for his use. Then without allowing any interval for rest, he was taken to Proctor hall where before a gathering of some seven hundred people, he lectured for an hour and a half in response to an address of welcome. We give below the address of welcome offered to the Swami:

## TO THE MOST REVEREND SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

Revered Swami,

We, the citizens of Kumba Konum, beg to offer you a most cordial and respectful welcome. We have been watching with

pride the progress of your arduous labours in the West, and we tender you our warmest congratulations on the signal success you have achieved in this great work of philanthropy and love. With untiring zeal and devotion you have now for nearly ten years consecrated your energies to the holy work of propagating the noble movement inaugurated by our honoured fellow worker, the late lamented Swami Vivekananda ; already we see signs of the not distant future which will bring the realization of his great and glorious work. Your profound and brilliant expositions have led to a wide and ever increasing appreciation of the grandeur of our sublime philosophy of the Vedanta, and the great men of the West esteem it a privilege to listen to your masterly discourses. Under your fostering care the Vedanta Society of New York has already become a powerful and growing organization and with its numerous branches bids fair to expand still further, like our famous Banyan tree, offering shelter to hundreds and thousands from the noon-tide heat of materialistic despair. We all fervently pray that your revered self and all the members of the noble Ramakrishna-Brotherhood may be endowed with health and strength to fulfil your mission. May you long be spared to carry abroad your messages of peace, harmony and love and to discover to the nations of the West, that the East is tre great spiritual Teacher of the world.

We beg to remain, Revered Swami,
Your humble and admiring followers,
The Citizens of Kumba Konum

Kumba Konum,
*July 14, 1906.*

Kumba Konum may be called the Athens of Southern India. It has been the seat of Hindu culture and philosophy for many centuries. The Swami Abhedananda paid his first visit to this great centre of learning fifteen years ago when he was travelling barefooted, a mendicant Sannyasin on his way to the holy temple of Rameswaram At that time, although unknown to the public he was most kindly received by some scholars ; he also met the great Mauni Swami who took a vow of silence which he kept for over thirty years.

The Swami's lecture on this occasion was deeply impressive and all the great Pundits and noted scholars of the place

showed their deep appreciation by asking many questions on the higher philosophy of the Vedanta. The next morning at 6 o'clock the aged Dewan Bahadur Raghu Nath Rao who is known as the "Grand old man" in Southern India, accompanied by fifty other educated citizens of Kumba Konum came to the Railway station to bid farewell to Swami Abhedananda and his party After travelling by fast train for four hours the Swamis reached Cuddalore at ten o'clock. Here a most imposing procession marked the reception at the station and was repeated again in the late afternoon when at six o'clock the Swami was conducted to the lecture hall to hear two addresses of welcome:

AUM

TO HIS HOLINESS SRIMAT ABHEDANANDA

Most Reverend Swami,

From the moment we received the news of your leaving the shores of America, we have been ardently longing to welcome Your Holy presence to this city, and to pay our humble tribute of love and gratitude for the grand mission you have been so nobly accomplishing in far off lands for the lasting good of humanity Now that the sacred hour has arrived, our very hearts leap for joy and we feel blended and fused, as it were, in a universal happiness in the presence of one whose very name is a signal for the bliss that comes of oneness and non-difference.

The great cause of spiritualizing the materialistic nations of the West and opening out to them the hidden treasures of our Vedanta, possesses in you a servant, staunch and steady, whose unbounded enthusiasm is equalled by his calm decision, stern self-denial, and unremitting toil. The seed of spiritual knowledge, sown by the divine hand of Sri Ramakrishna, shot forth into a charming plant full of bud and blossom at the brightening touch of Swami Vivekananda, under your protecting care has grown into a mighty tree with roots deep-struck and branches far spread, whose fruit will ere long be the perennial joy of all mankind.

Such noble deeds rarely fall to the lot of man and we

bless this day which has drawn us into the presence of one whose whole life is dedicated to their performance.

May the almighty Ruler of all be pleased in His mercy to spare you long for the good of man and the glory of this ancient land.

We beg to remain, most Holy Swami,
Your obedient Servants,
Citizens of Cuddalore.

Cuddalore,
*July 15, 1906*

AUM

## TO HIS HOLINESS SRIMAT SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

Most Revered and Holy Swamiji,

We, the members of the Young Men's Union, Cuddalore, Old Town, beg leave to approach Your Holiness with this our humble address of welcome, and to express our sincere love and gratitude for the great work you have taken up and been carrying on successfully, of propagating the Vedic religion throughout the world in the wake of the great Swami Vivekananda.

We welcome Your Holiness to this old historic town in the name of the sublime Vedic religion, preached and practised by our illustrious forefathers ; we welcome Your Holiness in the name of the great Mahatma Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Deva whose incarnation was willed by Providence as a faithful verification of the divine saying of the Lord in the *Gita dharma-samsthapanarthaya sambhavami yuge yuge* in good opportunity at a time when the mighty waves of materialism and Mammon worship rolled by the storm of Western civilization were dashing furiously against the citadel of our ancient faith and Sanatan Dharma.

We welcome you in the name of the old order of monks who left their hearths and homes, their kith and kin, their joys and sorrows, in short everything of this world and of the other, sorrowing for the afflicted humanity and dedicating their whole lives for this emancipation, begging alms and preaching the religion of universal love and same-sightedness from door to door, street to street and village to village

You have endeared yourself to all honest seekers after truth and your name like that of Srimat Swami Vivekananda is enshrined in the hearts of all Indians.

We fervently pray that God may give you life and strength to further carry on your noble mission and spread it throughout the world.

We propose, Swamiji, to open a library in grateful memory of Your Holiness's visit to this town on this occasion and we earnestly implore your kind permission.

We beg leave to remain, Reverend and Holy Swamiji,
Your most Dutiful Humble Children,
Members of the Young Men's Union.

Old Town,
Cuddalore,
*July 15, 1906.*

The Swami replied at length to these addresses, speaking for over an hour and a half before nearly 3,000 people. This closed his long and triumphant journey from Colombo through the extreme South of India and at two o'clock on the morning of July fifteenth he with his party took the train for Madras.

During the month that had elapsed since his landing at Colombo he had visited fifteen different places on the urgent invitation of the people of each place. He had received nearly a score of addresses of welcome and had spoken in public many more times before audiences numbering to several thousands. Everywhere the greatest enthusiasm had been manifested and new lustre added to the glory of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna and the work of His Mission first brought before the world by the illustrious Swami Vivekananda.

## CHAPTER III

# MADRAS

The arrival in Madras was the culminating event of the journey through the South. Here had been forged the first link in that chain of sympathy which now binds East and West for it was through the efforts of friends at Madras that Swami Vivekananda came to the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, and nowhere did he receive a greater ovation on his return It was to be expected after similar service, the cause of religion in the West that his brother, the Swami Abhedananda, would receive an equally warm welcome, and these expectations were fully realized From *The Hindu*, Monday July sixteenth 1906, we extract the following report:

## SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

Swami Abhedananda arrived in Madras yesterday He left America about the middle of May and landed at Colombo about June fifteenth. He has since visited several places of importance in the South, telling eager audiences everywhere of the growth of Vedanta in America. He has been in that country for ten years delivering lectures, holding classes, making disciples and in all manner of ways endeavouring to establish Vedanta there. Vedanta Societies have been started and numerous pamphlets and books have been added to the Vedanta literature to popularize the study of the Hindu religion by the Western nations. These Societies have been brought into existence chiefly by the lecturing tours of Swami Abhedananda; and after years of strenuous and successful work, the learned Swami is coming home to render an account of what is being done in distant lands on behalf of our ancient religion and to inspire hope and cheer in us as regards the possibilities of further accomplishment even under the strange and trying conditions of modern civilization. He has been everywhere greeted with the utmost enthusiasm and the guest of almost every town of importance

on his way from Colombo to Madras. The public welcome accorded him yesterday morning was one of the heartiest ever organized by the citizens of Madras

## ARRIVAL IN MADRAS

The South Indian Railway Station was the scene of great enthusiasm. There was a large gathering on the platform long before the time of arrival of the Boat Mail. The eager crowd rushed to the first-class carriages immediately the train was drawn up on the platform and welcomed the distinguished Swami with vociferous shouts of *Bande Mataram*. In a few seconds, Swami Abhedananda's tall, erect and commanding figure was seen through the carriage doorway, and as every one attempted to get as near as he could, it was some time before the members of the Reception Committee could approach and accord the Swami a formal welcome. Rai Bahadur P. Ananda Charlu, C.I.E., on behalf of the Committee garlanded the Swami, and after a few introductions a move was made to the carriages placed outside A procession was formed here which slowly proceeded through Chintadripet, Mount Road and Royapettah to "Mohan Vilas" The procession lasted nearly two hours and was accompanied throughout by Bhajana parties. In several places triumphal arches had been put up with suitable inscriptions and the large crowds that lined the route right through, cheered as the carriages passed "Mohan Vilas" was reached at about 10 o'clock, and it was very nearly, midday when the gathering dispersed.

Among those present on the Railway platform were Rai Bahadur P. Ananda Charlu, C.I.E., Rai Bahadur Professor M. Ranga Chariar, Rai Bahadur M. Audinarayaniah Garu, Messrs N. Subba Rao Pantulu Garu, P. R. Sundaram Iyar, B.A., B.L., Dr. Otto Shroeder, Messrs. T. Ramakrishna Pillai, V. C. Seshachariar B.A., B.L., A. S. Balasubramania Iyar B.A., B.L., K. R. Subrachandra Rao, T. V. Seshagiri Iyar, B.A, B.L., Dr. M. C. Nanjunda Rao, V. V. Srinivasa Aiyangar B.A., B.L., C. P. Ramaswami Iyer B.A., B.L., G. Venkatranga Rao, M.A., M.C, Alasinga Perumal, B.A., T. Rajagopal Pillai, S. Veeraraghava Chariar and several others.

The Reception Committee deserve to be congratulated on

the marked success that has attended their endeavours to give the Swami a suitable welcome and enable the Hindu residents of Madras to show their reverence and appreciation for one who has so devotedly and disinterestedly worked on their behalf and on behalf of their sacred religion. Indeed, as observed the Maharajah Gaekwar of Baroda, who was entertained at the farewell reception given by the Vedanta Society of New York in honour of Swami Abhedananda prior to his departure for India, *"the Swami has not only succeeded in spreading the great teachings of Vedanta but has also awakened in the Americans a true sympathy and love for India."* It must be particularly gratifying to our countrymen to learn that it is in the contemplation of the Swami and his fellow-workers in America to provide for the guardianship and control of Indian youths who may go to America for industrial education. Let us trust that by reason of the sympathy and love that has been awakened by the Ramakrishna Mission, a real impetus will be given to the industrial training of Indians in that country, and that side by side with the spread of spiritualism in the West by teachers from this country, our sons may be enabled to learn the art of making wealth in which the Westerners are such experts. If Europe and America want a spiritual renaissance we very much want a material renaissance. But in the endeavour to attain what each one wants, let there be no sacrifice of what each already excels in. The ideal life of a Vedantin is not in the utter renunciation of the world and all its wealth and treasures, but in the harmonious combination of the highest spirituality with the ordinary work-day concerns of this world. Such is the breadth and universality of the Vedanta that the humblest of individuals in pursuit of the lowest bread-winning occupations can beneficially to his soul and body practise it as a living working creed. Mr. Gladstone wrote thus in his diary: "May the God who loves us all, still vouchsafe me a testimony of his abiding presence, in the protracted though well-nigh dormant life of a desire which at times has risen high in my soul, a fervent and bouyant hope that I might work an energetic work in this world, and by that work (whereof the worker is only God) I might grow to the image of the Redeemer. It matters not whether the sphere of duty be large or small, but may it be duly filled".

If this can be wished for as the fruit of any religion, we believe it is pre-eminently so of our far-famed Hindu religion. It is this truth which modernized Sannyasins of the Vivekananda and Abhedananda type illustrate and exemplify. Those who follow the light of Vedanta need not take the coloured robe and fly into the jungles.

### ADDRESS OF WELCOME

In the evening, at 6 p.m, the address of welcome on behalf of the people of Madras was presented to the Swami at Victoria Public Hall. Long before the hour fixed for the meeting, the hall became overcrowded and it was thereupon decided to hold an open air meeting on the grounds to the north of the building. Around the improvised platform sat a very large gathering of the citizens of Madras and the proceedings were characterised by orderliness and enthusiasm. On the motion of Mr. P. R. Sundara Iyar, seconded by Mr. V. C. Seshacharia, Rai Bahadur P. Ananda Charlu was voted to the Chair

### RAI BAHADUR ANANDA CHARLU'S SPEECH

The Chairman in opening the proceedings said that they all knew why they had been brought together that evening or rather what personage it was that had brought them together. That person hardly needed any introduction to them, He was held in the same esteem and regard as his predecessor, the late revered Swami Vivekananda. In a sense it might be said that this Swamiji before them and other apostles who are co-workers were really the embodiments of the late Swami Vivekananda Carlyle had said that religion was the everlasting pole-star and the preachers of it were God's messengers to men. None of them died. He is here, there and everywhere ; and so long as the message, which he gave lived, he lived in that message ; he lived in everyone that spread that message and also in those who respected that message. The speaker was present at a recent meeting convened in Bangalore to take steps to organize a proper and fitting reception to the Swami during his approach visit to the city. He found that the late Swami Vivekananda is enthroned in the hearts of the people there. The late Swami had done them one thing for which they could

not be too thankful to him and to others who were carrying on his work. He had modernized Sannyasism, and they had before them apostles who would elevate them in the scale of civilization by opening the eyes of the world. They have their agents in the different parts of the country. At any rate, he could speak for Bangalore where he met the representatives of this sect. They were doing there the work that Swami Vivekananda had inaugurated in their midst. They could not therefore be too grateful for that kind of work and could not too warmly welcome the Apostles of this description If, as Bacon said, religion was the spice of life to make us live, it struck the speaker that personages like Swamiji who help in the noble cause, were entitled to everlasting gratitude and warm enthusiasm. That enthusiasm he would receive wherever he went With these few remarks he called upon Professor Ranga Chariar to read the address of welcome

## HIS HOLINESS THE SWAMI ABHEDANANDA .

Revered Swami,

On behalf of the Hindu inhabitants of Madras, we take very great pleasure in offering you our most hearty welcome to this capital city of Southern India On this occasion of your return to our motherland, after having spent years of strenuous and self-sacrificing labour, in a far away continent, spreading the light of ancient Indian thought, you naturally remind us of the great Swami Vivekananda, who has been the most markedly successful pioneer of the Vedantic propagandism in the modern history of our country. And if we now take credit to ourselves as having been the discoverers of Vivekananda in that we felt faith in him and encouraged him to go to the Chicago Parliament of Religions as the representative of Hinduism, it is out of any feeling of egotism and self-satisfaction, but to enable you to see how deeply we are interested in the growth of the Vedanta in the Western lands, and how true and warm our appreciation of your labours as a Hindu Missionary is naturally bound to be When we say that to us you have for years appeared as one who is fully worthy to carry out the aims and plans of the great pioneer, we feel that you will readily agree with us in considering that such an apprecia-

tion is well worthy to be coveted by even the most excellent of the servants of mankind. We have reason to know that your indebtedness is no less than his to your great common *Guru*, Sri Ramakrihna Paramhamsa. With your heart filled with the benign and sanctifying influences derived from having had the privilege of sitting at the feet and listening to the living words of such a seer and divinely blessed teacher as Sri Ramakrishna and with your life moulded on the plan of your great predecessor and fellow disciple Vivekananda, your are sure to leave indelible footprints on the sands of time, so that the generations that come after you may thereby realize that life is indeed the most usefully spent which is worn away in the doing of unselfish duty and in the rendering of disinterested and loving service.

The giver of light is more than equal to the giver of bread ; for it is light that ultimately produces bread. Accordingly the work of religious missionaries like you is blessed in more ways than one and the progress of humanity depends upon it largely.

May God who is the source of all life and light bless and prosper your truly beneficient work and give you time and bring to you health; to labour more and more in ancient Indian field of spirituality so as to enable mankind to reap in due time the abundant harvest of peace, purity and spiritual emancipation

We remain,
Revered Swamin,
Yours most Obediently,
The Citizens of Madras.

Madras,
July 15, 1906.

Professor Rangachariar, at the conclusion of the address, enclosed a copy of the same printed on yellow silk, in a silver casket prepared by Mr. Manikka Achari, and handed it to the Chairman for presentation to the Swami.

## REPLY TO THE MADRAS ADDRESS OF WELCOME

*(Delivered on the 15th July)*

Mr President, Co-religionists and fellow Citizens,

I thank you heartily for the reception that you have given me this morning and also for the enthusiasm that you have

shown from morning to evening. Our illustrious leader, the late Swami Vivekananda was the pioneer of this movement , in fact, he was the first Hindu Missionary who went abroad, crossing oceans and reaching the heart of Western civilisation and preaching the Gospel of Truth. Not only the members of the Ramakrishna Mission, but the members of the Vedanta Societies in Europe and America and students of Vedanta all over the world are all indebted to the inhabitants of Madras for having discovered Swami Vivekananda long before he was known to the public. The work which was done by our illustrious brother was a permanent work. It was only the beginning of a work which is going to last for ever. At any rate, as long as the Hindu nation will last, his work will continue to grow stronger and larger in capacity. His mission was to enlighten the minds of all inhabitants of all countries, His mission was to show that this world is not our home, it is not a permanent abode of our souls, but only temporary. Western nations, who are rolling in luxury and sensuous pleasures, have hardly found time to think of the ephemeral nature of our earthly existence and it was Vivekananda, who, for the first time in glowing terms, and through oratorical powers, described to people of Europe and America that this world of ours is not permanent, that this earthly existence is, when compared to the eternal, like a flash of lighting which passes away in a moment In this ephemeral existence what ought we to do, what should be our aim? Is Dollar worship—the worship of Mammon, the ideal of human existence? Is the search for sensuous pleasures the ideal of our life? Western civilization may hold materialism and sensuality and commercialism as the ideal for the time being, but the time is sure to come when they will wake up from this self-delusion and begin to see things as they are in reality. Western nations have a great deal to learn from the East, especially from India Vivekananda gave them the ideals of life, ideals which are not fleeting but eternal. And the first thing that I want to impress upon your minds is that you are souls and not bodies This is the religion, this is the fundamental principle of the Hindu faith and the Vedic scriptures. Vivekananda preached the religion of the Vedanta But what is the fundamental principle of this religion of the Vedanta? It is that we are born as immortal souls : we are

not born in sin and iniquity, but we are the children of immortal bliss This is the lession which the world has yet to learn from the religion of the Vedanta, and Vivekananda was the preacher of this great religion We must always consider this evanescent earthly career as a means to attain to the highest ideals of life which are freedom, emancipation and the attainment of perfection. We might call that state, a state of God-consciousness. If we are in reality children of Immortal Bliss, do we feel it or are we conscious of it? Whether we do so or or not it matters little. It is our birthright, we must feel it sooner or later ; we are bound to feel it and be conscious of it. Every one of us is like God, eternal, immortal and potentially divine Our religion is the most practical of all religions in the world, because it does not teach us that belief in a certain set of doctrines, dogmas or creed is the aim of religion. It teaches, on the other hand, that to become divine, to reach perfection, to manifest divinity in all actions of daily life is true religion. True religion lives nowhere so perfectly as it does in our motherland ; the *Punyabhumi* or the sacred soil of India is the only country which has maintained the jewel of spirituality in her bosom from time immemorial. She is the only country which has produced the highest spiritual ideals that human mind can grasp and has produced spiritual leaders who have moved the world. India still is living and her religion is not dead. It is still alive, in fact it is the heart and soul and the life-blood of every individual Hindu.

When a spiritual teacher returns to India from a foreign country, he is received with greater honour and reverence than what the commercial nations pay to the political rulers of their country. This shows that our life consists in spirituality, nay it is a part and parcel of our life. I have told again before my English and American audiences that, "you Christian people do not hold religion as a part of your daily occupation. You go to church once a week, but during the week days you are busy with other matters. But in India the Hindus eat religion, sleep religion, walk religion and live religion". In my travels in Europe and America I have found nowhere such a demonstration of spiritual life as I find here to-day after ten years of absence. India can never give up spirituality. If we are spiritually strong we shall be strong in every possible way. Spiri-

tual strength is the mother of all other strength, especially in our Motherland We may try to start social reforms and political reforms, but all these do not reach the very core of our hearts, the very bottom of our souls but if we unite reforms with our spiritual ideals we gain new strength new power and we are ready to move the world Western nations consider religion as something which is necessary because it is a part which must be played under the name of civilization, but in our country it is a part of our daily life . . Another thing which our religion teaches is unity, oneness Unity is the plan of nature or rather the ideal of nature , unity is the foundation of this phenomenal universe—unity of spirit, unity of souls If we are all children of immortal bliss, as such we are one External differentiations and distinctions are only in names and forms, but intrinsic unity pervades every atom of our being We must realize that we are one in spirit, one with our neighbours, one with all living creatures, Jesus the Christ asked his disciples to love their neighbours as themselves. Our Vedas have asked all to love humanity and all living creatures as themselves Why should we love our neighbours as ourselves? We do not find the answer to this in the Bible. The reason is given in the Vedic writings by the Seers of truth, the *Mantra-drashtas,* and that reason is this that we must love our neighbours and all living creatures as ourselves, because we are one with our neighbours in spirit, we are one with all living creatures in spirit We should learn that all individuals are one in spirit and, therefore, we should love all. Five hundred years before the Christian Era, the Great Sakyamuni, Prince Siddhartha declared before the world the eternal law, that hatred is never conquered by hatred but by love. But what is the meaning of love? Love is nothing but an expression of oneness. The Hindu nation will be a different one when all are united by one spiritual ideal, united in God, the eternal Being.

In Canada, Alaska the United States and down into Mexico, everywhere I have found in people a great desire to know more about religion and philosophy of Vedanta. There are a great many centres in America and thousands and thousands are already inspired by the ideals of this wonderful religion, Practical men and women of high culture in America are

anxious to learn more about it and to apply the teachings to their daily life and gain comfort, consolation and happiness even in this life. There are already thousands and thousands who have read Vivekananda's writings, and who have studied the *Gita*. There are many in America who regard the writings of Swami Vivekananda as their Bible, and they feel a new life They are so anxious to learn more about the Vedanta that they ask me again and again to bring more Swamis from India as their teachers. Such teachers, however, must first practise renunciation ; without renunciation no one can become a spiritual preacher. The strength of renunciation is known only to those who are able to live a life of renunciation. When I first landed at New York I was penniless. Not one penny was sent from India to support me. There are millions and millions of dollars behind Missionary workers, but we Sannyasins do not need funds. The blanket is our garment, bare-foot is our ornament and mother-earth is our bed ; and the Sannyasin life is the most enjoyable of all life because we enjoy freedom. If any one has once tasted the blissfulness of the eternal happiness that comes through divine communion, he cannot enjoy the pleasures of senses, pleasures of earthly life and all that proceeds from earthly attachment. People may ask why should we cut those ties? Because emancipation is the goal. It is our mind that is the cause of bondage and the same mind becomes the greatest help and brings us salvation and freedom when the evil *ajnana* or ignorance is removed Our own self can be our friends as well as our enemies If we ignore the higher spiritual nature and live on the sense plane then our own self acts as our enemy Those who wish to preach Sanatan Dharma must be fearless, must renounce all attachment to the body and senses and external objects, and must cut asunder all ties that hold the individual down on the material plane ; and when this is done, he becomes a spiritual leader of mankind. Swami Vivekananda was one of them. He had no ties ; he was fearless and always held communion with Brahman, the Infinite Being He felt the presence of the Divinity not only in himself but in all living creatures. In this age of commercialism and materialism Swami Vivekananda has set before us a living example as to how we may attain to glory by following his footsteps. The movement, which he started, is neither a local nor secta-

rian movement. I assure you, it is going to be our national movement. This movement is growing steadily and covering a larger area everyday, and the time is not far from to-day when we shall be able to see that the whole world has accepted this movement and become its true followers and admirers. Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, our divine *Guru* is the life and soul of this movement which is spreading under the name of Vedanta. It is a divine movement and will create wonderful results as time rolls on. The late Paramahamsa is going to be a living example of a Sannyasin and a renunciation. He has set an example to the world, and his hands are felt every-where. He is worshipped and honoured in America, in England, in Canada, in Europe and everywhere. The number may be small in some parts of Europe, but it is bound to increase if preachers are forth coming to make the whole world know the spiritual teachings of our Guru. A noted clergyman of America places on the same level the writings of the Swami with those of the great spiritual Saviours of mankind We shall unite our efforts for the spread of the movement We must recognize no distinction of caste in our religion ; because caste is a social movement and religion has nothing to do with it. Do you know that the Vedas teach that? Religion does not recogize caste and there is the grandeur of our religion because it is in religion alone that we can find freedom from all distinctions. We are all children of God there That has been held before our eyes as the highest ideal from time immemorial. "He, who sees the same spirit in a Brahman, a cow, an elephant, a dog and in a Pariah, is the true seer and knower of God. He is the true Pundit". Now it is our time to practise it, live up to it and show before the world that we live religion and do not merely talk about it. Then we shall be able to help our country, to help ourselves, to help humanity, and to help all those who will come in future, as well as all souls who are aspiring for the highest ideal of eternal Truth and who are struggling hard to realize that Truth, in their own souls.

Mr. V. C. Seshashariar proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman of the evening and the meeting terminated.

The next day many visitors called on the Swami and in th evening, before a concourse of nearly five thousand people assembled on the northern side of the Victoria Hall compound,

the Swami Abhedananda delivered a lecture on *Universality of the Vedanta Religion.*

## UNIVERSALITY OF THE VEDANTA RELIGION

*(Delivered on the 16th of July in Madras)*

Swami Abhedananda, in rising to address the large assembly numbering between four and five thousands, once more thanked them for their hearty welcome and fine demonstrations of warm enthusiasm and love they had shown for him and spoke to the following effect:

"It is extremely gratifying to me to know that you care more for your religion, for spirituality than for anything else. All other subjects, such as politics and social progress, are secondary to us Hindus and spirituality is our life It is a part of our soul. We cannot give it up. The moment we give it up, we shall be dead. From time immemorial, from the day when all the Anglo-Saxon and European nations were tattooing their bodies and eating raw animal flesh, from that hoary age down to the present day, our treasure and wealth are in spirituality and not in politics or in social reform.

The religion and philosophy that we have inherited from our ancient forefathers, *Mantra-drashtas,* the seers of truth, are absolutely universal. They do not take their stand upon the quick-sand of doctrines and dogmas but upon the solid bed-rock of eternal truths and spiritual laws that govern our souls from eternity to eternity ; and standing upon this solid foundation, our religion and philosophy have withstood all other ravages of time and have been able to conquer all other kinds of movements that have sprung up from time to time. Our religion and philosophy have civilised the nations of different countries, whether of Asia, or of Europe whether directly or indirectly. Spiritual ideals of the highest nature first arose from the heart of India, and then travelled Westward and Eastward—Westward as far as Alexandria and Greece and Eastward as far as China. Even centuries before the Christian Era the great preachers of Hindu philosophy and religion went out of India to distant lands to preach the gospel of Truth. They

never carried swords or guns, but they spread and scattered good-will peace and love wherever they went. The spirituality which we have inherited through our wonderful religion and philosophy is known under the name of Vedanta.

By 'Vedanta' many people may think that it means certain sectarian philosophy or some metaphysical dogmas which are purely monistic or non-dualistic, and consequently one-sided. The term Vedanta is not limited by any sectarian doctrine or dogma or any metaphysical theory.

Vedanta means the end of wisdom. It is not limited to any particular book or writing or scripture, but it is absolute in its nature What is that end of wisdom, and how to acquire it, is the aim of the Vedantin primarily. The end of wisdom must not mislead us to any such conclusion that wisdom can be limited or can be made final. The idea is that the end of wisdom means that goal which is reached by all relative knowledge, by all knowledge which proceeds from the phenomenal world or from our sense-perception. Knowledge which is scientific is only striving to reach that climax to which it will never go. And where is that climax? Is it in the knowledge of matter or in the external phenomenal world? No! Matter is the cause of the combination of material particles known as the phenomenal world, which means one-half of the universe There is another half which is not matter, but which is the knower of matter. It is not same as the combination of material particles, but it is the knower, the *Atman* the intelligence by which we are conscious of the external conditions, we can perceive the existence of matter and we can know that there is such a thing as the phenomenal universe or the external world. It is merely object of knowledge and that is one-half of the universe. The other half is subjective, and when we combine the knowledge of the objective world and that of the subjective world, then we find that grand wisdom which is unlimited by time and space and that wisdom may be called divine or eternal wisdom. That unlimited wisdom is the beginning and end of the whole universe, Where is that wisdom? It is in the universe. Is it outside this cosmos? Is it outside our bodies? No, it pervades the universe. It is outside as well as inside. It is everywhere. We have that wisdom itself in our souls. In fact, our souls are but mani-

festations of that infinite wisdom which is the foundation and the end of all phenomenal existences.

The wisdom is described by various names and some personify it and call it the Lord of the universe ; but some make this wisdom as one of His principal attributes. Omniscience is the attribute of the Soul. But is the soul separate from omniscience ? No. He is one with omniscience. He is one with divine wisdom. Therefore, the religion and philosophy of the Vedanta teach that existence and intelligence are one and the same They are inseparable, and, therefore, absolute existence and intelligence must be the foundation of this whole universe ; and therefore, it is called *satyam jnanam anantam brahman. Satyam* means absolute existence, *jnanam* means knowledge which is beginningless or endless and that is what is described in Vedanta as Brahman, the infinite Being, the supreme Being of the universe ; and that Brahman is nameless. It is one. It cannot be many. It is also said in the Vedas that this one infinite intelligence and existence is the source of all phenomenal universe. A question was asked in the Vedic age, what is the nature of that eternal truth of the supreme Being and how is it related to the phenomenal world. That question was answered by another sage in the *deva-bhasha* or the Sanskrit language. Its translation is this: "That from which the whole phenomenal universe has come into existence, by which it exists, through which it continues to live and unto which it returns at the time of dissolution, know that. That is Brahman". Therefore, Brahman is the beginning, middle and end of all relative existences That absolute Being is also the ideal of all the great philosophers of different countries. It is called by different names. Plato called it the good". Herbert Spencer called it The Unknown and the Unknowable", and other philosophers like Emerson called it "Oversoul". A great Chinese philosopher called it "the eternal Being", the nameless and formless infinite wisdom which is the beginning and end of the phenomenal existence, and that infinite wisdom is the goal of all relative knowledge, and that is the ideal of Vedanta. It tells us how that goal can be reached, and what happens when that goal is realized. The ideal being one and the same, it tells us that the same infinite wisdom, whether we call it personal or impersonal, whether we call it the Creator,

Preserver and Destroyer, is one and the same It makes no difference.

If we understand that it has no particular name, then we have no difficulty in reconciling this ideal with the ideals of sectarian religions like Christianity, Mohammedanism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Buddhism, and other "isms" of the world. If we understand the nature of that infinite Being as nameless, then we may say that it is Brahman of the Hindus, Vishnu of the Vaishnavites, Siva of the Sivaites, Sakti of the Saktas. It is also the Father in Heaven of the Christians and the Allah of the Mohammedans, Jehovah of the Jews and so on. The difference is only in name. But these different names do not change the nature of that absolute wisdom, the divine Being, the supreme Lord of the Universe, and therefore, all religious quarrels and persecution that have been described in the pages of the religious history of the world, should not exist in future if we understand that unity in diversity is the ideal of our existence. The unity of God-head under a variety of manifestations which have names and forms. if we realize that, then there would be no more quarrel, no more fight between the Hindus and the Mohammedans, Christians and Mohammedans, Hindus and Christians and other followers of various sects. All these quarrels and fights proceed from ignorance, and fanaticism is the child of ignorance Wherever there is ignorance there is fanaticticism, and fanaticism leads to all kinds of diabolical methods which deluged the world with blood under the name of religion. Christians have held swords and guns in their hands and demolished temples in this country and Ceylon. They have demolished Buddhist temples in Japan and China. Mohammedans have demolished the Hindu temples through fanaticism and through that spirit of zeal to propagate their faith ; but the Hindus have always practised toleration. They have never held swords and never destroyed any religious monument for the sake of their faith Show me a nation like the Hindu nation who built churches for the Christians and mosques for the Mohammedans! Why did they do so? Because they know that the Lord who is worshipped under the name of Allah or the Father in Heaven is the same Deity whom they worship under different names. The toleration of the Hindus had been unique in the religious history of the world. We

have never shed blood in the name of religion. We understand better, and therefore, the Hindu nation is still capable of being the spiritual leaders and teachers of the Western nations They are yet to learn from the Hindus the grandeur of religious toleration. Hinduism accepts the fundamental principles of all varieties of creeds with the religion and philosophy of Vedanta, but, if you look a little deeper, you will see that Vedanta does not deal with doctrines and dogmas, but it gives spiritual laws which are eternal and universal and which are the common property of all religions. And what are those spiritual laws and ethical laws? They describe the relation between the soul and God, the relation between the individual soul and the external world ? All these are most beautifully described, most rationally maintained by no other system than the system of Vedanta which is not only a philosophy but also a religion

Now, the religion and philosophy of Vedanta can be divided into three principal parts. One part is dualistic. By that word I mean, it admits the existence of three entities as separate, but closely related to one another, and the relation of the individuals to one another. The existence of the individual soul, the external nature and of the Creator ; these three are the co-eternal entities These exist, but they are not one and the same. Those who admit these three things as separate entities are known as dualistic Among the Hindus you will find the Vaishnavites admit that the Lord is separate from nature as also from the individual souls, but among the Western nations those who proclaim Judaism, Mohammedanism Christrianity, etc., you will find the majority of these followers believe that the Lord of the universe is separate from the Universe, and He is the Ruler and the Governor of the universe. The Creator is distinct and separate from the individual souls which are His creatures This is the first step in the spiritual evolution of the soul. First of all, when we see beautiful things and perceive by our senses, then we conceive of a Creator and a Ruler and Governor and we think of His attributes, His powers and His majesty and then we bow down to Him and worship Him. In times of distress and suffering we pray to Him and call for His help. That is only natural. Then, gradually we begin to feel that the Lord of the universe whom

we conceive as dwelling beyond our reach is not far from us. He manifests Himself within our souls, as an internal Ruler and Comforter within ourselves.

Then we feel we are not separate from Him, but more closely connected with Him in some mysterious manner, for our true nature is not absolutely separate. It is only a part inseparable from the whole ; yet as a part is not the same as the whole, so we feel that our true Spirit, our *Atman* are parts of the one stupendous Whole and yet not the same. This is the second stage of the spiritual evolution. It is called Visishtadwaita. It means that we are in the body of the Supreme Being, and the whole external phenomenal world forms the gross physical body—*Viratmoorti,* of that infinite Wisdom, and each individual soul exists in the body of the Lord. Sometimes it remains there latent and at other times it manifests itself in various manifestations and incarnations.

Then, there is another still closer realization and that comes to the soul which has reached beyond the limits of all relative knowledge, sense-perceptions and thoughts and ideas. When we rise above all relative conceptions, we find that there is something which is the foudation of our conceptions of the Creator, the Preserver and Destroyer which forms the essence of the Lord whom we worship under different names. When we realize that, we enter into the domain of the absolute existence We are no longer conscious of external things and we feel a blissful state of *samadhi* which is indescribable and there we find all differentiations vanish. The sun, moon and stars disappear. Where do they go? We do not know, but there exists one infinite wisdom and it is said in the Vedas that neither the light of the sun, nor that of the moon, nor that of the lightning can show the glory of that infinite wisdom, which these external material light cannot reveal. How can earthly light reveal that supreme Being But at the same time it dwells in the sun, in the moon and in the stars as well. It is the essence of the lightning. No one can transcend it. It is indescribable, unfathomable, immortal; this state is called Monistic or Advaita. Then we realize that these three, the individual souls, the external nature and the Creator are but the manifestations of one absolue wisdom which is infinite and eternal. In manifestations there is relativity. A creator exists

so long as there is creation, but when there is no creation how can there be a creator. So is *Isvara* What is its meaning? *Isvara* means the ruler or governor. Now, can there be a governor when there is nothing to be governed. And how long does the governor exist? So long as the phenomenal world exists, there is that manifestation which is called *Isvara* or personal God. But our God is not merely personal but He is also impersonal. Our conception of God as a personal deity is only a limited conception of God. That is only the beginning. We must rise higher and higher in the evolution of our conception of God and gradually we shall find that this *Isvara* is only the first-born manifestation of something which is indescribable and Infinite Wisdom and that is the Brahman Now under these three heads we can include all the special religions of the world,—Christianity, Mohammedanism, Judaism, etc., which are dualistic, and therefore, they can be embraced by the dualistic system of the religion and philosophy of Vedanta. Ramanujacharya described in his commentaries the grand truth that the first-born Lord of the Universe, *sanguna* Brahman is the Almighty Being in whose body dwells *chit* and *achit,* the individual ego and nature. This idea was expressed by Jesus Christ when he said that the great Lord is like the vine and we are but branches. It was expressed by the English poet Pope when he said, that the Lord is one stupendous whole of which we are but parts. But when we go a little deeper we find that He cannot be divided into parts, because He is Infinite and every part of Him is Infinite. Then comes, the most advanced metaphysics of Sankaracharya, who says that all these differentiations and distinctions are only on the phenomenal plane. The idea of separation, and the idea of division, exist so long as we are limited by time, space and causation. Time, space and causation are but the products of one eternal Energy which is known as *Prakrity* or *maya.*

But what is *maya,* I ask? Is it merely illusion? No, It means relative existence. It means time, space and causation. Sankaracharya defines it as Indescribable in its nature and name[1] It is the energy of that supreme wisdom. The Divinity, and beginningless. It consists of three qualities or materials which combine themselves and manifest into gross material forms of the universe. Its existence can only be

inferred by seeing results, and it is that which produced all phenomenal names and forms Time, space and causation are included in that; because these are the conditions under which all names and forms exist. European philosophers think that Kant was first to discover that time, space and causation are the conditions of phenomenal existence, but it was known to the Hindus long before the time of Kant In fact, Sankaracharya mentioned these several times in his Commentary on the *Upanishads* and on the *Brahma-sutras.* It was familiar to the Hindus long before Kant declared it, from the time of Sankaracharya who lived about the eighth century A D In fact, that idea was in a germ stage in the *Upanishads* which existed thousands and thousands of years before the Christian era We must not consider that *maya* means absolute illusion. It means phenomenal existence, conditional existence, It means that my existence depends upon the existence of Madras. Madras exists so long as there is India and India exists so long as there is earth and the earth so long as there is the solar system. That is conditional existence and that existence is possible only in time, space and causation. But when we rise above time and space, when relativity vanishes, there is no *maya,* nor manifestation of *maya* and there is the abode of infinite wisdom, and yet at the same time it forms the background; it forms like a canvas upon which the most beautiful picture of the phenomenal world is painted by the Almighty hand, and that canvas gives life and soul to the picture of the phenomenal world. Nothing can exist as separate from that Infinite Being, and therefore, we must feel our relation to the Infinite as inseparable, and this idea was expressed most beautifully by Christ when he said "We live and move and have our being in God" The same idea was expressed in India centuries before his time It is expressed in the *Upanishads* thus; "That from which everything comes into existence, in which everything exists, and into which everything returns." So our being depends upon the supreme Being This is the ideal goal of our religion as also of all religions of the world.

Therefore, our religion embraces all other religions. For instance, the Vedas say that *moksha* is to be attained through knowledge. By knowing the Brahman we can attain to absolute emancipation and freedom, and the same idea was given in the

Bible when Christ said; "And ye shall know the truth and truth shall make you free." Christ there meant that knowledge brings freedom. He did not mean the knowledge of any material object or of external matter, but the knowledge of that one Being which when realized would bring about freedom from all bondage If you study the Koran you will find the knowledge of Allah is declared to be the means by which that goal of freedom can be attained. Of course, going to heaven and enjoying celestial pleasures are not considered to be the highest state of spiritual realization. According to our Sanatana Dharma, although it advocates and helps such men who are anxious to reach the goal of celestial pleasures and does not discourage the devotee who wishes to go to heaven and enjoy the celestial pleasures for a certain length of time, yet it holds before us that these pleasures are within the realm of time, space and causation, and teaches us that those seekers after truth who wish to attain to the absolute Being, who endeavour to enter into the body of infinite wisdom must transcend the celestial region. Other religions do not give that ideal but give only celestial enjoyment as the highest happiness. And therefore, those special religions can never become universal, because they do not want to go beyond that limit of heavenly pleasures. If there be any one who does not care to go to heaven, these special religions cannot healp that individual, but here we have a religion which can help all those who wish to go to heaven as well as those who do not care to go to heaven, and therefore, this religion is more universal than other special religions.

Another point we must not forget. viz, that the universal religion of Vedanta which advocates the existence of one truth, one being and one wisdom, is not based on any theory which is like the theory of special creation out of nothing But it is purely rational. It is in perfect harmony with reason, science and philosophy As the modern scientists after long research and investigation have arrived at the conclusion that this world was not created in six days out of nothing, but is the result of the gradual evolution of the eternal energy which is all-pervading and which remains unmanifested at certain times and then manifests itself into various names and forms. The evolution theory has been discovered by modern thinkers through long research and investigation. The ancient thinkers of India dis-

covered the same law of evolution and based their religion upon that law and rejected the theory of special creation of the world by any external deity, and therefore, in the Vedas we read that something can never come out of nothing, and this is a scientific law discovered by modern scientists. Until lately this law was unknown to the scientists of Europe and America, but it was known in India centuries before the Christian Era, In the Chandogya Upanishad whose date has not yet been fixed by the occidental scholars, we read that a father taught his son saying how can something come out of nothing. That question was raised by the great *Mantra-drashta* of the Vedic period as it is raised to-day by the scientific thinkers of the West. And therefore, the evolution theory has given foundation to the religion of Vedanta which is universal, and its universality consists in that harmony which exists between itself and all sciences and philosophies of the world I shall now proceed to show you how the highest ideal of all the scientists of modern times is included within the pale of Vedanta religion and therefore it is universal The evolution theory gives foundation to the religion of Vedanta At the same time we must not think that this theory explains all things. There are other theories which are higher than the evolution theory Time will not permit me to enter into the details of that metaphysical point, but I can assure you that there is a theory which is better and more scientific than the theory of evolution, but the modern scientists of Europe do not accept it. Well has it been said by Sir Monier Williams that the Hindus were Spinozaites before Spinoza, Darwinians before Darwin and evolutionists before any word like "evolution" existed in any other language. This is true, for as early as the time of Kapila, we find him explaining that theory in detail. The modern theory which is so beautifully explained by Herbert Spencer is not very dissimilar to that ideal theory of evolution which was started by Kapila at least seven centuries before the Christian Era. He may be called the Herbert Spencer of ancient India. And thus we find that all the scientific thoughts and discoveries are helping and sustaining the religion and philosophy of Vedanta But what has become of the other special religions which were built upon the theory of a special creation? They are based on blind faith. They believe in traditions and are afraid of

asking question. If any one ask a question, such as, why did God create the earth before the sun, the answer is not given, and the preacher says it is blasphemous to ask such questions, and that most inscrutable are the ways of the Almighty and He can do anything. Such explanations do not satisfy scientific minds, and therefore they do not accept such theories but ridicule them. In our religion of Vedanta nothing can be ridiculed.

Another point which we must remember before we can understand the universality of Vedanta, is this: It has never had any founder. A religion which needs a founder or which is built upon the personality of a founder is limited by that personality and therefore cannot be universal; and if the founder be one-sided it can never be unlimited It may satisfy certain souls but not all, and for that reason we find so many religions existing in this world. Mohammedanism tried to convert the whole world. Christianity has been trying for the last 2,000 years But have they succeeded? We doubt it. They may try another 4,000 years We live in eternity, so we do not care Our life is not limited by three or four scores of years but we are children of Immortal Bliss We are not afraid of hell-fire after death, and there is in addition on our side the fact that we are not going to eternal perdition. I was coming from England to India in a P. and O. steamer There was a passenger who travelled with me and was interested in the missionary work, and he thought I was a Christian missionary So he asked me to what denomination I belonged. I said, "To no denomination." It was very surprising to him. He said, "Don't you believe in Christ?" "Certainly I do," was my reply. Then he asked, "Do you believe that he is the Saviour?" I said "He is one of the Saviours Mohammed was a seviour, Buddha was a saviour and there are many others" He then asked, "Do you believe that you are a sinner? He will save you and through him you will receive salvation." I said, "I do not believe that" "Don't you?" he asked. I said. "No." He then said, "You are the first man I have seen that has the courage to say so." I said, "Yes! We have the courage to say so, because we know it." He then said. "Well, it is very strange. Time will come when you will believe that you are a sinner." I said, "I am a child of God, and to call me a sinner is blas-

phemy, and if you call me so, you will commit a sin yourself." He said, "I have never seen such a man." I said, "you see me and I will show you thousands like me if you go with me." He then changed the subject

So, my friends our religion gives us that strength and we do not fear eternal hell-fire, because it does not belong to us. We are the children of Immortal Bliss This must be preached in all countries of the world, where they are groaning under the burden of that blasphemous thought that they are born in sin and iniquity and we must remove that by spreading the religion of Vedanta. Awake, arise and take the banner of this universal religion and go from land to land and preach the gospel of truth, to enlighten the minds of thousands and millions of men who are waiting to receive you as their own saviours. Such is the grandeur of the universal religion of Vedanta and its various methods It does not say that everybody should believe in one particular creed, but on the contrary, it says that each individual will have his own particular line of thought and each will eventually reach that ultimate goal Christianity, Mohammedanism, Vaishnavism, Sivaism and Saktamarga—they are all so many paths, each leading to the one goal If we realize that, then there will be no fight, no persecution but absolute peace and harmony The follower of the Vedanta religion is neither a Hindu, Mohammedan Christian, Parsi nor any other. He can worship in a Church, in a mosque, in a temple or in his own heart, because our human body is the temple of the living God, is the Church of the Almighty Father; and there the eternal Spirit shall be worshipped by spirit and in spirit and then we shall worship the true God. Then we shall be able to say and know the truth of the great saying, which Sri Krishna made known to the world nearly two thousand years before the Christian Era.—

"Whoever comes to me through whatsoever path, I reach him All religions reach the same goal which is the infinite and absolute existence, intelligence, bliss and love"

Rao Bahadur M. Audinarayana, in bringing the meeting to a close, thanked the Swamiji for his able interesting and eloquent address and said that after hearing the lecturer, it would not fail to strike any one that while this religion was

so tolerant, so all-embracing, it had nevertheless in practice conduced to the erection of many social barriers between them. This was a most important problem, the solution of which must be considered by all and he hoped the Swami or some one else would deal with it at some future time.

The meeting then dispersed.

The great strain of addressing large audiences in the open air was beginning to affect the Swami's voice, and on the seventeenth he was persuaded to take complete rest In the afternoon Justice Subramanyar Iyer and Mr. Sundara Iyer called at "Mohan Vilas" to see the Swami.

The next morning the Swami visited the Sri Ramkrishna Paramahamsa Girls' School In the evening edition of *The Hindu* ; (July 18, 1906) appeared the following report:

## ADDRESS ON FEMALE EDUCATION

### Visit to Sri Ramakrishna Girls' School

Swami Abhedananda paid a visit to the Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Girls' School, Georgetown, on the morning of the 17th July The proceedings commenced, with the recitation of a Sanskrit verse in praise of the Swami by a Pandit. The girls of the school then recited a few verses in praise of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa The Swamiji next unveiled the portrait of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, and spoke to the following effect:

"Ladies and Gentlemen,

When your worthy Vice-President explained why this school has been called Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Girls' School, it occurred to me that this is the most appropriate name by which the school could be styled There could not have been a better name for the Girls' School in this age, because Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna realized that every woman, whether young or old, is the representative of the Divine Mother, the Sakti, the Mother of the universe, *Jaganmata,* and it was he who, for the first time, made it known to the world that every woman should be considered as the Divine Mother in flesh and blood. Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, who is now recognized as the Incarnation of Vishnu, made his first teacher a lady. He was

the only *Avatar* who took a Brahman lady, *Brahmacharini,* as his spiritual teacher. By doing that, he raised every woman to a position which is desired even by the gods The highest position 'that can be given to woman-hood was given by Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, and he realized that the greatness of our country could be achieved only by educating the young girls, the women of our country. The young girls who are studying here will become the future mothers and their children will be the future generation. They will be the heart and soul of the Hindu community and of the Hindu nation. How important it is for use then, that these girls should be properly trained and educated. Why should more than half of the Hindu population be deprived of all the privileges that come through right education and of the enlightenment that comes through the knowledge of various branches of science, philosophy and religion? They have more right than we have, because they are going to be the mothers of the future generation. You do not realize how important it is for mothers to be well-trained. Otherwise, the children will not inherit those qualities which are great and inspiring If we want to have children, strong and genius-like, we must educate their mothers first. This has been the great defect in our present system of education in India, especially among the Hindu women ; but from the Vedic period we find that the education of women was highly considered and was given freely, irrespective of caste distinction. If we study the Vedas we shall find that there were ladies who were like incarnations of Sarasvati, such as Gargi, Maitreyi and others You will find many names like Gargi in the Vedic literature. Even in the *Puranas,* we find that their knowledge and education were supreme and they were held in great respect, and that they even commanded the male members of the community and guided them ; but to-day we are so negligent about our own education that we pay little attention to our young boys and girls. I appeal to the Hindu parents not to neglect this school but to strongly support it and make it a Hindu National Girls' College, where higher education will be imparted to all the Hindu girls and where some girls will be trained as teachers later on. We need women teachers. It is a mistake to let male teachers teach the girls, because women know their needs better than men Therefore, the first advice

that I can give to the Directors of this school is to train women teachers

I am very glad to know that you have two women teachers in your school, but we want two dozens If we have this number, they will be able to go from one Peta to another Peta and start other schools. If there is easy influence brought to bear by the Missionary ladies as has been said, then our Hindu ladies will do better I also look forward to the time when a Principal of a National Hindu College for Women will be a Hindu Lady If you go to America, you will be able to see the culture of women They are like the flowers and blossoms of the twentieth century, and those flowers are very beautiful in every respect. Young girls there do not marry so early as here. They devote all their youth to education. I have seen women 35 years old, pure in character, who are devoting their whole energy to study. They are not willing to get married, because marriage is considered by them to be the greatest bondage. They are staunch lovers of freedom and knowledge. If you go to public offices and public Schools and Colleges there, you will find women clerks and teachers more in number than men, and they are the best teachers. In the Kindergarten schools, in Primary Schools and in High Schools and Colleges in America, you will find everywhere women teachers. Why should we not try to train such women-teachers among ourselves? Why should we send our girls to Mission Schools, where they do not receive their national education? Everything is destructive of Hinduism in Mission Schools. Nothing is constructive It is constructive in their own way, because they try to break the Hindu community All this should be guarded against. You must unite your energy, and take a stand against such foreign influence If the parents of the girls do help and encourage such an institution, they would be ruining themselves It is upon them that the glory of the future generation greatly depends. Therefore, I appeal to all the parents to show proper encouragement without further delay and help the Directors to erect a large building for this school. I hope that in short time this school will have thousands of students I would like to see it growing into a High National College for Hindu women. I thank you all for having given me an opportunity to say these few words.

With a vote of thanks and with the singing of *mangalam*, the proceedings terminated.

### VISIT TO THE SANSKRIT COLLEGE, MYLAPORE

On the evening of the 18th July, Swami Abhedananda paid a visit to the Mylapore Sanskrit College, where he was presented with an address in Sanskrit. In reply, the Swami thanked them for the address and impressed upon them the need for throwing open the study of the Vedas and the Shastras to all classes of Hindus. He pointed out that it would be too late now when foreigners have already begun to study our sacred literature and philosophy, to keep back that knowledge from our fellow-Hindus. It is by spreading the study of the Vedas and Vedanta among all classes in India that our spiritual progress and main source of strength would improve After inspecting the various classes the Swami departed.

As a result of Swamiji's visit to the Sanskrit College, Mylapore, the following letter appeared in the Madras Mail, Tuesday evening, July 24, 1906

### MYLAPORE SANSKRIT COLL. & NON-BRAHMINS

Sir,

All along I was under the impression that no cast distinction was observed in the admission of students in the Sanskrit College at Mylapore, started under the patronage of that eminent patriot-citizen of Madras, Mr V. Krishnaswami Iyer. And I am now sadly disappointed to know that it is practically reserved for Brahmins alone. Swami Abhedananda visited the College on the evening of the 18th instant, and was astonished to see not even a single non-Brahmin among the students The College authorities, on being questioned by the Swami on the point, gave only an evasive reply. The Swami was deeply moved, and in a short and pithy discourse explained to them the necessity of enlightening the masses He told them that there is no meaning in reserving the knowledge of the Vedas to Brahmins alone. The Vedas do not prohibit anybody from being enlightened. The soul is neither Brahmin nor non-

Brahmin Knowledge is the divine heritage of all Of all *dhanams* the best and noblest is *vidya-dhanam* and that must be open to all There are many Europeans who have made a careful and sincere study of all the Sanskrit books and philosophy and the Brahmins of Mylapore can never pose to possess any real superiority over them Janaka and Rama were not Brahmins and yet they were not prevented on that score from acquiring a knowledge of the *Upanishads* On the other hand, Shuka, a Brahmin, is said to have been taught by Janaka, Kshatriya that he was It is enlightenment and character, not birth, that make a Brahmin The masses of India are left uncared for and they are all in great lack of enlightenment and it is the sacred duty of Brahmins to elevate them with a correct knowledge of the *Upanishads,* that crested jewel of spiritual thought. Unless that is done, no real benefit will be derived from the Mylapore Sanskrit College The College should produce not arrogant Pundits who look down on the masses, but large-hearted Missionaries like our beloved Swami who would make the cause of the down-trodden their own. Of what earthly use is dancing attendance on the Swami without making a sincere effort to walk in his foot-steps?

ONLOOKER

[There is no prohibition against admission of non-Brahmins in the Madras Sanskrit College at Mylapore, provided the candidate has passed the Sixth Class Sanskrit Examination under the Madras Educational Rules, or produces a certificate of possessing such knowledge from any recognized Pundit The College begins after the completion of the High School course. Non-Brahmins as such are not precluded from seeking admission —ED ]

From Mylapore the Swami and his party drove to Adyar to see the Headquarters of the Theosophical Society in India.

The next afternoon the students of the High School at Mylapore presented an address of welcome to Swami Abhedananda at the Ranade Library, The headmaster of the school garlanding the Swamis read the following address.

TO HIS HOLINESS
THE SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

Revered Swamin,

With feelings of profound respect, the members of the Bala Hindu Audikesava Bhaktajana Sabha, Mylapore, beg to offer you, on behalf of the student-community of Mylapore and on our behalf, a cordial welcome, and to express our genuine and heartfelt pleasure at your presence in our midst to-day Never before in the modern history of our country have hearts thrilled with so much delight as on the day when the great Swami Vivekananda was welcomed to these shores A parallel to such enthusiasm was visible yesterday when you set foot in Madras amid the acclamations of myriad voices, and no wonder The gracious messenger of a gracious faith, after disseminating the principles of the Vedanta in distant lands, comes to his native land traversing seas and oceans In the distant zones which he has ventured to visit millionares and philosophers, equally with the common people, have hung with rapture on his accents enthralled by the magic of his voice and the greatness of his message, they pay voluntary homage to him He sows broadcast the principles of the universal religion and far beyond the Tropic of Cancer and far into the Tropic of Capricorn they take root and fructify. A splendid and glorious work has been done and what Hindu heart will not be moved at the spectacle as the banner of the religion eternal is raised aloft in lands which until recently were but geographical names to us We are dazzled and amazed at your success We are proud of our religion, proud of such expounders of it as yourselt and we pray to the giver of all good that your valuable life may be prolonged far beyond the biblical span and that you may live to shed yet more lustre on our country

We beg to remain,
Revered Swami,
Members of the Bala
Hindu Audikesava Bhaktajana Sava

Mylapore
*July 18, 1906.*

In reply the Swami encouraged the students by showing from history that the Hindus were the first teachers in Arith-

metic, Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, Astronomy and medicine and that the world owes to India the first lesson in decimal notation, Today, the Swami said, we may be down-trodden, we may learn from the Europeans but we must not forget our past glory We should always remember that we Hindus are born not merely to learn from other nations but that we still possess many truths which we can impart to the Western nations as our forefathers did in olden times

After this short talk the Swami amidst prolonged cheers and acclamations of hundreds of students laid the foundation stone of a Vivekananda Memorial to be erected at Mylapore. The land was given by a devoted disciple of Swami Ramakrishnanandaji who has been working in Madras for the last nine years The ceremony of laying the foundation stone was performed according to the orthodox Hindu custom. The Pundits and Hindu priests chanted the *mantram* and the holy texts from the sacred scriptures, performed the *puja* and asked the Swami Abhedananda to lay the stone at the appointed moment and consecrate it The Swami gave a short speech in honour of the great works and exemplary life of the Blessed Swami Vivekananda the patriot-saint of modern India. The ceremony was concluded with the chanting of the glory of Ramakrishna by his devoted disciple Swami Ramakrishnananda.

## LAYING THE FOUNDATION-STONE OF THE RAMAKRISHNA HOME

Swami Abhedananda's presence in Madras was taken advantage of in laying the foundation-stone of the Ramakrishna Home, on a site in Brodie's Road, Mylapore, which was a free gift from Mr A Condia Chettier, a resident of Madras

His Holiness, before proceeding to lay the foundation-stone, said

Friends,

The work which was started by our illustrious brother Swami Vivekananda is a national work, and the whole nation is interested in it. If there are some individuals who are

apathetic in a certain way or who may show less interest in the work, the time is coming when they will wake up from their sleep of self-delusion and realise the grandeur and usefulness of this great work. Swami Vivekananda's work is inter-national We may not feel it now, but we are bound to feel it either to-morrow or the day after The whole Hindu nation, all the members of the different sects amongst the Hindus, are unanimous in their opinion that Swami Vivekananda was the patriot-saint of modern India His ideal was not a foreign ideal. His ideal was based upon the fundamental principles of the universal religion and philosophy of the Vedanta His ideals were founded upon the Vedic truths which were discovered by the ancient Seers and Prophets, and, therefore, all the sects should unite to help this great movement which is going to embrace the whole world. The whole world is now beginning to appreciate what Swami Vivekananda has done and what Ramakrishna Mission is doing. The Rmakrishna Mission is not a mushroom growth which has come up today, only to die tomorrow ; but it is going to gain strength every day and it is going to move the whole world The signs of such a movement have already begun. It has crossed oceans and knocked at the doors of those who are living at the antipodes of our country, and if the people of that country are already willing to raise monuments in the name of the Swami Vivekananda, in the name of his glorious Master, Bhagavan, Sri Ramakrishna, how important it is that we should do honour to Swami Vivekananda in every possible way. It is a pity that this foundation-stone was not laid four years ago, just at the time of the passing away of our illustrious brother, but it is better late than never, and we should join hands to raise this building on the spot. But this spot is too small for much scope. Of course, we thank the donor from the very bottom of our hearts, but this example is, I hope, only the beginning You must remember others may come forward to endow a larger building in memory of that illustrious patriot-saint of Modern India He has set a noble example , I mean the donor ; and others, I am sure, will soon come forward with liberal offers, but from this minute we ought to put our shoulders together We must unite in our efforts, and our purpose should be to raise a gigantic monument in memory of Swami Vivekananda What he has done for

Hinduism, you may not feel now, but your children and grandchildren will realise and see that the current of spirituality has taken a new channel, and that channel is going to broaden itself every day, unite all other countries and bring all the nations within its fold Today we have gathered here to honour Swami Vivekananda, not merely for his personality but for the work which he has done, for the glory which he has brought upon the Hindu nation. It was he who for the first time explained the universality of our religion, and it was he who proclaimed it before the world Others have tried But they were only the fore-runners ; Swami Vivekananda was the leader and founder of this movement Although he got inspiration from our Divine Master Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, still he was but the mouthpiece, through whom the Divine Master poured his own spirit amongst his hearers The building that is going to be erected here will, in course of time, be the institution which will continue the work which Swami Vivekananda carried on during his lifetime Of course his work needs a large institution in which to train the Hindu students who will be willing to understand their own religion in a scientific manner and then go forward as preachers to other countries Therefore, we want to see it established in the heart of Madras, an institution such as this, because Madras first discovered Swami Vivekananda. Madras takes the glory of discovering Swami Vivekananda before he was known to the public, and Madras should, therefore, show its appreciation first, by building a gigantic monument in the name of Swami Vivekananda. If the people of Madras fail to do it, it will be a shame to them They will bring that shame upon themselves by their own negligence and lack of their due discharge of duty I appeal to those who are present and all those who are interested in this grand movement to unite their efforts to make this a successful institution and raise more funds, so that other institutions may be added to this, in order to perpetuate the memory and further the spiritualizing work of Swami Vivekananda.

The Swami then proceeded to lay the foundation stone, on which were inscribed the words ,

Foundation-stone of Sri Ramakrishna Home, in memory of Swami Vivekananda, Laid by Swami Abhedananda, on

Friday, the 20th July, 1906, on the site presented by A Condia Chettiar

Underneath the foundation-stone were laid in a box five sacred woods,—*Aswatha, Bilva, Tulasi,* Lotus and Sandal, five stones,—*Saligrama, Bana, Shona, Sphatika* and *Rudraksha*, holy ashes, a copy of the Bhagavad Gita, the photographs of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and Swami Vivekananda and the autograph signatures of the Swamis of the Mission Swami Abhedananda laid the foundation-stone and Parthasarathy Ienger who took the chair being a devotee of the Mission, after placing these under the foundation-stone declared "it is truly well laid"

With a vote of thanks to the Swami, and with the distribution of sugarcandy, the gathering dispersed

## A CONVERSAZIONE AT TRIPLICANE

Under the auspices of the Triplicane Literary Society, a conversazione was held at the Gangaikondan Mandapam There was a larger representative gathering on this occasion

In reply to the question, as to what his and his brother Swamis' attitude was, towards the three systems of Hindu philosophy—dualism, qualified monism and monism,—whether there was any idea of superiority and inferiority, and whether he followed Sankara, Ramanuja or Madhva, or whether he had chalked out a separate path for himself, Swami Abhedananda said:—His was no new system or theory, he owed his allegiance to the three above mentioned commentators There was no idea of superiority or inferiority One system was neither superior nor inferior to the other All the three were parallel roads to the same goal, *moksham* Each followed the particular road according to his tendency and aptitude One liked to taste the sugar or *anandam,* whilst another liked to become the sugar or *anandam* itself No one has any right to say that the one is wrong and the other is right All the three commentators are considered to be the *Avataras* of some deity. They realised what they said They were God-inspired individuals Their ideas found expression in the saying of Hanuman, the greatest Bhakta, and Sankara the greatest Advaitist Both of them said,

"When I think of my body, Oh Lord! I feel that I am Thy *Dasa* or servant; when I think of my Jivatman, I feel that I am Thy *amsa* or a portion of Thee; and when I think of my *Atman,* I feel that I am Thyself" Thus, it will be seen that the seeming antagonists, the greatest Bhakta and the greatest monist have agreed about the three systems of philosophy.

The next question raised, was, whether the emancipation of the individual or the advancement of the country was more important The Swami said, that the country did not mean merely earth and water It is composed of individuals If the individuals are emancipated then the country is emancipated. The next question raised, was, that if the converse proposition was true, when the country was politically free; could it be said that, its individuals were emancipated? The answer was, "No" Because the freedom we see in different countries is not founded upon the rock of true religion, but is based on the shifting sand of commercialism

## ABHEDANANDA AT THE SOUTHERN INDIA VAISHYA ASSOCIATION

From Triplicane the Swami was driven to Georgetown a distance of four miles, to speak at the anniversary of the Vaishya Association at Georgetown, Madras, where he made the following speech:

Mr. President, members of the Association and friends,—

It is a great pleasure to see in this city, the existence of such an Association as you have formed The object of all these Associations, whether of the Vaishya community, or of the Brahman community or of the Kshatriya community ought to be one and the same The ideal of all these Associations ought to be the highest—physical, mental, intellectual, moral and spiritual perfection We must develop, in the first place, our physical nature We have become too weak We cannot stand on our legs Our backbone is broken We need crutches, and this is the condition of our young men to-day Teach them how to stand erect Like a brave son of the Aryan nation stand erect, and carry the banner of our religion all over the world Character-building ought to be the ideal of

this Association. First, build your character In what does character-building consist? In moral culture, in being truthful and in developing the feelings of sympathy, fellow-feeling and love for our neighbours These things you should cultivate And besides these, you should practise self-control Control your passions, anger, hatred, jealousy They are degrading us We must not encourage passion, animal desires and greed for possession, which exist in all people who are interested in commercialism You must not rob your neighbours You must not make trade by lying and cheating others Honesty must be the best policy of every man, especially of the Vaishya community, and those who are honest, command respect from all the nations of the world. I was in Ceylon a few weeks ago, and there I found how the Ceylon Government respected the Natukota Chetties and all the Vaishyas who are the bankers of the community. Why? Because they are honest When they borrow money they do not have to give any security Honesty and truthfulness are the ornaments of our souls We must practise them Whenever a Chinese merchant gives his word, that word is a bond He never breaks that word, and therefore the Chinese merchants are respected all over Europe and America If the Hindu merchants, especially the Vaishya class, practise this truthfulness and honesty of purpose, they will command respect from all nations, and I should like to see this Vaishya community crossing the ocean to distant lands, to spread the commerce and trade of our country A country becomes prosperous through industries, commerce and trade, and these have been in the hands of the Vaishya community from ancient times So this Vaishya community practically holds the treasure of the country, and, therefore, every member of that community ought to feel responsible for the growth of that treasure, for the spread of commerce, trade and industry. All the people who belong to this caste are bound by their duty, by nature and by religion, to pay attention to industries, agriculture, trade and commerce. I have seen Vaishyas in America and in England In fact, the majority of the people in England are Vaishyas. The Americans understand commerce. Look at the prosperity of the American nation! America is the wealthiest country in this world Why? Because they know how to develop the industries, how to manufacture articles, and

how to send them all over the world We have become too unprogressive and have no initiative and therefore we are down-trodden to-day You must wake up and build your character first Besides that, the members of this community must study their religion carefully, because the life of a Hindu, whether he is a Vaishya, Sudra, or a Brahman or a Kshatriya, is most intimately connected with his religion By religion, I do not mean any particular doctrines, dogmas, beliefs, or faiths, but I mean, the realization in our daily life, in each caste, of the worship of the supreme Being, which is the ideal of our religion. We must work for work's sake, but never seek for the result Leave the result to God This is what is called Karma Yoga, because we must live on this earth and perform the duties of life, and that Karma Yoga is the ideal even of a Brahman, even of a Sannayasin. Karma Yoga is the means by which you can attain to the purification of the heart. What is the ideal of Karma Yoga? "To work thou hast the right, and not to the fruits thereof" It is through Karma Yoga that the highest ideal of religion is accomplished Without practising Karma Yoga, none can achieve the highest goal Those who neglect the duties of life cannot get purification of the heart, and that purification of the heart is the first thing necessary for every mortal *Chitta-suddhi* has been declared essential in all the Shastras from the Vedic period downwards All the Puranas, the Upanishads and other *Shastras* are unanimous on that one point, that *chitta-suddhi* is the key to heaven and immortality. How are you going to attain that *chitta-suddhi*? By performing the duties of life and not seeking the results, and by offering the fruits of your daily work at the feet of the Lord every morning and evening When you have done that, your heart is purified. Then you will see the vision of the supreme Being, call Him Vishnu, siva, Christ, Father-in-heaven. or Brahman. Only the names are different but the Godhead is one and the same A Hindu ought not to think that his God is different from the Christian's. Where is the difference? He is the Lord of all nations We are all His children, and we must recognise all humanity as our brothers However imperfect we may be in the performance of our duties in life, still by birthright, we are children of the Divine Being, and when you have realided that, you have attained the highest goal of perfection, you have

attained the highest *moksha.* That is what our religion teaches, and all the works of our daily communal life are the means by which that goal is attained, whether you are a Vaishya, Kshatriya or a Brahman it makes no difference If you practise Karma Yoga, build your character and understand the highest truths given in the Shastras, and follow the teachings of the great *Avataras* like Sri Rama, Krishna, or Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa; you will reach the highest goal in time, and before death comes, you will attain that peace and happiness which are envied even by Indra and other Devas of the celestial regions

The visit of Swami for nearly ten days at Madras was so successful that he was kept busy every day from early morning till midnight People of all castes came from distant places with offerings in hand to pay respect to the Swami The owner of the garden house where the Swami stopped gave the name "Abhedananda Vilas" to his own residence to commemorate the Swami's visit

## CHAPTER IV

## DEPARTURE FROM MADRAS

Swami Abhedananda accompanied by Swamis Ramakrishnananda and Paramananda, left Madras on the morning of the 26th for Vaniyambady where there is a branch of the Ramakrishna Mission Dharmapuri was the next station to be visited previous to proceeding to Bangalore There was a large gathering present at the Central Station platform to bid the Swami farewell The Swami and his Brothers were profusely garlanded previous to their getting into the train

### VISIT TO VANIYAMBADY

The Vaniyambady Railway Station was the scene of great enthusiasm on the 26th at noon There was a large gathering of over a thousand people on the platform, long before the arrival of the train On alighting from the train, the Swami Abhedananda was profusely garlanded and taken in procession to the Vivekananda Lodge, Puthur At 5 30 p m the Swami was escorted in procession to the especially erected pandal before the Ponniamman Temple in Amburpet, where a grand reception was arranged for him

Mr. P Ponnukrishnaswami Pillai, B A, Pleader of Tirupatur, was unanimously voted to the chair. Welcome addresses in English, Tamil, Sanskrit and Telugu were then read by Messrs S Ponnuswami Pillai, M Subbaraya Iver, R. Ramaswami Iyer and C Subbaraya Iyer, respectively The Sanskrit address read by Mr R Ramaswami Iyer in an impressive manner, was specially composed by Mr T S Narayana Sastriar, B A, B L, High Court Vakil, Madras

श्रीरस्तु

## स्वागत पत्रिका

स्वस्त्यस्तु ! सन्तु नमाँसि भूयाँसि !! स्वागतम् !!!

तत्र भवतां, शमदमादिसर्वसद्गुणाकराणां, समस्तवेदवेदान्तादि-शास्त्रकमलाकर-दिवाकराणां, सकलाशासौमन्तिनीकर्णपूरीकृत सुविमल यशस्तोम कुमुदनिकर निशाकराणां,

अखिल विद्वन्मण्डली मण्डनानां, अशेष पाखण्डिगणखण्डनानां, अनवद्य पदवाक्य प्रमाणादि संस्कृताङ्गल विद्यासंप्रदाय परिशीलनव्ययित बहुसंवत्सराणां, आजानसिद्ध सौजन्य सौलभ्य सैशील्यादि सद्गुणग्राम परवशीकृत मानसानां, अनुपम नैपुणैरति प्रचण्ड वैदुष्यै रमन्दैश्वर्य सन्दोहैरभिवृडसारस्वत प्रक्रिया विलासै रतिशयित शिल्पकलान कलापैरमरिका खण्ड निवासिभिरनुदिनमतिगौरवमभ्यर्च्यमानानां, अखिल भुवन क्षेमङ्कर प्रक्रिया वरिष्ट तपश्चर्य्या विशेष समनुग्टहीत निखिल जनताश्रेयश्चिन्तन साम्राज्य-सिंहासनाधीश महामहिमश्रीमत्परमहंस परिव्राजके त्यादि बिरुदावल्यङ्कित श्रीमद्रामकृष्ण परमहंस चरणकमल समाराधन परायण श्रीविवेकानन्द स्वामिचरणांम्बुज भक्ति विशेष प्रभाव प्रशमित दुरितानुबन्धतयासमासादितसर्वेष्टसिद्धीनां आदृत वेदान्त प्रचार सद्व्यवसायभूम्नां, अनुष्ठिताखिल महीमण्डल निवासिजनता शर्मगरिम्यां यथार्थनाम्नां, अमेयगुणधाम्नां, अभेदानन्द महामहिन्नाम्।

तत्र भवतां सततसमातन्यमानषड्दर्शनी प्रसंगाणां समासादित नैश्चित्यानांसमन्ततो दिग्विजयमाकर्ण्य समासादितामन्दानद निष्यन्दमानसा श्रीवाणियंबाडीनगरि निवासिनो वयममी सादरमिमां स्वागत पत्रिकां समर्प्य संप्रार्थयामः।

अद्यैव सुप्रभातं, सूदिनं चैवाद्य नः मुसंवृत्तम्।
सफलं च जन्मजातं, समागमेनात्र भवतोऽत्र ॥

अभेदानन्दोऽयंस्वसमय सुधावर्षणेनाखिलानामभेदेनानन्दं भुविविरचयन्, जीवतात् संयमीन्द्रः। अजस्रं वेदान्तश्रवणपठनाध्यापनेबद्धकक्षा नमूनार्यान् कुर्वन् स्वचरित सदाचार मार्गेण सर्वान् ॥

जयत्वभेदानन्दो, जयन्तु तत्पथसमाश्रिताः सर्वे।
जयतु सनातनधर्मो, जयन्तु तत्स्थ्या विवृद्धबाधाश्च ॥

THE ADDRESS OF WELCOME

To His Holiness *Sri Swami Abhedanandaji*,

The storehouse of tranquillity, gentility and other good qualities who, like the sun, delights the lotus pond of Vedas, Upanishads and all other sciences, who like the moon expands the group of lilies existing in the shape of a mass of pure and unsullied fame parading all the quarters of the world, who is an ornament to all the learned world, who has rooted out all

the false religions, who has spent many years of his life in studying the great literature of the East and the West, who charms the mind of all people by his natural born gentility, amiability, good-heartedness and pleasant manners, who is every day highly esteemed and praised for his teaching by all the people of America, famed for their riches, distinguished for their arts and industries, noted for their learning, and praised for their skill, who has made his conquest easy of attainment with his life modelled on the plan of his fellow-disciple, the late Swami Vivekananda, the prince of ascetics, the venerable disciple of His Holiness Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Parivrajakacharya, the re-establisher of the Vedanta philosophy and religion, who has spent all his life in penance for the well-being of the usiverse, who himself has devoted the whole of his life to the teaching of the Vedanta philosophy to the world, and who true to his name is engaged in securing the spiritual happiness to the whole world.

We the citizens of Vaniyambadi, greatly rejoice to hear the success that Your Holiness has achieved in all the quarters of the world, and most cordially welcome you with your friends and disciples who have condescended to come to our city, as if it were by the good deeds that we have done in our former birth. Great indeed is our fortune ; this is the most happy day for us, and now only, by the advent of Your Holiness, has been fulfilled the object of our birth in this world

May Sri Swami Abhedananda live for-ever in this world securing the happiness of all without distinction of any kind by the shower of divine nectar of Vedanta philosophy and religion which true to his name flows from his charming lips, and may his benign and pure example lead all the Aryans to take up the study and teaching of the Vedanta which is destined to purify the whole world by removing the darkness of ignorance

May Sri Swami Vivekananda be victorious and may all those who follow his footsteps likewise prosper May the Sanatana Dharma prosper for-ever, and may all the people continue to prosper for-ever, strengthened by the true knowledge imparted by it

We beg to remain,
With respect to Your Holiness,
The Citizens of the town of Veniyambadi.

Vaniyambadi,
July 26, 1906

The Swamiji then rose amidst deafening cheers, and made a very long, earnest and instructive speech in an admirable manner In thanking the public of Vaniyambady for the very kind reception and the welcome address in different languages, the Swamiji pointed out, that the receptions given in the afternoon and the evening were extremely warm and enthusiastic. With reference to the chairman's remarks about the "American sage," the Swamiji said, that he was more than an American, having spent over nine years there, while five years' stay was enough to make one an American, for, scientifically, the atoms constituting the body undergo change once in five years He said that he was a Sannyasin and lived the life of a Sannyasin in America, and that he had come here to live up to the ideal of a Sannyasin He dwelt upon the materialism of the Americans who cared much for wealth and luxury, and said that Swami Vivekananda changed the tide of materialism by spreading Vedanta amongst those who were the foremost citizens of the world. For the last nine years he had been teaching the Americans, Sanatana Dharma, which is universal religion based upon eternal truths These truths were taught by the ancient sages, such as Madhwa, Vallabha, Sankara, Ramanuja and others, and they are to be found in the *deva- bhasha* or Sanskrit He next explained the *Sloka* in the *Bhagavad Gita* wherein the Lord Sri Krishna says, "Whenever true dharma goes down and adharma prevails. He incarnates, in order to destroy evil and establish righteousness" So, Sri Ramakrishna came as an *Avatara,* to save our religion, at a time when materialism was spreading A spiritual tidal wave has arisen and is doing the most wonderful things in other countries He next dwelt upon the question, as to whether God has form He said, that we are all children of Immortal bliss, and of the eternal Brahman Who has various names We are not bodies, but are souls,—birthless and deathless As we throw away our old dresses and put on new ones, so we assume new bodies. The Sanatana Dharma teaches that we are immortal and we must realize it This is the truth which we have to teach

The Swamiji's speech was explained in Tamil by Mr. Chengal Rao and the Chairman

On the return from the lecture there was an imposing torch-light procession and native music After receiving a number of visitors, on the following day the party once more set out arriving at Dharmapuri late in the after-noon A vast throng awaited the Swami at the station and in the midst of a cheering procession he was carried in an open palanquin to the bungalow where he was to stop At half past six an address of welcome written both in English and in Sanskrit, was presented to him The Swami replied at length and the evening closed with a torch-light procession

The addresses of welcome are.—

ॐ

## HIS MOST HOLINESS

Srimath Paramahamsa Parivrajakacharya Ashtanga Yoganushtana Nishta Thapassarvabhauma, Srimath Yugavathara Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Karakamala Sanjata Sakala Nigamagama Sarahridaya

New York Vedanta Sanga Prathishtapanacharya,

## SRI ABHEDANANDA SWAMIN

May it please Your Holiness,

We, the members of the Vivekananda Literary Society and other residents of Dharmapuri, beg most respectfully to accord Your Holiness a hearty welcome to this place on the occasion of your return from America after a successful career of preaching and teaching to the most enlightened nations of the West for nearly a decade, the universal and sublime philosophy of Vedanta

We have been watching with genuine feelings of pride and gratefulness your disinterested and noble work in a land quite foreign in climate and social conditions from ours. We cannot adequately express our feelings of joy and thankfulness for all your labours in the field of Vedanta.

It has been very kind of Your Holiness to have accepted our invitation inspite of innumerable calls from various quarters.

In conclusion, we pray to Akhanda Sachidananda Brahman to bless Your Holiness and your co-disciples with long life, health and strength to enable you all to dispel the darkness of ignorance that enshroud us, Worldlings

With respects,
We beg to subscribe ourselves,
Your Holiness' most obedient servants.

Vivekananda Town Hall,
*Dharmapuri, 27th July, 1906*

SANSKRIT ADDRESS AT DHARMAPURI

ॐ

उद्दण्डैर्मतषण्ड खण्डनपरैः पाखण्डकैः खण्डितं भूयो मण्डितमेवखण्डपरशुर्योऽद्वैत-मस्थापयत्। प्राप्तस्सोऽयमभेद पूर्व परमानन्दात्मना भूतले मोदं मेदुरयञ्चिराद्विजयतामद्वैत विद्योतनैः॥ महाभागाः ?

श्रीमतामत्रागमनेनकुतुकितान्तरङ्गाः किञ्चिदिववयंसञ्चारया मस्सविनयं विज्ञापनं।

आर्याः आस्तिकशिखामणयः ?

वयं खलु कियताचन कालेन मतमस्मदीयमधीयानाः तत्र तत्र चार्वाकादि परमत निराकरणपराणि परश्शतानि वाक्यान्यधीमहे। अनुमिनुमहे च तैरस्मन्मतप्रत्यर्थिनः पूर्वं वहवो बभूवु, ते च श्रीमद्भि जगद्गुरुप्रभृतिभिः पराकारिषतेति च। कतिपयेभ्यः पूर्वं वत्सरेभ्योऽस्मान् प्रतिप्रत्यवतिष्ठमानान् परिभूय परस्सहस्त्रं प्रतिवादिनः परां प्रथां प्रापयामासु रास्माकीनमत्र भवन्तो विद्यावन्तस्स्वामि विवेकानन्द पादाः इति। अद्यत्वेच तत्र तत्र व्युत्तिष्ठमानान् प्रतिवादिनः करिण इव केसरिणो निरस्यन्तः स्वयं साक्षातूकृतसकलसिद्धान्तश्रुतिप्रतिपादित प्रत्यगात्माभेदाः स्वयमेवान्तरानन्दन्तो नन्दयन्तश्च परानभेदानन्देत्यात्मनो नाम यथार्थयन्त्यत्र भवन्तो महान्त इति च कर्णाकर्णिकया कर्णयन्तो वयमस्मिन्नेवाहन्यक्ष्णोरपि लक्ष्यीकुर्वाणा यत्सत्यमालोकनीयेष्व-चरमंगोचरयाम इति।

यदि यथेदानी मीदृशानां दर्शनेनानीदृस्योत्साहस्य भाजन सुपर्युपरि भवेम तर्हि नियतमेवयमनितरसाधारणतामाप्नुयामेत्यत्र न कोऽपिविशयलेशस्यावकाशः, अतश्च महामहिमतेजसामत्र भवतामसकृदस्माकमपि भवादृगालोकन भागधेय-माधत्तात्तरुण रोहिणी रमण चड़ामणिरुमाजानिः इति शिव मस्तिलं ॐ।

Another meeting was arranged for the following morning to be held in the school house Sir Henry Cotton's son, who is the Sub-Collector of Dharmapuri, presided and the Swami lectured for an hour on "Vedanta." After the lecture he answered a number of questions. Two prominent citizens of Dharmapuri, C. Venkatachariyar (Zemindar), and T. P. Subrahmanya Sastri of the Government Girls' School in honour of Swami Abhedananda expressed their respect and admiration by composing the following Sanskrit verses:—

ॐ

अभेदानन्द चित्तानाम्
अभेदानन्द शर्मणाम्।
पदपंकजयोः सर्वे।
प्रणमामो ऽधुनावयम् ॥१॥

अभेदानन्द विजयम्
प्रतीक्षन्ताः सदा वयम्।
अभेदानन्द कुशलम्।
निरीक्षन्तः प्रतिक्षणम् ॥२॥

तं पश्यासगुरुं भेदा
भिदाज्ञान विशारदम्।
प्राच्य पाश्चात्य मतयोः
अंतरे सूक्ष्म दर्शिनम् ॥३॥

क्वात्र शेखरिणं यस्य
परहंसस्य सद्गुरोः।
निपुणं प्राच्य समये
पाश्चात्येषु मतेषुच ॥४॥

यः पाश्चात्य मतेजातान्।
विबुधान् बुधसत्तमान्।
अकरोत्पर हंसस्य।
सद्गुरोः कृपया क्षणात् ॥५॥

नमाम स्तं महात्मानम्
नमाम स्तं यतीश्वरम्।
भजाम स्तं महाधीरम्
अभेदानन्द दायिनम् ॥६॥

सद्गुरो र्गुरुवर्याणाम्
परमहंसस्य धीमतः।
छात्रवर्यं त्रिकालज्ञः।
स जीयाच्छरदांशतम् ॥७॥

28-7-06
Dharmapuri, Salem
District Madras Presy.

C. Venkatachariar, (Zamindar)
Kadapur P O.
Salem District.

ॐ नमः परमात्मने।

अभेदानन्दोऽयं भवति महितः पामरबुधैः यदध्यैतायं तद्विशदविशदं च प्रतनुतो ततो दूरादेव प्रचलति तमः पापजनकं मतिप्रादुर्भाव स्तदनुमहती निर्वृतिरथ।

अन्वेष्टव्यं कथमपि नृणां दर्शनं स्याद्यदीयं कारुण्यात्स स्वयमिह महानागतश्चेति दिष्टम्। आनीतो वा भवतु महता केनचित्तस्य कुर्यात् श्रेयः स्रष्टा सकलजगता मीश्वरो वांछितेषु।

ॐ

T. P. Subrahmannya Sastri of Government Girls' School, Dharmapuri 28-7-06

## RECEPTION AT BANGALORE

After spending two days in Dharmapuri, where he was most heartily received, and by his lectures creating a wide-spread enthusiasm and interest in Vedanta, the Swami Abhedananda left for Bangalore. Ever since his landing at Colombo,

he had been welcomed with grand ovations and invited to various centres, but the reception which awaited him in Bangalore, far surpassed any that had been yet accorded to him. There was present at the station which was prettily decorated, an intensely enthusiastic gathering, numbering no less than eight thousand people. In fact, it seemed that the whole population of Bangalore had joined to welcome the Swami He, with other Swamis, was garlanded. The orthodox Pandits then recited benedictory verses and presented the sacred rice and cocoanut.

Under the date of August 1, 1906, the *Mysore Standard* published the following editorial and complete report of the Swami Abhedananda's arrival in Bangalore which is reproduced here: —

## *SWAMI ABHEDANANDA IN BANGALORE*

The presence of Swami Abhedananda in Bangalore and the soul-stirring lectures he has been delivering here, have created an amount of enthusiasm in all classes of the people, which is unparalleled in the history of this city. Nothing in the past brought together the hearts of all classes of people and nothing made them listen with rapt attention better than did the spiritual teachings of Swami Abhedananda. Kings and Princes with great powers and greater wealth have come to this place and have attracted larger crowds of people. But all that has been more or less the attraction of vulgar power and wealth, and to the spiritually disposed Indians it is devoid of that high influence which Swamis Vivekananda and Abhedananda exercise on the mind and heart of the nation. The greatness of these heroes is founded not on material glory, but on the eternal truths which they expound to the people and by which their lives are inspired. They are, therefore, superior to all Kings and Princes, and they live in countries where they have exercised their influence long after Emperors and Maharajas are forgotten. The people of Bangalore were moved to tears when the Swami was led in a magnificent procession voluntarily formed by the educated and the ignorant, when the enthusiastic band of young students swarmed round the Swami and drew his carriage three miles from the Railway Station, and when

the women and children in the different *pettahs* hurried through the streets eagerly bent on seeing the hero of their heart Lord Roberts returning from his victory of human slaughter in South Africa was led in great triumph through the streets of London, and the masses of the people there quite realized the significance of human greatness then We in India, even in our material fall any physical bondage, have our own triumphs and victories, though they are differently fashioned Swamis Vivekananda and Abhedananda returning from their spiritual conquest of the West and stirring the people at home to a sense of their spiritual greatness which they have forgotten, offer occasions of national triumph and glory, which impress us far more deeply than the triumphs of wars and land-conquests. The spiritual wealth is the one national heritage of the Indians which no conqueror has touched and few have stolen It is a wealth which was recognized earliest by the great seers of India and preserved with utmost care for thousands of years, till the vulgarisms of material influence made us forget it and sometimes despise it today It is under these circumstances that Sri Ramakrishna and his devoted followers have been sent to us by the great but invisible Power that guides the destinies of nations and countries And these teachers have been spreading the doctrines of spiritual ascendancy over the material and spiritual freedom of man and of universal tolerance and brotherhood. The Indian Vedanta philosophy is bound to be recognized one day by the world as it advances in civilization founded on truth and love. The petty differences set up by sectarianism, the ugly manifestations of self-seeking priesthood, the mischievous tendencies of proselytizing missions and the barbarities of human enslavement practised in the name of Western civilization—all must vanish when the light thrown by the Vedanta philosophy uplifts the world's conscience and elevates the human mind. The Vedanta philosophy as taught by the Swami and understood by the nation is not a mere "do nothing" sort of philosophic doctrine, as it is understood by some. It is a powerful force for human righteousness, a strong lever employed to lift up the fallen people to a higher plane of thought and destiny. It is not intended to make people sleep in idleness and inaction, but to stir them to an activity based on a purer and a higher aim of life. Vedanta makes for unity

which is so lacking in India. It makes for brotherhood which is so wanting everywhere It makes for tolerance in action and freedom in thought which are the beginnings of true progress in every country So it is in every sense an active and visible force for a freer and superior life both in India and beyond India—and not an inactive and latent influence Swami Abhedananda having still further strengthened the work begun in America, came to remind us once more to realize the truth and significance of our scriptural teachings and recognize the higher responsibilities that they bring us The teachings of the Swamiji have laid a powerful hold on the present generation, particularly on the student population, and we may already count the beginning of the decay of sectarianism and proselytism in this country as a result of this The Ramakrishna Mission has opened a new era of religious reform in India as in America and other parts of the world, which has yet only begun. A good deal yet remains to be done and earnest workers are required to undertake the noble mission. It is said that Southern India is poor in men who are prepared to make national sacrifice, but we are confident that the stirring addresses made by the Swami Abhedananda have entered so deeply into the heart of the rising nation, that before long we shall not be wanting in our sense of national responsibilities and sacrifices. In the meanwhile we have to offer our devoted love and great admiration for the splendid work of the Swami, guest of Mysore. We wish him and his grand work complete success

On Sunday evening at Bangalore when the Swami Abhedananda delivered his first address, the gathering was so large and unmanageable that soon after his appearance the assembly shouted out *Bande Mataram* and subsequently, that term was given up in exchange for *Swami Abhedanandake Jay* ! When Mysore could spontaneously shout out *Bande Mataram,* there is truly life in this nation !

## *SWAMI SRI ABHEDANANDA IN BANGALORE*

Since Swami Vivekananda, the first Indian Missionary who went abroad, preached Vedantism to that practical nation of workers and thinkers in the West, namely the Americans, the

desire of the rationalistic men of the West to know more and more of the living religion of the East, has been great. The call for Sannyasis of the type of Vivekananda to expound the theory of Vedantism is also becoming more and more urgent. Though India could not give to them more such teachers, it has been sending a few to push on the work started by Vivekananda of transplanting one of the oldest and best religions of the world. The unfinished work of Vivekananda, soon after his premature demise, was taken by the Swami Abhedananda who during the past ten years, has proved himself to be an able and worthy colleague and successor of him. The accounts of the work done by the Swami during these ten years have been most refreshing to hear and read. Since his landing at Colombo, he is being welcomed by the whole nation, invited to various centres and accorded hearty receptions. The intelligent public of Bangalore, never failed to recognize the work done by one of their co-religionists in the field of spiritualism. They prepared themselves ready to honour him and accordingly invited him to visit Bangalore. No less was our beloved young Maharaja wanting in intelligence to recognize the work of the Swami. His illustrious father was a great friend of Vivekananda, and helped him in his undertaking. Our young Maharaja also has invited the Swami as his guest. Both the invitations were responded to by the Swami and it was announced that he would arrive in Bangalore on Sunday morning

## THE SWAMI'S ARRIVAL

Thousands of notices issued by the Reception Committee, spread the news of the Swami's arrival, and from an early hour in the morning the public began to move in groups towards the City Railway Station. There were present at the station, the officials and his subordinates, the merchants and his brokers, the landlords and his tenants, the school master and his students. Others had gathered on the *pials* of shops, on the roofs of houses, on the routes through which the Swami had to be conducted in procession, feverishly waiting to catch a glimpse of the Swami, and revere and honour him, believing

that their life would become sanctified thereby. In fact the whole of Bangalore had joined to welcome the Swami. In a land where people breathe spiritual atmosphere, the arrival of a religious leader is looked upon with greater significance than that of Governors or Viceroys and Rajas or Maharajas. High and low, young and old, men and women, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, orthodox and the heterodox, had all heartily joined to welcome a son of their nation so spiritually great.

## AT THE CITY STATION

The City Station was neatly decorated by the Reception Committee members. The general public, an immense gathering of no less than 8,000 people, had formed a huge moving mass at the platform behind the members of the Reception Committee and other invited gentlemen, who waited there with garlands and bouquets, to greet the Swami and receive him. The train arrived somewhat late As it steamed into the station the native bands played. Swami Abhedananda, Swamis Ramakrishnananda and Paramananda alighted and were received by Mr K. P. Puttanna Chetty, Councilor and President of the Reception Committee, and Mr M. G. Krishnaswami Rao, Vice-President Bangalore City Municipality and were garlanded and presented with bouquets by them. The orthodox pundits then recited benedictory verses and presented the Swamis *pala manthrakshite* or the sacred rice and cocoanut

## THE PROCESSION

At the foot of the station staircase a grand procession formed. At the head of the procession a banner bearing the motto of the Ramakrishna Mission was carried. To the rear of this banner a number of *bhajana* and music parties kept pace. Behind them was carried a huge picture of Vivekananda and one of smaller size of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa neatly decorated with flowers. Next followed the state carriage, in which the three Swamis were seated with Mr. Puttanna Chetty.

Before the procession started a band of ardent students unyoked the horses of the Swami's carriage and took the task of drawing the carriage by their own hands In spite of the requests of the Swamis and others, to leave this work to the pair of horses in attendance, the students would not overcome their enthusiasm, national feeling having been greatly aroused. A number of carriages followed the Swami s carriage A long procession thus formed, conducted the Swamis from the station through Arlepet, Chikpet, and Doddapet to the Palace Cottage, the students drawing the Swami's carriage the entire distance. Immense crowds lined the streets through which the procession moved, paying their respects to the Swamiji and receiving flowers and *prasadam.* Several hundreds of men, women and children, especially of the non-Brahmin sects, shed tears of joy, when they saw the inspiring figure of Swami Abhedananda in the procession. The young students joined the procession, and followed it as far as the Palace, shouting all the way, *Vivekanandake Jay, Abhedanandake Jay.* The whole route was gaily decorated with festoons and thickly lined by the mob.

## AT THE PALACE COTTAGE

At half-past nine the procession reached the Palace Cottage which has been placed at the disposal of the Swami during his stay here. Swami Abhedananda and Swamis Ramkrishnananda and Paramananda were next conducted into the Cottage. Here they seated themselves and took rest having travelled all night A few minutes later the Dewan Saheb paid a visit to the Swamiji. The Dewan Saheb and the Swami Abhedananda were engaged in an interesting conversation inside for over a quarter of an hour. Outside the people were rushing in to see the Swami and talk to him with feverish anxiety. The Swami seeing the anxiety of the people came out and spoke a few words. He thanked the people for giving a grand reception. He thanked the young students for the burden they took on their shoulder in dragging his carriage all the way. He was very much tired, he said, from travelling and needed rest. No less he believed the public present there were tired, as they had exerted themselves in conducting the procession from the station to the palace. In the

evening he would be present at Doddanna's Hall to receive an address and to speak in reply. Flowers, and *prasadam* were asked to be distributed to all present Tea, and light refreshments were also served to those present.

## AT DODDANNA'S HALL

The news that Swami Abhedananda would be present in the evening at Doddanna's Hall spread like wild fire. Though admittance to the Hall, where an address of welcome was to be presented by the citizens of Bangalore to the Swami, was by means of invitations issued, the general public rushed in huge crowds and filled the Hall. Before it was 4 p m., the Hall was completely filled People went on pouring in and by 5-30 p.m., the Hall was filled to suffocation It was quite unmanageable for the Committee to control the audience. While the Hall was thus over-crowded, thousands at the doors began to rush in, till at last they had to go home sadly disappointed. At 5-30 p.m , the Swami Abhedananda, with Swamis Ramakrishnananda and Paramananda arrived at the Hall and were received by the Reception Committee and conducted to the platform The Dewan Saheb, who was to preside at the function of the evening also arrived at 5-30 p m. About 2,000 people were present in the Hall.

To

HIS HOLINESS
SWAMI SRI ABHEDANANDAJI

We, the Hindu citizens of Bangalore, have very great pleasure in offering you a most hearty welcome to this important centre in the premier State of Mysore In doing this we are proud and happy to feel that the name of this ancient, historic State must for ever be intimately associated with the origin and development of the noble and philanthropic work that is being done in different parts of the world by the band of self-sacrificing and devoted workers of the Mission which bears the name

of your revered *Guru Deva*—Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. We allude to the relation of personal friendship and intimacy that subsisted between our late beloved Maharaja Sri Chamarajendra Wodeyay Bahadur, of blessed memory and your late illustrious Gurubhai and colleage, the epoch-making Swami Vivekananda. It may indeed be justly claimed that Mysore has contributed in no small measure towards inaugurating the Sri Ramakrishna Mission in the West, as it was largely at the instance and with the help of our late enlightened Maharaja that Swami Vivekananda went to America and stood before the Chicago Parliament of Religions as the champion and exponent of the eternal religion of the Hindus. It is a matter of history that the organization of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission in America was the direct outcome of the Swamiji's visit to the West and his large-hearted sympathy for the spiritual needs of the earnest, thinking minds in the New World.

When Swami Vivekananda found himself in need of a fellow-worker in America, it was to you that he sent his brotherly call. How generously you responded to it and how vigorously, and unremittingly you have been working in obedience to that call of duty during the past eleven years, we have the privilege and the pleasure to acknowledge with gratitude to-day. What worthier shoulders than yours could wear the mantle of Sri Ramakrishna-Vivekananda?

We have no doubt, Revered Swamiji, that your present visit to our Motherland will give a new and strong impetus to the working of the various religious institutions of India, and especially to the efforts of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission for our spiritual regeneration.

In conclusion, Beloved Swamiji, we all unite in praying that a long life of health and vigour may be yours, and that every success may attend your noble endeavours for the elevation and enlightenment of humanity.

Wishing you a very happy and useful sojourn in our midst.

We remain,
Revered and Beloved Swamiji,
with profound reverence and esteem,
Your grateful and loving co-religionists of
Bangalore.

## REPLY TO THE BANGALORE ADDRESS OF WELCOME

*(Delivered on the 30th July).*

Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen,—

It is impossible to express the feelings that you have aroused in my bosom, by the enthusiastic welcome you have given me, this morning. It is almost impossible to express how much I am indebted to you all, for giving me the honour of being a guest of the people, and of the nation. In India, the Hindus excel all other nation, in giving honour to spiritual leaders. In the West, in Europe and America, when a spiritual leader returns from a foreign Mission, he is not recognized by the nation, but only by a few members of his Society But when a General comes from the battlefield, he is honoured by the nation. When Lord Kitchener returned from South Africa, the whole English nation was proud of him; when Dewey returned from Manilla, New York City and the whole American nation gave him great honour. But here in India, I have come from Colombo to Bangalore, and at every step I have received such honours as have not been received even by Lord Kitchener and Dewey And what is the reason? The reason is, that Religion is our life and soul. Politics are for a few days, while religion is eternal. We love Religion, we eat Religion, we drink Religion and walk Religion. Show me another nation in the world, who holds this spiritual ideal and lives up to it, in the daily life, I have not seen such an outburst of enthusiasm, either in Europe or in the American Continent.

I thank you gentlemen, for the kind words that have been uttered by our worthy friends this evening, in honour of a servant of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. The power that is working in the Ramakrishna Mission, is not a human, but a divine power. It will take its course, no matter what obstacles are put in its way. It is bound to grow stronger and stronger. No one can weaken it Swami Vivekananda, our illustrious brother, was the pioneer of this movement and his powers were the powers of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, which were working through him and which were recognized by the people of India, and specially by the people of Mysore and Madras, long before he

appeared before the public. If Madras claims to have discovered Swami Vivekananda before he was known to the public, a similar claim is due to the inhabitants of Bangalore and especially to the late Maharaja. I have heard many a time, Swami Vivekananda himself declare, in England and in America, that the late Maharaja of Mysore was his best friend in India Here, I must thank the present Maharaja, because he has continued to revere and honour the memories of our illustrious brother and of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. By honouring the servant of God, you have honoured yourselves and you have honoured the greatest divine manifestation of the nineteenth century, in the form of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. You have honoured also the Sanatana Dharma—the eternal religion, the great Rishis of the Vedic period and all the *Avataras* or the incarnations of Divinity, in human form. Honour, I may not deserve for the lilttle work that has been done by me; but you have shown your greatness by appreciating the work that I have been able to do, in a distant country. No nation can rise, unless the power of the appreciation of great work is manifested in the nation. And therefore, after seeing the demonstrations of your appreciation for the work that has been done in America and England, I think that our nation is going to rise, in time to come, and in the long run, we shall see that this nation will be one of the greatest of the world But my friends, our greatness will not be in politics but in spirituality; and it was recognized by our brother Swami Vivekananda, that the whole heart of the nation throbs when spiritual work is accomplished, and then, the response comes spontaneously from the heart of the whole nation.

Swami Vivekananda, as you all know, went to America in 1893, all alone, and friendless, in a foreign land. He went there from a land to which Christian Missionaries were sent by hundreds to convert the poor heathen of our Motherland There he went alone, without being supported by funds from the nation, without being helped by the Government Single-handed he went and he gave his message to the world and he who invited me to take charge of his work in 1896. Although I felt myself unworthy of the task, I accepted his command and went to see him and to do little things for him, at least, such things as lay in my power to do. But he gave me the entire

responsibility of his work and of the Mission in England and in America By divine power, that work and that mission which were given to me, have been carried on successfully for the last ten years When I landed in America, I was penniless and alone ; I was the same Sannyasin who came to Bangalore fifteen years ago, bare-footed, with one blanket as my bed and clothing, and slept under the tree near the tank in the choultry ; I was the same Sannyasin who travelled from the Himalayas down to Rameswaram, from Jagannath to Dwarka, bare-footed, without thinking of the morrow, without touching money, and without taking two coats ; the same Sannyasin who was lately in New York, in the heart of civilization, culture and education, for the last nine years, without any desire for remuneration for the work, that went out from my heart America is a country noted for its dollar worship But that will not give you a clear idea of the heart of the nation I think the heart of the American nation is far more liberal than that of any other nation. The Americans know how to appreciate the greatness of a man or of a woman, in whatever line he or she may excel. And it was the American nation who made Swami Vivekananda well-known all over the world ; therefore, all the Hindus of to-day and all those who will come in future, will ever remain indebted to American hearts and American souls. I have come to India to preach the glory of the American nation, because they are sincere and earnest seekers after truth. I have lived amongst them long enough to be a judge of their spiritual powers. The American nation is a young nation, full of vigour and strength, with powers that have made them think that they can turn the whole world in any direction they like. And when that power and energy are directed towards the spiritual goal, what results may follow, who can say ? Whatever is done in America, re-acts on the whole of Europe. European nations are bound to take American ideas sooner or later There, the permanent foundation-stone of the Vedanta work or of the universal religion of Vedanta has been laid; and I may say that, to-day, there are hundreds and thousands of the most cultured, and most advanced thinkers, professors, philosophers and millionaires and multi-millionaires of America who are willing to accept the truths inculcated in the philosophy and religion of the Vedanta. There are centres in different

parts of the country. Probably you have heard of a Hindu temple, that has lately been established in San Francisco, which has escaped the ravages of earthquake and fire. Parts of the city were destroyed, but the Hindu temple is safe. We have also a "Peace Retreat" in California for those who have renounced the world, for those who are leading the life of Brahmacharins and Brahmacharinees; and I am glad to say, that there are many such souls who are capable of living the life of Brahmacharinees; American women are the most educated women in the world; and such women are anxious to follow the teachings of Vedanta philosophy. What charm lies in the Vedanta Philosophy that attracts such educated, cultured and advanced thinkers as the Americans? The charm is in its simplicity in the expression of truth and nothing but truth.

*Satyameva jayathe nanritam* Truth will triumph and not falsehood This is the eternal law. If the philosophy and religion of Vedanta were not established upon the bed-rock of truth, it would have been dead long ago. But as Truth is eternal, so the religion and philosophy of Vedanta is also eternal, and it is bound to suit every age. The students of Vedanta in America, practise its teachings, practise the various branches of Yoga—Karma Yoga, Raj Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Jnana Yoga. They practise Pranayama—the breathing exercise. And when they find that breathing exercise gives them physical health and mental strength, they accept it, honour it and revere it, and follow it most literally. The Americans are practical above all nations, as is well-known to us. Every minute is valuable to them. The common saying in America is, "Time is money." So, when they devote their valuable time to the pursuit of the Vedanta religion, there must be a great inducement for them to do so. Through the study of Vedanta and through the practice of the various Yogas they conserve their energy, they, like a better life and their spiritual eyes are opened, and when they come to see things in a clearer light, when they can gain results, physically, mentally, intellectually and spiritually, they follow the teachings most literally And what are the results that come to the students of Vedanta? The results are many, as I have already said. Among them there are some who go into *samadhi* or a state of super-consciousness through the practice of Raja Yoga. There are some

students who have realized the true nature of their existence,—that they are not one with the body but that their body is nothing but the garment of the soul, that they can get out of the body and yet retain consciousness and individuality. Such powers are most fascinating to all nations and therefore, to the American people who are most practical. The teachings of Vedanta declare that every individual is a soul, is the *Atman*. "I am not merely a body, neither the result of the combination of material particles like atoms and molecules" We possess something which is an intelligent, self-conscious entity; and it is not merely that we possess that within ourselves, but that we are not separate from that intelligent, self-conscious entity, we are one with it. Is it subject to birth and death? The special religions of the world say that the self-conscious entity is subject to birth, but the philosophy and religion of Vedanta teaches that the selfconscious entity *Atman* is beyond birth and death, is immortal by its nature.

"Neither is it born, nor is it subject to death" Self-conscious and intelligent *Atman* has not come into existence out of nothing; but it is eternal, everlasting, and even when the body is destroyed, it continues to live. When our bodies are destroyed, we do not die, we continue to live. In what form do we live? Not in the material, but in the spiritual form; and that spiritual form is eternal. If we understand this truth, then, we are able to understand the fundamental principles of the universal religion of Vedanta.

Christianity teaches that we are born in sin and iniquity, that we are children of Adam, who was the first sinner But the Vedanta teaches that we are children of God, that we are not born in sin and iniquity but we are children of Immortal Bliss "Oh ye, children of Immortal Bliss, listen to me I have discovered the truth," said a great saint of the Vedic period. How comforting and consoling is the expression, "children of Immortal Bliss"! Shall we give up this idea and accept the theory that we are born in sin and iniquity? By no means On the contrary, those who were born and brought up in such doctrines and dogmas, are now ready to abandon them, to throw them overboard and to accept the eternal truth that we are children of immortal bliss, and therein, lies the greatness of Vedanta. The Western nations have yet to learn,

this great truth from the Hindus. Swami Vivekananda was the first Missionary who held this ideal before the Western nations and therefore, he had success, because "Truth will triumph and not falsehood." And many other truths, grander than this, more ennobling, more uplifting and more spiritualizing are contained in the Vedanta philosophy.

What is sin according to Vedanta? Sin means ignorance and selfishness, and that selfishness proceeds from ignorance. And what kind of ignorance? The ignorance of the fact that we are children of immortal bliss, that we are divine. If we wish to spiritualize the whole world, we must go and preach this truth in all countries, among all nations, and the results that will follow will be most wonderful, will be divine. The Kingdom of Heaven will be on this earth if we know that we are immortal, that we are divine by nature, and that selfishness is the cause of all miseries, of all imperfections, of all vice, of all wickedness. To be unselfish is the ideal of all religions, to make everybody feel that the grandeur of unselfishness is the ideal of all religions, whether special or sectarian. But the methods adopted by sectarian religions, differ from the method that has been adopted by the universal religion of Vedanta. A sectarian says that you are born in sin and iniquity; you must always think of it and then the Saviour will come to save you And the result is that, there are more crimes, misery, wickedness, murders, suicides, and all other kinds of vices, in Christendom. They have heard from their childhood that they ought to be good and that they are not good now, because they are sinners But the method of Vedanta is to teach that they are divine, that they are potentially perfect. And the result is, that wherever this truth is preached there is less crime, less vice, less corruption, and less wickedness If we think ourselves to be sinners, we shall become sinners. "As thou thinkest so, thou shalt become." If we think ourselves divine, as immortal, as pure and perfect, we shall be perfect. This is the fundamental principle of the religion and philosophy of Vedanta

The Vedanta is not a sectarian religion, because it is not built around the personality of a founder; in fact, it has had no founder. Who was the founder of the Vedanta? Nobody knows The most ancient Rishis *Mantra-drashtas,* referred to the holy sages who passed away before them; and even the

*Avataras,* like Sri Ramachandra and Sri Krishna, did not claim to be the founders of the Sanatana Dharma of Vedanta. All other religions are built around the personality of their founders. For instance, take Christianity, Christianity without Christ is an impossibility. Mohammedanism is built round the life and character of Mohammed Buddhism is built around the life and character of Buddha Zoroastrianism depends entirely upon the life and teachings and the most ennobling character of its founder Judaism is built around the teachings of Moses. But the religion which is not founded upon the personality of its first teacher, but on the contrary, which is based upon the eternal principles asd such spiritual laws as govern our life at all times, only such a religion can claim to be universal It embraces the fundamental principles of all religions, but it does not suffer as other religions do, when historical personality is taken away, and when the life and character of the founder is not well established by history.

The religion and philosophy of Vedanta is universal for another reason It teaches unity in variety, that the Godhead is one, although the eternal supreme Being is worshipped under different names and in various forms. The God of the Mohammedans, is the same as the God of the Christians He is also the same as the Jehovah of the Jews, as the Father in Heaven, as Siva, Vishnu, Divine Mother and has various other names God is one Why should we quarrel in the name of God? We ought not to quarrel on account of our difference of ideals, but we ought to examine our ideals and see the harmony that underlies the names and forms of the Divinity And this truth was given in the most ancient of the Holy Scriptures of the world—the Rig Veda In it, we find, "That which exists is one, men call it by various names" Men worship it in different forms, but the real Godhead is one and cannot be many Other religions do not teach this truth so clearly as it has been taught by the Vedas. We accept the unity of the Godhead and variety of manifestations, and the variety of names and forms We can embrace all the religions of the world. We can call ourselves brothers and sisters of the followers of the different sectarian and special religions. The true follower of Vedanta, is neither a Hindu, nor a Mohammedan, neither a Christian, nor a Jew, but in principle, he is one with them. We

can go to a church and worship the Divinity there. We can go to a mosque, we can go to a temple, or sit under a tree and worship the same Divinity everywhere The Hindu sees the Divinity in his own bosom and realizes that his body is the temple of the living God A temple made of stone cannot confine the Divinity ; but the living tabernacle of God is the human body. And we must worship the Lord dwelling within our hearts, in spirit, and by spirit. Such kind of worship is the highest ideal of all religions. When we study the Koran and the life of the Great Prophet Mohammed, we feel how real was his feeling for the Lord ; how he realized the grandeur of the Divinity, first in his own bosom, heart and soul, and then he felt the presence of Divinity everywhere. And he stands as the ideal of the Mohammedan nation His teachings are, that every individual soul will feel the presence of the Lord Allah in his heart ; and he who does not feel His holy presence is not a true Mohammedan. The same is said about the Hindu He who does not feel the presence of Vishnu in his soul, is not a Hindu ; so if a Christian does not feel the Kingdom of Heaven within him, he is not a true Christian But what is the Kingdom of Heaven outside the presence of the divine glory and majesty of the Lord and the Father in Heaven? Vishnu is the all-pervading Being He who pervades the Universe is Vishnu. Is He different from Allah? How can He be, because Allah is also all-pervading? Allah dwells everywhere and is not different from the Father in Heaven. The whole world is but a manifestation of the power and the will of the Father in Heaven—Vishnu Wherever there is any form animate or inanimate, there is to be found the presence of the Father in Heaven My friends, if we study the sectarian religions or special religions through the light of Vedanta we shall find the wonderful harmony which underlies all. Therefore, we tell the followers of other religions the same thing When they study the Vedanta they find new inspiration and new revelations This universal religion of Vedanta is going to spread all over the world, to enlighten the minds and intellects of all nations and to dispel the cloud hanging over the atmosphere of spirituality The torch-light of Vedanta is burning all the time in the spiritual atmosphere of our Motherland, the *punya-bhumi,* and we shall carry that torch-light wherever we go, from India to America,

from America to Japan and from Japan back to India. We shall encircle the globe with the message of the eternal truth, the universal religion of Vedanta

My friends, the task before us is very great We need workers who will come forward to bear the torch-light of the universal religion and go to distant lands to preach the Gospel of Truth Constant calls are coming to me from America, Germany, England, France and many other countries of the Western world. I have started centres in many of the cities of Canada, Alaska, the United States and Mexico, and I want a hundred workers who can teach the Gospel of Vedanta. There are six Swamis now in America, and I have been receiving constant calls from England. There are hundreds of sincere, earnest seekers after truth who are anxious to study the religion of Vedanta and to practise the various methods of Yoga A few days ago in Madras, I received a letter from two young Englishmen who live in London, and who after reading Swami Vivekananda's books on Yoga, have become so infused with the teachings, that they say there is nothing greater than these. There are many such Englishmen, who would be glad to follow the life and teachings of such a Sannyasin

In fact, a Sannyasin lives the life of Jesus the Christ He never thinks of the morrow. His ideal is that the Lord provides for everybody The Lord says in the *Gita*, "Any devotee who constantly thinks of Me, I carry for him, all provisions and all comforts upon My shoulders."

So, my friends, if we try to live a life of renunciation, remain unattached to the world, do not seek the pleasures of the senses, and sacrifice our selfishness upon the altar of humanity, we shall be as living gods on earth There is no power greater than spiritual power All other powers are for a few days. Where are the Romans to-day? Where are the Greeks? But the Hindus are still alive The ancient nations of Egypt and Babylon are dead and gone. Other temporal powers have faded away, but the spiritual power is still in India Therefore, we must always pay attention to our spiritual side; all other things will come when we deserve them Our ideal of spirituality is to see divinity in all human beings, nay, in all living creatures, to feel the presence of God in every man, woman, and child, in the lower animals, and even in inanimate

objects. The Lord dwells everywhere and our worship will be the service of humanity When we serve our brothers, when we redress their grievances and make them happy we must remember that we have served the Lord of the Universe This is the best service to which we can devote our lives to help our brothers irrespective of caste, creed or nationality. We must help them to redress their grievances, give them food and clothes, and open their spiritual eyes, because spiritual life is greater than any other If we can make our brothers feel the presence of the Divinity within them, we have well performed our duty And the Divinity as I have already said, is one. Therefore, we are one with our brothers in spirit The Christian religion teaches "Love thy neighbour as thyself!" But why should I do that? The reason is not given Why should we not cut their throats and enrich ourselves with their wealth and property? That question naturally arises in the minds of all Christians But the reason we find in the Vedas, and the Vedas declare· "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, because thou art thy neighbour in spirit". You must feel that intrinsic unity in the midst of extrinsic variety And when we feel that a down-trodden *pariah* is our brother, that the same Divinity which dwells in the soul of a well-qualified Brahmana, also dwells in the poor Pariah, in an unmanifested form, when we feel that the same Divinity which dwells in the heart of a Hindu also dwells in the heart of a Christian or Mohammedan, we begin to realize God ; then, we are entitled to serve God and serve humanity The religion of Vedanta teaches, "He who can see the same *Atman,* the same Divinity in a well-qualified Brahmin, in a Pariah, in a cow, in an elephant, a dog, or a cat, he is a true Seer, he is the lover of God." Therefore, we must practise that We must not hold all these social distinctions in religion Religion gives us no ground for any distinction, because we are all children of immortal bliss. We are all one, and that unity we need today. Our Metherland needs that unity in spirit And only the Vedanta can bring unity to its best advantage Unity in the spirit should be our ideal ; and in our daily life we should feel that all people are our brothers and sisters, that the same God is dwelling within us all, and we must recognize the Divinity in all We must feel the presence of Divinity within our souls

first God is the soul of our souls and life of our lives In Him we live, from Him we come, and without Him there can be nothing If our hearts are sincere and pure, then, our worship will be accepted by the Lord. The Lord of the universe is one with us and we are one with Him , but the moment we forget this unity, we become sinners, because, sin means ignorance. We are then immersed in ignorance, selfishness and all other imperfections that limit our souls and make us imperfect The ideal of the universal religion of Vedanta as preached by members of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission, is the same as that of the Vedas, the *Puranas* and the Hindu *Shastras;* and it is the message of all the great *Avataras* And that ideal being one, we must stand up and declare it before the world and help others to see it, realize its greatness and live up to it.

So, we need preachers who will devote their lives to the cause of our Motherland, to the cause of Sanatana Dharma and who will go abroad preaching and teaching the principles of Dharma Young men of Bangalore, to you I appeal as the hope of our Motherland , the hope of our religion depends upon you ; you must take the whole burden ; be ready, the brave soldiers of the Sanatana Dharma, and stand up before the world to declare that you are the children of Immortal Bliss, that you are birthless and deathless, that nothing can frighten you. Feel the bliss of the Brahman first and then declare it. But who can give that bliss to you? Not even God Himself can give it What should you be afraid of? Stand up before the world holding the banner of Sanatana Dharma and manifesting fearlessness at every step of your progress The practice of the religion of Vedanta will make you fearless because, fearlessness is the ideal Fear of death cannot come to you. Hold that ideal in your mind in every undertaking.

Many of you might have read the poems of Emerson. He was the pioneer of the Vedanta on the American Continent. In one of his poems he has expressed the ideal of Vedanta most beautifully The first stanza begins thus "If the red slayer thinks he slays, or if the slain thinks he is slain " He got this ideal from the Vedas, from the *Bhagavad-Gita* and the passage is well known to you. This ideal will make us realize our own greatness as children of Immortal Bliss We have become weak in nerves and muscles ; weak physically, mentally,

intellectually, because we have not cultivated this grand truth, this strengthening ideal. We have lost our backbone and therefore, we are miserable and unhappy. But if we wish to regain our greatness, we must realize the grandeur of this ideal of Vedanta

An Englishman says from his childhood that he can do anything and everything I wish that every Hindu is able to say that, A Hindu has more advantages, because he has behind him the whole support and strength of the Vedas, while the Englishman, has not this spiritual strength to support him. He is taught from his childhood that he is a born sinner and cannot do-anything If in spite of that teaching, he declares that he can do everything, how much more powerful should a Hindu be to declare it when he knows that his Scriptures support and sustain him in that declaration?

My friends, we must wake up from our sleep and lethergy, begin to act, and show our spiritual strength by carrying forward the universal religion of Vedanta from one end of the earth to the other We are sure to receive appreciation, goodwill and blessings, from all hands because a preacher of truth is revered and honoured in all countries. The preacher of peace and good-will does not look for any material help from anybody. He relies on the Lord and the Lord provides everything for him

On Tuesday evening July 31st Swami Abhedananda delivered his second address on Vedanta philosophy in Sowcar Doddanna's Hall under the presidency of Mr. K P. Puttanna Chetty As was expected there was an unusual rush for seats and it was with considerable difficulty that the meeting was held. The large audience listened to the entire speech with rapt attention and repeatedly cheered the speaker. The following is the full text of the lecture —

## ON VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Well has it been said by Prof. Max Muller, that Vedanta is the most sublime of all philosophies, and the most comforting of all religions. Of all the philosophies of the world, the

Vedanta philosophy is the highest, and the religion which is inculcated by this system of philosophy, stands upon the solid rock of reason, logic, science and the spiritual laws which govern our life But what is Vedanta? Even in our own country, in the home of this wonderful philosophy, there are many who do not understand the meaning of the term Vedanta, who do not know its religion and its teachings The word 'Vedanta' is a Sanskrit term, and consists of two words. *'veda'* and *'anta'*, 'Veda', again, is derived from *vid* (to know), the English word 'wisdom' comes from the same root. So, it means wisdom or (knowledge), and *anta* means end. The word 'end' can be traced to the Sanskrit word *'anta'* So, 'Vedanta' means literally the end of wisdom It does not mean any particular book or scriptural writing but it means the highest divine wisdom, the wisdom of the divine Being Why is it called the end of wisdom? Does it mean that wisdom is limited by any principle or condition? Does it mean that wisdom has a limit? No By the term 'end of wisdom' we do not mean any limited but unlimited knowledge; that is infinite wisdom, where all relative knowledge ends, the goal of all relative knowledge, philosophy and the various branches of Scientific knowledge What is that goal? That we must first understand in order to conceive the scope of Vedanta It has a vast scope; it covers a large field The aim of all sciences, philosophies, of all religions, is to discover the Eternal Truth which is called in Sanskrit *satyam* That Eternal Truth is the ideal of philosophers, scientists and of all great thinkers of the world Religions are but so many attempts of the human mind to discover that eternal truth, that eternal wisdom The two are not separable In fact, eternal truth, and eternal wisdom are inseparable God is wisdom All knowledge that the human mind can attain, is from God. Scientists study the manifestations of that eternal truth and the conditions under which such manifestations take place. So, where all relative knowledge ends, that is the goal of Vedanta; where all sciences end that is the ideal of Vedanta. Its aim is to discover absolute wisdom, absolute knowledge, to realize its true nature and to commune with it.

All the scriptures of the world have described that eternal truth in different languages, calling it by different names Some

Scriptures declare it to be the Lord of the universe; some give it personality and gender, making it masculine, as the Father in Heaven, others call it the Mother of the universe Some worship it as the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of all phenomena Plato called it the Good, Spinoza called it Substantia Kant, the great German philosopher called it the transcendental Thing in-Itself Herbert Spencer called it the Unknown and Unknowable Emerson called it "Over-Soul" others call it Noumenon, the Substance of the Universe, the Eternal Being, and so on. But all this signifies one substance, one reality, one truth, one wisdom, which is unlimited by space, time or causation. That which is beyond the realm of all phenomenal appearances is the ideal of all scriptures The one and the same substance is described in the Vedanta as Brahman, which literally means all-pervading Being, the infinite substance or reality of the universe. And it is also said in the Vedas that when a great seeker after truth wanted to know the true nature of that substance he asked another great sage what was its nature, and the answer came in the most beautiful language which is known, as *deva-bhasha* (Sanskrit), the language of the gods,—"That from which all phenomena have come into existence, by which they live and unto which they return at the time of dissolution, know that to be the eternal truth; know that to be the Brahman" That same Brahman appears in the form of a personal God; and the personal gods of different religions are but so many manifestations of the one eternal truth, the one absolute Reality of the universe. In fact, the God of the dualistic religions is the first-born Lord of the universe, the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer The work of creation, preservation and destruction can be performed by one who has individuality, personality, intelligence, omnipotence, omniscience and other blessed qualities Him we call *Isvara,* the Ruler and Governor of the universe; and other religions also worship Him in the same way, as the Ruler, the Creator, the Governor of this phenomenal universe But does He create this universe out of nothing? In what sense is He called the Creator? If we study the dualistic religions of the world—Christianity, Judaism, Mohammedanism, Zoroastrianism, what do we find? In these religions we find God, the first-born Lord of the universe, described as creating the phenomenal universe,

in six days out of nothing Some try to explain these six days as six cycles, periods of time Whatever the meaning may be, the fact remains, that the Lord of the universe created something out of nothing, by His will-power, and we read in the Old Testament of the Bible that the Lord created the earth before He created the sun But scientific researches to-day have opened our eyes and have brought out the truth in such a clear light that we can say, without fearing any contradiction, that the sun was not created after the earth, but before In fact the earth has come into existence as a part of the solar system. We cannot deny that fact and we have also learnt from the best thinkers of the present age, that the theory of evolution is the proper theory by which to explain the origin of the phenomenal universe ; and this theory of evolution was not unknown to the seers of truth during the Vedic age We find proper expositions of this theory in the *Upanishads*

Those who have read the *Taittiriya Upanishad* will remember that the theory of gradual cosmic evolution was most beautifully described by the Seers of truth, the mantra-drashta, —*"akasath vayuh, vayorgnih, angerapah, abbbah prithivi, prithivya oshadhayah, oshadhee bhyonnam, annath purushah"* Those are the gradual steps of the evolution of the cosmos From that Infinite Being first appeared ether ; from ether the gases, then liquid, then solid, then the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms, and lastly, man And this theory of evolution which is considered today by the civilized world as the proper explanation of the phenomenal universe and its origin, was taught in India centuries before the Christian era. The father of the evolution theory in India was Kapila, the great founder of the *Sankhya* system of philosophy, who lived at least in the seventh century B.C Those who have studied this system of philosophy will remember that it entirely deals with the evolution theory of the Cosmos, of the *Prakriti*. Now what is the *Prakriti*? The same as the Latin *Procreatrix,* the creative Energy of the universe, that which is called by Herbert Spencer, the Unknown and Unknowable, eternal energy was the *Prakriti* of Kapila and the same was described by the great Seers of the Vedic period. That eternal energy evolved itself, receiving the influx of the great intelligence of the Brahman, into ether, gas, liquid, solid, inanimate and animate objects of the phenomenal

world. This process of evolution has taken at least millions of years. So, we cannot believe to-day that the world was created 6000 years ago, all of a sudden, but we are at one with modern science today, which has proved that this world has taken at least millions of years to come to its present condition. Some of the modern scientists, like Prof Huxley, have admitted that the doctrine of evolution was known to the Hindu sages long before the Christian era Prof. Huxley says, that "the doctrine of evolution was known to the Hindus, centuries before Paul of Tarsus was born." Sir Monier Monier Williams declared rightly when he said that the Hindus were Spinozites, before Spinoza was born, Darwinians, thousands of years before Darwin, and evolutionists before the evolution theory was known to the West.

So, we shall have to study our own scriptures, to find out the evolution theory described in the Vedas, and explained most logically and scientifically by the father of the evolution theory, I mean, Kapila, the great founder of the *Sankhya* system. In fact he may be called the Herbert Spencer of ancient India. Kapila's theory travelled from India westward and his cosmology was adopted by the great philosophers of Greece, the followers of Plato and other philosophers of Europe. If we study his philosophy we will find that he received inspiration from the same source from which the Vedic seers of truth received theirs; and Plato's philosophy teaches that the world of sense is a world of dreams, of ideas You will remember his famous illustration of men sitting in a cave with their backs towards the light, facing the wall, and people were passing between the light and the cave and their shadows were falling upon the walls, and those men who were sitting is the cave, could not turn their heads which were tied to their shoulders, and they had to see the shadows And like these shadows, are the objects of the senses, says Plato. This was the Greek explanation of the theory of *maya,* which was taught centuries before Plato Another familiar illustration is of the body as the chariot, the Soul as Charioteer, which Plato gives very strongly, and which was taught centuries before his existence, by the seers of the *Katha Upanishad* Probably you will remember the well-known passage, which shows the relation that exists between the soul and the body *Atmanam rathhinam viddhvi,*

*sharıram rathhameva tu, buddhvımtu sarathhım vıddhvı, manah pragrahameva cha* That is the most beautıful ıllustratıon. "Know the body to be the charıot, the *Atman* or Soul, the charıoteer, the intellect—the drıver of the charıot, the mind—the reıns, the senses—the horses, and the paths—the objects of the senses The wise ones say that the enjoyer, doer, actor, in the body ın the result of the combınatıon of *Atman,* mind, and *ındrıyas,* the senses." Thıs ıllustration we find in Plato's *Republic* That shows that the Vedıc conceptıon of the universe was accepted by Plato, probably through the intellectual intercourse that had existed between Greece and India ın ancıent tımes. We find that the Vedantıc philosophers went to Greece and had a conversation with Socrates, ever sınce the tıme of Alexander the Great, communıcatıon had been strengthened and many Hındu philosophers settled afterwards in Greece and Alexandrıa So, through the ınfluence of the teachers of Vedanta thıs wonderful truth travelled from Indıa to the West, and even durıng the Buddhistic period we find the Buddhist Emperor Asoka, who lıved 260 B C., sendıng Buddhıst missionaries from China to Egypt and from Sıberia to Ceylon, to pıeach the gospel of truth as ıt was taught by the Buddha.

But who was Buddha? Was he dıfferent from a Vedantic sage? No. Buddhısm, you must remember, was a chıld of Vedanta Buddha simply preached the ethics of the Vedas, especially the ethıcs of Vedanta, and he was born and brought up as a Hındu. He was well-versed in the *Upanishads* and in the six schools of philosophy which existed before his time. He was the first to popularize the theory of *maya.* Thus, hıs teachings which were expounded and preached by hıs followers, are very closely connected with those of the Vedas, the Vedanta and the *Upanıshads* From this we can gather, how much the Western world has receıved from India and how much Indıa has given to Europe, to Egypt and to other countrıes of Asıa. I have said this to show you that truth of Vedanta exısted long before the tıme of Plato, long before Europe was cıvılized, when European nations were lıvıng in caves, eatıng raw animal flesh, and wearing skins. At that tıme the Hindus were highly civilized in every branch of knowledge, science and philosophy. They had the highest religion that the world has ever known, and that religıon and system of

philosophy have been handed down to us We are the followers of those great Seers who lived in that hoary age and who gave the world the highest truths through their superconscious experiences. These truths were afterwards written down in the form of books and these books are known today as the Vedas But I have already said that the Vedas do not mean any particular book, but divine wisdom. Many of our Vedas have been destroyed. We find them mentioned, but we do not find the books

All the knowledge that came to the human mind through inspiration and revelation was called Veda by the ancient Seers and philosophers, but when these teachings and truths were crystalized and written down, then those writings were divided into different portions, such as *Samhitas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas* and *Upanishads.* In short, we can divide all the scriptural writings of the Vedic period into two parts—the one, which deals with rituals, ceremonials and sacrifices, known as *karmakanda,* and the other, which consists of the teachings by which the true nature of the Soul, of the *Atman* can be realized ; by which the relation which exists between the *Atman* and the Brahman, between the individual ego, and God, can be realized; and that portion is called *Upanishad* or *jnanakanda* In fact, today, we hold Vedanta or the *jnanakanda* of the Vedas as the scripture of the Hindus, and the *Samhita* portion is subordinate to the *jnanakanda* portion. We do not refer to the *Samhita* portion for authority. But when we need any authority for sacrifice or ritual, we refer to it, and for all knowledge, to the *jnanakanda.* And the six schools of philosophy that have come into existence from ancient times refer to the *Upanishads* for their authority Therefore the word Vedanta includes all the *jnanakanda* portions of the Vedas and all that gives authority to the great Hindu systems of philosophy. So today, when we refer to the scriptures, we refer to the *Upanishads*

These *Upanishads* have been commented upon by the later incarnations of the Divinity or *Avataras ;* and the great commentators such as Sankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, Madhvacharya and other Acharyas, are spiritual teachers They have different systems, but all these are founded on the *Upanishads* The greatest of all these commentators was, Bhagavan Sri Krishna, who lived about 1400 B C and his commentary is called

the *Bhagavad Gita,* or the *Song Celestial,* as Sir E Arnold calls it The *Vedanta-sutras* or *Shariraka-sutras* contain only the aphorisms which combine the various theories, meanings and interpretations that were given by the Vedic sages So these three, the *Upanishads,* the *Vedanta-sutras* and the *Bhagavad Gita* are the foundation-stones of religion and philosophy of the Hindus. These three are known as *Prasthanatraya.* If any one wishes to preach a new religion in India he will have to make a fitting commentary on the *Prasthanatraya* When Sri Ramanuja preached, he had to make a commentary on these three. Sankaracharya, Madhvacharya, Neelakantacharya, and other Acharyas did the same. But do they differ in reality? No. Their interpretations are only explanations of the truths which were understood and explained by the Vedic sages. If we study the *Upanishads* themselves, we find there the germs of Dualism, Monism, Visishtadvaitism, Advaitism, Shaktaism, Shaivaism, etc The Saiva-Sidhanta has its root in the *Upanishads* There are some who think the dualistic interpretation as true, while others hold that Visishtadvaitic is the best, Sankara's folowers think monistic interpretation to be the highest. If we study carefully, we shall find that these three have their places, and they are equally right, equally true and equally great. There is no quarrel between the Advaities, Visistadaities and Dvaities They are all one and the same in reality. If we boil down their arguments and their various interpretations we can find that they are teaching the same truth, only under a different form, garb or imagery of thought Therefore a true follower of the Vedanta should accept these and place them in their proper places. This was first explained in the *Bhagabad Gita* by Sri Krishna It can be interpreted by the Dvaita, the Visishtadvaita and the Advaita theory. But the different commentators being anxious to preach their own ideas and theories, have tried their best to torture the different texts and twist their meanings. For instance, Ramanuja finds a passage which has decidedly an Advaita meaning , but he explains it in his own way ; he does not care whether the text is tortured or twisted So, Sankara, when he finds a passage differing from his theory, does the same. But there was a living commentator of all these systems in the form of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramhamsa. It was he, who for the first time pointed out to the world that

there was no quarrel, no fight between these systems, but each of them described a portion of the truth and when we combine them all together, we find the whole truth. And therefore, if we wish to study Vedanta in all the phases, we shall have to study Dvaitism, Advaitism and Visishtadvaitism, and place them in their proper places to learn the standard of truth The standard of truth is within us. If we wish to refer to the highest authority, we shall find it dwelling in the cave of our hearts. He is the Eternal Teacher, the *Guru* of all *gurus,* the Teacher of all teachers ; and if we go into the state of superconsciousness, there we will find that all these different methods of explanations and interpretations reach the same goal

The goal is one, and that goal can be realized only by going into *samadhi* or superconsciousness, or GodGodconsciousness, as we call it And Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, after going into that state of *samadhi,* and communing with eternal truth, declared before the world that all these different interpretations are different paths which lead to the same goal They are like so many radii which converge towards one common centre Brahman, the infinite Being He is the eternal truth. Call Him by any name, Vishnu (all-pervading), Father in Heaven, Divine Mother, Allah, Jehovah or Buddha. The difference is only in name, not in reality , and a familiar illustration of Ramakrishna is, that as the same substance, water is called by different names in various countries such as, *waser, pani, bari, jalam, tannin, aqua* and so on ,but it makes no difference in the substance ; so, the substance of the universe, the reality of the universe, or th eternal truth, is one and the same although called by various names and worshipped under different forms The same eternal truth is the foundation, the Ideal, the Alpha and Omega, of the philosophy and religion of Vedanta. And therefore we see that harmony exists and underlies all systems of philosophy and religion We must see absolute harmony between Christianity, Judaism, Mohammedanism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and all the other *"isms"* of the world There is no difference We are all worshipping the same God, the same Reality. Where does He dwell? He dwells in our hearts He is the Soul of our soul, Life of our life, He is the *Paramatman.* He is the Lord of the universe To Him, as Allah the Mohammedans pray five times a day, the Christians pray by calling Him Father in Heaven, the

Vaishnavas as Vishnu, the Saivas as Siva, and the Buddhists as Buddha The Saktas too, worship the same Reality as the Divine Mother of the universe But here we must remember that, God is sexless, although He is described as masculine. If we call Him by the masculine gender we limit Him in His true nature The Fatherhood and Motherhood of God are nowhere explained so well as in the religion of Vedanta. It is the most scientific truth that God is not only the instrumental, but also the material cause of the universe. If we analyze the definition of the 'matter' of the materialists we find it is the same thing as the eternal truth or the eternal substance. They call it insentient, because they do not know its real nature. If energy is the cause of the universe, it cannot be insentient, because it has the germ of intelligence, otherwise we commit blunder by saying that something comes out of nothing, which is impossible. Therefore, matter and energy of the materialists and evolutionists, is the same substance, only interpreted in terms of matter and insentient energy

We find how easy it is to reconcile different religions with all the great philosophies of the world Idealistic, materialistic and spiritualistic philosophies can be harmonized and made to stand in absolute harmony with the teachings of Vedanta Some people think that doctrines and dogmas of different sectarian religions of the world, will prevent them from finding absolute unity and harmony, and from making the Vedanta religion universal. But we must remember that doctrines, dogmas and schemes of salvation are the non-essential parts of religion The most essential part of religion is to realize God, to become divine and to feel the presence of the Divinity in our souls, to feel the presence of the Divinity everywhere and in all living creatures. That is the ideal The Mohammedan holds this ideal before him, and realizes Allah in his soul , a true Christian holds the same ideal in following the teachings of Jesus the Christ, who said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free," and "Ye shall be perfect even as your Father in Heaven is perfect." Knowledge of truth brings perfection and that perfection comes to a sincere and earnest devotee. That is the essential part of all religions If we throw overboard all doctrines, dogmas, theories, and theologies, we do not lose religion, the essential part of which

consists in realization, in divine communion, in going into the superconscious state and attaining Godconsciousness Therefore we do not see any disharmony, any difference, except in the method of expressing the same idea ; and different methods are fitted for certain kinds of temperaments, for certain kinds of dispositions For instance, those who live in the desert of Arabia follow a certain kind of method in worshipping the Lord Their ideas and methods of expression are different And among the Jews and Christians we find the same thing. The Jew can only be convinced by certain things, just as the Europeans are to be convinced by certain methods These methods differ from those by which the Hindu mind is convinced Acknowledging all these different varieties of expression, we find that the fundamental principle which underlies them, is one and the same and we can learn that by studying the Vedanta religion and philosophy

Therefore, the Vedanta religion may be called the universal religion and the universal philosophy. And this universal philosophy or religion teaches that, when we think of our bodies, we are the servants of the Lord He is the infinite Being, He is the Creator, He is the *Isvara.* When we are conscious of all the senses, when we are conscious of their manifestations, then we must admit, the existence of the Lord as separate from us. He is infinitely greater than ourselves. But He has not created us out of nothing, because that is against the law of nature He did not create us out of nothing, for we existed before the birth of the body And when we think of ourselves as one with the body, we are His servants We must be devoted to the Lord, pray and worship Him and recognize Him as the omnipotent and omnipresent Lord of the universe When we think of ourselves as individual egos, or as souls, we must recognize the relation which exists between the soul and the Infinite Being, and that relation is described in all the scriptures of the world as the relation between the sun and its image. In the Old Testament we read that God created man after His own image. That does not mean that man is the image of the Lord as most of the Christians believe, but it means a deeper truth and that truth is that our soul is the image of the Lord Do we not find similar expressions in the *Upanishads* and the Vedas? This individual ego is the image of the

Lord, because it contains the germ of the Divinity. It is potentially divine ; it is immortal, just as the Lord of the universe is immortal As the image of the sun is bright and self-effulgent, so the image of the Infinite is self-effulgent, is also full of intelligence, full of divine qualities and divine powers: only those qualities are not manifested in perfection at present in the individual ego or image

Our ideal is to manifest the divine qualities and powers as perfectly as possible, under the present environmental conditions In this, we must not forget that the soul is related to God as a part is related to the whole. And that is the foundation of Visishtadvaita, which teaches that there are three things *"chit, achit,* and *Isvara."* The first two, form the part of the body of *Isvara,* that is, they exist as the body of the Lord So we, as individual egos, form part of the Lord whose body extends over the whole of the phenomenal universe ; the sun and moon are His eyes; the infinite space He pervades, and He exists everywhere He dwells in an atom, in a molecule, just as much as He dwells in the largest solar system. Do we not see that the Vedas preach the same truth? "That infinite Being is smaller than the smallest. He dwells in the atom and also in the solar system. He dwells in the caves of our hearts. In whatsoever heart He is felt there comes the infinite bliss." The idea that God dwells everywhere, that He is all-pervading, must be grasped by all the Visistadvaitists. And the *Anubhashya* of the dualists takes only one portion of the truth which is that the *Jiva* is only *anu,* an infinitesimal part of the world. When we turn towards the Advaita system, we find, that the infinitesimal part of the eternal Being is infinite, because every part of the Infinite is infinite. How can it be otherwise? Infinity is indivisible If individual souls be parts of the Infinite Being and dwell in the body of the Lord who is infinite, how can they be separable? Can they be finite in their true nature? Every particle of the Infinite is infinite. This is higher mathematics So we see, that these are the three grades of realization. They are equally great, and true They exist as parallel lines. Some people would like to remain as servants of God all through eternity. They do not care to go deeper and realize that they are parts of the Infinite Being They would rather worship the Infinite Lord as their master and governor. Others

care to commune with the Infinite Being, in a different way. Therefore, our Vedanta religion gives us four ideals of salvation, *moksha ;—salokya, samipya, sarupya, sayujya* These are all equally true Therefore we should accept the four, and if there be any more, we should accept them too. Because the scope of our religion and philosophy, is not limited by any doctrine, dogma, or book It is unlimited and therefore we can take in Christianity, Mohammedanism, Judaism and Zoroastrianism We do not see any difference. The only difference is in the manner of expression, in the mode of worship All religions give the same attributes to the same Infinite Being, only in a different language, in a different manner. Having understood this, it is easy to find that the different systems of dualism, qualified non-dualism, and Advaitism, are so many phases of the eternal truth. If we accept the all and follow the path which is best suited to ourselves, then in time we shall attain to the highest goal The special religions of the world teach that one method must be accepted by all. I am wearing a coat, and if it does not suit, that person will go to eternal pardition, how foolish I shall be? But if I allow you to fit your coat according to your own form, then I am taking the wise method, and that wise method has been taken by religion and philosophy of Vedanta, which tells us, that each individual must have his own method. Why should we force individuals to follow particular methods? What right have we? Each individual has taken a way of attaining the Lord directly or indirectly. And the schemes of salvation are not given into the hands of certain priests, who consider themselves as the Viceregents of God No, that is impossible. Our country has suffered enough from priestcraft, and we must not be subject to it any more.

Our religion does not teach idolatry ; but it teaches an ideal worship. There is no such thing as idol worship. I have heard again and again in England and America from the Christian Missionaries, that the Hindus are idol-worshippers I tell them that if it be so, the Christians worship idols too. I must tell you my experience in Italy. When I went to Rome, I saw the figures of infant Jesus, which are known as Bambinos, that is the figures of baby Jesus. They are adorned with ornaments, and one figure I noticed very carefully, and found that a gold watch was hanging on its neck, and I asked my friends the

meaning of it. Why does the infant Jesus wear a gold watch? My friends explained that some devotees offered it on account of the fulfilment of their prayers. I was very much pleased to know that these Italian peasants pray to the Bambino for rain, and for the cure of diseases, and so on .When their prayers are fulfilled, they give these votive offerings. I went to St. Peter's in Rome, and there I found a statue of St. Peter, a huge figure made of stone, and the big toe of the right foot was worn away, and I asked the cause of it. They answered that it was due to the kissing of the foot by devotees. These things opened my eyes, and I found that our country does not go so far, in fact, the Hindus never worship idols in this way. But they know that externals are nothing but symbols. We have no idolatry. We have symbols for abstract truths, which are too deep for ordinary human beings to grasp, and every Hindu knows, that external worship is only a symbolic form of the internal worship. You know when a priest sits before an image to worship the Lord, he puts flowers on his own head first, as *atmapuja* and then places other flowers on the image. The external is considered to be the lowest, and the internal the highest form of worship, *manasapuja* is the best, and it is practised by the followers of all religions. There is no Mohammedan, or Christian, who does not worship the Lord as seated upon the altar of his heart, for the external altar, whether in a church or temple, represents only the altar of the heart, upon which the Lord must be seated and worshipped in spirit and by spirit. There, we find the harmony that exists between Vedanta and other sectarian religions; and recognizing that harmony, that intrinsic unity, we shall no longer fight other religionists on account of their beliefs and faiths. In India alone we find that religion or philosophy of Vedanta has taught millions to recognize other religions as paths which lead to the same goal, and it has made them infinitely tolerant towards them. It is only in India, we find that the fires of the inquisition were never kindled on account of beliefs and faiths of other religionists. On the other hand we see that when the Parsees were driven out from Persia by the Mohammedans, they came and took shelter in India, and the Hindus opened their doors to the foreigners, and they have been living here unmolested for centuries They also opened their doors

to the Christian Missionaries, and there are Hindu princes and Rajas who have given lands to them on which to build their churches. But would a Christian build a temple for the Hindus? That kind of toleration exists in India alone We understand that unity in variety is the plan of nature, not only on the material, but also on the spiritual plane Therefore we are the spiritual teachers of the world.

We must learn our own religion first, study our philosophy and understand the universal principle of unity in the variety of methods of worship in all religions, and then go out to foreign lands to preach that truth to others, to make them more tolerant and help them to realize the ideal of this universal religion. If we do this, we shall be worthy sons and worthy disciples of our ancient Rishis, the great Seers of truth. We must realize, that all our brothers are one with us in spirit, that we are all children of God What will be the result? The result will be *moksha,* freedom of the soul, emancipation from all bondage, imperfection, suffering, sorrow and misetry. We do not believe that we have to throw away all the comforts of life, but we must realize that this earth is not our real home ; that our home is in the spiritual realm, the infinite abode of eternal bliss Thence we have come, there we must return. That freedom is not only spiritual freedom but freedom in every possible way Spiritual freedom is the mother of all other freedom If we are spiritually free, we can live in this world as free souls, not bound by environmental conditions, limited by ignorance and imperfections ; and that freedom is the ideal of Vedanta. Does that freedom begin after the grave? No. It begins now and here ; we must be free today. That should be our ideal, and "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Let us know the truth, let us attain to that freedom in this life and then hereafter we shall remain free in all eternity.

## CONVERSAZIONE AT BANGALORE

On the evening of the 1st of August a conversazione was held in Sowcar Doddanna's Hall, and Swami Abhedananda was asked a number of questions of a varied nature, which were all ably and very patiently answered by him Questioned on

Advaita and Dvaita theories, he explained that, in fact, there was no difference between the two ideals, when realised by seekers after truth. In reference to *maya*, he explained, that *maya* did not mean illusion Illusion, was a word wrongly adopted in translation. The real translation of *maya* will be delusion. This word gave a false idea to the Western mind *Maya* did not mean ignorance. Here, he quoted Sankara's explanation. Questioned, if an unbeliever could be a Vedantin, the Swami replied that he could be, for Vedanta, in the first place, taught him, to believe in his own existence, and in course of time it would create a belief in him, of the existence of the Brahman. Asked to explain how it was possible to have unity in variety, he gave the illustration of electricity, which as a vibrating energy produced heat and light, and by its power propelled vehicles, etc., but the energy in all was one and the same. To several other questions, the Swami gave replies which may be summarised thus:

The *Puranas* are sacred books, based on the Vedas. There were a large number of them, some by known and others by unknown authors If they did not correctly interpret the ideals of Vedanta, they were not good like the *Puranas*. There were as many Vyasas as there were the *Puranas*, Vyasa, being the title assumed by all authors. Even now were existing many Vyasas, who published many new *Puranas*. A nation would advance by spiritual power, for it was the mother of all other powers. The Hindu *Shastras* never preached idol-worship In fact, that word idol was wrongly used by translators, which has led to great confusion and misrepresentation. To the English mind, the word idol gave a different idea In India there was symbol-worship practised, which only helped man to realise God in the abstract sense We always offered food to God before we partook of it ; before we slept, we offered prayers, whatever action we performed, we first thought of God, and then did it Such was not the case in Christendom The word caste, meant pure breed. It was first employed by the Portugese in India. The *Shastras* explain it as *Varnashrama*. The word caste was employed by them to denote its divisions It was a misnomer. *Varnashramas* were intended to show divisions of labour. Such divisions of labour existed in all other countries These divisions were flexible in all countries except in India Vedanta

does not say that the soul has any caste or sex The spiritual unity was the mother of all other unities. To the Hindus, in the present day, unity was a thing unknown ; they had no unity, even in matters of self-interest. While all other countries worked with unity of purpose, here in India, there were as many millions of purposes as there were millions of people. There was no co-operation By Theosophy, he understood, as the word literally meant, wisdom of God. Vedanta was also the highest wisdom of God. Vendantism was a religion, whereas Theosophy was not so in the same sense Questioned on widow remarriage, and the raising of the age limit for marriage, the Swamiji said that the ideal of Vedanta, was not marriage. To put the soul under the experience of the various stages, the *grihasthashrama* and others were intended When a man became the father of two children, the *Shastras* taught him to consider his wife as a mother. Our women were taught to marry their young daughters before they were ten or twelve years old. If they did not live to see grand-children and great grand-children, they believed that there was no *mukti* for them Thus, had arisen our social troubles There had arisen many reformers, each pushing his own opinions and fighting with others. No proper reform could be achieved by them. We have to go back to the teachings of the Vedanta, and the *Shastras.* If we practised what they taught, all our troubles would soon vanish. We would then become a great nation, spiritually, physically and socially.

On Wednesday afternoon August 1st, Swami Abhedananda accompanied by his Gurubhai Swami Ramkrishnanda paid a visit to the *Yuvaraja* in his palace and had an agreeable conversation for half an hour about America and the Western civilization.

Various gentlemen of the city of Bangalore came to see Swami Abhedananda at different hours of the day and kept him busy with their questions and inquiries There was at this time a Hindu Athelete of unparalleled strength known as the Indian Sandow who was exhibiting his strength in the city.

In the evening of August 2nd, Swami Abhedananda and his party were invited to see the most wonderful feats of Prof Rama Murti, the Indian Sandow. The Swamijee went to the Circus Tent and took his seat as the guest of His Highness the

Maharaja of Mysore. After the performance Prof. Rama Murti came to take the blessings of the Swamijee The Swami Abhedananda blessed him and said: "You have exhibited wonderful powers and strength which you have acquired through long practice of *pranayama* and *kumbhaka*. You filled your lungs with air and made your chest like a pneumatic tire of a motor car, which enabled you to hold the heavy weight of a cart with twenty-five strong men riding on it." Prof. Rama Murti smiled and bowing his head received the blessings of the Swamiji. Afterwards, this great athelete was so pleased with the Swami that he offered his circus tent for the meeting of the students.

On Friday morning, August 3rd, the Swami and his party were received by the members of the Anna Basanti Sangam which was organized to distribute alms to the poor people by thousands. In the afternoon the Swami paid a visit to Mr. Fraser the English Resident of Mysore. Mr. Fraser took great interest in the philosophy of Vedanta and was delighted to meet the exponent of this ancient system. He asked the Swami many questions regarding reincarnation and *maya* and the ultimate goal of religion of Vedanta. The Swami's answers were to the point and convincing.

Thus having spent heartily an hour with the British Official Swami Abhedananda went to the Bangalore Cantonment to receive an Address of Welcome at the Mayo Hall in reply to which the Swami lectured on the various phases of Vedanta for about an hour

The Address runs as follows:

## TO HIS HOLINESS SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

Revered Swami:

When Swami Vivekananda found himself in need of a fellow worker in America, it was to you that he sent his brotherly call How generously you responded to it and how vigorously and unremittingly you have been working in obedience to that call of duty during the past eleven years! We have the privilege and the pleasure to acknowledge it with gratitude today. What worthier shoulders than yours could wear the mantle of Sri Ramakrishna-Vivekananda?

We have no doubt, Reverend Swamiji, that your present visit to our motherland will give a new and strong impetus to the working of the various religious institutions of India, and especially to the efforts of the Sri Ramakrishna Misson for our spiritual regeneration.

In conclusion, beloved Swamiji, we all unite in praying that a long life of health and vigour may be yours, and that every success may attend your noble endeavours for the elevation and enlightenment of humanity.

Wishing you a very happy and useful sojourn in our midst.

We remain,
Revered and beloved Swamiji
With profound reverence and esteem,

Bangalore,
August 3, 1906.

Your grateful and loving co-religionists of Bangalore.

In the *Mysore Standard,* August 4, 1906, appeared the following account:

## MAYO HALL ADDRESS

At Mayo Hall last evening Swami Abhedananda was presented with an Address by the Vedanta Society. In response to it the Swamiji made a stirring speech, dwelling on Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, and Raja Yoga The Swami pointed out how the Vedantists in America and Europe accepted the principles on which these various systems were based, and practised them with wonderful results The Raja Yoga taught how to perform *pranayam* or breathing exercises and cured many diseases of the body, a fact which has been accepted by scientists of modern times Today, in the schools of America and Europe, boys and girls are taught breathing exercises. Several other Yoga theories were being just recognized by the best thinkers in the West. The Christian spiritualists' movement was producing wonderful results, and exploding the old theory of the soul being subjected to eternal perdition, but, on the contrary, was establishing the Vedic theories in respect to them. While the West was just beginning to recognize those truths, he deplored

the fact that in India, the abode of Vedanta philosophy, the Hindus were neglecting the truths discovered long, long before the sceptic nations. The Swamiji said that we sit today at the feet of the Occidental Nations to learn these things. Being intellectual slaves, we have lost all the originality, with which our ancient Seers were endowed. The Swamiji said that the present system of education which we are receiving, must necessarily be playing an important part in allowing us to deteriorate. The appeal of the Swamiji was to start national schools and colleges. It is a high time, he said, that our education should become nationalized and will not fail to produce desirable effect.

After the lecture there was a most impressive and elaborate procession from Mayo Hall to the Cantonment Vedanta Society and the Vivekananda Reading Room at Ulsoor where Swami spoke for half an hour in reply to the following Address of Welcome:

To

SREEMAT SWAMI ABHEDANANDA
OF THE
SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

Revered Swamiji,

We, the members of the Vedanta Society and the Ulsoor Vivekananda Reading Room, beg leave to offer you a hearty welcome on your return to our Motherland We are gratefully aware of the invaluable services you have rendered, on behalf of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission, to the people of the West, particularly to the Americans. When the late Swami Vivekananda, of hallowed memory, first crossed the *Kalapani* to represent Hinduism before the Parliament of Religions, at Chicago, India did not even dream that her cherised Vedanta would find a lasting abode in the thoughts and feelings of the cultured classes of the Americans But, thanks to the unremitting work of the late Swamiji and yourself, there are enlightened

Americans today who are as proud to be known as Vedantins as we are here in India The purple mantle of Vivekananda could surely not have alighted on worthier shoulders than your own.

Revered Swamiji! It has been the good fortune of Vivekananda Societies like ours to understand Guru Maharaj Ramakrishna Paramahamsa's advent to the world as an *Avatara* and his grand Mission of salvation for humanity and to appreciate the noble achievements of Swami Vivekananda, yourself and other illustrious members of that noble brotherhood of the grandest Apostles of all history. It is our earnest ambition to reap the grand spiritual benefits which your noble achievements have been scattering broad-cast over the whole world, as early as possible and then, however, humbly, help to spread the cause to the world at large. Revered Swamiji, will you not with your all embracing love and goodness help us in this our cherished desire and make us all worthy disciples of Mahatmas like yourself.

With this selfish prayer, which we cannot refrain from putting before you, we wish Revered Holiness, all strength, health and the true blessings of life to carry on your grand achievements in the cause of Vedanta to ever greater fruition

We remain,
Revered Swamiji,
Your admiring and respectful Servants,
The Members of the Vedanta Society
and the
Ulsoor Vivekananda Reading Room

Ulsoor, August 3, 1906.

The Swami and his party did not return to their quarters until late in the evening During his stay in Bangalore the hour between eight and nine in the morning and three and four in the afternoon was reserved for the reception of visitors of all classes rich and poor alike, and many availed themselves of this opportunity to personally consult with the Swami

On the morning of August 5th, nearly 3,000 Hindu students of Bangalore presented the Swami with an Address of Welcome to which the Swami replied for over an hour.

## TO HIS HOLINESS SWAMI ABHEDANANDAJI

Dear and Reverend Swamiji,

We the students of Bangalore, beg to offer our most hearty thanks for the work which you have been doing on behalf of Vedanta, in America and elsewhere, and welcome you to our midst, though it be but for a brief time.

Vedanta has been the common heritage of *Bharatakhanda*, and although in one form or another, it has been held the dearest possession of the Hindu, it was left to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa to revive its teachings and point out the unity which it has been taught. The banner of this Universal Religion was first borne to the West by the Reverend Swami Vivekananda of hallowed memory. His work in this Holy Cause of our Motherland has been all but too short. But the gloom that fell over the country was dispelled when the mantle of this responsible office fell on your shoulders.

It has given us no small amount of pleasure to learn that your work, in America in particular, has taken firm root. It will, therefore, be counted a memorable day in our lives when we have had the honour of coming in touch with you and have been accorded the pleasure to express our gratitude to you for the edifying and ennobling work you have been doing

Wishing you long life and inexhaustible energy to convey the banner of our religion yet farther

We beg to remain,
Dear and Reverend Swamiji,
Your admiring disciples in Vedanta,
The Students of Bangalore.

Bangalore,
Aug, 5, 1906.

## A WORD OF WELCOME FROM THE YOUNG MEN OF BANGALORE

Hail thou in our midst today! O noblest son of India's cause!
Hail we all, thou trusted Master, who has won the world's applause!
Far away from native clime, to foreign shores thou dared to go
For a call from Higher powers, made thy heart to service bow

India's call to noble sons is, Life and Love and Liberty,
India s hope is symbolized and cast, in forms of men like thee.
Love or money? Which shall give us peace of life with bliss
complete?
Money panders to our whims, but love to kiss thy peaceful feet,
Many a movement tempts the youth, who guards the rising race.
Well thou Swami saved the banner raised by Mother Kali's grace,
Well the mantle of a nation s sacred duty to the world,
Rests on thy unselfish shoulders, bears the flag of peace unfurled,
Until we take the vow of duty,—actions make us bold and
free,—
Vainly roars in prison walls the Indian Lion of Liberty.
We were India's poor and cursed, darkest nation on the globe,
Till a poor and bold Sannyasin clad in poor *kasayam* robe,
Freed us from the curse of ages, freed us from a nation's woe,
And the wonder of the world in India's interest made to grow?
Mark the word was softly said and the seed was gently sown ;
Deeper, deeper sank the truth—to glorious heights the work
has grown!
Give us, Swami, life and hope ; Fire us with the patriot's love!
Ever shall thy watchword guide us—Truth within and God
above!

## ADDRESS TO THE STUDENTS OF BANGALORE

Friends and young men of Bangalore,

I thank you heartily for your kind words this morning, and the enthusiasm which you have shown since I arrived in Bangalore It is extremely gratifying to me to know that the younger generation of our holy Motherland has appreciated the work that has been done by our illustrious brother, Swami Vivekananda, and by his fellow-disciples and co-religionists

Young men of Mysore, to you I repeat that this enthusiasm should be a lasting thing and not a temporary, passing fad We must realize the situation that our Motherland needs young men who are strong and determined in their purpose and who are ready to sacrifice their self-interest for the glory of their religion The younger people all over the country are the

future workers for the regeneration of our holy, Motherland; and if we are united in one great cause, we shall achieve the most wonderful results. The results are bound to come but we must be prepared to receive them.

Swami Vivekananda first declared before the world that the future of India will be greater than the past. He was alike a prophet, a patriot and a saint His path should be followed by all the students of this country; and those who are present here and who have read his books and followed his teachings, will never forget the grand ideal which he held before the world. The ideal which the Hindus hold out to the world is that grand idea of spiritual freedom. We must know that it is the foundation of all other kinds of freedom. *Moksha* (spiritual freedom) must be our ideal; and *moksha* can be achieved through Vedanta; therefore, we must study it carefully and understand the principle of this universal religion. We should read these commentaries in the light of modern science. Then, we shall understand the true spirit of the Acharya and shall be able to write new commentaries in future. But these commentaries must be based on the Universal principles of logic and science.

We shall find in the ideal of Vedanta the unity in variety, the unity of all philosophies and sciences; and that ideal must be realized by us all The moment we have realized that, the highest goal of freedom is ours, and by keeping that goal before our mental eyes we shall build our character. Otherwise we shall not be worthy of that ideal.

How should we build our character? By practising the various systems of Yoga handed down to us from time immemorial. These different Yogas will make us strong, morally and spiritually. Strength is the thing which we need today. We must practise a great many of the physical exercises such as *pranayama,* Hatha Yoga. We must get muscles of iron and nerves of steel. Young boys should play foot-ball, cricket etc. The ideal should be national regeneration; everything that denationalizes should be abandoned We must try to become a nation; and Vedanta is going to make us a nation.

Vivekananda's is a national movement. Every one of you must feel it a part of your national life. Be devoted to the cause and try to be worthy of your nation.

Physical strength as well as strong moral character is needed. We should be truthful; to stand by truth and realize truth is the ideal. If we are not truthful we cannot acquire the highest ideal of truth, for God is Truth. Truthfulness is the first virtue Honesty of purpose is another virtue which must adorn the character of a nation

After truthfulness and honesty, comes continence or *Brahmacharyam* Why are we degraded? We have lost our *Brahmacharyam*. How many of the two hundred fifty millions of Indians live as *Brahmacharins*? Early marriage is the chief cause of our national degeneration. We are misled by being married when we are children. It will be a thing of the past if parents realize the situation. It is weakening in its results We have no strength nor development By practising *Brahmacharya* we shall be heroes, we shall be great workers for our Motherland. By *Brahmacharya* everything can be attained.

We must live a strictly moral life. Women are the mothers of the whole nation, and as our Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna said, they must be considered as the earthly representatives of the Divine Mother. We must study the Vedic ideals and hold these ideals in our minds. Women must have a share in all the scientific knowledge and education of the day. No nation has become great by neglecting the education of women. They must be educated, and they must have certain privileges. Thus, good will come to us if we observe the Vedic rules Look, how many women were the *mantra-drashtas* in ancient times—Maitreyi, Katyayani, and Gargi! Why should we not now produce such women?

We want thousands of men and women who will devote their lives to the cause of religion Why do we not get such now? Because we neglect our religion We do not study the Vedas. We do not hold the Vedic ideal before our minds. Therefore, we are degraded. We must wake up, and understand the situation. All the students should be like one body and one soul. We must not follow our selfish desires Remember, "Unity is strength." That strength is necessary to banish the evils of the period of darkness Knowledge will dispel the darkness of evil and bring out the sunshine of purity and virtue We must bring that light of knowledge which will come through the study of the Vedas.

The Vedas are divided into two main portions, the *karmakanda* and the *jnanakanda*. The *karmakanda* or the ritualistic portion of the Vedas is forgotten now, and the knowledge portion or *jnanakanda* stands superior to *karmakanda*. The *Upanishads* have given us better ideals than any other religion of the world. Now is the time for us to study them carefully and to translate them into all living languages.

National industries, national schools and colleges, ought to be established The education we are receiving at present is against our national ideals We cannot afford to forget the higher ideals Vedanta should be expounded in all colleges and universities But this will come later on, if we unite in purpose and stand up as a body and demand such things. Young men, have vigour and determination for that one purpose and then demand it until it is granted Nothing can resist a determined effort Look at the Japanese; in forty years they have become a nation by the force of character and unity of purpose. These are two of the grandest virtue which a nation can possess, and by them forty-eight millions of japanese have become ten times stronger There is no power on earth which can resist their onward progress.

Our young men consider the profession of a pleader as a high one They should have better ideals We know that Hindus were averse to litigation. They never cared to appear in Law courts in ancient times Today, think how degraded we are! We cannot help quarreling all the time. Read Max Muller's *"India, What Can It Teach Us"*. There, you will find Megasthenes' account of India and the Hindu character. And to-day, we hold the ideals of becoming a pleader - To hold the ideal of living upon the litigation of other people, is degrading. Let us improve the industrial resources of the country. We are governed by the British who are commercial and industrious. That is what we need today. Go to other nations and study them. Let us correct our own faults by observing other nations; but we need not imitate their vices.

First, we should cultivate the power of organization. The Western nations have become great by this power. Ten men here cannot work together long in harmony. We must sacrifice our individual opinions for the sake of an ideal, otherwise we

shall be crushed by a greater organized power that threatens us from a distance. If we are united and well-organized, there is no power on earth which can resist us. I have an idea to start in every great town of India and Ceylon, Vedanta Societies. They shall be well organized. Young men will be trained in these societies, to observe the laws of organization, so that they will learn how to co-operate among themselves. By their organized power the Missionaries win men into their fold. Why should we not organize ourselves and resist their power ?

Another thing we have to learn from the Western nations is obedience Here everyone wants to lead and no one wants to obey. The first virtue is obedience. If you wish to be a commander, first be a good soldier. If you are not a good soldier, you cannot command You obey, not the individual, but the principle. In America, the people obey the President. When his term is over, the ex-president is an ordinary man. So long as he occupies the Prsidential chair, they obey him ; whatever he says, they are willing to obey Obedience is the secret of success in a constitutional form of government The individual may not be qualified, and others may take his place but the authority must be maintained. Look how the British Government works in India. The Viceroys come and go They do not obey any individual, but the principle. By learning how to obey we shall be leaders.

We must build our moral character. What is the highest moral law? It is given in all the scriptures of the world, thus: "Love your neighbour as yourself" It was not only understood but taught best in India Buddha, Krishna, and the Vedas taught it. Another golden rule is, "Return good for evil" Why should we love our neighbours ? Because we are one with our neighbours in spirit. Vedanta teaches that the father loves his child for the sake of the soul, not for the body The husband loves his wife for the sake of the soul and that soul is the immortal child of God. We are one in spirit, and therefore, we must love. Let men express themselves by one will, purpose, ideal and one method of work For what is love but an expression of oneness ? The lover and the beloved become united in spirit ; the same law of attraction by which two atoms are drawn together, when manifested on the soul plane, is called love We must place ourselves under these conditions

and feel for the sufferer That kind of love is necessary of which our *Shastras* declare:

"Behold! not for the love of the all, is the all dear, but for the love of the Self verily, the all is dear."

Compassion is a great virtue; we must practise that, and not take revenge. Buddha said, "Hatred is not conquered by hatred, but by love. This is the eternal law". It is through love we shall become a nation. If the Brahmans love the Periahs, the Pariahs will fall at their feet; but if they hate them, they draw nothing but hatred from the Pariahs. Therefore, my friends, we must understand this ethical law and live in such a manner that we may reap the best results of divine love

We must not consider that non-Brahmins are degraded. They are the sons of God, just as much as Brahmins are. Pariahs must not be down-trodden and deprived of their privileges. The soul is never a Pariah The soul is the child of God. The *Atman* of a Pariah is as great as the *Atman* of a well-qualified Brahmin. Why should you not recognize this and help the poor by uplifting them from their social condition We must begin that from this very day Hold the ideals of the Vedas always before your minds

Lastly, spiritual unity is necessary There may be various sects—the *dvaita, advaita, visishtadvaita,* but we must understand that God is one. Our conceptions of Him may be different, but conceptions do not make God. He is one. The more we advance towards Him, the more we approach the Divinity, the better we understand that He is one and not many. He is worshipped by all nations. Note the familiar illustration of water, by Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna "As the same substance, water, is called by various names, so the same God is worshipped under various names and forms" Therefore, we must see the unity of Godhead in the various forms of worship. Allah is not different from Vishnu The highest ideal of unity is given in the Rig Veda, and no other scripture has given the truth to the world so beautifully and in such inspired language. By holding this ideal of the unity of the Godhead, all differences will disappear.

In every religion there are two parts, the essential, and the

non-essential, such as doctrines, dogmas, and schemes of salvation The latter are man-made; they are not divine. The essential part is the relation of the Godhead to our soul and the attainment of Godconsciousness. There we agree with all religions. Be conscious of the soul and its relation to the Divinity. Whether you are a Christian, or a Mohammedan, you are one. If a Hindu realizes God, he embraces a Mohammedan, as Sri Ramanuja, Nanak, and Chaitanya did.

In our religion we have absolute freedom All religions whether *advaita* or *dvaita* admit that *Atman* has no hunger, that *Atman* does not eat. No doubt it is said that *ahara-suddhi* brings on *sattva-suddhi;* but those who are not purified, possess a soul which is free from hunger just the same.

Let us drop all differences of opinion on religion and religious points, and let us live as brothers and sisters loving each other thus, and co-operate for the good of ourselves and our land, the *punya-bhumi Bharatvarsha,* the most spiritual country in the world There we shall see harmony, unity, and that should be our ideal.

A correspondent writing in the *Mysore Herald,* August 5th, called attention to the fact that the management of the entire proceedings of the meeting was carried out by the students alone, without the help of any description either from officers, officials, professors or teachers. Does not this, then, show that the students of Bangalore have unity of purpose, and is it not highly significant that Mr. Rama Murti, the Indian Sandow, permitted the students to make free use of his tent, without asking any compensation.

Appreciation is due to Dr. Palpu for his encouragement and suggestions given to the members of the committee formed for the ceremony of preparations made to receive the gentlemen."

This closed the series of public meetings in Bangalore In the afternoon a conversation was held at the Palace Cottage, and the Swami answered many questions on Vedanta. Then followed two days of rest, a visit to Stravana Balagla, and on Tuesday, the seventh of August, the Swami with his friends proceeded to Mysore City.

## SWAMI ABHEDANANDA IN MYSORE

Reports of the great enthusiasm aroused by the Swamis' visit had preceded them to Mysore where the people gathered in throngs at the station to meet the honoured guests. A large number of the leading citizens of the town consisting of official and non-official classes were present The students had mustered in large numbers The President, Vice-President and the Municipal Commissioners were in attendance The Palace Officer with a few Pandits and a large number of communities were there. The Mohammedan Community was also well represented by Mr Mir Humsa Hussain, our popular Sub-Judge and others. As soon as the train arrived, Mr. Kantharaja Urs with the City-fathers welcomed the Swamis, garlanded them and presented boquets. When the Swami alighted from the carriage, the people and the students by whom the platform was regularly packed, offered their *pranamas*. The local band played and in the midst of solemn welcome, the Swamis were conducted by Mr Kantharaja Urs to the carriage and drove with them to the guests' quarters. In the evening at 5-30 p m. the Swamis were taken in procession through the Dewan's road, the Ramavilasa Road and the Lansdowne Bazar Road to the Town Hall in a carriage drawn not by horses but by the student population—his ardent admirers There was a meeting of the citizens in the Rangacharlu Memorial Hall.

There were nearly ten thousand peoples present. The first and second floors were simply packed and there were some even on the third floor As soon as the Swamiji took his seat, Mr. M. Kantharaja Urs who presided over the meeting, on behalf of the people of Mysore, welcomed the Swamis in a short, sweet and eloquent Address:

Dear Swamiji,

I have been called upon by the citizens of Mysore, assembled here this evening, to offer you, on their behalf, a most hearty welcome to our midst, from the far off land whither you had gone and where you spent the best years of your life, not with the sordid and selfish motive of bettering your material procpects, but to proclaim, by your word and deed, the true worth of a reli-

gion which has held its own, side by side, with the greatest of the world's faiths.

You have, indeed, conferred upon us a great honour by visiting this ancient Province, with its historic and religious traditions, a Province which has been the field of labour of our great religious teachers in times gone by

We are eagerly looking forward to be enlightened by you on what we have forgotten in our ancient Scriptures and also as to what we have yet to learn, if not unlearn In our own generation, the great living example of your noble self and of your late revered brother and colleague, who is ever present among us in spirit though not in flesh, the Swami Vivekananda, has proved beyond all doubt, what single-minded devotion to any cause, whether spiritual or material, can achieve

Your mission has been to show to the world in the most emphatic manner possible, the dependence of our material prosperity upon our spiritual progress. Instances are not wanting in the history of the great nations in proof of this.

It might be said that it was in the days of Cromwell and his contemporaries, whose religious belief was so intense that the foundation of England's greatness was laid The great characteristic of your sublime teachings is like it, the complete absence of anything like dogma or intolerance. Your earnest desire is to promote feelings of good-will and universal brotherhood among all classes, irrespective of caste, colour or creed. These are some of the essential points which distinguish your teachings from those of our old religious teachers. Where they have failed, you have attained signal success

The learned and highly-inspiring lectures which you have been delivering ever since your return to the moth country, have done more than a library of books on Vedantic literature can ever do, in arousing in the young minds of the rising generation, a real and keen interest to seek after truth and know it.

Once more, we welcome you, Swamiji, as the proclaimer of our ancient faith in distant lands and as the reviver of the Sanatana-Dharma, in this land of ours.

Mr. A Mahadeva Sastri, curator of the Government Oriental Library, then read a Sanskrit Address and a part of its translation follows:

## Sanskrit Address at Mysore

A noted Hindu astronomer of the Sanskrit College of Mysore wrote the following Sanskrit verses in honour of Swami Abhedananda:

कविज्योतिर्वित् पण्डित रत्नं महाविद्वान् गोपालज्योस्य : मैसूर

श्रीरस्तु

नानादेशालोकन विज्ञातसमस्ततत्वानां।
श्रीमदभेदानन्दस्वामिवराणां चिरायुराशास्थे ॥१॥
भवतां हितकामानां न काम भोगेषुनोत्कर्षे।
नार्थेऽभिरति नांस्तिकमतविध्वंसे पराश्रद्धा ॥२॥
भवदांगमनं नृणां हिताय विद्याभिवृध्यै च।
सत् तत्वालोकाय प्रभवति जगतीत्यहं मन्ये ॥३॥
भाषाभूषावेषादयस्मतां घर्मबुद्धीनां।
न भवंत्यरयो लोके भक्तिज्ञानादिमार्गस्य ॥४॥
कुसुमेषु रसं यद्वत् गृह्णंत्यलयो भवादृशाः श्रेष्ठाः।
तहत् देशमनुस्येष्वनुपमसारं स्वयं क्रमशः ॥५॥
देशाटनकोविदभाषणादिभिर्ज्ञातदेशचर्य्याणां।
महिमा भवतां जगति प्रथते वैराग्यबुद्धिश्च ॥६॥
भवदारब्धं काय्यं साफल्यमुपैतु देवकृपयाद्य।
भवतामरोगदृढगात्रता शतायुष्यमपि भवतात् ॥७॥

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| गु | रु | की | तें | स्फु | र | ग्मू | तें | व | र | की | तें | श्रि | या | धि | क |
| वा | रु | स्फू | तें | टू | र | जा | तं | कृ | ष्णा | पू | ज | न | या | ज | य |

## SRIMAT SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

Welcome to Your Holiness, O Abhedananda Swami! We the citizens of Mysore City are quite delighted with your long-wished-for visit. Great indeed is the deed that is now being achieved by Your Holiness, namely, the spread of the excellent Vedic religion in different continents. The Vedic religion is eternal and the source of all other religions It was taught at the beginning of creation by the original Creator. Narayana,

the divine Being. The Lord himself has said referring to the two-fold path of *Sankhya* and *Yoga*—wisdom and devotion—"In this world the twofold path was taught by Me in the beginning" But this religion becomes over-powered by irreligion in course of time, owing to the ascendancy of desire-nature in its followers. Then, the Lord Himself, the Divine Being, Narayana, manifests Himself on earth and re-establishes the Vedic religion. So says the Lord: "Whenever there is a decay of religion and the ascendancy of irreligion, then do I manifest Myself" We are told in the *Ithihasas, Puranas* and other such writings how several Incarnations of the Divine Being took place at different points of time and what mighty deeds were achieved.

The Aryavarta has ever been the country where the Vedic religion, in all its aspects, is taught. Thence it spread to other lands and, there according to the needs of the people, it is partially learned and observed We are told in the *Puranas* that in this very cycle, the Divine Lord Narayana manifested Himself, in this Aryavarta, in this land of Dharma, as Sri Krishna, Buddha, and so on, for the resuscitation of the decaying Vedic religion. So also in this age of Kali when about five thousand years passed away, when the religion of divine service became almost extinct, when the whole land of India conceived a strong predilection for materialism, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, the great teacher, incarnated as the Divine Narayana. Having in view the preservation of Dharma He resuscitated once more the Vedic religion of knowledge and devotion, Himself teaching it in Bengal, the land of His birth, and disseminating it through his disciples and their pupils in India and in other continents. Nay, we have reason to regard the Blessed Lord Ramakrishna Paramahamsa as a manifestation of the Divine Being Narayana in as much as He, though He had not before studied the *Shastras,* by His teaching and by His very presence converted into ardent and humble devotees of the Vedic religion of divine service many of the atheists who held views antagonistic to the religion of divine service and who were learned in all modern systems of thought, as also many of the theists who, thinking themselves learned, cherished wrong ideas of religion

Among the disciples of this Teacher are the late Swami

Vivekananda, of blessed memory, and Your Holiness, O Abhedananda Swami. You are indeed "Abhedananda ;" for in utter disregard of all distinctions caused by caste, colour, and creed which belong to the body, and firmly holding to the true nature of the Self which admits no distinction whatever, you enjoy bliss yourself, and by imparting to others true knowledge you make them also participate in the supreme bliss.

The propagation of the Vedanta philosophy in Aryavarta, the land of its birth, is not so difficult a task. But wonderful and hard indeed to achieve is the propagation of the Vedanta philosophy in foreign lands where systems of thought opposed to the Vedic religion prevail, and which abound in savants who are adepts in modern materialistic sciences. Not only wonderful is this achievement, but it is also service to humanity. For, so long as the body is regarded as the Self as is naturally to all creatures, and so long as the idea is not replaced by true knowledge of the Self that it is ever immortal, pure and free, so long the personal attachment, hatred, envy and other passions will remain the inevitable source of all evils.

We hope, therefore, that propagation of Vedanta philosophy which you are carrying on in America, the foremost of all the modern nations, will, by implanting true ideas of the Self in the people of that country, eventually lead to mutual friendship among all peoples of the earth and to an earnest regard for the welfare of all creatures on earth. That Your Holiness and other teachers like you, of Vedanta philosophy, may by thus propagating the philosophy everywhere,—in India and other countries and continents,—impart to the people true knowledge of Self, guide them to the path of Dharma, and help to generate friendliness among them. May the Blessed Lord, Narayana, the Inner Ruler of all, graciously bestow on you wisdom, power, health and long life! So do we pray at all times

Mr. B Ramakrishna Rao in course of his address said:

I rise to echo the voice of welcome to the revered Swami. The Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Mission is a miracle, to which India stands indebted. Five thousand years ago the challenge that went forth was a challenge addressed to chivalry: and on the wide plains of Kurukshetra, there met heroes from all the corners of the then known world in deadly conflict Its

history is written in characters of blood; yet one pleasant relic survives. I allude to the immortal teachings of Bhagavan Sri Krishna delivered to Arjuna, the Pandava hero, on the eve of the battle. Fifty centuries of challenge have gone by; and this time the challenge goes to humanity and unity. Nor is the response less ready On the Columbian plains at Chicago meets the great Parliament of Religions. A grand dream is thus a realization, and thither was carried, the high philosophy of Sri Ramakrishna by a young Hindu Sannyasin Vivekananda The ways of Providence are mysterious. To rightly appreciate Swami Vivekananda's services to our Motherland, we should try to imagine what the result would have been, had not the Swami appeared on the scene at Chicago, as the apostle of Vedanta religion.

One of the chief functions of the Sannyasin is itinerancy Another and most important one is self-sacrifice The brotherhood of the Ramakrishna Mission seems mindful of these.

Honour and reverence then to the messengers who carried the holy Vedanta to distant lands. "Welcome then to the apostle of holy Vedanta is distant lands where half the convex world intrudes between, Welcome to the Soul who though soaring to the higher realms of *Jnana* is yet devoting himself to useful *karma,* as Swami Vivekananda said: "with his heart to God and hand to work:" Welcome to Swami Abhedananda (cheers).

"And this welcome, this day, we regard as most auspicious being the fourth anniversary of the installation of our present beloved and respected Maharaja Krishnarajendra Woodeyer (cheers)

"We wish the Swami a happy sojourn in our midst; we wish him and his colleagues health, prosperity and success to the Mission, they have the fortune to represent"

The Swami rose in the midst of vociferous cheers and spoke as follows:

Gentlemen,

I am thankful to the chairman and Messrs A. Mahadeva Sastri and B. Ramakrishna Rao, for the flattering words of

appreciation in which they spoke of my work for the propagation of Vedanta in the West. I wish that I deserved the credit that you have given me this evening. The honour of carrying the message of Vedanta to the West belongs in the first place to Swami Vivekananda. I followed him. I spent one year in England and nine years in America It is a very interesting country The American people are not narrow-minded Christians. They are open to examine new truth, and accept them if they stand the test of reason. We have several centres in America. Great teachers and professors of colleges and schools are imbibing the lessons of Vedanta with the greatest avidity. There is a great demand in America for Vedantic teachers. Our Vedic religion has a bright future before it in America. Its exponents are received there with open arms You must have read of the terrible catastroph caused by an earthquake in San Francisco Nearly the whole of that city was destroyed The matter for congratulation is that our temple there, survived the shock. Near San Francisco a hermitage was started by Swami Vivekananda. It is several miles from the inhabited parts, thirty-five miles from the railway station and six miles from the Post Office. Being thus sequestered, it constitutes an excellent place for meditation and concentration of mind. It is known as the Shanti Ashrama, and is well suited for the Yogis.

I shall now come to the doctrines of Vedanta, doctrines which by their sublimity, operate as beacon lights showing the way to earthly as well as heavenly bliss Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa was an ocean of divine wisdom. He was an embodiment, nay, a fountain of spiritual knowledge He thought Vedanta, spoke Vedanta and lived Vedanta. He used to say, "I serve God He was then a Dvaitin, as a Visishtadvaitin he used to say. "God is in me." Showing the ultimate state to which everything animate and inanimate, when stripped of the different forms, will become one with the universe itself, Ramakrishna used to say "I am He." Here, he was giving an illustration of Advaita It was from the Guru Maharaj that Swami Vivekananda, myself and others imbibed the doctrines of Vedanta. These doctrines we carried as a message from India to the West.

In our religion there are essentials and non-essentials. The

essentials are *jnana* and *Atman*. The one is a stepping-stone to the attainment of the other. The non-essentials are *karma*, ceremonials and rituals. They are intended for purifying the heart The essentials lead to *mukti* or salvation All Dharmas, if properly understood and acted upon, must lead to salvation There can be no salvation without correct knowledge and the reduction of such knowledge to practice The doctrines of all religions can be properly explained only by the light of Vedanta; for it is the only religion which successfully solves the problems of the inscrutable ways of God. I do not mean to say by this that, our Vedanta is the only true religion and that all others are so many myths What I say is, that Vedanta has laid down modes of realizing God in such a way as no other religion has ever done. By the practice of various Yogas as taught by our *Maharshis*, we can conserve our energy and become real *Brahmacharis*. These Yogas give birth to and develop our spiritual lives. We then begin to see things in a clearer light. We can follow the teachings of our *Brahmarshis* most effectually. We can go into *samadhi*, get out of the body and yet retain consciousness and individuality. We can come to realise that every individual has not merely a body, but also an *Atman*. Our bodies are material, and subject to birth and death. Our intelligence is immortal and eternal, and continues to exist when the body is destroyed. When the body goes, we live not in the material form, but in that of the spirit It is that form which is eternal. .This must be understood, if the fundamental principles of Vedanta are to be grasped. The religion and philosophy of Vedanta is unsectarian. The Dharma inculcated in the Vedanta are universal and cosmopolitan. There are religions which are built up around the personalities of particular individuals, who have lived a life of an upright and ennobling character. Christianity, Mohammedanism, Buddhism, and Zoroastrianism, are of this character. Take away the personalities of the founders of these religions, and what remains is not much We cannot say so of Vedanta It teaches that the Godhead is one. It impresses upon us that the Supreme Being is worshipped under different names and in various forms, and that Siva, Allah, and Vishnu, are but different names of the same Being. It is Vedanta that teaches these eternal truths and their manifestations, far better than any

other religion in the world. The true follower of Vedanta may be a Hindu, a Mohammedan, a Christian or a Jain. He may go to a Christian church, a Mohammedan mosque or a Hindu temple. It is the students of Vedanta that sees Divinity in himself. He looks upon his body as the temple of God It is this kind of worship that is the most transcendental of all What does Vishnu mean? It means 'The all-pervading Spirit.' So is Allah. There is no matter without spirit and it is this all-pervading Spirit that is known by the name of God. The God of different nations is identical with this Spirit though He is known by different names. There is a wonderful harmony in all religions, and it is Vedanta that shows this harmony. There is a dark cloud of ignorance hanging over the religions of the world It is universality of Vedanta that by its effulgence drives this cloud of ignorance from the atmosphere of spirituality.

I look upon India as the *punya-bhumi,* for, it is here that the eternal truths of Vedanta rose, like a torrid sun, to dispel spiritual ignorance and darkness all over the world. Swami Vivekananda carried the torchlight of Vedanta from India to America and Europe, and we shall encircle the whole globe with the light of this Eternal Truth The task we have laid before us is a very onerous one, and we are in need of fellow-workrs There are in America and elsewhere, thousands of sincere seekers after truth They have begun to see that the Vedanta teacher is the most rational expounder of God and His mysterious ways There are men and women in America and other parts of the world, who sit at the Vedantic fountain and look upon India, as the land from which the eternal truths of Vedanta have flowed The message of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa has directed the attention of the religious world to India, and has thus awakened in us a sense of duties I hope that the Vedantists of India will respond to this call and enable India to be a spiritual centre—a centre, from which the light of the spiritual sun will dispel the mists of ignorance, superstition, and sectarianism, from every part of the world I hope that the attention and reverence that you have shown to me today, is an index of the spiritual revival which has come to animate you all. That God may bless you with spiritual insight of Vedanta, is my sincere prayer.

Mr. M. Venkatakrishnaya then proposing a vote of thanks to the Lecturer and Chairman, said: "Gentlemen, we the people of this country represent a number of nationalities and sects by the differences in our religious views. This is the cause of our disintegration and downfall Our Swamiji has shown us the effects of the absence of union among us, union in spiritual as well as worldly affairs He has shown that though the Creator of this universe is known under different names He is one and the same, and the realization of this unity of thought will lead to our material and spiritual salvation. This should be borne in mind, reflected upon, and reduced to practice by all It is due to the kindness of His Highness, the Maharaja, that we have had the great delight of listening to the uplifting discourse of the Swami. We cannot be sufficiently grateful to His Highness for this favour. I propose a vote of thanks to him and to the Swami Abhedananda for his most edifying spiritual discourse. Mr. Kantharaja Urs has given us great pleasure by presiding over this meeting and by welcoming the Swami on our behalf I propose a hearty vote of thanks to him"

The vote was responded to with enthusiastic applause. Garlands were presented to the Chairman, Lecturer and the other Swamis, who graced the occasion.

In the Mysore *Herald,* August 9, appeared the following editorial:

## THE HARVEST FIELD

The conductors of the *Harvest Field* do not seem to be pleased with the ovations, respect and demonstrations of joy which the arrival of Swami Abhedananda has been evoking everywhere Our contemporary says, "Swami Abhedananda has been received fom Tuticorin to Madras with garlands, addresses and triumphal processions and in Madras he was conducted in slow and dignified progress, from the railway station to his residence. In colour, in noise, and in multitude nothing has been wanting. What sincerity and abiding strength lies under

this outward show?" We assure our contemporary that it is real, sincerity and regard that have found expression in demonstration of such reverence. The people would not care two straws for those who ae unworthy of such reverence Our contemporary asks the Swami to declare whether God is personal or impersonal, whether the soul of man has a separate existence or is identical with the supreme Soul. Our Christian priests may find these to be problems of impenetrable mystery. Any elementary book on Vedanta would explain to our Missionary gentleman that God is impersonal, that the soul of man though a separate entity, is a par and parcel of the universal or supreme soul and is, therefore, identical with it. It does not require an Abhedananda to declare this truth. Any *chela* of the Swami would put our Missionary in the way. The Swami is attacked by our Missionary gentleman for giving an expression to the idea of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. The Missionary thinks that these ideas are a monopoly of the Christian creed He does not know that Christ disappeared from his country for several years, that he went to India and sat at the feet of several Pandits and imbibed transcendental doctrines which today make the New Testament what it is, a store house of sublime truths, side by side with material encrustations of the grossest type. The followers of Vedanta have a mission to perform, and it is no other than to civilize and enlighten the people who are following illogical and irrational superstition and bigotry.

On Thursday, the ninth of August, there was an informal meeting and conversation with Mr Mahadeo Sastri, Pundy Kasturarrangam and other Pandits at the Oirental Library. The following day the Swami paid a visit to the Sanskrit College of Mysore where he heard the Hindu students chant the Sama Veda with the seven notes in the scale. A noted Hindu astronomer of the college in honour of the Swami wrote Sanskrit Verses.

On the tenth, the Swami visited Sringeri Math established by Sankaracharya and on the eleventh he was escorted to Seringapatam in the state carriage At Occad, the members of the Vivekananda Society and the citizens of Seringapatam with native band received the Swami and garlanded him amidst loud cheers and in procession conducted him to Sri Ranganatha

Temple, and thence to Daryabagh, where a cordial address of welcome was presented to him, the text of which follows:

REVERED AND BELOVED SWAMIJI
We, the Members of the
SERINGAPATAM VIVEKANANDA SOCIETY
AND ITS CITIZENS

Beg to offer Your Holiness our most
cordial welcome to this
SACRED AND HISTORIC PLACE.

It is with the greatest pleasure that we have been hearing of your success in the West and the New World, and we have no words to give expression to our gratitude for your exceptional devotion in spreading the Aryan spiritual Love throughout the length and breadth of the world.

We, in conclusion, pray for your long life so that you may be able to continue by your earnest and admirable devotion to spread the holy cause of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission, and trust that you will be graciously pleased to spare a corner in your heart for us all here.

We beg to subscribe ourselves,
Members of the Vivekananda Society
and
The Citizens of Seringapatam.

Seringapatam, August 11, 1906

The Swami in reply thanked the gentlemen present for their hearty welcome and then delivered a short but eloquent speech on the superiority and the universality of the spiritual Lore of India and the importance of studying the Vedanta philosophy. In conclusion he advised them in fitting terms to co-operate with the Seringapatam Vivekananda Society.

At the earnest request of the Hindu friends of Seringapatam, the Swami and his party visited the holy temple of Sesha-shayi, Tippu Sultan's Fort, the oscillating Concrete Arch 112 feet wide, built as a curiosity by Engineer Haviland, Tippu's Garden and other of historic interest.

The Swami then returned to Mysore where accompanied by Swami Ramakrishnananda he went to the Palace of His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore to hold a conversation in the Durbar Hall with the invited guests and officers of the Court. About fifty learned Pandits and Sanskrit scholars took their seats in orthodox Hindu manner on one side of the hall, while all the higher officials of the State arrayed themselves on the other side. His Highness, the Maharaja, presided and in honour of the Swamis left his throne and sat upon the carpet beside them.

The Swami Abhedananda gave a short address in English and opened the meeting by inviting questions from the learned audience The Pandits asked many religious questions in Sanskrit which the Swami answered in English, as many present did not understand Sanskrit. The conversation lasted some two hours and a half. His Highness becoming intersted in the Swami s replies forgot his various duties At the close of the meeting the Maharaja garlanded the Swamis.

On Sunday morning, the twelfth of August, Swami Abhedananda gave his stirring Address to the Students at the Rangacharlu Memorial Hall. There were several thousand students present The whole of the Hall both first and second floors were packed by them. All the leading gentlemen of the town were present His Excellency the Dewan Bahadur presided and in introducing the Swami, said—

"Gentlemen, You are already familiar with the figure of Swami Abhedananda and of what he has been doing since he landed in India from America. No introduction seems, therefore, required. Today, he is addressing the students I consider your lot a happy one Our days are past and the benefits that you will derive from the Swami's words are invaluable Man does not live for bread alone. He lives for another life and that is spiritual life. It is enviable that at the very threshold of your life you have a leader of Modern India to inspire you with his words of wisdom. Thanks to all the Oriental scholars, the Theosophical Society and the Ramakrishna Mission for universalizing our Vedanta. Not only universalizing but also showing that its truths underlie all the scriptures of the world Of this, Swami Abhedananda will be the exponent today. I shall, therefore, introduce him to you."

The following is the sum and substance of the Swamiji's stirring speech:

## ADDRESS TO THE STUDENTS OF MYSORE

Gentlemen,

I am very happy that I have an opportunity this day of thanking the citizens of Mysore, the Dewan and His Highness the Maharaja for the kindness which they have shown to me. I thank His Highness especially for the sympathy shown to our Mission, by following in the footsteps of his father Our movement is a national one. It will spread all over the world and will bring together all religions It will bring harmony out of discord and order out of disorder. Whether we are Vaishnavas, Saivas or Saktas or followers of any one of the numerous creeds, the fundamental truths are the same Our business is not to fight about particular theories, doctrines, creeds or cults It is to attain to Godconsciousness There have been many spiriual leaders in the past, and there will be many more in future. God manifests Himself wherever and whenever, He thinks it necessary. This is a truth which our Lord Sri Krishna proclaimed. "Whenever religion declines and irreligion prevails, I am born again and again." God thus manifests Himself in all countries, and not in one particular country. Jesus the Christ was such a one, born in an Eastern country, for reclaiming the savage nations of the West. He was also an *Avatara.* Incarnations are universal They are not confined to any particular locality. Our contention is against those short-sighted Christians who insist upon one particular *Avatara* alone We recognize Jesus as one who realized the highest ideal of man, an ideal which had been realized by many of our *Rishis* and Yogis thousands of years before Him. Jesus the Christ is the Son of God as we all are, asd as were our *Rishis* and Yogis. Lord Krishna and others are God manifested on earth. Our Indian ideal is the spiritual ideal, not the worldly. Worldly prosperity, worldly power, worldly self, worldly lust,—these are not our ideals Our ideal is to attain to Godconsciousness. This cannot be attained by anything less than renunciation; for, our scriptures say: "By renunciation

alone is immortality attained." Renunciation was the watch-word of our *Rishis*, the seers. It means a life of absolute purity, chastity, absence of passion, and self-sacrifice. This life cannot be led by one whose mind runs after the pleasures of the senses, and whose heart is bound down by matters trivial and transitory. Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna actually led such a life and demonstrated it to the world even in these days of commercialism. His saintly widow is still living. She always remained a virgin instead of desiring children like other mothers, and today, she is the mother of many, many spiritual children.

Remember that the soul is sexless. This is to be realized. There are no marriages in Heaven. It is only on earth that we have marriages because we are so very imperfect. Where there is perfection, the soul is found to be sexless. There can be no marriage of the flesh. Here is a story which, though not traceable in the Bible, believed by the West to be genuine:

A woman went one day to Jesus and asked him when the Kingdom of Heaven would come on earth. He promptly replied: "When you cease to produce children." You are to realize, I say again and again, that the soul is sexless. Our scriptures say. "The soul is neither man, nor woman. The soul is of the form not of body but of spirit To whatever body the soul becomes attached, it assumes the sex of that body, but in itself it is sexless. Keep this idea vividly before your mind's eye. In Sanskrit lalnguage the Soul is tre *Atman*. It is neither man, nor beast, nor Brahmin, nor Chandala ; nor has It beginning or end. "Swords cannot pierce It. Fire cannot burn It. Water cannot moisten It. The air cannot dry It. It is eternal and perfect." Each one of us has that Immortall Spirit in us. We are the children of Immortal Bliss, not therefore, the slaves of the senses and the passions.

Religion does not mean mere ritual. It does not consist in the external forms. It means self-realization, Karma Yoga or the practice of rituals and ceremonials and other exercises of the body, are helpful in order to attain *chitta-suddhi*, purity of the heart. When that is attained, all rituals and ceremonials become unnecessary, and real spiritual life begins. True religion begins when we realize God as Vishnu, the universal Father and the Universal Mother. The relation of the soul to God has to be realized more and more. The means to that

is the purification of heart. This again means attention to moality. Ethical laws are the first steps leading to hearts purification. This done, Self begins to be realized. Morality is at the very foundation of all religions. It is not spirituality, but it leads to spirituality A mere moral man can be unspirituality. A mere moral man can be unspiritual. But a spiritual man cannot be immoral. A spiritual man is like a mighty river whose current is always rushing down into the ocean of love and bliss, of God, the Eternal Being. Here, you must mark the distinction. In the Western countries morality is divorced from spirituality and religion, whereas they are inseparable according to our Vedic teachings. In the West, there are purely ethical societies not founded upon religion, and in as much as their aim does not go beyond the moral interests of the day, they cease to have a permanent hold upon man. But in our Vedanta, ethics are the laws of the spirit which govern us and direct us. All that is meant by the term ethics, and much more, is conveyed by the one Sanskrit word. *Brahmacharya. Brahmacharya* includes such ethics as *shama* and *dama. Shama* means control of the mind. *Dama* means control of the senses When this has been attained, we have reduced the first principles of the moral law into practice. Spiritual life begins then, and a spiritual man can never afterwards be immortal, We should realize this, To have a wife and to beget children are not the highest ideals of life, for, material life, such as this, necessarily means a life beset with passions Where passions rage, there can be no peace, no *shama,* no *dama,* and no elevation beyond the passing interests of the day. Young friends, regard woman as the incarnation of our Divine Mother. Worship her, honour her. Bhagavan Ramakrishna strictly lived up to this kind of life—a living example for all of us to follow.

The Hindus are wonderfully practical in matters of religion. They are a religious people, though they are behind-hand in these days, in rising to the lofty ideals which their sages have placed before them. Such a religious people as the Hindus are found nowhere else in the world. Realize the ideal of *Brahmacharya.* It must continue, according to our *Shastras* up to twentyfive, thirty and even forty years of age. But in these degenerate days, this is lost sight of. Our boys are married

very early. Their education suffers. The result is, that babies with big moustaches are found, with weaker babies and the weakest intellects Parents are expected to exercise a higher sense of responsibility in carrying their children. They must see that the duties of *Brahmaharya* are duly performed and if that is rightly performed, their children will become better fitted for *Grihastha-dharma*. If they fail to do, that their sons will become physical, moral, intellectual and spiritual dwarfs. I appeal to you ,my young friends, to stand up and assert your rights of true manhood. Have the courage of your convictions. Do not succumb to the short-sighted advice of your parents,—sticklers to the old, worn-out, and misinterpeted *Smriti* texts. So much for boys. What about the girls who have to be married according to caste before the age of puberty? This is only a custom. Our *Smritis* allow full latitude for girls to be married after the attainment of their puberty. She must wait till she has fulfiled all the conditions of her *Brahmacharya*. She has her own *Brahmacharya*. Not only boys should be taught *Brahmacharya,* the ideal of manhood, but girls should also be taught to be *Brahmacharinees* to attain the ideal of womanhood If the husband is to be a Rama, the wife should be a Sita. Always keep the ideal of the *Atman* before you. It is sexless Lead this life of sexlessness or *Brahmacharya* even in this life, as far as possible. Realize, again and again, that our women are the earthly representatives of the Divine Mother. Parents are responsible for the irreligious nature of their children. They should set the example, and show young men how to lead a moral and spiritual life. They must realize Godconsciousness through their own *Brahmacharya,* so that the sons and daughters may follow their example. That is the purpose of earthly life.

Pleasures of senses, riches and success in business do not bring real happiness. The happiness of these is a mirage. In truth, it is misery and the ruin of the soul Our scriptures say: "Pleasures of senses are like butter. The more they are poured into the fire of desire the more it flares up. It can never be quenched." Quench it by not feeding it with morbid desires. Allow it to die out by discrimination, *viveka.* Realize the purpose of life by means of *viveka.* What is *viveka*? It is to discriminate between the eternal and the

non-eternal, between the real and the unreal, between the lasting and the flecting, between soul and matter. The pleasures of the senses are short-lived. They end in pain and pass away. Hence, they are unreal, non-eternal and material. Give way to the senses and impress the mind with the objects sought by the senses and you are well nigh on the way to destruction. Give heed to discrimination and practise it daily, and you are on the high road to salvation and eternal life. Spiritual education, therefore, be given to children. Its aim should be pitched high. Its ultimate aim is to make man spiritually great. All other teachings should be but steps leading to this goal; otherwise, what is the use of education? It might fit a man for material life of an ephemeral nature. But does it end there? Is not real education that which secures both earthly and heavenly bliss? Even our Pandits who are supposed to have received the right kind of education are not educated on right spiritual lines. They do not care to put their knowledge into use. They produce no original works. They do not help the advancement of the nation. The fault lies not in them but in the want of encouragement which our Hindu Princes are bound by their holy traditions, to give. I visited the Oriental Library and the Sanskrit College in Mysore They reflect great credit on the Maharaja. But a great deal more remains to be done. The university students die for the want of bare necessities of life to support their families. What is the kind of education they receive? So much stuff to be forgotten the next day; not of the least value to make them true men here and here-after. Does modern education make their minds spiritually great? Are their hearts spiritually pure? Are their souls spiritually lofty? It is high time that we should have National Colleges and Universities, where we can teauh our boys how to become morally and spiritually great. Vedanta becomes necessarily an essential part of our curriculum and religion, in its essentials can be taught in them Where we differ is in the non-essentials, the rituals, ceremonials, dogmas and doctrines, but the essentials are the same. These must be taught.

Obedience is a great virtue. This quality constitutes the assets of a nation. It is a virtue very much wanted just now in India. Here, no obedience is paid to leaders. Among our educated men the idea prevails that each one is a leader. If

all lead, who is to obey? No one can be a general who is not an obedient soldier. "In this *Kali Yuga*, every one is a preacher, no one is a disciple." This should not be. For, where there is no obedience, no organized action, no nationality can be formed. A nation without obedience is only like so many myriads of atoms repelling one another. Let teachers of societies in India themselves first practise obedience and then teach it to their children. Obedience is not to the person, but to the eternal truths which the person embodies and which he represents. In honouring me, you have honoured the message I bring. In respecting me, you respect the *Rishis* whom I voice and Vedanta which I uphold. Obedience is a national characteristic, without it, each one is selfish Thus he becomes isolated asd self-centered. He is no more a part and parcel of the national body. Selfish man is no more a helper in national life. Unselfishness means an eye for the welfare of our fellows, sympathy for our neighbours and friendliness to all creatures. These qualities will not allow room for chilling considerations such as, caste, creed, and colour. Compassion and love mark all ages, for through these qualities men attained their highest goal. God is the source of all love, from whom springs all compassion God is love. Do not our Vedas say so? "Blissful love! Ocean of love! Practise it daily among your brethren. Remove sorrow." "Love thy neighbour as thyself" says the Bible, but it gives no reason. That reason is given in our Vedas. It says: "O Shvetaketu! That art thou." This passage does not mean that God dwells somewhere in the clouds as the Christians say, but a God living everywhere, in your heart and in my heart. Therefore, in loving you, I love myself. In loving you, I love God. This is the reason. Let us love each other with the love organized by obedience, love exerted for united effort.

Caste, my young friends, has done good in the past. To the Brahmin-caste is due all the wonderful literary monuments we possess. Most of our Vedic *Rishis* belonged to this caste. But the Brahmin-caste has now gone. We have now, as a rule, Brahmins in name. Brahmanism in mere outward resemblance. They do not hesitate to fondle a dog in their lap, but reject and look down upon a man who may belong to a low caste! You despise a Pariah? Is there no *Atman* in him?

Is it not our bounden duty to extend to him the right hand of fellowship and elevate him? What did Ramanuja not do for this despised class? Is not his spirit today animating your blood? Social distinctions exist in all lands If castes are here, classes are in other countries; but classes are more accommodating to modern conditions than our steel-bound caste, where caste prejudice and social distinction produce discord and disturb the free action of love and compassion. They must be done away with as far as possible. No institution came into existence except for the purpose of establishing peace. If that condition is not satisfied, the institution of caste must undergo all necessary changes. Practise humanitarianism. It was on this rock that our caste system was built. But if that foundation has given way, how can the edifice stand? I appeal to you not to look down upon a Pariah. They are the backbone of our nation. They are full of promise. They helped Ramanuja and they were called by him *Tirakula*—the blessed caste. We worship God. Is that worship to be paid only to stone Idols in man-made temples? Are we not living temples of God? Are not our hearts sought after by God as the choicest temple built by His own hands? Does not that God dwell in my Atman as well as in the *Atman* of the Pariah? Extend then your love, charity and sympathy to your fallen brethren and make them like yourself. Flowers, incense and cocoanuts are daily offered to our Gods in the temples. But to our Gods in the human temples must be offered flowers of good-will, incenses of sympathy and cocoanuts of loving help. *Manasa-puja* or mental worship is important. About that our Vedas are unanimous. Worship Him who is seated on the altar of the heart Flowers, fruits and offerings, how are they accepted by God? He eats not the fruit, but accepts the feeling with which it is offered. "What fruit, what flower or leaf or drop of water is with *bhakti* offered, I accept that, and not otherwise. Love God, therefore, by loving all creatures. Otherwise we are not true disciples of our *Rishis*. For, they declared in trumpet voice before the world, that the sameness is to be realized every where in a cow, in a dog, in an elephant and in a Chandala.

Try to feel the presence of divinity everywhere. This is religion. You may learn all the days of your life; but without practice, it is useless. Mere book-learning without practice is

like sandal on the back of a donkey. Your ideal is not to be a mere book-worm; but to practise what you learn, so as to arrive at perfection. Here is one remarkable thing in our religion—Vedanta. Whereas other religions aver, and that perfection comes only after the grave. Our Vedanta affirms that it is to be attained here—right on this earth and now. Says the *Gita*: "Before this present body is cast off, perfection is attainable by one who has conquered desire and hatred". Show me a passage like this in any other scripture in the world!

The *Atman* is eternal and can not be killed or harmed in any way. This is our strength and stronghold, and this is the message of peace and comfort. Alexander the Great learnt that lesson in India; for, when he came to India, he met a Sage under a tree and paid his respects to him. The Sage smiled. Alexander wanted him to go to Greece. The Sage refused, on which the emperor threatened to behead him. At this, the Sage smiled again and said, "You kill me! O! You the lord of the Western world! You!" Alexander was surprised and demanded an explanation. The Sage said. "I am *Atman*. How can you kill me?" This opened the spiritual eye of the conqueror of the world. The Sage again said: "You are a conqueror of the world. Have you conquered your passions? You have not. You are a slave to passions. If you wish to be a real conqueror of the world, of the universe, conquer yourself. Learn to rule over your senses and passions. That will be a greater conquest" Hold fast to this ideal of *Atman* and this self-conquest of mind and senses. When this victory is gained, you have achieved all. Nothing is impossible.

Another characteristic which is desired today in our young men for the up-building of the Indian nation, is fearlessness. "Fearlessness is for him who has realized the blissful Brahman," says Vedanta. If you are not fearless, if you are a coward, what can you accomplish? Young friends, can you stand up and say, "I can do anything. Nothing is impossible for me." Look at the Englishmen. They can go and place themselves before a gun not caring for the weeping of those who are near and dear to them. We think of our little home, little affections, wife and children, and forget the ideal of the nation. What makes the Englishmen courageous but his nerves of steel and muscles of iron? Do not think that I am boasting. But I stand

before you as a living example of *Brahmacharya,* and describe what I have seen an experienced. Stand up and prove to the world that you are the worthy disciples of our *Rishis* Put aside the idea that heaven is only for a handful of Brahmins. Go to other nations, and preach salvation to all. For, Christians say that only Christians go to Heaven. How absurd! The Christians too should be saved. Go to them as friends and not as beggars.. For, beggars are not cared for. In Europe or America, they are simply kicked out and sent to poor-houses. When we go to America or Europe, we should go to give them something which they have not. We cannot now give them science, astronomy, medicine, politics, but we have one thing to teach them and that is spirituality. Their ideal is purely a commercial one. They know how to amass riches We do not care for wealth. Let us give them spiritual wealth and open their eyes to the spiritual truths which we have inherited in such abundance. They stand in need of religion. Indeed, they go to church. But they go there not to worship God, but to worship anything other than God. I have heard that a doctor goes there to find his patient, the lawyer goes there to find his client, the young man goes there to find a wife, and a lady in search of a husband. Teach them the ideal of renunciation, show them the way to find the *Atman,* and they will worship you as Christ India is the home of all religions. Europe never produced a great religion. It never produced a spiritual leader or an *Avatara* like ours Jesus Christ was an Oriental. Christians do not understand Christ It is only Vedanta that can interpret Christ to the Christians. Theologians never teach true Christianity. You can teach it most satisfactorily in the light of Vedanta. Teach them how to worship God. You will have acquired the merit of having saved so many Christian brethren from ignorance and superstition. A king is respected in his country. A king has many worries and anxieties. But a wise man has none. His only care is the good of humanity. Live for the world and die for the world. Sacrifice passion on the very altar of humanity and be a servant of God. Christ lived for humanity and died for humanity. Hence, he was worshipped. Here, in India, there were hundreds of men like Christ. We have forgotten many of them. We should recall their memory. We should hold up

high spiritual ideals before younger generations. Instead of imitating only the vices of the foreigners as we do, we should learn their good qualities. Absorb what is excellent in them Go to foreign countries, absorb their best methods and introduce them into our land. One of these methods is the power of organization. This is the secret of their greatness. Separated individuals lose their strength, but united for a common cause they become a tremendous power. Can all Mysore unite? Yes, and under the wise rule of His Highness the Maharaja. When a house is divided against itself, there can be no strength. It must fall. United efforts towards one ideal should be made. Learn how to obey leaders. Leaders may be false in private life, but they must be obeyed so long as they occupy the position of learders. Practise obedience in your own house. The Vedanta Society in America, for example, chooses its own leader for one year, and that leader, for the time being, is obeyed and honoured. They govern their own Society. They make their own laws and by-laws and obey them. But here in India, the case is different. Societies spring up, but they die the very next day. Imitate the British in this respect. They select their leaders. It is the people who send out your Viceroys and Governors. Fifty years ago the Japanese quarrelled among themselves; for they did not know the art of self-government. But to-day, you find something new evolved out of chaos. What do they do? They go abroad to Europe and America, study in the universities, learn all their systems and return home, with all their virtues and not their vices. Such a spirit is necessary for our material salvation. I met in Mysore a very clever astronomer. I admired his proficiency. How valuable would be his knowledge to our country, if he could be persuaded to go to Europe and America and learn all the improvements in Astronomy there, and come back and give the benefit of his learning, to his country? I am afraid this is too much to ask of old men, but young men can do it. Parents have begun to consider the present conditions, and everything is pointing towards the union of the East and the West. Once more, I hold up before you the national ideal. Individual ideals should make room for national ideals. Freedom should be admired and freedom should be the aim of every one. It includes social, political, physical, intellectual and moral freedom. This

should be aimed at. We must be free in all places; but we are slaves now.

Our desire for original research has been lost sight of and even where exceptional genius is seen, it is not encouraged. It was during the Mohammedan period, that our intellectual talents received a rude shock But under the benign rule of the British Government we have received a blessing, liberty of conscience being restored to us. This is our best opportunity to regain it You know Dr. Bose, our Indian scientist. He is honoured by all the scientists of America and Europe. Nine years ago, he went to London to lecture. I was present there. Lord Reay took the chair. Dr. Bose showed many experiments. He was honoured, cheered and idolized. The noble British people like such men. We need not care for the few Anglo-Indian young civilians. Sent out here to rule us, these civilians, with neither experience nor good heart ride roughshod over us, and they tarnish the good name of the great British nation. Here the Government is arbitrary, but there it is the voice of the people that rules. The secret of their, success, I again point out to you, is organisation. In Britain forty millions of people have one voice and one mind. But here in India three hundred millions of people have more than three hundred millions of purposes and minds. We are like babies in politics. Our only pride is our big moustaches Wake up, my young friends, from this lethargy. Stand firm on your lelgs, go abroad and freely give what you have, and freely take what you can in return Make West and East come together. America wants India and India wants America. Let us send our children to America; they will give us every help. They are the most practical people on earth. Here is a great opportunity for Mysore to shine in the galaxy of nations. I hope the Mysore Government will help in sending some workers to devote their lives to the call of their Motherland. The Americans will teach our young men practical life, and let us teach them spiritual life in return. I will ask Americans to come to India. Let some of us go and bring them here and others remain in their midst. America needs simplicity, for their life is very complex. In India we know how to live a simple life; with one meal a day we yet remain happy and contented. We know how to live on a penny a day; there, a pound a day is not enough The

Americans are becoming vegetarians; this will create a bond of friendship between them and us. You teach them vegitarianism, and learn from them industrial principles. I am glad to inform you that with the help of His Highness' Government we mean to start an Institution in Bangalore to train people and to interchange them with some from New York. I appeal once more to you, to devote some of your precious lives to the cause of our Motherland, and try to raise it to the dignity of its ancient greatness.

When Swami Abhedanandaji finished his speech, Moulavi Durvesh Peer, a Muslim nobleman, addressed the audience in Hindusthani. The followisg is the translation of ports of his address:

"Swami Abhedananda's wonderful intellectual gifts and his brilliant powers of expression of the highest truths in their simplest forms speak for themselves. He is an extraordinary being. I shall not compare him with a *Rishi,* a sage or a prophet, but I shall call him a "Living Gramophone," with practical records of spiritual experiences of those eternal truths drawn from the ocean of wisdom.

Thirteen hundred years ago, Mohammed, our Prophet, explained to his followers the principles of 'Fellow-sympathy', 'Brotherhood', and above all, the 'Unity of God'. The truths were framed in the sacred Vedas some thousands of years before the Mohammedan Era, and are being repeated now to our Hindu brethren by our Swamiji. If such is the teaching professed by a Hindu like the Swamiji and a Mohammedan like myself, why should I not call Swamiji a Mohammedan and myself a Hindu. Let me go a step farther and say, why should we sot be both of one common religion. We are all one, though divided into multifarious individualities, we come from one common source and we shall return to the same through our endeavours to follow the true footsteps of our great *Rishis* and Prophets."

"The presence of Swami Abhedananda in Bangalore has now enabled the Ramakrishna Mission to build a large Mission House in Bangalore and make it the centre of an elaborate scheme of religious and charitable work in the Mysore Province. We hear that arrangements are being made to lay the foundation stone of this building, separate quarters for a train-

ing school for students. Two sets of scholars will be prepared —one *Brahmacharya* and the other *Garhasta,* and both of these will be sent out on Mission work to carry spiritual and charitable aid to the Mofussil people. The scheme is an excellent one, and there is unbounded scope for useful work. We hear that in the Fiji Islands there are twenty-five thousand Hindus as permanent settlers with a property worth about thirty-two lakhs of rupees and as no educational and religious aid is sent to them from the Hindus, the Christian Missionaries have established schools and in course of time they hope to convert them into Christians. If we only had a number of trained Hindu Missionaries we could immediately send some to the aid of Fiji Hindus. Similarly the scope for Hindu Mission on the Ramakrishna lines is extensive We sincerely hope that every educated Mysorean will cooperate to make the Bengalore Mission scheme successful "

*Mysore Standard*

Saturday, August 4, 1906.

On the thirteenth the Swamiji and his party left Mysore to see the famous Cavery Falls, which they reached in the afternoon. In the evening they paid a visit to the local Club where they met an American engineer, Mr. Haskell from San Francisco. The next morning they went to see the Power-house, from which electricity is carried a distance of eighty miles; and then they returned to have a glance of the Falls—its great body of water pouring down three hundred feet, and presenting a spectacle of unusual beauty and grandeur.

The party arrived at Bangalore early the next morning, and was met ther by many friends at the station, and then driven to the Palace Cottage. There were no public meetings from the fifteenth to the twentieth, the time being spent in receiving or visiting friends. On the eighteenth the Swami went with the Dewan to visit the tract of land, some ninety acres, which as the result of Swami Abhedananda's visit, had been donated to the Ramakrishna Mission, as a site for an educational institution; and on August the twentieth the corner-stone of the building was laid by the Swami. The ceremony opened with *bhajanam,* then an English poem was read, and other poems

in Sanskrit, Canarese, and Persian were recited followed by the girls' *bhajanam,* and Mr. Nair's speech. As the Swami laid the foundation-stone of the Ramakrishna Mission Institute[1] he gave a short address to the persons assembled. A box containing Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna's pictures, five kinds of jewel, a picture of Swami Vivekananda and Hindu sacred symbols was laid beneath the corner-stone The ceremony clolsed with the distribution of *prasad.*

On the evening of the following day, the three Swamis left for Puri, where they were to meet and be welcomed by Swami Brahmananda, the President of the Ramakrishna Mission, and several other members of the Order.

## FROM BANGALORE TO PURI

The journey from Bangalore to Puri by way of Madras is a long and tedious one, the distance being nearly eleven hundred miles. At several stations, *en route,* people who had heard about the Swami's tour and were eager to see him, brought fruits, flowers, and other offerings, as tokens of love and esteem to the honoured visitor.

The Swami Brahmananda accompanied by other Swamis of the Brotherhood and Atal Babu, the Deputy Magistrate of the place, came to the Railway station at Puri to receive Swami Abhedananda, and at once took him to the Holy Temple of Jagannath, where he offered worship with all devotion.

## FROM PURI TO CALCUTTA

A week of complete rest and retirement at Puri came as a delightful break after the ten week's arduous work and journey from Colombo A group of disciples of Sri Ramakrishna met there and lived as they had done in the early years of their Sannyasin life, just after their Blessed Master had left them; this reunion was a truly happy one for Swami

[1] Now the Institute is in charge of Swami Nirmalananda who went to America in 1903, to assist Swami Abhedananda. He worked there for two years and returned to India in May, 1906.

Abhedananda. It was not until the 31st of August that public duties were once more remembered and Swami Abhedananda accompanied by Swamis Ramakrishnananda and Paramananda set out for Berhampur, Ganjam Dt, where he delivered a lecture in the Town Hall before a very large gathering, on *Vedanta in America.* Before leaving Berhampur the Swami delivered another lecture, on *What is Vedanta.*

## LECTURE AT BERHAMPUR

The Swami Abhedananda delivered a lecture to the following effect:

The ideal of a universal religion as realized in Vedanta, was made familiar to the world by the late Swami Vivekananda, who indicated how its teachings should be practically applied to daily life. Universal toleration is the key-note of the creed of the Ramakrishna Mission. In all the various religious creeds which have for centuries distracted the world with their conflicting claims, the disciples of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa see nothing but truth and harmony. There is but one supreme existence. Various people give it various appellations. Different intellects comprehend it in different degrees. Christianity, Buddhism, Mohammedanism, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, each looks at it from a different point of view, and represents a different phase of the same eternal truth. Vedanta alone has seen and comprehended it in all its aspects and hence nothing in any religion appears to it strange or untrue. All religions are like paths leading to the same goal, each from a different direction The religion of the Vedanta recognises them all and gives to each its proper place either as a dualistic, or qualified non-dualistic, or monistic faith. But the foall of all is the same—the realization of the supreme Being in us and all around us. Everyone, whatever his creed may be has to attain to this state of Godconsciousness Absolute purity, absolute chastity, and absolute goodness, and absolute renunciation are the means by which we reach perfection. But one need not actually give up the world and become a Sannyasin in order to attain salvation. He can realise God in any condition. It is possible for him to be in the world and yet be

not of it. Ultimate salvation is the birth-right of every soul, if such a word as birth-right can be applied in connection with the soul, which has neither a beginning nor an end Each soul is as much an eternal existence as God Himself In fact it is a part of Himself, a tiny spark thrown out from the same divine flame, an *angsa* of the same divine glory.

Then comes the application of this knowledge to practical life "Love thy neighbour as thyself," commands the Bible. It is the Vedanta that tells us the reason why. When man learns to realise God in himself and all around him, when he learns to see the same Divinity shining through all living creatures, how can he help not loving them as himself? How can he any more affect to distrust or despise the rest of mankind? Is not the soul of the Pariah as great and glorious as that of the learned Brahmin who gives himself airs and fancies himself polluted by the touch of the former's shadow? The Pariah lies down-trodden to-day, because of the intolerance of the priestcraft. Lend a helping hand to him and lift him up. A Brahmin should not scruple to take food even at his hands One should only be afraid of mixing with men of evil ways, however high their caste be, lest they should retard one's salvation But otherwise, shall we not rise superior to the petty prejudices of caste and sect, and taking the lessons of the Vedanta to heart, recognise our brother, nay our own Self, in every man? Let not the apparent differences between dwaita. Adwaita, and Vishishtadwaita beguile your hearts. Let the *Vadagalais* and *Tengalais* no more look on each other as natural enemies Practise true religion, and realize your oneness. Learn to unite and that is your primary need. Politics alone cannot make a nation great; it is but a secondary thing Educate your masses, drive away superstition and ignorance and become united, and then you willl achieve greatness in every field.

Go out to foreign countries, and see things for yourselves, and learn by comparison. You will, then, know your strength and realise your weakness You have a good deal to learn from the Western nations, although on the spiritual plane you have much to teach them. They are all freedom-loving people, these Western nations. The Americans are especially so. They keep their minds open to truth from whatever direction it may come. It does not prejudice their mind if it sometimes comes from

Asia. They permit no consideration to trammel their action, to hinder them from practising what is right and what is true. They never sit quiet expecting others to help them, for they know the secret of self-help. That is their greatest virtue And India has need to learn it. Obstacles do not discourage them, opposition does not cow them down ; they know how to dare asd do. What one man cannot singly achieve, they accomplish by mutual co-operation. In every branch of human activity that is the secret of their greatness. When several Americans or Germans meet for a common purpose they all act like one body. But under simillar circumstances, ten Hindus would be as irreconciable, as ten different nations. That is the reason of our fall.

Education is universal among the Americans, and they are the most civilised and enlightened people in the world. No Europeans can be compared with them, they are the nation of the future. The higher education and greater liberty given to the American woman, instead of being prejudicial to her morality as some are apt to think, have made her more cultured, more moral, more self-reliant, more self-respecting and more respected than her sisters elsewhere. One of the most prominent virtues of the Americans is the honour paid to the fair sex Theoretically the Hindus are supposed to worship the Divine *Sakti.* Not however, until they honour their women as the earthly manifestations of the Divine Motherhood, will they be entitled to the name of *Sakti*-worshippers. In practice, the Americans are the truest worshippers of *Sakti* and national greatness has been their reward.

In America, a woman is in no hurry to marry before she is thirty. Some women never want to marry at all. A man considers himself to have attained the marriageable age between thirty and forty. And yet their lives are chaste and pure The married state is not the highest ideal of life. Absolute purity, absolute chastity and absolute renunciation are the highest ideals. But these high ideals cannot be universally practised, and marriage as an institution is necessary to keep the world going. But every man and woman should be given a chance of choosing or refusing it, and of rising superior to it, if possible. But what do we find in India at the present day? Every little girl and practically every boy is forced into marriage before

either can realise what it is all about. And what is the result? A lad of sixteen or eighteen and his little wife of twelve or fourteen begin forthwith to fill the world with their weakly progeny. That is how the country is being filled with a race of moustached babies with no backbone Whereas in the West, men and women marry when their physical and mental vigour is at its best, and, consequently, give birth to a race of heroes.

Yet, I am not a social reformer The socalled social reform will not bring our salvation. Go back to the Vedic Age for the ideals of life. Caste has existed and will exist in all societies. Caste in the Vedic Age was no rigid system but was based on individual merit as it is now in the West, and was never determined by birth. You may take your food even from the hands of a Sudra. His birth should make no difference. But do not associate with an unworthy person even if he is a Brahman.

Why are you so anxious to have your widows remarried? Why do you not train them in pious and devotional ways? Marriage is after all not the highest ideal of life Widow remarriage is permissible under certain conditions. The lower the class to which the widow belongs, the more is it permissible for her to re-marry. Marriage, with the Hindu, is not as in the West a matter of contract. It is on the other hand, based on a spiritual ideal. The wife is the *Sahadharmini* of the husband. The relation of husband and wife started in this life will, not cease at death but will continue even after the gross earthly body is dissolved. And applying this doctrine logically and impartially to man and woman alike, a man should not take a second wife on the demise of the first.

Custom is not religion. What laws man has made, he may unmake at any moment Do what is right and make that your custom. Cultivate your muscles, and build up your bodies, so as to make them fit temples for your souls. An unhealthy body is a drag on the soul. A diseased person cannot attain salvation, say the scriptures Therefore, perfect your physique. Acquire knowledge. Educate your women equally with yourselves and honour them. Educate the masses, and uplift the down-trodden classes Practise self-help. Learn to live independent of Government service and Government support. Be united, and learn to co-operate among yourselves. Build up your character and be pure and chaste in thought, word,

and deed. Offer both morning and evening at the feet of the Lord, the fruit of your good deeds, and you will, yet, be great.

During their forty-eight hours' sojourn at Berhampur the Bengali citizens of Puri prepared an Address of Welcome which they presented to him at the school-house on the evening of September 7th, when Atal Babu, the Deputy Magistrate, presided.

To

SREEMAT SWAMI ABHEDANANDA
OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

Reverend Sir,

We the Hindu inhabitants of Srikshetra beg to avail ourselves of this opportunity to approach you with a hearty welcome to our midst on your return from America after ten years of unremitting labour in the cause of Sanatana Dharma We never expected that you would favour us, with a visit to this most backward part of the province, but by the consideration you have shown, you have laid us under an eternal debt of gratitude.

We cannot adequately express our whole-hearted joy and thankfulness to you for the invaluable services which you as the head of the Ramakrishna Mission in America rendered to this *punya-bhumi* in so vigorously carrying on, with unique zeal and single-hearted devotion, the noble and holy Mission started by Sri Ramakrishna Deva and continued by the late venerable Swami Vivekananda.

You have proclaimed to the nations of Europe and America the Hindu ideal of universal religion, harmonizing all creeds, and providing spiritual food for each soul according to its needs. You have preached the Truth and the way taught from remote ages by a succession of Masters whose blessed feet have sanctified the soil of India and whose gracious presence and inspiration have made her through all vicissitudes the Light of the World.

Thus, you have laid humanity under obligation difficult to repay. May God, Who has hitherto crowned your noble

work with conspicuous success spare you long, giving you vigour and strength to continue your noble Mission.

*Srikshetra,*
September 7, 1906

We beg to remain,
Reverend Sir,
Yours Obediently,
Inhabitants of Srikshetra

The Swami in reply spoke for an hour explaining the spiritual ideal underlying all rituals and ceremonies practised at the Holy Temple. He dwelt on *bhakti* and renunciation showing that the Hindus are not idol-worshippers, but ideal-worshippers—and that no one can become a leader without renunciation. India has always guided by leaders like Bhagavan Sri Chaitanya and Bhagavan Sri Sankaracharya who led the life of absolute renunciation

This public meeting marked the close of their pleasant stay in Puri Atal Babu entertained the Swami at dinner on the evening of September 8th. Swami Abhedananda, accompanied by Swamis Brahmananda, Ramakrishnananda left for Calcutta by the night-train.

## RECEPTION AND REPLY TO THE CALCUTTA ADDRESS

The arrival of Swami Abhedananda in Calcutta was the real return-home, and many leading citizens had been preparing a grand and hearty reception for him, which he met on his landing at the Howrah station with Swami Brahmananda and other brother-Sannyasins, on the morning of the 9th September They found an enthusiastic crowd of about a thousand gentlemen, headed by Babu Narendra Nath Sen, and Rai Jatindra Nath Chowdhury, waiting to welcome them. They were garlanded, and amidst loud cheers their carriage was unhorsed and drawn from the Howrah Bridge to Justice Sarada Charan Mitra's Aryan Institution where the Swami was received by Hon. Justice Sarada Charan Mitra. The next day they were driven to Babu Pasupati Bose's garden house at Belgachia,

which had been set apart for their entertainment during the week they were to remain in the City of Calcutta

The report of an interesting interview appeared in the *Statesman* under the date of September 11, of which the following is an abstract:

Swami Abhedananda told a representative of the *Statesman,* who called on him yesterday, that he went to London in 1896 and after lecturing there for about a year crossed to New York at the invitation of the Vedanta Society of New York. He had been in America ever since, and had continued the work begun by his brother Vivekananda Reviewing very briefly the progress of Vedanta in America, the Swami said he had met with much sympathy on all hands and, as a matter of fact, the only people in the United States who had shown any unfriendliness were the clergy who had a special interest in Indian missions.

"Have you been able to enlist the particular interest of the clergy in the preaching of Vedanta?" asked the interviewer. "Oh yes! The Rev R. Heber Newton, D. D, of New York, an Anglican priest, is an honorary member of the Society, and a number of others. Professor Lanman of Harvard is another, so is Professor Hiram Corson of Cornell, whilst the president and officers are all men high in educational and scientific circles. I was also, when in New York shortly before my departure, invited to lecture before a meeting composed of clergymen, and I did so They heard my message sympathetically."

"What is the object of your mission, Swami: to make converts, or—?" The question was not a happy one, and the young monk replied very earnestly: "The object of Vedanta is not to make proselytes, or to form a new sect, or creed. Its mission is to explain logically and reasonably the spiritual laws that govern life; to show that the true religion of the soul harmonizes with philosophy and science; in short, to establish a universal religion which underlies all sects, and creeds, and special religions.

"Vedanta," added Swami Abhedananda, "is based on the principle of unity. In the Rig Veda, we read "That which exists is one, though men call it by various names." Vedanta is a universal religion. A student of Vedanta does not belong to any sect, creed or denomination. He is neither a Christian, nor

a Hindu ; yet in principle he is one with both. He is a follower of the one nameless and eternal religion which underlies all the sects and special religions of the world Vedanta does not prescribe one special path to the ultimate goal of religion. On the contrary it recognizes Christ, reveres his teaching and his influence The many dogmas taught by Missionaries are repellant to the Hindu, and are rejected as untrue. The Hindu, accepts Christ but rejects Churchianity. He distinguishes the religion of the Churches from the religion of Christ. The one is a religion of dogma, creed and ceremonial,— the other of the heart, of communion of the individual soul with the Heavenly Father."

To go back to Swami Abhedananda's own particular work in America, he said his time was spent in conducting Vedanta classes, meeting students and lecturing. He had visited and lectured at Cornell, Harvard, Yale and other universities in the United States, and had also lectured at the Toronto University, where he met Professor Goldwin Smith, whose friendship he valued

A large and thoroughly representative meeting was held in the Town Hall on the evening of the twelfth to accord to the Swami Abhedananda a formal reception to the City of Calcutta. Babu Narendra Nath Sen was in the chair and among the audience were Dr Chuni Lal Bose Rai Bahadur, Babu Umesh Chandra Datta, Babu Dasurathi Sannyal, Babu Jaladhur Sen, Editor "Basumati," Mr. Madanjit of South Africa, Kumar Khitendradeb Rai Sahib, Dr. Jnanendra Nath Kanjilal, Mahamohopadhyaya Satish Chandra Vidyabhusan, Moulavi Syed Erfanali, Dr. Hem Chandra Sen, Babu Hemendra Nath Sen, Rai Yatindra Nath Chaudhuri, Moulavi Mahomed Yusuff Khan Bahadur, Babu Yogendra Krishna Bose, Rai Pashupati Nath Bose Bahadur, and Babu Sachindra Nath Bose.

The President in introducing the distinguished guest of the evening, made the following speech:

"We are met here this evening to present an Address of Welcome to Swami Abhedananda, who has returned to India after an absence of nearly eleven years in the West—chiefly in America,—where, as you are aware, he has been most successfully carrying on the noble and holy Mission, inaugurated by

the late Swami Vivekananda. Swami Abhedananda arrived at Colombo, on the 16th of June last, and from there proceeding to other parts of Ceylon and to Southern India and Orissa, he arrived at Calcutta last Sunday The ovations attending his progress through those parts have been cordial and enthusiastic and I am glad to feel that Calcutta, despite its various distracting thoughts, has not forgotten its duty to the Swami. His arrival here possesses as much interest for him as for ourselves, as Calcutta is his place of birth To him as a Sannyasin, all the world is his home, but we nevertheless take pride in the fact that he is one of us—one of the soil—a Bengali by nationality. I feel it as much a privilege as a pleasure to be called upon to preside on this occasion, for though not belonging to the Ramakrishna Mission, I have ever watched the humanitarian and benevolent portion of its work with the keenest interest. The Ramakrishna Mission is the only Hindu Missionary propaganda, which has settled itself permanently in the West. Its efforts have been singularly fruitful in bringing the Western mind into close touch with Hindu thought and creating an interest among the Western people in the literature, religion and philosophy of the Hindus The teaching of the Ramakrishna Mission is Vedantism which as it embraces all the religions of the world, is in the truest sense the universal religion.

I do not wish to take up your time with a detailed account of the work which is being done by the Ramakrishna Mission in Western countries—especially in America—as Swami Abhedananda who is the head of the Mission in the West, will himself enlighten you on that point. This much I ought to say that I feel a peculiar delight in the work of the Sannyasins of the Ramakrishna Mission in the West—a work which will assuredly bring about, in the fulness of time a union between the Occident and the Orient Gentlemen, this union has been the dream of my life, and I offer my thanks to the Almighty that it has been my lot to see the little bantling, which Swami Vivekananda carried in his arms to America, growing in strength and beauty, lovingly tended by people, who are no longer strangers to it. Vedantism is that Truth, which is "Truth to the esd of reckoning" Its basic principle is the Brotherhood of man, Brotherhood, not of sect or creed, but of all sects,

creeds and dogmas, united by the Truth Eternal. If the East is ever united with the West it will be through the lofty teachings of Vedantism or Buddhism—for both are almost the same—and the work of the Ramakrishna Mission therefore, gentlemen, possesses unbounded interest and great significance for the world and mankind.

"Gentlemen, I look upon Swami Abhedananda's presence in India at this moment as most opportune ; for the sublime doctrines of Vedantism, of which he is so eloquent an exponent, are exactly the doctrines which ought to be spread far and wide among us, to free us from the racial bitterness which has been causing the greatest harm to Indian progress. I sincerely hope that his presence and utterances will divert the thought of our people from the acrimonious and painful controversies which have already produced disastrous effects on our society. Political and *Swadeshi* speakers we have many amongst us, and we have all listened to them with attention. It is time we give heed to our few religious, moral and social teachers, and seek to lay the foundation of our progress all along the line, so that we may prove ourselves worthy of the privileges and concessions which we have been striving to obtain.

"Gentlemen, from the account, which Swami Abhedananda will presently give you, will learn all about the wonderful work which the Ramakrishna Mission has been doing in America, and also what the Swami himself has done since his arrival in Colombo about three months back. Hinduism, through the efforts of the Ramakrishna Mission, has been making rapid advance in the United States It is only fair to expect that America, in return for the sublime religious truths which she has been receiving from India, should impart to India that technical and industrial knowledge which has made herself so famous throughout the world. I am glad to hear that a step in this direction has already been taken, as Swami Abhedananda will tell you I sincerely hope that Swami Abhedananda's presence in India will induce our young men, as well as our elderly men, to visit America in increasing numbers—the former for scientific and industrial education, and the latter to study the means by which the Swadeshi movement in this country may be developed and advanced. In many respects, the conditions of India today are similar to those which pre-

vailed in America when she started her own Swadeshi movement. Gentlemen, Swami Abhedananda is here to tell you all about the work of the Ramakrishna Mission, and it is not for me to tell you what magnificent work he himself has been doing in connection with that Mission. He left India, as I have said about eleven years ago, and after spending a short time in England, went over to Canada and United States of America where he has been the head of the Ramakrishna Mission since the lamented death of Swami Vivekananda. That he has been a fit successor to the late Swami Vivekananda is amply testified by the invaluable services which he has rendered to the cause of Hinduism. He is the author of valuable works on Vedantism, such as *Self-knowledge, How to be a Yogi, Spiritual Unfoldment, Divine Heritage of Man, Philosophy of Work, Re-incarnation;* and a most interesting book with the title *India and Her People,* which is a reprint of the several lectures he delivered before the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences has just been published. These lectures describe the social, political, educational and religious conditions of India His amiable and engaging manners, his indefatigable labours and his steadfast devotion to the cause with which he is identified, have won him a large following in America, and I may mention, gentlemen, that his American disciples have let him come to India only on the condition that he would return to them before the end of the year. Swami Abhedananda is a true Sannyasin, and he is known in New York as "the man who works for nothing." He has built up that great organization, the Vedanta Society of New York which counts among its members thousands of cultured American men and women Self-renunciation, chastity and meekness are the three essential attributes of a Sannyasin, and these are strongly illustrated in the character of Swami Abhedananda.

"Gentlemen, I do not wish to detain you longer, as you must be eager to hear what Swami Abhedanada has to say. I need only add that the Hindus of Bengal accord a cordial and respectful welcome to Swami Abhedananda."

Babu Sarat Chandra Chakravarti next read some Sanskrit verses, composed by himself for the occasion, which were meant to do honour to the Swami in recognition of his services in the West

श्रीश्रीरामकृष्णः शरणम्

श्रीसत्वसंस्फूर्त्तमूर्त्ति—महायुगचक्रावर्त्तननायक—महासमन्वयाचार्य्य—महाराजाधिराजमौलिमुकुटन्यस्त कुसुमपरागरञ्जित पादपद्म—श्रीश्रीरामकृष्णपरमहंसदेवस्य प्रियशिष्य श्रीमत्स्वामिविवेकानन्द स्वामिपादपरिव्राजकाचार्य्यवर्य्येषु—

एह्येहि स्वामिवर्य्यत्वतुलितमहिमः स्फूर्त्तवेदान्तमूर्त्तिः
एह्येहि ज्ञानदीप्त स्मितधृतलघिमा रामकृष्णैकनिष्णः।
जित्वा यो विश्ववीरान्निशितप्रहरणैर्भिन्नमोहान्धधीरैः
दिष्ट्यावीराग्रणीं त्वं धवलजयस्रजाचुम्बितोन्नीतवक्षाः ॥१॥

संसारे सारभूतां बहुहजनहितज्ञानदानैकवाञ्छां
ज्ञात्वा छित्वोर्द्ध्वगस्त्वं सुकठिननिगड़ान् कामिनीवित्तरूपान्।
ऋद्धिः सिद्धिश्च शक्तिश्चपलविमतयः कृन्तिताज्ञानखन्डैः
धन्यस्त्वं रामकृष्णार्पिततनुमननः सर्व्ववोधैकभूमिः ॥२॥

संस्मृत्य स्वामिवर्य्यंह्यपरदिनकरन्तूज्ज्वलज्ञानमूर्त्ति
स्थित्वाटूलाष्टीकप्रान्ते जनहितमननो नाल्पदुःखन्नसेहे।
गीतं शान्तं जगर्ज्जाभयरहितमननो स्निग्धगम्भीरमन्द्रं
एकोऽप्यानन्त्यमागादितिहितमधुरं सर्व्ववेदान्तसिद्धम् ॥३॥

उद्भिन्नज्ञानरश्मिर्गलितनिजपरः सर्वमास्मेति वाणीं
युक्त्या वै स्वानुभूत्या निगमपथिगतो घोषयन् निर्व्विशेषम्।
ज्ञातो धर्म्मस्यमूलं कलितजनमलः सोऽहमस्मीतिमन्त्रः
निर्व्याजा या च भक्तिः प्रकटितपरमप्रेमसर्व्वात्मरुपा ॥४॥

पाश्चात्याः कर्म्मवीरास्त्वतुलितप्रतिभा विश्वविश्रीतवीर्य्याः
वेदान्तं मन्यमाना ममगुरुप्रतिभागौरवं किं स्मरन्ति।
आहोस्विदीर्घयात्रा मधुमदकुसुमोन्मेषिणी किं तवास्ति
वेदान्तामोघघोषाः किमुकथय तथा नागलोकेनदन्ति ॥५॥

धन्यास्ते बुद्धिमन्तः सुविपुलविभवाद्यार्य्यं धर्म्मानुजुष्टाः
धन्याभक्तिश्च तेषां जितमदगरिमा भोगवैतृष्णचित्ताः।
धन्यं तद्देशमीड़े तवचरणकणालिप्तपृष्ठं पवित्रं
आशीर्ब्बादोऽस्तु तेषामनुदिनमनुगो-रामकृष्णोश्वरस्य ॥६॥

दुःखाब्धेः प्रान्तवेला महहगतवती वङ्गमातात्विदानीं
दुर्भिक्षव्याधिक्लिष्टा हृतवलविभवा राजदण्डैर्द्विखण्डा।
हाहाकारश्च सर्व्वां निरशनवसना जातजाड्या महान्धाः
सद्यार्य्यामोघशक्तिमपनयतु खञ्जदासीनत्वं जनानाम् ॥७॥

विख्याता ब्रह्मविद्याखिलतिमिरहरा वेदवेदान्तगम्या
देशचारैर्मलिनैर्घनघनपटलैश्छादिता लुप्तवीर्य्या।
दूरीकृत्याधुनात्वं चलपवनवलाद्दर्शयास्मानपूर्व्वं
लुप्ताभं चण्डभास्वत्निगमगुरुगिरिशीर्षमध्याह्नसूर्य्यम् ॥८॥

लीलां रामस्य कृष्णस्य रुचिररसां दर्शयन् यश्चलोके
लोकानुद्धर्त्तुमिच्छन्नजनि नरवरश्चाप्तकामोऽतिधन्यः।
यल्लीलारङ्गभङ्ग्या प्रविचलितमहो साम्बरं क्षौणीपृष्टं
तस्य श्रीरामकृष्णस्य चरणकमले भक्तिरस्तुह्यानल्पा ॥९॥

वर्षन्त्वाचारलाजानमरकललना दक्षिणार्च्चिः प्रशान्तः
गृह्णात्वग्निः समुखं प्रकटितरसनो वेदिमध्ये हवींषि।
निर्घोषन्तु सुकीर्त्तिं तत्र दशककुभो दिग्देशाक्रान्तदीप्तां
सन्तुह्येमान्यखिलान्यहरहरहहाभेदबुद्धेस्तवैव ॥१०॥

इति कलिकाता निवासिनामभ्यर्थनापञ्चम्।

ॐ तत्सत् ॐ

The following Address of Welcome, brightly illuminated on country-made silk, bearing a beautiful gold border and fringe, was next presented to the Swami

## TO SRIMAT ABHEDANANDA SWAMI

Dear and Revered Brother,

We, the Hindu inhabitants of Calcutta and places adjacent to it, offer you a most hearty welcome on the occasion of your return to the land of your birth after a sojourn abroad for more than ten years. During this long period of absence from your native land you were solely occupied with remarkable devotion and earnestness in the noble mission of spreading far and wide the sublime truths of the Vedanta in a far-off land beyond the seas. The seed of the Vedanta philosophy was sown by the revered Swami Vivekananda and a tree has now grown up under fostering care, spreading its branches on all sides. You have succeeded in establishing centres of activity, viz., at New York, Washington, Brooklyn and other places where large numbers congregate to learn the divine truths of our religion It has given us a great pleasure to learn that with your unflagging zeal for the Religion Eternal, your untiring energy, your deep insight into our *Shastras,* your graceful and frequent lectures, and your extraordinary power of conversation you have succeeded in creating in the mind of the American people a genuine desire to learn and practise in life the truths which originated from our *Rishis* of old.

On account of your masterly exposition of the doctrines and philosophy of our religion, as appears from your works published by the Vedanta Society in New York, you have often been invited by learned Societies to deliver lectures before their respective association ; and these facts show the influence you have created in the mind of the thoughtful American nation Some have accepted you as their spiritual guide You have by your labours opened a vast field for the propagation of the Hindu Religion in which four of your brother Sannyasins are now actively engaged Above all, you have by your self-sacrificing labours raised India in the estimation of the Americans and established a cordial relation with them Swami Vivekananda and you have made a new epoch in the history of our religion and remind us of those glorious days of India when Missionaries from the court of King Piyadasi went to the different pars of the world to preach the religion of righteousness.

May you be spared long by the blessings of your revered Master Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa whose holy message it has been your proud privilege to bear to the different nations, so that you may bring your noble and disinterested mission to its fulfilment and see the holy land of India, the mother of religions, revered by all nations of the world and the sublime truths of the Vedanta accepted throughout the inhabited world.

The 12th,
September 1906,
Calcutta

NARENDRA NATH SEN
Chairman,
Reception Committee.

The Swami gave the following reply:

Mr. Chairman and fellow-citizens of Calcutta, I thank you heartily for the kind reception that you have given me this evening It is extremely gratifying to me to know that you regard me as one of your brothers, although I have laboured in foreign countries for the last decade. Indeed the word brother is a very affectionate term, which brings together our hearts and rouses a feeling of sympathy, love and good-will, which unites our hearts together and makes us stand for one common cause, which is our mother-religion and mother-country. We are all children of the *panya-bhumi*, our holy Motherland which is the most sacred place in the world. There is no other land which can be called *panya-bhumi*. I also thank you for the appreciation that you have shown by recognising the work that has been done by one of your brothers in England and America Of course, I do not deserve the praise and kind words that you have uttered this evening. The work could have been a thousand times better by any one of you present here because I know that there are amongst us, here, men of greater talents and of greater education and of greater spirituality But still this little work that has been done by one of your brothers and by a servant of God, if I am allowed to say so, is done through your good-will, your sympathy, your kindness and your brotherly feelings which you sent across the ocean to the shores of the United States. A call came to me from England and I responded to that call although I knew that I was not worthy of it. It was left to me to continue the work started by our illustrious brother, Swami Vivekananda.

It was a work of hard labour and constant care, because we had to meet opposition from different quarters—from Missionaries who had interest in foreign missions, especially in India ; but after nine years of hard labour the work has gone so far that it stands on its own merit and it cannot be suppressed by any power that exists in this world. There who have seen the progress of this movement which I represent, cannot deny that a divine force is working behind it. It is a divine movement and the signs of the time show it

Swami Vivekananda was not an ordinary man. He was the patriot-saint of modern India,—he may be called an incarnation of divine wisdom in this age of commercialism It was he who turned the tide of commercialism in a foreign land like America In 1893 he stood before a select audience from all parts of the world and gave the Message, he received from his Divine Master, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. It was his first public lecture, but every word that dropped from his lips was charged with a divine power which electrified his audience His message was that Hinduism was a universal religion, that it taught that all were children of Immortal Bliss and were not born in sin and iniquity. It was a message of revelation to them, and this opened their eyes Vivekananda started the work in New York, and he travelled in different parts of the United States and also in Canada. He was received everywhere with great hospitality and kindness as he himself told you several years ago His writings to-day are regarded in the same estimation as the Bible I have met many earnest and sincere souls in America and in England who regard Vivekananda's Raja Yoga as great as the Bible. His teachings have changed the characters of men and women who never believed in God, and who never cared for spiritual things. They have become spiritual, moral, God-loving and God-fearing, by reading and studying his books. Swami Vivekananda was the pioneer, the first preacher, the first Hindu Sannyasin who went, after crossing the ocean to the shores of the United States, carrying his Master's Message and the Gospel of Truth as taught by our ancient *Rishis*. Before him, many other preachers had crossed the seas, but they represented only a sectional portion of Hinduism. Vivekananda represented the Vedic religion, the Sanatana Dharma, which we may call a universal religion.

Vivekananda achieved great success, and why? Because he respected truth and nothing but the truth. He preached nothing but the eternal truth which is found nowhere except in the Vedas alone All other scriptures of the world are mere reflections of what we find in the Vedas.

You have mentioned in the Address that King Piyadassi was the first to send Missionaries to foreign countries It was at that time about 260 B C., that India reached the climax of civilisation Then India had life and vitality, but today that vitality is dead, though she is going now to revive it; and bear in mind that the power of Ramakrishna whose name also you have mentioned, is going to bring a new force into the life of the nation If we read the history of ancient India we know that Asoka, the great Buddhist Emperor, also sent Missionaries to China, Egypt and many other countries, to preach the gospel of Buddha But who was Buddha? He was an incarnation of Vishnu, the Divinity whom we worship. There are some who regard him as an atheist or agnostic, but still he was an incarnation of the Divinity and his religion was nothing but the ethical portion of the Vedanta religion. He popularised the ethics of Vedanta and the philosophy of the Vedas. Before the time of Buddha many preachers and philosophers went to Alexandria and Greece If you study Professor Max Muller's works, there you will find the names of Hindu philosophers who discussed philosophical points with Socrates at Athens After the invasion of India by Alexander the Great, a change was brought over the Indian thought and Hindu philosophers went all over the world to teach the doctrine of Hinduism It can be shown from the *Shastras* that crossing the ocean is not a sin To-day what we need is, that young men should go from this country to other lands and study their manners and customs and learn from them the things of which they are masters I wish the young men of Bengal, and young graduates especially of Calcutta to take a vow of going to foreign lands, and work and earn a living there, and learn from them the secret of their greatness and of their national power. Vivekananda was the pioneer and preacher of this age, and whoever follows in his footsteps in accordance with his teachings and ideals, will surely become great and will be able to serve his motherland in the right line.

The centres that have been started in different parts of the United States show that Vedanta is needed in America, and the Americans are trying to live up to it in the midst of their commercialism and materialism. The people rush through life and suffer from nervous postration; they need rest and peace of mind and spiritual vitality. They work through the one desire of making money and gaining knowledge, and now that they have these, they are ready to renounce everything There are many millionares who are tired of their luxuries Without *bhoga* there cannot be *yoga*.[1] Many Americans who have enjoyed life to the fullest extent are now anxious to receive renunciation as their ideal. Americans are extremely busy people; time is money with them. They now study Vedanta and practise *yoga,* the breathing exercises. Do you think that they would continue to do so, if they did not get results! No. They are the most practical people in the world. By seeing England, France and other countries of Europe, you can form no idea of the American life

In America we find the most cultured women in the world. Their ideal is purity and chastity. Unmarried women of 30 or 40 years old, living pure lives, can travel from one end of the country to the other without having any one to help or protect them. English women cannot do that English people are conservative. But Americans are not so. Their ideal is freedom. They enjoy political freedom and social freedom also, and now they seek to attain spiritual freedom Christianity also teaches this, but the bonds and thraldom of churches are too severe for them Christ says: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Christianity teaches that truth will be reached through knowledge. Here Christianity and Vedanta meet Because our ideal also is *moksha* (freedom) What is *moksha*? Is it spiritual freedom alone? No. Freedom,—spiritual, moral, mental, physical, social, and political also. *Moksha* should be your ideal in every line of work. Our ideal cannot be otherwise.

I travelled from Colombo to Calcutta and everywhere I found that the Hindu nation lives only in the spiritual life Go to Southern India and you will find the people there do not care much for their political or social leaders. But if a spiritual leader comes they fall prostrate before him and honour

and revere him, worship him as a living God on earth. They are ready to do anything for him So the people of India live in religion, they eat religion, drink religion and sleep in religion. There is no other people in the world, into whose nature religion has gone so deep Now, religion should be our ideal. But mind you, the religious ideal includes all other ideals Political and social ideals are merely sectional things. If we try to imitate the English or Americans and give up our spiritual ideals and follow in their footsteps, we shall be dead, and our leaders will fight and quarrel as they are doing to-day.

In attaining our political freedom we must have one mind. We have eighty millions of Bengalees and eighty millions of minds; in the United States the population is eighty millions and they have one mind Go to Japan and you will find that forty-eight millions of people have one mind. The same is in England But what do we find in India? When the idea of three hundred millions of minds comes to me I become quite hopeless and I despair of expecting anything from them, The leaders are not of one opinion, whether social, political or religious. But, my friends, if you study Vedanta, there you will find the foundation of unity, because unity is the starting point, and unity is the goal. First realise this, that although no two faces are alike and no two minds are the same, yet in the *Atman* we are one. Start from that as our religion—that should be our life—that should be our goal. We talk about fellow-feeling, universal brotherhood, but mere talk will not make us feel that we are brothers. We have talked enough and for the last two hundred years, we have been talking. But let us begin work now. Close your mouth and go on working. Do not make a loud noise. When I first heard of the *Swadeshi* movement I was delighted. Then I found that *Swadeshi* was not spread all over India, and when I came near Calcutta I found several leaders criticising and finding fault with other leaders without uniting in the common cause. But where can a movement succeed without unity? If you want to make any success, political or industrial, you must try to attain it through spirituality, because there is our life, there is our vitality—there is our religion, but if we go as we have done, we shall be more downtrodden, than ever.

Vedanta will help to make us worthy descendants of the

ancient *Rishis*, who taught that fearlessness should be our ideal. But how many of you are fearless, and how many of you are ready to go to a cannon's mouth without fear? Here is a poor Sannyasin, who has travelled alone all over the United States of America and Europe, without drawing a single rupee from India, without expecting remuneration for his services. In New York the temperature goes down in winter several degrees below zero Every street is covered with ice and snow. There you have to fight against nature and environmental conditions, people and everything If you wish to be masters of yourselves, you must know what it is to be fearless. Go to foreign lands and try your fortunes there and see how fearless you become, and how much you can do for the Motherland. Fearlessness is our ideal, because we are not subject to birth and death. We are the *Atman*. The nature of our souls is free from birth and death. You know the well-known passage from the *Gita* written nearly 1400 years before the Christian era, which taught that the "Soul could not be burnt by fire, dried by air, moistened by water or pierced by the sword." The Soul is indestructible, eternal, unchangeable, and immortal. This should be the constant theme in our daily life Our life is eternal and immortal, and immortality is our birthright. If we think of that we shall fear nothing. What have we to fear? Death, what is death? Throw away when the time comes this garment of the body, this material form, just as we throw away our old worn-out garments. If we cannot do so, we are not entitled to be called Hindus. No other religion but the religion of the Vedas teaches that All other religions teach that we die and go to perdition, unless we are saved by some external power. But our religion teaches immortality as our birthright. Thousands are waiting to receive this truth. Brothers, wake up! There is great work for you to do. Go to distant lands and preach the gospel of Truth that you have inherited from the ancient *Rishis* and show that you are fearless. Let the practicability of your religion be demonstrated by example, and others will follow and realize the truth. Always remember that we are children of God—children of Immortal Bliss. This ideal will also make you strong. We need strength ; we require nerves of iron and muscles of steel ; our age demands these. We must have them. How can we get them? Simply

by talking, making speeches? Never We must study our own defects and errors; we must be united and formed into one body Unity and mutual help will make us a thousand times stronger than we are today. We shall get that through our religion and not through political speeches.

The work that has been done in the United States is a work which is constantly growing. There are six of our missionary brothers There is a Hindu Temple in San Francisco,—it has been saved from the ravages of earthquake and fire, almost by a miracle. We have also a Peace Retreat (SHANTI ASHRAMA) for the use of *Brahmacharins* and *Brahmacharinis* One of our students in America donated 160 acres of land, which is far away from the rush and cares of a city or town There in the wilderness, American men and women go and live for months and practise meditation. We have also other centres in different parts Now we stand in need of more workers I appeal to young unmarried graduates, to take up the life of a *Brahmachārin.* Practise *Brahmacharya* and you will have power and strength and be able to become leaders of men This call will be renewed again and again. Teachers will come to India from America and give instruction in various subjects, industrial and scientific, without receiving any salary or remuneration. American people are willing to help us, especially in educational matters They are proud to have helped Japan and now they are willing to help India. A close connection has been established between India and the West, and this was the ideal of Swami Vivekananda that India and the United States should meet together, and the Vedanta Society be the channel through which this communication should continue. If you go to the United States you will be received there with kindness. America regards the Hindus as the most moral, most religious, most divine and most philosophic people on the globe.

The American nation is willing to receive any great truth however old There is nothing older and greater than the Vedic religion. The work that has been done in the United States is going to reflect on the minds of the European nations. Many of our books have been translated into German and Spanish. Constant calls come from different parts of England to start centres in various cities We are in need of workers Only those workers who are able to practise *tyaga* will be

accepted by the Ramakrishna Mission Vedanta, which has been taught for the last fifteen years in the United States is the religion of our country and is known as Hinduism. The better name is Arya Dharma, still better, Sanatan and still better, Vedantic religion. I do not mean that sectarian Vedantism is the religion of the Hindus. In true Vedanta there is no quarrel and no fight between different sects as Vaishnavism, Saivaism or Saktaism. Each leads to the same goal, and that goal is one, though there are all these different phases of religion and different sects Here in connection with this, let me conclude by repeating the well-known lines from the *Mahimna-stotra* which every Hindu repeats daily. "As the different streams having their sources in different places, all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee."

A summary of this lecture appeared in the local Dailies under date of September 13, 1906, a few of which we mention: *Indian Mirror, Statesman, Bengalee, Patrika, Indian Daily News and Englishman.*

On the fourteenth September at half past five in the afternoon the Swami delivered a lecture in the Curzon (now Alfred) Theater on *Advice to the Students and Young Men of Calcutta* The house was packed from floor to ceiling and hundreds were turned away from the door The Swami spoke for an hour and a half and the audience listened with rapt attention, scarcely a sound being heard throughout the vast auditorium during the entire time. Pandit Satis Chandra Vidyabhusan presided. The lecture follows:

## ADVICE TO THE STUDENTS AND YOUNG MEN OF CALCUTTA

Mr. Chairman and Brethren,

I have been requested to say a few words to the young men of Calcutta regarding what should be their ideal Two mighty forces are now fighting against each other—the one is trying to crush our independence and demoralize us, to denationalize us and to divide and rule is the motto of that force, while the other is trying to unify, to nationalilze and to tend to freedom,

the goal of all religions In the midst of this struggle, what should be our ideal, is the question Shall we remain single-handed and make individual efforts to attain to the highest goal, or, shall we put our shoulders together to gain the common cause, to achieve success in our attempts? This struggle will decide the future of our nation and the future of our holy Motherland, Bharatvarsha, the *punya-bhumi* No nation has become great by forwarding the policy of individual efforts, simply to attain individual interest. The history of all nations tells us that great works have always been done by those who have succeeded in sacrificing their self-interest upon the altar of humanity, and if we do not follow that path which has brought success and glory to other nations, we shall remain slaves and our future will be doomed for ever In this struggle we must wake up and stand on our own feet, and show our bravery and courage in all the actions of our daily life

What do we want? We are now making efforts to improve our national industries, to educate the masses and to become one as a nation. The ideal remains the same as it is with all other nations and we want freedom. But what kind of freedom do we want? Our ideal of freedom is greater than that of any other nation in the world. Europeans and Americans are satisfied with the attainment of freedom in their social and political lives. But suppose we have attained to political and social freedom, shall we remain satisfied with them? No, because our ideal is greater than that of any other nation in the world We want freedom in the truest sense of the term. The ideal of freedom given in the Vedas is what is called *moksha,* spiritual freedom ; and here, my friends, let me tell you that spiritual freedom is at the foundation of all other ideals of freedom that exist in this world Spiritual freedom must be our ideal and to attain to it must be our aim We must struggle hard to realize it, because that it the greatest and highest of all kinds of freedom. Political freedom is for a few days. It does not affect the soul, it does not bring freedom to our *Atman,* and to our true selves, but spiritual freedom is eternal, as it makes us live in this world like God in flesh and blood.

Social freedom may be the ideal of many, but what good will it bring to us in our true life, or in our spiritual life? Social freedom may make us stand before the world as one of the

nations enjoying social freedom, but if we examine the social conditions of other nations who call themselves free, we find that our social conditions are far superior to theirs. If you go to Europe and America, you will find that the struggle is going on to make the people more spiritual and more moral in their daily life. But the Hindus are naturally more moral, more temperate, more truthful, more God-fearing than any other nation in the world. We all know that rolling in luxury and enjoyment of sense-pleasures are the ruling ideals of Western nations. Of course, there are men and women who may be called truly spiritual, but their number is very small. In our country, on the contrary, there are hundreds of thousands of men and women who do not touch any kind of liquor We do not need to start Temperance Societies to cultivate moderation in drinking Why?—because our religion forbids us to taste liquor of any kind But today, we find in India among the younger generations, a tendency to imitate the vices of the Western nations. We must try to imitate their virtues and not their vices.

What are their virtues? The first thing that strikes a traveller in the West, is their unity of purpose and self-sacrifice in the cause of their national glory. These are things we should imitate and learn from other nations; we should cultivate the power of organization. To work in an organized method is unknown to the Hindus, and, therefore, we are down-trodden today. We cannot work together, and it is a shame to us. Why do we not co-operate as brothers and lend a helping hand to our fellow-brethren for the common end? Why do we not try to stand as one body for the common good of our Motherland? I have said many times that if we go to Japan, we see that forty-eight millions of people have one mind and one purpose If we go to England, we see that forty millions of people have one purpose, one interest and one mind. But in our country three hundred millions of people have three hundred millions of minds and three hundred millions of ideals and purposes! In Bengal, there are eighty millions[1] of people, and if they have one purpose, what power is there in the world to check it? Today, we are trying to develop our industries, to agitate for

[1] Now the population of India is greatly increased, and the Swami's estimation of the number of population was in 1906.

the furtherance of our *Swadeshi* movement But to what end? And what is the proper course we ought to take? The first course is, that we must be united in our efforts Unity is the secret of success One single individual will work with the power of a thousand hands and will attain to glory, if that individual be united with others in purpose and in interest. Therefore, we must remember that unity—unity of purpose—is the secret of success, and we must not quarrel and fight amongst ourselves We want a personality—one individual, who should stand before all classes of people and should be the ideal of all. But, my friends, to follow a person is easy, it is difficult to follow a principle We Hindus want a leader, and him we should follow. Now we have no strength to stand on our own feet. We are so degenerated today, that we can not hold on to one ideal and live up to it.

Our religion has many ideals, and why should we not recognize all the ideals, all the personalities that have flourished from the Vedic age down to the present century? We have Krishna, Rama, Buddha, Chaitanya, Sankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, and the latest of all, Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramhamsa. Are not these personalities great ideals, which our religion has held before the world as Incarnations of Divinity, who came down to save us and the world when religion fell into decay? If we hold these ideals before our mind, and follow their teachings and examples, their greatness will permeate every soul, and work with tremendous force through us. Let us hold those ideals before our minds, and make ourselves channels for the manifestation of those powers, which have been constantly flowing towards us, through the works of our daily lives.

Religion of the Vedas is our religion Vedas, as we all know, are not works of mere intellect written by human hands, but they are inspired words or revelations that have come to great souls, the *Rishis* of ancient times, and contain the highest wisdom ever given in any of the Scriptures of the world. Whether we study the Bible or the Koran, or the Zend Avesta or the Buddhistic Scriptures, we find that in the midst of these different revelations there is one ideal, and that is the worship of Truth and nothing but Truth The same ideal we find in the Vedas, which may be called the mother of all other scrip-

tures of the world, containing as they do all the truths that have been discovered by different Incarnations of Divinity in different countries and at different times; and as such, the worship of Truth should also be the ideal of the modern generation of our young men and women There is nothing in the religion of Christ, or of Mohammed, or of Zoroaster, or of Buddha, that cannot be found in the Vedic religion. Ours is the grandest religion that exists to-day, as it includes all other religions of the world, which may be called the special or sectarian religions; and hence it will help us to unite into a common brotherhood, the Christians, the Mohammedans, the Parsees, and the Buddhists,—for all are children of Immortal Bliss, and the aim of all is one, and that is freedom Jesus the Christ, one of the Divine Incarnations, held before the world the ideal of freedom, and the way of attaining it he declared by saying· "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." The knowledge of truth will bring freedom to us. Did not Buddha, the great Incarnation of Vishnu, preach the same truth about five hundred years before the advent of Jesus of Nazareth? And was not the worship of Truth his ideal, and freedom the goal of his ideal, and freedom the goal of his religion? Did not Chaitanya, another great Incarnation of the Divinity, preach the same truth? The highest ideal of the Vedas was only brought out and preached amongst the masses, by Gouranga of Nadia For the sake of attaining to that ideal of freedom, he renounced the world, and went out with a begging bowl in his hand for the sake of his own people, for the sake of the Motherland, nay, for the sake of the whole world. He set before the world the ideal of renunciation and exemplified it in his own personality Therefore, he became the leader of mankind, and today, if any one wishes to become a leader, he must followed his foot-prints and must renounce the world.

Renunciation must be the ornament of a leader. A mere talker cannot be a leader. He who talks at great length or writes volumes, cannot be a leader, unless he be a true Sannyasin. Self-sacrifice must be his motto, and he should show it in his own life at every moment. If amongst you, you find one single individual who has sacrificed his own self-interest for the good of his Motherland and for the good of his own fellow-men, follow him and you will have success. A leader is

never made, but born, and one who is not spiritual can never become a true leader When a spiritual leader stands before the world, he possesses divine power He never commits a mistake, for the divine hand guides him; he never thinks of the morrow, but the morrow thinks for him,—that is the secret of his greatness Even a political leader who is carried away by self-interest and ambition to gain name and fame, can never have success. The true leader must be a moral and ethical man, nay, he must be the embodiment of ethics or morality; otherwise, he would lead himself and others to destruction, as the *Upanishad* declares: "There are many who think of themselves as great and most intellectual, and go about calling disciples and followers; they are themselves blind, and those who follow them fall into the ditch, the abyss of ignorance and destruction, where the blind leader takes them." Therefore, my friends, we must be careful to select a true leader. We must wait, we must prepare ourselves to receive him whose work is a free spontaneous offering to the world without any remuneration in return Such a leader is bound to come, for the law is that wherever there is the demand it must be fulfilled, sooner or later So, our duty at present is to prepare ourselves, to get ready for that divine teacher who is to come and lead us to the right path, and bring freedom to us, not only physical, social and mental, but spiritual freedom; and whenever spiritual freedom is attained by a nation, poiltical freedom is bound to follow. Political freedom is only a secondary thing; it ought not to be the highest ideal; and even in America people are now waking up to this fact There is a great deal of party feeling, fight and jealousy among the political leaders all over the world. Go to England, and you will see how the conservative party is fighting against the Liberal. Go to America, and there you will see the Republican party trying to subdue the Democratic party by means, fair or foul.

Our ideal ought to be the highest, the spiritual freedom. What ought we to do to attain it? We should live the life of a *Brahmacharin.* We must be truthful; we must make our moral character perfect ; we must live a life of purity, chastity and abstinence; and we must practise fellow-feeling and live for our brethren. Do not despise your lower classes who are

downtrodden today They have suffered for thousands of years, and have been conserving their forces When a leader arises he will take with him all the forces that have been conserved for this long period, and those forces will find a channel in the form of this great leader. I appeal to you, young men of Calcutta, to live the life of a true *Brahmacharin* If you wish to attain the glory, if you wish to save your Motherland and your nation, conserve your energies, be truthful, be pure in character, be chaste and be moral. Always lend a helping hand to your brother who is in distress. Do not care to look to what caste or social position he belongs, but open your heart and embrace him as your brother, give him help and education, and try to make him a worthy citizen of our motherland This should be our first duty

Without *Brahmacharya* no higher power can come to us. It is the first step and those who are unmarried should not marry until they are twenty-five or thirty years old. Early marriage has done much good, but it has also produced many evils. Here, I must tell you that I am not standing before you as a social reformer, but as an impartial critic. I must show you both sides, and leave it to you to draw your own conclusions. Child-marriage has done much good, but it has also weakened the nation If we wish to have strong children, if we wish that our descendants should be great, powerful and physically strong, we must not marry until we have attained to maturity. I have seen in England and America the babies who are very strong, healthy and well-formed. But in India, boys of eighteen or twenty years of age studying in the schools have one or two children who look as weak and helpless as little chickens. What can we expect from such children? Therefore, my friends, you must be careful, and if you are pressed by your parents to marry, tell them that you are not yet worthy of it. Next, educate your girls, and give them a little instruction in physical culture. It is very important. In America, in the schools for boys and girls, physical culture is daily taught. There, you will see girls studying until they have reached maturity. Well-developed in muscles, intellectually strong and strictly moral, they can stand before men without fear, and can brush them off if need be. They practise physical culture, and combined with that, a little *pranayama*

(breathing exercise) will do them much good, and they have already begun to do a little of the simplest kind Deep-breathing will develop the lungs and make one free of many diseases Here, we neglect to study Yoga, while there, they are practising concentration, because they have come to know that physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual development can be attained only through concentration. It is a shame that we should neglect the study of our systems of Yoga, handed down to us by our ancient *Rishis* through many generations, while it is to-day being assiduously taken up by the Western nations. Therefore, I tell you that you ought to practise a little of Hatha Yoga, *i e.*, physical culture. A little practice of Hatha Yoga will help us to develop the muscles and nerves of the body and gain control over them. If our muscles and nerves are not strong, how can we face difficulties and be brave and courageous, because bravery and courage are the things which come to those who have nerves of steel and muscles of iron Then we must practise also a little of concentration, because if our mental efforts and mental energy be dissipated and scattered in a thousand and one directions, how can we expect to conserve our energy and direct it through one channel? Concentration is the secret of all success. An artist cannot be a good artist if he has not the power of concentration. A sculptor or a musician or a philosopher cannot be great in his avocation, if he does not possess the power of concentration and spirituality. Concentration is the first step to Raja Yoga. So, you must practise it. Do you know the secret of the Japanese victories over the Russians? It was through the power of concentration The Russian soldiers were addicted to drinking and given to luxury so they missed their mark. But the Japanese being very temperate, never indulged in this vice and they possessed the power of concentration, hence, they have attained to that glory which has amazed the whole civilized world Therefore, I would ask the young men and women of our country to practise concentration; for our religion gives women equal rights to practise it.

Women will show wonderful powers if they get an opportunity. For a long time they have not found opportunities; therefore, they are left behind, but give them a chance, and you will see they will be your equals in many lines. They will be great workers Our country has produced the best women

warriors. You know the famous Chand Bibi. You know of the Rani of Jhansi who stood against the British during the Mutiny and the English historian thought that the best general on the enemy's side was the Rani of Jhansi. She was dressed as a man, in the uniform of a general; she rode a horse and commanded her forces. Such characters our country has produced. So, give our enslaved women a chance, and they will show you what powers they possess. Know every woman as a representative of the Divine Mother, Kali, whom we worship

The American nation is great to-day, because they are the worshippers of *Sakti*. You know Shivaji became great by worshipping the Divine Mother. And if you look upon woman with lustful eyes, you have committed a great sin according to our faith. Every householder must consider all women except his own wife as mother and that is the injunction of the *Shastras* If we followed it today, if we acted up to that injunction, we should have been just as great as the American nation. We must look upon woman as the representative of the Divine Mother, as the Incarnation of *Sakti*, and if we consider ourselves as Her children, Her blessings will work miracles There is no question about it.

We are de-nationalized today, because we have lost our spiritual ideal Political power—the power of the sword and gun—will never bring salvation to our country. Show your moral and spiritual strength, and you will be the greatest nation in the world. The Hindus have always been from time immemorial the spiritual teachers of the world, and will always remain so. Belonging to a land where flourished great Incarnations, such as Rama, Krishna, Chaitanya, Nanak, Ramakrishna, why should we go to the Western men and women to learn our religion from them? Why should we bend our knees before teachers of the West when our religion is greater and spiritual ideal is higher than that of theirs Go to Europe and America not as beggars, but always as spiritual teachers. We cannot make friendship with any great nations, and expect them to respect us, unless we meet them on an equal footing. Give and take—that is the law The Americans would not have respect for the Hindus if they have got nothing to learn from them. If you have nothing to teach the Englishmen you cannot expect to have any respect from them. But, my friends,

you must develop your spirituality, before you go to foreign lands as teachers You are to show them your self-control, your power of concentration, your power of purity, truthfulness, chastity and *Brahmacharya,* and then they will sit at your feet and worship you as the Incarnation of Christ. The ideal is great, but we must begin from this very moment to live up to it and to hold it before our minds, preach it to our fellow-citizens, and ask them to follow it.

One thing that we should learn from the Western nations is obedience In our country there are thousands to command, but very few to obey. No one becomes a good general who is not an obedient soldier. Are you ready to obey,—not an individual personality, but a principle, an ideal? Practise obedience, if you wish to be leaders eventually Western nations are the most obedient, the most loyal to their national ideal We have no national ideal yet But we must have one without going to extremes and without encouraging hatred and ill-feelings for the Western nations or their representatives We must have for them a feeling of love, kindness, and sacrifice, and consider them as brothers and as much children of God as we ourselves are. We are only on different levels, and stand on different platforms on this stage of the world. They represent certain ideals, and we others Commercialism guides their interest and their policy. We must not follow that, but spiritual ideals should guide ours, because that is our national destiny If commercialism be our ideal, our nation will be dead in no time

Obedience and fellow-feeling should be cultivated by us, by trying to organize our efforts to make little republics in our midst, thus learning the simple lessons of the constitutional form of government. In America, we have the Vedanta Society in New York. The form of government in this Society is the same as that of the United States, *i e*, a constitutional form of government, and that we should learn first, before we can become an organized body Without organization no great work can be done, nor has it ever been done Today, we are disorganised mobs, but organize them, and you will find the embodiment of a mighty force which will be irresistible. Therefore, let us learn from the Western nations the secret of organization. In Europe and America, the whole social body is

organized like a machine, each one fulfils its duty and its part, but all these parts when united produce a gigantic force, and that force moves the world.

We must be grateful to the British nation, for having brought us in contact with the European civilization We have become degenerated because we kept ourselves isolated and aloof from the rest of the world, and our late ancestors formulated all kinds of rules and regulations to prevent us from crossing the ocean and knowing what is going on, on the other side. The mistakes of our fore-fathers produced sad results, the effect of which we are reaping today But let us not perpetuate such mistakes any longer. Let us go abroad, mix with other nations, assimilate their virtues and introduce them into our society. Let us unite ourselves and stand as a body, learning those lessons and living up to them in our daily lives, and then we shall again be a great power.

We are also indebted to the British nation, for having given us a common language, English, which is going to be the universal language Today, if you know English, you can travel in any country whether in Europe. America or Asia. If you go to the Madras Presidency, you find English spoken. There is a suggestion to make Bengali the prevailing language of India, but that is impossible, mere child's talk. Hindustani can be a common language in our country, but it is known to very few in Southern India, for there, most of the educated men speak English like their mother-tongue. If we wish to exchange our thoughts with them, we can do so in English From Colombo to Calcutta, while passing through the principal cities of the Madras Presidency and Mysore, everywhere I found that English was spoken most commonly by the educated classes, and it was so easy and convenient to me to express my ideas in that language which they so well understand, that I feel myself indebted to the English nation for this great benefit which they have given to our Motherland And through this common larguage, we shall be able to organize ourselves, and bring our people together under one banner.

The *Swadeshi* movement should not be confined to mere words We have to develop our own industries, which have been neglected for several centuries; and now our eyes are opened to the fact that without industrial development our

nation is virtually doomed. After passing the B A. examination our ambition is to become a clerk getting a salary of twenty or twenty-five rupees What a poor ambition! Why should we not direct our energy in various lines, to commerce, to trade, to industries and agriculture, and develop the resources of our Motherland and be happy and prosperous? Today, we are poor because we have neglected our agriculture and our industries. Of course, taxation in some districts is very heavy: but if we know the means of increasing the resources of our coustry, we can live very comfortably notwithstanding those heavy taxes. So our energy must be collected, and not dissipated, and that should be directed towards the regeneration of our country in industrial lines, in trade, agriculture and commerce. I went to the St Louis Exhibition, and I was very sorry not to see there Indian arts and Indian goods properly exhibited by Hindus. There was only a Christian, a Missionary perhaps, who had the charge of a small stall, and there was from Bomboy, a Parsee gentleman, Mr. Vimgara, who with his son was exhibiting some beautiful things of our country. But, why do not the Hindus combine their efforts to give such exhibitions in foreign lands, and draw the attention of the civilized world to the fact that our country is not backward in arts and industries Mr. Vimgara has opened a store in New York and is importing goods to America and making a fortune But why does not a Bengali merchant do the same? Why do not our millionaires come forward and help in this direction? But one thing we must rememberber, that strict honesty should be observed amongst our merchants in dealing with foreigners. When I was coming on the P. & O. Steamer, an English gentleman was telling me about the honesty of the Chinese merchants He said that the Chinese people are very honest, whatever they say they do, and with them honesty is the best policy. If the Hindu merchants follow the same principle, they will also command respect wherever they go. In Ceylon, I saw that the Chettis command respect from the European merchants and bankers. They borrow thousands and thousands of rupees from large banks, without giving any security or bond Their word is the bond; whatever they promise they fulfil, and they find no difficulty in getting loans. The Japanese nation also following the same business principles have gained success. So,

my young friends, if we wish to be respected by other nations, we must be honest in the first place; and thus being able to come in close contact with the great merchants of other nations, we shall instil their ideas in different lines of industry in our midst and improve ours. Our machineries for spinning and weaving etc, must come now from foreign land. But why should we not learn to make them here in our own country? Where is that energy, that combined effort to accomplish the task? We must form combinations, and learn to trust our fellow-brethren. Mutual trust is the secret of national glory

If we wish to help ourselves, we must love our brethren Love means the expression of oneness and that oneness cannot be on the physical plane, because no two faces are alike. Nor can we be equal on the plane of mental or intellectual powers But oneness can be manifested on the spiritual plane, because we are one in Spirit. Our religion teaches Love thy neighbour as thyself, and not only thy neighbours but all living creatures thou shalt love as thy true self, for it is the same spirit in man, woman and the lower animal. There is the basis of unity, oneness, because we are all children of immortal bliss, as our Vedas declare. If we remember that and live up to it, we shall feel that we are one in spirit with all Let that grand message of the Vedas always ring in your ears,—"All ye children of immortal bliss." If we are all children of Immortal Bliss, where is the room for caste distinction in the *Atman*. The *Atman* is without caste or creed and, it is ever pure. There we are all children of God; there we are one. Even in a Pariah or a Mehtar, who is considered as most degraded from the social standpoint, even there, dwells the immortal Soul, and he is a child of God as much as we. Hence shall we not respect and lend a helping hand to him? Is he not our brother? Shall we not be false to our ancient *Rishis,* shall we not lack faith in our own religion, if we do not treat him as our brother? Does not our religion teach? "In a well-qualified Brahmin, in a cow, in an elephant, in a dog, in a Chandala, a Pandit must see the same *Atman.* Thus, our religion will bring to us the power of unity, and make it the foundation of all our activities; otherwise we cannot succeed. The politics of the Western nations are for a few days, and constantly changing; but our politics are founded upon the eternal truth,—the eternal law of unity in spirit, and

will lead us to the goal which is not ephemeral, but is the abode of the highest peace and happiness We are all searching after happiness and peace of mind. Mere politics will never bring peace or happiness. It brings turmoil, struggle, despondency, and warfare in its train All true peace and happiness are based upon spirituality which ultimately leads to freedom or *moksha* That is the ideal of our religion. For that *moksha*, the sages and saints have sacrificed their own selves; kings and princes have sacrificed their thrones; and that freedom should also be our ideal. My young friends, mind you that, that freedom does not remain confined only to the spiritual plane, but it leads to freedom, social, intellectual, moral and political also.

## SWAMI ABHEDANANDA'S ADDRESS AT THE HOWRAH TOWN HALL

On the 15th September 1906, after a visit to Kalighat, a bath in the Ganges, and worship in the temple, the Swami Abhedananda with some of his Sannyasin brothers went to the Howrah Town Hall to receive an address of welcome from the Salkhia Anath Bandhu Samiti and Benevolent Institution, Pandit Dinabandhu Vedanta-Tirtha was voted to the chair

In an introductory speech in Bengalee, the chairman explained how Vedanta was the secret of every act of our daily life. Although no longer existent in the body, the great Swami Vivekananda was, the speaker said, ever-existent amongst us and like great personages deserved the term 'Sri' before his name in place of the term 'late' He, the venerable Pandit, regarded the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna headed by Sri Vivekananda as the *Avataras* of the Vedanta. In conclusion, he pointed out that our want of happiness and consequent misery is due to our having neglected to model our lives in accordance with the truths of our religion.

The address of welcome was then read:

### TO SRIMAT ABHEDANANDA MAHARAJ

Revered Swamin,

We, the members of the Salkhia Anath Bandhu Samity and the Howrah Benevolent Institution beg respectfully to accord

to you a most cordial welcome to this place, after your return from America. We fully share with our countrymen the feelings of joy and pride at the success with which your tireless effort of ten years, in spreading the Universal Religion of Vedanta in the Western world, has been crowned. With unflinching zeal and courage you have followed the footsteps of the late illustrious Swami Vivekananda, ever since the work has been handed over to you. The seed had been planted and you have watered it and protected it from outside dangers Through your loving care and the combined efforts of your beloved Gurubhais, it has now grown into a strong plant, which we hope will soon spread its branches over the whole of the West. We are fully conscious of the great difficulty and self-sacrifice which this noble task has caused you We feel ourselves greatly blessed by having you in our midst again and take this opportunity to express our heartfelt love and regard for you. It is our sincere prayer that you may long be spared in health and vigour to carry on the mission of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna May the spirit of Swami Vivekananda work within you as ever.

We remain,
Very respectfully yours,
The Members, Anath Bandhu Samity
and
Benevolent Institution.

15th Sept., 1906,
Howrah

The Swami in reply, thanked the Anath Bandhu Samiti and Benevolent Institution for their kind reception and spoke to the following effect:

The disciples of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa are engaged in a work that may truly be called a national work. They preached the Truth as revealed by the *Rishis* of old—the Truth, that is the universal religion.

Our religion is popularly known as the Hindu religion. On analysing it we find, that the term was first applied to us, by the Persian and Greek invaders, from the river Indus (Sindhu) which separated the Aryan races from the other races of Central Asia. 'Hindu' is simply a rendering of 'Sindhu,' for

they pronounced 'H' in place of 'S' Since that day, various races have inhabited India, so the epithet has lost its meaning now. The proper name for our religion should be Arya Dharma, and we are Aryas The Christians sometimes call our religion Brahmanism. This is also incorrect, for no Brahmana was the special founder of it The eternal laws known as the Vedas were inspired revelations from the *Rishis* of old. They existed from eternity and will exist to all enternity The term 'Sanatana Dharma,' will therefore, indicate it better. This even is not expressive enough The more intelligible and all-inclusive term should be, 'Vedanta Religion.' It is derived from *"veda"*—(*vid*—to know) wisdom, and *"anta"*—the end. The Vedanta comprises the Hindu scriptures. When we speak of our scriptures or Vedas, we mean the *Upanishads* and the *Aranyakas,* because all the great Acharyas like Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhava, and others have written commentaries on these *Upanishads,* and when they have quoted from the Vedas, they have mostly referred to the *jnanakanda* portion of the *Upanishads* There are however many sublime utterances in the *Samhita* portions as well. By the term, Vedanta religion, then, is meant not only the *advaita,* but the *dvaita,* and the *visishtadvatia* also But these do not contradict each other, or prove the others as false, for the one thing which we find running throughout the different sections of the Vedas is, 'unity in diversity,' which rings out in those words—*"ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti."*—That which exists is One, sages call it by various names.

In the Vedas, we find the *karmakanda* which includes the *Samhita* and the *Brahmans,* and the *janakanda* or the *Aranyaka* portion. The latter appeals to us more directly and is undoubtedly the sublimer of the two. In the *jnanakanda* we find the sublime *Upanishads* which contain the essence of the Vedas These as well as other parts of the Vedas, in different ways, reach the one Almighty Being whom they declare as,—"That from which all animate and inanimate objects have come into existence that by which they live and unto which they return at the time of dissolution, know that to be Brahman." Again, as that transcendental unconditioned existence—"whence words come back with the mind unable to reach." This is the Brahman, the Infinite, as mentioned in the Vedas.

This is also the ultimate ideal of all religions,—the one ideal worshipped in different forms. All philosophies also talk of this same One Being whom we call the *Paramatman.* Plato called It "the Good," Spinoza called It "the Substantia," Kant called It *"das Ding-an-Sich,"* the transcendental Thing in Itself. Herbert Spencer called It "the Unknown and the Unknowable," Emerson named It as "Over-Soul" Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa used to say that it is like the different names given by different nations to the same one substance, as for example, the water, as *pani, bari, jalam, aqua, wasser,* etc. ; so, the same one 'Reality' or 'Brahman' is called by differnt names, such as Vishnu, Siva, Kali, Allah Ahura Mazda, Jehovah, etc., by different nations and sects Thus, there is no room for us to persecute the followers of other religions ; rather we should embrace those of other religions and see the sameness which underlies them all. However, we find everywhere the different sects fighting against each other Sri Krishna declares in the *Gita*: "Whosoever comes to Me through whatsoever path, I reach him ; all men are following the paths which ultimately lead to Me." Under such teachers where is room for quarrelling—where—? All quarrels or religious persecutions proceed from bigotry, narrow-mindedness and fanaticism. They are the results of *avidya* or ignorance, and must be shaken off as such Those who realize the true nature of the Lord of the universe, do not fight or quarrel with any one on account of his faith

Vedanta is all-inclusive Dualistic, qualified, non-dualistic and the the monistic schools are all included in one common and all-comprehensive ideal of the Vedanta. The *Guru* of Bhagavan Sri Chaitanya was of the dvaitist school, and in the life of the Lord Gouranga is exemplified the highest ideal of dualism.

The Lord is the omnipotent and infinite wisdom, and the *Jiva* or the *Jivatman* is a small particle of the same wisdom, which is only covered over with the veil of ignorance. To remove this ignorance the devotees in the path of *bhakti* take after the five relationships with the Lord, such as, *shanta,* reverential admiration; *dasya,* servantship; *sakhya,* friendship, *vatsalya,* filial love, as between mother and child ; *madhura,* sweet, as between husband and wife. The ultimate goal or

*moksha* is of four kinds: *salokya,* or living with the Lord in the same sphere; *sayujya,* i e, identification or sameness of form; *samipya,* or living in close proximity of the Lord; and *sarshti,* or possessing the same rank or power as the Lord, *Bhakti,* however, is greater than even *moksha.* The highest ideal for worshippers is to serve the Lord i.e. to serve and not to expect anything in return, not even *moksha.* Such is *para-Bhakti* or *prema.* This is the highest kind of love imaginable —a love that seeks nothing in return, not even *moksha* or freedom of the soul. This ideal love is dwelt upon at length in the *Bhagavatam,* which says "Such is the glory of Hari, the Lord, that even those men of meditation who have cut all the bonds of *samsara,* and have realized the highest bliss of the Brahman or *Atman,* worship the Lord of the universe through love, which knows no reason (for loving)."

Now the question is: is this divine love different from divine wisdom? No! *Para-bhakti* leads to Brahma jnana and Brahma jnana leads to *para-bhakti.* The ideal is the same in both, Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa used to say, *suddha-bhakti* (pure love) and *suddha-jnana* (pure wisdom) are one and the same.

According to the *visishtadvaitavad* or the qualified non-dualistic doctrine of Ramanuja, the Lord is one stupendous whole, while the *Jivatmans* are but parts. In Him is the cosmic mind, the cosmic body, the cosmic Intellect, the sum total of all Spirits. He is the *chitghana rupa,* the Soul of our souls, in and through Whom we live. Sankara, the pure Advaitist, holds that the true nature of the *Jivatman* is the same as the Brahman, and the highest ideal of the Vedas is summed up in the three words,—"*tat-twam-asi,*"—"That Thou art."

Thus the Swami described in brief, and gave the audience an insight into the three great schools of philosophy, which he held to be included in the one vast body of the Vedanta—the universal religion of Vedanta, which he preaches. Here he made a divergence in alluding to the miserable state into which our religion has fallen nowadays.

Continuing, the Swami said:

With us Aryas, religion has more intimate relation with our existence than it is so with other races. Religion is our dream, religion is our recreation, religion is our food, religion

is our very life, religion is all-in-all with us. At the present day however, we have fallen far behind that ideal. True, the struggle for existence has become very hard now; we have to work from morning till night to earn a living; how then can we find time enough for performing *sandhya-vandanam,* and other religious practices, laid down in our *Shastras* as the most important duties of our daily life? What are we to do then? I admit the truth of these assertions, but in the midst of all these hindrances, we must not by any means forget our higher ideals We must remember that true happiness which every one of us is striving after, is not to be found in the world in which we live i.e. in *samsara.* We must know that this is only the school in which to purify the heart—to attain to *chitta-suddhi.* Christ said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Purification of the heart or *chitta-shuddhi* is the condition of God-vision. We have to work, and all work ultimately leads to *chitta-shuddhi,* if one knows how to do it properly. What is the secret of work? It has been laid down by Sri Krishna as—"To work we have the right, but not to the fruits thereof." As work we must, let the guiding principle of our work be love and not mere gain. Morning and evening let us repeat each to ourselves—*Sivarpanamastu,*—Let all the fruits of my daily work be at the feet of the Lord" This kind of work will purify our heart and souls. Through whichever way one proceeds to attain to Godliness, whether it be Karma Yoga, or Bhakti Yoga, or Raja Yoga, the one essential thing is *chitta-shuddhi.* It has been truly called the gate to Divine consciousness. We must however have *Anuraga* (intense love), if we are to attain to the higher ideals of our religion. The work—even clerical work, that we do, if done with *anuraga* will lead to *chitta-shuddhi* in the long run. Holding high the unparalleled ideals of our religion before our mind, anyone, even the meanest worker, will attain to *chitta-shuddhi* if he works with *anuraga.*

The Swami then reverted to his original theme of the unity underlying the three great schools of Vedanta philosophy, and cited Hanumana, the greatest of all Bhaktas, who said: "Oh Lord, when I think of my gross physical body, I am Thy servant, when I think of myself as *Jiva,* I am a part of Thee; and when I think of myself as *Atman,* I am one with Thee."

Again, he quoted the last verse of the prayer of Prahlada, when his father was torn open by Vishnu in the Narasimha Avatara. There, after bowing down to the Lord, Prahlada bows down to himself: he no longer finds any difference between himself and Vishnu The Swami then declared that this was the wisdom he had gathered from all the *Shastras.* He next went on to show how the all-embracing and universal religion of Vedanta included all the other religions In the course of doing so he remarked·

The Christians say that God created all beings, hence we are His servants and eternally separate from Him, and therefore we cannot be one with him. But do they not also say that we go unto Him? If we came from Him and return to Him, is not this separation only temporary, and apparent, and as such, unreal? This is what the Vedanta actually preaches The Christians however, have one thing which is unknown amongst us, viz, eternal perdition. We have a purgatory no doubt, but it is temporary, and meant only to purify our souls If we place all the other dualistic religions side by side with this phase of Hinduism, one point of difference stands out very prominently. They all say that each individual starts with a fresh soul which persists through eternity Is this possible? To say that we shall be eternal hereafter, presupposes that we had been eternal before. Eternity surely cannot have a definite beginning, as it has no end

It will thus be seen that the different systems of religions are all included within the great Vedanta. But it does not stop here ; it gives us something more. Each soul must have his own path, as a coat has to fit each particular individual. We have each our own spiritual Ideal, the *Ishta-devata,* whom we worship as one of the different forms of manifestation of the same one Brahman. Thus, we learn to make allowances for each one to worship in his own way. Let us all pray, and worship our ideals with all earnestness of soul, and we shall sooner or later come to know that even in this life it is possible to enjoy the supreme bliss, which is rare even in the *Brahma-Loka* or *Vishnu-loka.* Then only shall we know, that religions are like the radii leading towards the one centre, the Brahman

After the lecture, the Swami and his party were driven

accompanied by a torchlight procession, to the Salkhia Anath Bandhu Samiti, where they were entertained with a song sung in chorus, especially composed for the occasion, in honour of the Swami:

श्रीश्रीरामकृष्णो

जयति

पूज्यपाद् श्रीमद् स्वामी अभेदानन्द महाराजेर
अभिनन्दन उपलक्षे,

## आनन्द-सङ्गीत

एले कि उदासी योगी तपस्वी ( फिरि ) भारत-तपोवने ।
प्रचारि प्रतीच्य-प्रदेश माझारे, हिन्दुधर्म्म सनातने ॥

गुरू गुण-गाथा गाहिते गाहिते,
प्रशान्त पयोधि पवित्र सैकते,
पूर्ण प्रेम-तत्त्व जीवे बाखानिते ( छिले ) महाशक्ति आराधने ।

वीरचूड़ामणि सतीर्थ तोमार,
श्रीविवेकानन्द ज्ञान अवतार,
पदाङ्क ताँहार करि अनुसार, ( छिले ) सर्वभूत-हित-साधने ॥

वेदान्त-विचार झङ्कार श्रवणे,
बुध-हृदि-तन्त्री काँपिल सघने,
पाश्चात्य कोविद तत्त्व-अन्वेषणे लुटाल तोमारि चरणे ।

रामकृष्ण-पन्थी विरागी कुमार,
श्रीअभेदानन्द तेयागी संसार,
आजि कृतार्थ भारत ( ओहे ) कर्म्मवीरवर, तव पद परशने ॥

सागरान्त-भूमे गुरू-कृपावले,
विचार-समर साहसे जिनिले,
निष्काम परम धरम साधिले, चिन्तिये श्रगुरू-चरणे।

मातृ-भुमि आजि करे आवाहन,
एस हे सन्न्यासी ऋषि उदासीन,
जागाव निद्रित भारत-सन्तान वेदान्त-दुन्दुभि निस्वने ॥

रामकृष्ण अनाथबन्धु समिति
सालिका
१५इ सेप्टेम्बर. १९०६

समितिर सेवकमण्डलो

On Sept 17th, the Swami went over to the Ramakrishna Math at Belur on the banks of the Ganges and spent five days there quietly with his Gurubhais. On the first day he made a pilgrimage to the Sacred Temple at Dakshineshwar, where the Divine Master, Sri Ramakrishna, had passed the years of His holy mission, and gathered His disciples around him

During his short stay at the Math the Swami revised the constitution of the Ramakrishna Mission which was not then registered and proposed in a meeting of the Trustees that Swami Brahmanandajee should remain Life President of the R. K. Mission. This motion was accepted unanimously.

## SWAMI ABHEDANANDA'S SPEECH AT CHANDERNAGORE

On the 23rd of Sept Swami Abhedananda delivered the following lecture at Chandernagore on the anniversary of the Sat Samiti. The French Mayor presided.

Mr. Chairman and Citizens of this historic city.

I thank you for your invitation and for the kind reception you have given me this evening. From my childhood I have had a desire to come to this city to see how the French Government existed in India, but the opportunity did not occur until now. I have travelled in France, and been to Paris For the last ten years I have been travelling in Europe and America, spreading the religion which we have inherited from our ancient

*Rishis.* You all know the historic appearance of our illustrious brother, Swami Vivekananda, at the great Parliament of Religions held at Chicago in 1893, where he represented Hinduism, and of the phenomenal success he attained there, and how his ideas and teachings were accepted by many of the educated and cultured inhabitants of the United States and of Canada. Since that time, the religion of the Hindus has been spreading rapidly in the United States and also in England, Germany, and other parts of Europe. We must know and understand the principles of this great universal religion which is popularly called Hinduism. Properly speaking we are Aryas, and our religion is Arya-Dharma. The word "Hindu" is a misnomer There are many people to-day who feel themselves proud of this name. They are mistaken, because it is meaningless to us today. If we read history we find that these terms "Hindu" and "Hinduism" were given to us and to our religion by foreigners, by the Persian and Greek invaders of India. We are descendants of the same ancestors as the Anglo-Saxon and Latin races of Europe and of America. Many of the English words that are used to-day can be traced back to Sanskrit roots. Sanskrit, the mother-language of all the European languages was the language of the *devas,* the *deva-bhasha ;* it was the language of the *Rishis,* the inspired teachers described in the Vedas. They were Aryas and we are their descendants, and our religion is Arya-Dharma But by that name today, people generally understand a sectarian creed which has been spreading in the north-western parts of India, and therefore, that term is not best suited to us. It is more appropriate to call it Sanatana Dharma or eternal religion,—the religion which does not die, which has neither beginning nor end, and which being nameless and formless, gives a foundation to all the other religions of the world.

This Sanatana Dharma was first declared in the Vedas. The Vedas, as you all know, are divided into two portion—*karmakanda* and *jnanakanda* The *karmakanda* includes the *Samhita* and the *Brahmans,* and the *jnanakanda,* the *Aranyakas* and the *Upanishads.* We do not nowadays use the *Samhita* or *Brahmana* portions which describe the sacrifices—the *yag-yajna* —because these have become obsolete and are no longer practised by the present-day Hindus When we speak of our Vedas

and *Shastras*, we do not mean the *Samhitas* and the *Brahmans*, but we refer to the *Upanishad* and the *Aranyaka* portions, which form the Vedanta scriptures. In fact, the Vedanta is our true scripture. When we speak of our Vedas and give quotations from them, we do so form the *Upanishads*. Of course, there are sublime passages in the *Samhitas* which describe the highest wisdom, for instance, the passage: "That which exists is One , men call It by various names"

This truth of unity in the midst of diversity of names and forms was declared in the Rig Veda for the first time, and this truth is recognised today as a scientific fact. It is only through unity in the midst of diversity that we find harmony between different religions and harmony that exists between different creeds and sects. Our religion is not limited by any sectarian doctrine or dogma. All other special religions of the world like Christianity, Mohammedanism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Buddhism, have their own dogmas and doctrines, which they hold to be the only truth and the whole of truth, but our religion is free from these crude ideas. It embrances all the religions of the world, and has room for all setcs and creeds. We can embrace the essence of Christianity within our fold i e within the fold of our Sanatana Dharma ; we can embrace the essence of Mohammedanism, Buddhism, Judaism, and all other 'isms' of the world, and bring them within the fold of the Sanatana Dharma. The principle of our religion is universal, and this principle has been taught by other great spiritual leaders of the world The Divinity of our scriptures—the Vedas—is both personal and impersonal: It is with form and without form, and it is beyond all expression, beyond all conception, beyond all ideas and comprehension The Vedas say that the Lord is beyond the reach of the mind and the intellect, and beyond words. We cannot describe the true nature of the Divinity by any word, neither can we conceive of Him in our mind which is limited. The Lord is described in the Vedas as the Brahman, the Infinite Being, the nameless and formless Deity. The *upanishads* describe this Infinite Being, as, "That from which all animate and inanimate objects have come into existence, that by which they live, and unto which they return at the time of dissolution, know that to be the Brahman." That is truth, that is reality, that is Divinity.

The Brahman appears in the triune aspect of Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver and Siva the Destroyer. These three are one in Brahman In fact, the same Infinite Being appears through various names and forms, the Divinity is one The one Lord of the universe is worshipped by the Vaishnavas as Vishnu, by the Saivas as Siva, by the Saktas as Sakti, by the Christians as Father in Heaven, by the Mohammedans as Allah, by the Jews as Jehovah, by the Buddhists as Buddha. That one without a second we worship through both *bhakti* and *jnanam*. He can be worshipped through any form and by any method. He does not care for external forms of worship ; He sees only the sincerity and earnestness of His devotee. He who is sincere and earnest, and who can sacrifice everything for the sake of his Lord, will attain to peace and salvation in the end.

We do not believe in such ideas as that we are born in sin and iniquity. Christianity teaches that every man is a sinner, but our Sanatana Dharma, on the contrary, teaches that we are all children of Immortal Bliss, that we are immortal by our birth right, that we are like parts of that Infinite Being, like sparks of that fire of the Divinity As there is no difference between a spark and fire, so there is no difference between the *Atman* or the true Self of the individual and the Lord of the universe, except in manifestation The *Atman*, as we read in the *Upanishads*, is infinite, birthless, deathless, and unchangeable. When the body is destroyed, the *Atman* within is not destroyed. Sri Krishna declared on the battle-field of Kurukhetra this Vedic teaching of the true Self of man Fire cannot burn the Self, water cannot melt it. It is indestructible, unchangeable, birthless and immoral. The body is only a garment of the soul, but the soul is indestructible. We shall continue to live even after the dissolution of the gross material body, and the scientific world is now beginning to recognize the fact, having found conclusive evidence in its favour which cannot be refuted. Such evidences regarding the existence of the soul after death have I seen, as cannot be denied They who deny the continuity of the soul after death are ignorant. They do not know enough of the soul. The soul can never die, and if we always remember the truth, why should we fear death? Those who deny the immortality of the soul have constant fear of death, but those who know that the soul is im-

mortal are fearless, and fearlessness is our ideal, and should be the ideal of one and all, because our religion teaches, above all else, fearlessness If we understand that we can never die, we shall be able to face any danger, we shall be able to dare anything, and go anywhere without fear. If you are practising self-reliance through the *Swadeshi* movement, practise the ideal of fearlessness. You are a child of God, so face any obstacles bravely like a soldier. Stand up like a man and be brave. Do not be cowards Why are we down-trodden today? Because we are cowardly, and have lost faith in ourselves; We have not the courage and strength to stand on our own feet All the Englishmen, and Frenchmen I have met told me that we are cowards. I may here mention that while I was coming on the P & O. Steamer, an Englishman told me, "You Hindus allow everybody to rule over you. We know where the secret of power lies." This secret of power is understood by the Europeans, and Americans. Therefore they are great, and we should imitate their virtues How is it possible for forty millions of Englishmen to rule over three hundred millions of Indians? Because they have faith in themselves, they have strength of will, and they are fearless, while we have come to lack these virtues We do not feel how degraded we are becoming. We are like ostriches, who when danger comes, bury their heads in the sand thinking that thereby they will avoid the peril. We must not do that sort of thing any more.

Now let us learn our lessons ; let us stand up and cultivate the truth that we are the *Atman,* birthless and deathless, and therefore we must be fearless and brave anything that stands in the way of realizing our highest ideal. Let us sacrifice our self-interest on the altar of humanity Let societies like the Sat-Samiti, which are ready to help their brethren, increase every day. Let there be similar philanthropic bodies working in thousands and thousands of places all over India. Let them practise unity of purpose. We have many among us who are known as leaders and social reformers, but they have no unity among themselves. Why do they not give up their little differences? Why do they not learn to agree to differ? Be ready to throw overboard your own personal ideas notions and stand up for one great cause. You know how two Englishmen will fight between themselves over some little difference, but they

stop immediately when a foreigner comes between. Then the Englishmen become as one body to fight a common enemy

What is the use of fighting about such petty things? Let us understand our ideal and put it foremost before us. Our ideal should be freedom, because our religion teaches freedom or *moksha*. Our religion holds that ideal of freedom before us, and we must remember that this does not mean political or social freedom, but spiritual freedom, which is the mother of all other kinds of freedom ; and through our religion we shall gain that. Jesus the Christ also says, "Ye shall know the turth, and the truth shall make you free." That is spiritual freedom. God is truth and the knowledge of truth will bring that freedom to us Our *Shastras* teach that knowledge of truth will bring *moksha*. Unity of purpose must be the method by which we should work with others, with this ideal of freedom before us. Let every young man, educated or uneducated, follow this ideal, and preach it among the masses. Go to other parts of India, go to Ceylon, to Europe and America with this ideal in your mind, holding aloft the banner of spiritual freedom and preach the Gospel of Truth. You will find there are thousands who will come to you to drink of the perennial water of wisdom, to quench their thirst.

It is necessary today that we should train young men to be spiritual teachers. Spiritual teachers are those who have sacrificed all their self-interest upon the altar of humanity. In our religion no householder can become a perfect spiritual teacher. Buddha could not have become the spiritual teacher of mankind if he had lived as a householder. Chaitanya, Sankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, Nanak, Bhagavan Sri Ramkrishna—all these spiritual teachers were great Sannyasins, or renouncers of the world. Today we need more Sannyasins who will be ready to give up everything, to give up their body if necessary for the good of others. Without thinking of the morrow, they should be ready to go anywhere and help mankind without seeking for any reward. Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was a living example of self-sacrifice and perfect renunciation, untainted by the spirit of commercialism and materialism Have you not seen Swami Vivekananda. His great disciple? He worked all his life for the sake of his Motherland, and gave his life for the good of her people. Let us imitate his example

and follow his path Earnest and sincere workers are they who renouncing everything, work only for work's sake, all through life Let us unite ourselves for the good of our brethren. Let us help our poor people; you take care of those who are your own, while your poor brethren are dying of inanition every day. When you are able to feel for them, then your country will rise Do not look down even upon a Pariah Is not God dwelling in the heart of a Pariah? What right have you to hate anyone? When we shall wake up to the truth that God dwells everywhere and in everything, then, will come salvation to our Motherland; then, will come freedom to our individual souls; then and then alone we shall be able to serve our country and humanity, and then alone we shall reach perfection even before the dissolution of this body .

On Sept 24th, the Swami held a conversation at Aheeree-tola; and on Oct. 1st, occurred the final event of his sojourn in Calcutta. This was a reception given at the Oriental Seminary by the Swami's neighbours, relatives, friends and early associates, who evinced much interest and pride in honouring him. The Swami in reply to a Farewell Address presented to him spoke, for over an hour. The meeting was presided over by Dr Bolai Chandra Sen, who in a short speech spoke as follows:

"Gentlemen, I thank you very much for the honour you have done me by electing me your President as it gives me the opportunity of saying a few words on this occasion. Swami Abhedananda is one of us, as he lived, moved and had his being in our society and, therefore, we take all the greater pride in his success. He, I doubt not, will relish our token of love more than any he has yet received, for it is like the joys and sorrows of the people of Brindaban for their Kanai's joy at his coming and sorrow at his departure; and even in distant lands will our love and prayer follow him, falsifying once at least the saying that a Prophet is not honoured in his own country.

"Those that have not read his works and printed lectures cannot appreciate what wonderful progress he has made at so early an age in the domain of spirituality; and I, who am his senior by more than a quarter of a century, can with benefit to myself sit at his feet and receive lessons in matters spiritual.

"The life of a Sannyasin is not a bed of roses, and in spite of all the difficulties and dangers that awaited him he boldly unfurled the banner of his illustrious *Guru*, Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna and poured the nectar of Vedanta into the hungry and thirsty souls of the most materialistic and commercial nation of the world freeing their minds from the thraldom of false religious beliefs.

"India has lately risen from the slumber of ages, but without the strong back-bone of religion, all our national movements are likely to meet with scant success; for I firmly believe, that no nation can be truly great that is not socially, morally and religiously great; and the saying of the *Mahabharata* that: "Where there is mercy, there is religion, and where there is Krishna there is success" will remain true to the end of time; and so long as we remain satisfied with the mere outer shell of religion and taste not its life-giving kernel, our hope of regeneration will prove a vain hope after all.

"Swami Abhedananda! We hail you as one of the brightest jewels of our race and a glory to India You carry with you the blessings of a nation that was once conspicuous by its attainments in all departments of life and which can once more raise itself to that height by living not in the past only but also in the present as well as in the future"

The following address was presented to the Swami:

## FAREWELL ADDRESS TO SRIMAT SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

Our Beloved Swami,

We, your relatives, friends and neighbours, have met here this evening to bid farewell to you on the eve of your return to America—the scene of your holy labours. In doing this, we cannot but recall to our mind the many hardships and privations you cheerfully underwent at the call of duty as a Sannyasin, and also your self-sacrifice and loyal devotion to your spiritual *Guru*—Bhagavan Sri Sri Ramakrishna under whose fostering care and by the help of whose spiritual light you have become what you are to-day—a glory to India.

We feel proud that you, through your noble deeds, have been appreciated by the American people, that some of them even regard you as their Divine Master on earth—the highest compliment to which a man can aspire. Your achievements in America are truly wonderful and despite many difficulties and single-handed, you have there succeeded in establishing several centers of Hindu religion, each claiming thousands of followers under your banner. Your publications and lectures on the Vedanta philosophy have fully vindicated India to the civilized world of the Twentieth century and thus you have laid your countrymen under a debt of endless gratitude.

We now hand you over this humble token of our love and esteem, that it may remind you of your early associations in the midst of your labours in a foreign land and pray that you may be spared long to preach the all-saving truths to people of all creeds and colours, and form the happy medium of uniting the East and West in an indissoluble bond of fraternity and love."

Áheereetola
Calcutta, Your Friends and Neighbours.
October 1', 1906.

In response to the address, the Swamiji rose amidst loud cheers and spoke for more than an hour. After thanking his old neighbours for their kind recognition he dwelt at length upon the importance of moral and spiritual culture of individuals for the attainment of national greatness and declaimed much against the materialistic tendency of the age that has deterred our real progress.

On resuming his seat a young gentleman asked the audience to join him in requesting the Swamiji to remain longer in India to help its people to tide over the present difficulties.

In reply to this request another gentleman rose and pointed out the urgency of the return of the Swamiji to America and its wholesome bearing upon India.

The meeting was then dissolved with a vote of thanks to the chair.

## CHAPTER VI

# FROM CALCUTTA TO BOMBAY

The visit in Calcutta terminated on October 5th when the Swami Abhedananda accompanied by Swami Paramananda and Amulya Brahmacharin (now Swami Sankarananda) left for Bankipur (modern Patna Junction) where on the following evening he delivered a lecture in the Town Hall. The Swami began with an interesting account of his work for ten years in the United States of America, continuing, he spoke in part to the following effect·

At no distant future the teaching of Vedanta promises to be the creed of the New World. In fact, the Vedanta Society of New York today, counts among its members some of the most prominent men of that Continent For instance, Prof. H. C Parker of Columbia University, New York, one of the foremost scientists of the age, whose invention of a new form of electric light,—more perfect and powerful than that of Edison,—is sure to revolutionize all our knowledge in the field of electricity, is the President of the Vedanta Society of New York. In the Vedanta philosophy, especially in the practice of Yoga, the Americans have found something hitherto not known to them They have readily accepted the teaching of the Vedanta and are practising *pranayama* with such earnestness, that while the knowledge of Yoga is steadily declining in India, it is taking rebirth in America with such renewed vigour, that sooner or later America will take the position of a teacher, and the Hindus will have to learn from her the precious art which is a sacred heirloom from the immortal *Rishis* of old Therefore, I urge upon my countrymen to wake up before it is too late

Every age has its particular incarnation and creed so that Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, who practised and realised every form of existing religions, ought to be taken as the ideal of the present age, and then and then alone regeneration of India is possible. His creed is the creed of the twentieth century.

With the young men of the present day, the passing of University examinations and getting a clerkship or becoming

a lawyer or a medical man, are the aim and end of life. The result of this aim of life has been simply disastrous; it makes people so selfish and mean that each man seeks for himself only. In this state of society in which each individual, forgetting that he is a part and parcel of the nation, thinks of his own concern only,—this false idea of self-preservation really eats into the vitals of the nation, ultimately leading to its ruin. The Indians without any distinction of caste or creed ought to move as one nation, and that is only possible in the universal religion of the Vedanta. We have had enough of early marriage; it is time now that some sincere young men should renounce the world and devote themselves to the good of the country. Then and then alone, the regeneration of the land is possible

On the morning of October 7th, the Swami drove to see in the city of Patna the birth-place of Guru Govind Sing, the great leader of the Khalsa Sikhs of the Punjab. In the evening the Swami Abhedananda gave a conversation at the house of his host Dr. J. N. Mitra (the Dewan of the Maharaja of Hetua) where many people gathered to ask questions about the Vedanta work in America. The Swamiji answered all questions for nearly two hours and left a deep and lasting impression upon the minds of those earnest seekers after Truth who assembled there.

In the early morning of the eighth of October the Swami left Bankipore for Benares and arrived there at 10 o'clock. Here again, he was in one of the chief centres of the Ramakrishna Mission. Through the active efforts of Swami Shivananda, the Home of Service and the Advaita Ashrama with its school for boys have become important features of the work of the Mission in Benares. The Swami was entertained at the Ashrama The day following his arrival was spent in a drive to Sharnath where exist the ruins of the Mriga-dava Vihara and the ancient relics of the Buddhist stupa. The Swamiji also visited the Home of Service of the Ramakrishna Mission. In the evening the students of the Central Hindu College presented the Swami with the following Address of welcome in response to which he delivered a lecture lasting for an hour and a half before a large audience. Mr. G. S. Arundale presided at this meeting.

To

SREE ABHEDANANDA SWAMIJI*
OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

Dear Swamiji,

We, the students of Central Hindu College, Benares, beg leave to offer you a most hearty welcome to this ancient seat of the Hindu religion and learning

All lovers of Hinduism cannot but rejoice at your self-sacrificing labours in far off America, in the cause of spreading the great truths and principles of the East, and it must be a source of great saisfaction to you to be an instrument of a truer appreciation of and sympathy with, Eastern ideals on the part of Western peoples.

It is through the efforts of noble workers like yourself that the dream of a brotherhood uniting East and West may some day become a living reality. The names of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and Swami Vivekananda are household words throughout the length and breadth of the land, and that noble work of the Ramakrishna Home of Service is everywhere bearing testimony to the great aims and aspirations of the band of devoted workers in the cause of humaniy of whom you are so earnest a member.

It is particularly fitting that you should receive your first welcome in Kashi at the Central Hindu College, Benares, in which the sacred principles of the Hindu-Religion are taught side by side with the ordinary secular instruction, and which stands as a firm supporter of the principle that religion is the basis of true education.

We earnestly trust that you may long be spared to continue your sacred mission, and we respectfully beg to assure you of our heartfelt sympathy in your devoted efforts in the cause of religion and Brotherhood.

We subscribe ourselves
Your admiring students,
The Central Hindu College.

Sd/- G. S Arundale
Chairman,
Central Hindu College
Oct. 9, 1906.

The next morning the party left for Allahabad Many of the local gentry met them at the station, among them being Swami Abhedananda's former friend, Babu Sirish Chandra Bose, the then Sub-Judge at Gazipur, at whose house they were entertained.

On the 11th, the Swami took a bath in the Triveni and after a short visit to the Brahmavadin Club of the Ramakrishna Mission, he, on invitation went to Mayo-Hall where the Hindu residents of the city presented him the following Address of Welcome in Hindi:

## HINDI ADDRESS AT ALLAHABAD

# श्रीरामकृष्ण परमहंस देव।

## श्री परमहंस परिव्राजकाचार्य्य शिष्य श्री स्वामी अभेदानन्द सेवायाम्

भगवन्!

कोऽतिभारः समर्थानां किं दूरं व्यवसायिनाम्।
को विदेशः सविद्यानां कः परः प्रियवादिनाम्॥

भारत भूमि के इस प्राचीन तीर्थ स्थान पर कि जहां से गंगा यमुना सरस्वती मिलकर काशी आदि नगरों को पवित्र करती हुई समुद्र में जा मिली हैं, जो सदा से ऋषि महात्माओं का निवासस्थान रहा है हम आप का प्रेम पूर्वक स्वागत करते हैं।

आपका जो उद्योग ब्रह्मविद्या के पाश्चात्य देशों में प्रचार के विषय में हमारे कर्णगोचर हुआ है उसका हम कहां तक धन्यवाद दें। यह ब्रह्मविद्या ही इस भारतभूमि की सदा से जीवन प्राण रही है और इसी के प्रभाव से हमारे पूर्वजों ने वह महत्व कि जिससे सकल पृथिवी के गुरू कहलाते थे संपादन किया भारत के दौर्भाग्य से वह ब्रह्मविद्या लुप्तप्रायः हो गई थी, परन्तु बड़े हर्ष का स्थान है कि अब आप ऐसे महात्माओं के प्रयत्न से फिर उसका सूर्य्य उदय हुआ। यद्यपि स्मृति में समयानुसार परिवर्तन होता रहता है परन्तु श्रुति सदा

एक ही रही और रहेगी ; और वर्त्तमान समय की पदार्थविद्या अथवा दर्शनशास्त्र यद्यपि उसकी व्याख्या भला ही करें उसमें कोई न्यूनाधिक्यता नहीं कर सकते । सत्य धर्म्म सदा एक है और एक ही रहेगा, और हम आपको इस कारण धन्यवाद देते हैं कि आपने इस सत्य धर्म्म के पाश्चात्य देशों मे प्रचार का प्रयत्न किया कि जिससे हमको उनके साथ एक भाव की शीघ्र आशा हो सकती है ।

आपने इस ही प्रयाग तीर्थराज में कुछ काल पर्य्यन्त निवास करके जो ब्रह्म विचार व तप किया था उसी का यह प्रभाव है कि आप की ओर से हुआ अमेरिका आदि देशों में ब्रह्मविद्या का प्रचार ।

हमें आशा है कि अब अपना समय केवल विदेशों के ही उपकारार्थ न देंगे किन्तु इस अपनी मातृभूमि की सेवा में भी वैसे ही तत्पर होंगे जैसे आप अमेरिका आदि के सुधार में तत्पर हैं—इस देश में सच्चे निर्पेक्ष काम करने वालों की उन देशों से अधिक अपेक्षा है यहां देश सुधार में तत्पर निष्काम कर्म्म में प्रवृत्त लोगों की संख्या अधिक नहीं है इस लिये यह अविद्याग्रस्त भारतभूमि आप जैसे सुपुत्रों से सेवा की बड़ी आशा रखती है ।

अब हम ईश्वर से प्रार्थना करते हैं कि वह आपके हृदय में मातृभूमि की दृढ़भक्ति की प्रतिदिन वृद्धि करे आप सदा धर्म्म कार्य्य में तत्पर रहें और ईश्वर आपको दीर्घायु और परार्थ साधन में नित्योद्यक्त करे ।

आपके कृपाकांक्षी
प्रयागनिवासी हिन्दु मण्डली

The translation of the above address runs as follows.

To

His Holiness Swami Abhedananda, the disciple of Sree Ramakrishna Paramahamsa—the great preceptor of religious preachers.

"Your Holiness

Nothing is a burden to those who are competent; nothing is distant to those who are in commerce; no land is foreign to those who are learned ; no-body is unfriendly to those who speak civilly

In this ancient place of pilgrimage of India where the Ganges, the Jamuna and the Saraswati having mingled together their flow run into ocean purifying the great cities like Benares in their course; in this place which has always been the resort of sages and Mahatmas we accord you a hearty welcome

How can we thank you for your endeavour to spread the Brahma-Vidya in the West of which we have heard so much? It is this Brahma-Vidya which has ever been the life and soul of India and it is through the influence of this that our ancestors were capable of those noble achievements for which the whole world recognizes them as its teachers Through the misfortune of India that Brahma-Vidya was almost forgotten, but it is a matter of great joy that the glorious sun of wisdom is rising again on the horizon of men's mind through the ardent efforts of the Mahatmas like yourself. The *Smriti* changes according to the need of time but the *Shruti* (Vedas) always remains unchanged; modern science or philosophy may give a new interpretation of it but can neither add to nor deduct anything from it, as true religion is eternal.

As a result of your preaching this true religion in the Western countries we expect soon to establish bonds of unity between the East and the West, and we thank you heartily for your noble effort to spread our Sanatana Dharma.

In this Prayag, the king of holy places, you lived for sometime practising Yoga and meditation on Brahma, the supreme Spirit, and have gained such spiritual strength as has enabled you to propagate Brahma-Vidya in Europe and America.

It is our hope that you will not now devote all your time to the benefit of foreign countries alone, but will be equally engaged in the service of our motherland, and will endeavour to better her conditions as you have done in America.

In this country selfless workers are more in demand than elsewhere; here, the number of unselfish men who work for the good of the country without seeking any return, is not very large. Hence this land of Bharata now fallen under the evil influence of *avidya,* hopes much for the service of her noble sons like yourself

It is now for us to pray to the Almighty that He may daily increase the unselfish love of Motherland in you, that you may be always devoted to the Holy work of the Sanatana Dharma

and that God may grant you long life, and keep you always engaged in doing good for others

We remain, Swamiji
The seekers of your grace
The Hindu Citizens of Allahabad.

The Swamiji replied in a lecture lasting an hour and a half on *Hinduism in America* Rai Bahadur Lala Baijnath was in the chair.

After thanking the audience for the Address of Welcome presented to him, the Swamiji spoke to the following effect:

It was in the last century that some of the German and American scholars happened to light upon some translations of the Vedas and the *Upanishads,* which appealed to them very much, and they wrote books based upon them Through these writings was indirectly revealed to the Western world the essence of the Vedas; and in many cases they did not mention the source of their works, but placed them before the public as their original productions But since Swami Vivekananda's Mission in America, where he represented Hinduism at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, this veil has been removed. The whole of America was lost in admiration for him and his brilliant exposition of our religion He was acknowledged as an "Orator by divine right," and one of the newspapers remarked: "After hearing him we feel how foolish it is to send Missionaries to this learned nation." He travelled and preached all through America and in many parts of Europe also; he established Vedanta Societies in New York and California, and brought over other brother-Sannyasins to continue the work there, which has all along been growing apace. There are many disciples there, who study the Vedanta and the Upanishads and live the lives of Brahmacharis and Sannyasins They believe in the immortality of the soul, the presence of God in everything, and in the doctrines of *karma* and reincarnation. They no more believe that the world was created only four thousand years before the advent of Christ To the cultured minds of the rational Americans Christianity is insufficient Hinduism, they find, stands on its own ground quite unshaken before the advance of modern science

Now and again, the Hindus are represented as mere

idolators, worshippers of images and stones, by our friends the Missionaires, the fore-runner of peace! But in fact we are not idolators We are ideal worshippers Our idols are only symbols which have a deep significance of their own, and are a great help to concentration and devotion to the One Omnipresent Being. Idolatory is not rare in Europe Roman Catholicism has many idolatrous forms of worship In Italy, I saw idols of Bambino (baby Christ) being decorated and worshipped, and prayers offered to them for certain things, as for rain or cure of diseases, and gifts were presented to them. Christian Missionaries should first of all, destroy the idolatory, prevalent among their own brothers and neighbours before they come to preach to us They need not take the trouble of coming over to India to teach a nation, which has her own universal religion.

What we need is industrial development To become a great nation we should advance the cause of *Swadeshism*, which will develop our natural resources and improve and enrich our much neglected industries To become a great nation, we should have a common aim. We should slacken the bonds of the caste which pertains merely to the food question and entertain brotherly feelings for all beings, be they Mohammedans or Hindus, Parsees or Christians. All of you are the children, natural or adopted, of the same Motherland—India Try to attain spiritual freedom, and political or social, or any other freedom will follow in its wake Foremost of all, educate the women; home is the best training school Without educated wives home cannot be a source of inspiration to higher ideals Without educated mothers, we cannot expect worthy sons or daughters, to keep up the traditions of our holy motherland. The amelioration of a nation chiefly depends upon the women of the country.

## AT THE HINDU BOARDING SCHOOL

The next evening, at the Victoria Boarding School there was an informal gathering of students repressenting nearly all the boarding houses and institutions of the city. The Swamiji was invited to answer questions put to him by the students. The following is a summary of his replies:

## I. ON THE AMERICAN STUDENT LIFE

In America, nearly all he students live in boarding houses or hostels attached to the schools and colleges. They all dine together which helps them to feel a brotherly love for all Fellow-feeling is very strong among them. They have the highest regard for their friends, and are always prepared to undergo any sacrifice for their sake They lead the life of celibates during their college course, as our ancestors used to do, and are not prepared to take upon themselves the responsibilities of a family-life. Some even remain unmarried up to forty years of age. It is very rare to find a lad of twenty with a wife to support or look after, while in India, it is not uncommon to meet boys married before they enter on school life, and who have children before they reach the age of twenty. The educational authorities in America are very careful about physical training. Drill is compulsory, and nearly all the students take part in sports Chapels and churches are connected with all institution, for he purpose of religious education The Americans are an intensely patriotic people ; patriotism is a chief feature of their character From their school and college days they begin to prepare themselves to serve their country. In addition to many debating societies and various similar associations, they have small committees of their own, modelled after the plan of parliaments, through which they manage their Boarding and private affairs, and decide various other matters. All these things help them in after life In the States, freedom and liberty are appreciated most and fully enjoyed there They have a national system of Government. I mean Representative and Democratic Such a system of government is found in nearly all civilised countries except India.

## II ADVICE TO YOUNG MEN

As students you should lead a pure and good life,—a life of *Brahmacharya* (celibacy). Learn to love your country and your countrymen, and depend upon your own exertions You should have faith and confidence in yourselves, and should not look to the Government for every little thing

The *Swadeshi* movement teaches us self-help and how to increase our wealth It cannot live without the patriotic feel-

ing of using, even at some sacrifice, our home-made products only. It is a strong fence and the only weapon in our hands to protect our own industries and commerce It will also help you in several other ways. America gained independence and several other countries acquired their self-government, through the spirit of *Swadeshism.*

Do not hanker so much after Government service or to become lawyers or *keranies* (clerks). The only honourable and patriotic professions for you are to take up industrial occupations and scientific investigations and researches. Go out to foreign lands, to learn what the West can teach you in science and industries. Some of you should also take up the task of advancing the cause of female and mass education among our ignorant and down-trodden classes, and bring about these much needed reforms on national lines.

## III. ON THE CASTE SYSTEM

The four castes mentioned in the Gita and observed in ancient times were not such as we see among us now. The caste system did not rest on food and kitchen questions only It was the natural outcome of society based on he division of labour and the different professions which men followed. The present system differs according to different localities. He whom we call a Brahmin in Upper India, is regarded as not much better than a Sudra in Southern India. Look to your ancient history. When Hinduism had not entered into the kitchen, India was great. The same Soul permeates everybody, and God makes no distinction between a Pariah and a Brahmin. So, try to shake off these artificial bonds which have come into existence with the lapse of time.

At eight o' clock the same evening, the Swami left Allahabad for Agra. On his arrival in the morning Pundit Jagannath and others met him at the station and he was taken to the Garden House of the Punditjee The day passed quietly except for a drive in the evening to the Taj Mahal.

On the morning of the 14th, the Swami went to the *Kalibadi* where an Address of Welcome was presented to him by the Bengalee community. The people asked him many questions regarding philosophy and religion, and he pleased them

with satisfactory answers. The following is the Address of Welcome:

TO

SRIMAT ABHEDANANDA SWAMI
THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

Dear Swamiji,

We, the Bengalees of Agra, beg leave to express our high sense of the honour conferred on us, by your gracing the Bengalee Library with your presence this morning We welcome in you a great religious preacher whose labours in America have earned him a world-wide reputation.

Your labours remind us of Swami Vivekananda whose work you have been carrying on so devotedly in raising our Fatherland in the estimation of the people of other countries and establishing a cordial relation between the East and the West You have infused a new spirit amongst us, so that many have now prepared to follow your foot steps.

The Ramakrishna Mission to which you belong, has done much to dispel the false notion of at least the educated portion of us, that, truth is only to be found in the West. We have now come to realise that we also have something to impart to the West in the shape of eternal truths

In conclusion, we beg to assure you of our most sincere wish that you may long be spared to fulfil and to see the fruits of your most important and sacred mission. May the God whom you are serving so devotedly, grant, that health and strength, success and prosperity, may attend your path during the remaining days of your life, so that you may be able to carry with redoubled energy the philanthropic task you have so zealously and self-denyingly undertaken to accomplish.

We again welcome you to the imperial city of Agra and thank you for honouring us by your presence in library to-day.

We beg to remain,
Dear Swamiji
Your sincere admirers
The Bengalees of Agra.

Agra,
14th October, 1906.

In reply the Swami gave a short but stirring speech and hearty thanks to the Bengali inhabitants of Agra

The Swami visited the Agra Fort and saw the palace of Akbar, the great Moghul Emperor, and all other buildings of historical interest

Later in the day, the Hindu residents of Agra presented the Swami Abhedananda an Address of Welcome in the hall of Agra High School; and in response to which the Swamiji delivered a lecture on *Universality of Vedanta.* The following is the Address of Welcome:

TO

SRI SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

Revered Swami,

We the Hindu residents of Agra, offer you a most hearty welcome to this city which had once the honour of being included in the ancient kingdom of Muttra, the birth place of Sri Krishna, the Divine Propounder of the *Bhagavat Gita*

It is a source of great joy and pride not only to ourselves but to all our brethren throughout the length and breadth of this country to find you disseminating the grand truths of the Hindu religion in distant lands, and especially in America, the centre of modern thought and culture. You have at great self-sacrifice and devotion devoted your life in propagating the doctrines and principles of Vedantism among the Western nations

The essence of Vedantism is self-sacrifice and self-denial, and the very essence of your actions has been the entire absorption in others, so that self is renounced as well as forgotten. In continuing the heroic work commenced by the illustrious Swami Vivekananda, whose fame has spread far and wide, you have been actuated by simple duty and loving kindness and have thus proved yourself a worthy successor to that eminent sage.

The chief aim and object of all right-thinking men of modern times is to establish a universal brotherhood and this lofty ideal of uniting East and West can only be realized by

making the teachings of our *Rishis* widely known. But it is a matter of deep regret that the noble doctrines of our religion have so long been neglected that they have been almost forgotten in the land of their birth and for their revival there is utmost need of energetic and disinterested workers of your type

May the supreme Brahman, the source of all life and light grant you health and long life to carry on the sacred mission and we do assure you that we feel highly blessed by your presence in our midst.

We remain,
Revered Swami,
Yours respectfully,
Hindu Residents of Agra
Sd/- Pandit Jaga Nath
Sd/- Govind Sahai Sharma,
and many leading gentlemen
of the city.

October 14th, 1906

At the close of the lecture, he with the other Swamis started for Alwar (Rajputna), to which place he had been specially invited as the guest of His Highness the Maharajah

Arriving at the station he found the chief officers waiting to welcome him The next day he dined with His Highness, the Maharajah. On the 18th, there was a Dewali illumination, and in the evening he was driven to the city palace On the 19th, he dined in the palace and witnessed an imposing procession in his honour The public meeting was arranged for the 20th, His Highness the Maharajah himself presided and read the following Address of Welcome·

Long before I had begun to take lessons in spirituality, and about the time I had joined school, now some eleven years ago, —in the innermost recess of this human musical organ, there sounded a note, just one string that vibrated, and it produced a desire that gained strength with time and became a longing to meet that great and noble soul, to my mind the ideal helper of the submerged classes,—he who encouraged the weak to follow in the footsteps of the strong, so that all may reach the desired goal of spiritual freedom,—he whose works are a moral tonic to the spiritually degenerated invalids, and whose life was

a living example of sacrifice for his country and motherland,—I refer of course to the great Swami Vivekananda

It was my ardent desire to be personally acquainted with this human touchstone, but destiny ruled that it should be otherwise, and before I left school the papers gave the sad news, that the Swamiji was, never more to be met with in this world.

His books, however, perpetuate his thoughts, and his words today are as life-giving and up-lifting as they were the day when they were spoken. It was through these books that I was led on to be acquainted with other works of a similar kind, by the Swami Abhedananda, and was impressed with the thoughts revealing our glorious Vedanta philosophy, expressed in modern logical and scientific language by our revered guest present here to-day. My long cherished desire of meeting the Swamiji, however, was destined not to be fulfilled until the other day, and I now welcome this opportunity of listening to his lectures with enthusiastic joy and silent gratitude. The Swamiji has taken charge of a big mission, which is to spread broadcast the religion of the Vedanta, in order to harmonise all religions, and this time it is one that goes from the East to the Western world He has to foster with motherly care the seed planted by Sri Paramahamsa Ramakrishnaji Maharaj and watered by Swami Vivekanandaji. It is a big task, and I dare say, with some difficulties in the way, but at the same time it is a noble charge and one of the finest of tasks that can be allotted to a human being. The success with which the Swamiji has met is apparent to all. Our congratulations to him would be but a poor expression of our admiration for his resolute undertaking. His present visit to India, with such a varied and vast experience at his back and his lessons which are imparted freely and candidly to all will, I am sure, do a great deal towards furthering the cause of the welfare of our Mother India

Swamiji, I have expressed it before, but I do so now again, and this time personally before you, that Alwar, its ruler and his children, all wish you every succtss and all prosperity in the future.

Now, gentlemen, I will not detain you longer, as the Swamiji is going to give us the pleasure of hearing one of his lectures Therefore, with my repeated good wishes to the Swamiji and his noble cause, I will now ask you to join with

me in publicly offering him a hearty welcome to our Capital, and wishing him all prosperity and blessings in the future.

In reply, the Swami lectured again on the *Universality of Vedanta* and on the 24th, he gave a second lecture on *Hinduism in America* at which all the European officers of the State were present.

The next day was devoted to an interesting excursion with His Highness, in a motor car to Shiresta. On their way they went to see the valley of the river, and on to Kusalgarh—where they rode on elephants and went into the tiger jungles. They sat in a cage until nine in the evening, but no tiger came near, so they returned to Kusalgarh, and reached Alwar at night The same drive was taken again two days later when His Highness succeeded in shooting a tiger.

On the following night after dining with His Highness in the palace, the party left Alwar and reached Ahmedabad the next evening, Oct. 28th, and met a number of people at the station waiting to receive the Swami On the 29th an informal meeting was held by a gathering of students, when the Swami answered questions

The public meeting took place on the following evening in the Theatre of Ahmedabad, with Judge Lal Sankar Umibhai Trivedi in the chair. The following Address of Welcome was read; the Swami produced a deep impression by his reply, which lasted for an hour and a half.

TO

SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

Revered Swamiji,

Who having pride for his country and religion will not approach Your Holiness with feelings of deep gratitude and reverence? Who will not look at the work of the Ramakrishna Mission with wonder and astonishment?

At a time when the Aryan Religion of Vedanta was almost enshrouded by cloudy superstitions there came forth a great Yogi—the late Swami Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and He put forth tremendous religious energy giving birth to your

illustrious brother-disciple and predecessor the world-renowned Swami Vivekananda who organized that grand Mission at whose head you at present so nobly stand.

This holy Mission brought peace and light to a million souls beyond the seas and made the once unknown and despised name of the Hindus as glorious, bright and purity-inspiring as it was in the past. In this country of its birth, it purified the channels of religious activity and poured in new light and enthusiasm by holding out new ideals of asceticism and interpreting the canons of religion into the practical life. Your Mission first proclaimed in India after long long intervening years of ignorance that religion was the one thing most prized and that it was the inexhaustible source of all fruitful worldly activity as well as inestimable peace and tranquillity to the immortal soul; and we believe in so doing you really played the part of the ancient *Rishis* in whose memory even now we bow down with worshipful heart in awe and reverence

This grand service of humanity undertaken and performed in the name of the Almighty God has most aptly drawn towards you admiring hearts of India and elsewhere, and let us assure you that the Ahmedabad people are not far behind in acknowledgment and appreciation of its inestimable value.

In welcoming then, Your Holiness to our humble habitation we make an offering of our hearts, pure and sincere, at your pious feet and simply wish to be guided fearless in the path of duty and righteousness this poor offering to the Ascetic Guide of the poor and their support.

We remain,
Your humble Servants
Sd Lal Shanker Umiashankar
Chairman of the Reception
Committee.

Ahmedabad
October 30th, 1906

In course of his reply the Swami explained the real character and significance of true Hinduism. He made an elaborate comparison between Hinduism and all other great world-religions, and showed that it was underlined by a great principle which was absent in others—the principle of evolution Continuing, he said:

In Europe in recent times, Drawin's great theory of evolution has revolutionized all systems of modern philosophy and the theology; and yet the Hindus, the ancient *Rishis* of the Vedic period, knew perfectly the grand theory of evolution. All the theories hitherto advanced by every other religion to rationally explain the creation of the world were unsatisfactory. Hinduism alone had a satisfactory explanation to give, as it was based upon the eternal principles of evolution; and hence this had completely subverted the theology of the West.

The Swami then very lucidly explained the general principles of Hinduism and warned the audience against the so-called spurious Hinduism—that spirit of "Don't touchism" which was simply ruining our beloved Motherland.

The next afternoon he delivered another lecture on *Advice to Young Men.* He exhorted the young men to scrupulously observe *Brahmacharya,* which would give them a sound mind in a sound body. He then dwelt at length on the paramount necessity of regularly taking physical exercise and observed, that in these days of Sandows and Dumbells, some of the grandest exercises of old India, such as *pranayama* etc were relegated to a back seat, if not absolutely forgotten. And yet *pranyama* was one of the healthiest of exercises It was indeed a veritable panacea for the thousand and one ills that flesh was heir to. Then, he spoke of the importance of meditation, which would not only help the development of intellect but also enable one to acquire self-control. The Swami, then, deplored the present low depths of ignorance in which our women are sunken owing to the lack of proper education and carried his audience back to the glorious days of Katyayani, Gargi and Maitreyi, and proved how the ancients fully appreciated the supreme importance of female education. Continuing, he spoke to the following effect.

India need never expect to rise in the scale of nations unless she realised this fact. Reform should never be restricted to a narrow groove Political, social, religious and intellectual reforms should simultaneously be taken up There is an idea abroad that reformation means something essentially new It is a mistaken and misleading notion. It only means the reformation of something that was deformed, in course of ages through ignorance. It is very disappointing to observe how the

leaders of the Indian people devote themselves exclusively now a days to politics. That will not help them The moral and ethical tone and the social status of the whole community must be raised, in general And then, too that course of India—that vapid and suicidal spirit of "Don't-touchism"—which is hindering the growth and development of India, must be resolutely put down. Hinduism is the most tolerant of all religions, and the modern spirit of intolerance is absolutely foreign to its genius.

Life is not meant for enjoyment only. Selfishness is one of the worst sins A selfish man is almost a beast. Without the cultivation of the spirit of self-sacrifice, no land has ever risen in the scale of nations There is too much talk in India now, what the country truly wants to devote wholly and offer its lives as a sacrifice on the altar of righteous duty and patriotism

We reprint here the report of Swami Abhedananda's visit to Ahmedabad from the *Gujrati Punch* of November 14, 1906

## SWAMI ABHEDANANDA IN AHMEDABAD

Like Angels' visit the visit to Ahmedabad people was really worth-listening indeed This week, however, this city was exceptionally lucky and an object lesson in "plain living and high thinking" was provided by the presence in our midst of Swami Abhedananda, one of that noble band of ideal workers whom the inspring spirituality of the great Ramakrishna Paramhamsa brought into existence The Ramakrishna Mission started by that inspired son of India, the late Swami Vivekananda, is an institution about the grandeur, sublimity and potential utility of which very few people in this country have any idea. And yet, to retrospective minds it almost, looks like the revival of a chapter from the ancient, happy, holy, ideal Aryavarta, India that even in these sceptical days lingers in the memory of mankind Western education brought in its wake. Western civilization is only another word for materialism. The morally "anti-sceptic" influence of religion over the youths of the country was growing weaker and weaker every day, and there were not a few who feared that a collapse would soon follow. Like the Nile in flood this wave of sceptic-

ism was inaundating the land and India was about to lose the only thing that has made Her even in these degenerate days respected by the whole world—Her charter as the mother of religions. How is it that this Mother of religions has today become the Mother of slaves? The Mohammedans ruled over us. Aye! too longer than the British have done or need do and yet, we almost converted the great Akbar into Hinduism! A miracle almost! And yet it was not a miracle. It was subject to the eternal principle, the eternal forces of cause and effects Though a subject race, Hindus then, as Hindu, were not only themselves moral and religious, but were so intensely moral and religious that they were aggressive. And what was the secret of this unparalleled miracle? The sincerity of the people, not an academical but a heart-felt faith in Hinduism. But Akbar never tried to force Persian upon the people, nor uncongenial ideals upon his subjects. There were, then, no graduates made to order. He tried to educate, not the memories and brains, but the hearts, the minds of men. He preached the gospel of "Compromise", which the present Secretary of State, Mr Morley, only pretends to preach! Surely, the so-called paternal Government can take a leaf out of Akbar's life in this respect, and instead of trying to pit caste against caste and creed against creed, try like the great Moghul to cement the various races together.

But to return to Swami Abhedananda, as our readers know, the learned Swami returned from America only a couple of months ago and is now again on his way-back to the land of Washington to preach to its people the noble gospel of Hinduism The Swami was kind enough to halt here for a couple of days, and delivered two illuminating addresses. In one he tried to explain the real character and significance of true Hinduism and in the other gave some sound and practical advice to the young men The Swami made an elaborate comparison between Hinduism and the other great world-religions like Christianity. Mohammedanism and Judaism.

He pointed out that the ancient Vedic religion, what was commonly known as Hinduism or the Sanatana Dharma was not only the oldest creed of which history has any record, but also superior to all the other creeds in existence to day. An analysis would show that it was not based upon superstition,

myth or miracle It had a rational foundation and was underlined by a great principle which was absent from all the other socalled world religions—the principle of evolution. The Westerners boasted of the phenomenal strides they had made in the realms of science, and the greatst scientific discovery of modern times, Darwin's great Theory of Evolution which has revolutionized all the system of modern philosophy and theology. And yet the Hindus, the ancient *Rishis* of the Vedic period knew perfectly this grand theory of evolution. Only one instance by way of comparison can here be stated. Every other religion had completely failed to explain rationally the creation of the world. All the theories hitherto advanced were unsatisfactory. Hinduism alone had a satisfactory explanation to give, and that explanation was based upon the eternal principle of evolution This central idea of Hinduism had not only tickled the imagination of the great thinkers of the West but had completely metamorphosed their theology. So much so that most keen thinkers and scientists had ceased to believe in Christianity. This was the work which the Swami and others of the Ramakrishna Mission were doing in England and America The learned Swami then very lucidly explained the general principles of Hinduism, and exhorted his audience to be true to them. At the same time he warned them against the so called spurious Hinduism which was then rampant in the country, asked them to be firm believers in the gospel of the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God, and to do away for ever with that spirit of "Don't touchism" which was simply ruining their beloved Motherland. The second discourse delivered by the Swami consisted of very useful advice to young men. He appealed to his young audience to remember that they would be in the not distant future the leaders of the country, and it, therefore, behoved them to qualify themselves thoroughly for the responsibility. The first thing they ought to do was to observe *Brahmacharya*—that noble idea of manhood which no other religion but Hinduism preached. The evils of early marriage were sapping the vitality of the youths of India The young men of India would never be of any use of Her unless they scrupulously observed *Brahmacharya*. The learned Swami then reminded his youthful auditors of that grand Latin motto—"Mens sana in corpore sano" i.e. a sound

mind in a sound body. He tried with very eloquent language to impress upon their mind the paramount necessity of regularly taking physical exercise. In these days of Sandows and Dumbells some of the grandest exercises of old India were relegated to a back seat if not absolutely forgotten The importance of *pranayama* was appreciated by very few. And yet that was one of the healthiest exercises Youth men, aye! even young women should regularly go through *pranayama ;* it was indeed a veritable panacea for the thousand and one ills flesh is heir to. The learned Swami then detailed some of his personal reminiscenes in Japan, England and America, and said that even many eminent physicians in the West were convinced of the importance of *pranayama,* and had taken to regularly prescribing it to many of their patients. The lecturer then went on to explain the necessity and importance of meditation. It not only helped the development of intellect but also enabled one to acquire self-control.

The Swami then turned to the question of female education. It was sad, he said, to see the low depths of ignorance in which the women of India were immersed There was a time when the women of India were imparted a solid education as well as the men. The glorious names are of Katyayani, Gargi and Maitreyi, what did they prove but that the ancients fully appreciated the importance of femals education? Was it not a pity that the land which could once produce such gifted women should now have almost disowned female education? India need never expect to rise in the scale of nations unless She realized the supreme importance of female education Reform should never be restricted to a narrow groove Political, social, religious and intellectual reforms should simultaneously be taken up. There was an idea abroad that reformation meant something new It was a mistaken and misleading notion. There was nothing essentially new in reformation. It only meant reformation of something that was deformed in the course of ages through ignorance It was one of the most disappointing of things to observe how exclusively the leaders of the Indian people devoted themselves to politics. That would never do. The moral tone and social status of the whole community must be raised before any appreciable results could be achieved in the regeneration of India. And then, too, that

curse of India, the spirit of what may be called "Don't-Touch-ism" must be resolutely put down. It ought to be remembered that they were all children of one God and were, therefore, bound to live side by side like brothers—Mohammedans and Hindus alike Hinduism if correctly understood was the most tolerant of all religions, and the modern spirit of intolerance was, absolutely foreign to its genius. The learned Swami, then, asked the young men to cultivate this spirit of tolerance and to remember that life was not meant only for enjoyment. Selfishness was one of the worst of sins. It was the bounden duty of every young man to cultivate the spirit of self-sacrifice. No land ever rose in the scale of nations whose young men were not prepared to make all kinds of sacrifice for their Motherland. A selfish man was almost a beast. There was too much talk in India What was wanted was sincere workers, men who were prepared to devote all their lives to the cause of their Motherland. In conclusion, the learned Swami hoped that there would be found among the young men of Ahmedabad at least a dozen who would place before them this high ideal and offer their whole lives as a sacrifice on the altar of duty and patriotism. For want of space we cannot notice the several other points touched by Swami Abhedananda in the two learned discourses delivered by him here. But we would specially recommend our readers for thoughtful consideration the eloquent plea which he put forth for female education and the stirring appeal which he made for the renunciation of the vapid and suicidal spirit of "Don't-Touchism" which was hindering the growth, development and imancipation of India.

The Swamis left at night for Bombay, a great number of people came to the Ahmedabad station to see them off.

## CHAPTER VII

## BOMBAY

On the first of November, Swami Abhedananda reached Bombay where he was received by many leading gentlemen of the city among whom were Sir Bhalchandra Krishna, Messrs Narottum Morarjee Goculdas, Gadgill Barrister-at-law, Tribhowandas Nathubhoy, Babu Amritalal Chakravarty, B B. Joshi, Sarat Chandra Mitra, Mohini Mohan Ghosh, H C. Mitra, P. D. Mitra, V. R Joshi, B. G. Dulve, G. B. Khare, etc. As the Swami alighted from his carriage, he was greeted with shouts of *Bande Mataram,* and was decorated by Sir Bhalchandra Krishna with a garland of flowers, and introduced to the gentlemen present to receive him The Swami was then driven in the carriage of Mr. Narottum Morarjee Goculdas to the latter gentleman's bungalow, Santi Bhavan, in Warden Road. Their plan was to go at once to see the famous caves in the vicinity ; at five o'clock they proceeded to Daulotabad and Ellora. They drove ten miles in a Tonga to Roja, whence they went to the caves of Ellora. The morning was spent in visiting the various caves, and at one o'clock the return journey was begun. On November fifth a similar journey was made to the Karli caves, and they were the guests of Dr Bhalchandra

The following few days were devoted to public meetings arranged in honour of Swami Abhedananda The first was held at Framji Cowasji Institute Hall late in the afternoon of the sixth. Dr. Bhalchandra presided and the Hon. Goculdas Parekh read the following Address of Welcome presented on behalf of the citizens of Bombay, and beautifully illuminated and printed on orange coloured silk satin

## TO SRIMAT SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

Revered Swamin,

We, the citizens of Bombay in this meeting assembled, most devoutly and cordially welcome Your Worship to this illustrious capital of Western India.

We deem it a high privilege to have the opportunity of honouring in you a zealous preacher of the sublime doctrines of Vedantism.

The work you have carried on, for nearly a decade, of proclaiming and expounding to the Western world and to America in particular, the tenets of Vedanta has evoked the admiration of your countrymen and earned for your Revered Self their lasting gratitude

Amidst a conflict of religious opinions and dogmas on the one hand and the progress of materialism on the other, the bewildered mind of man has in modern times sought peace in in different systems and ideals, but in vain. It was not till the appearance of the Ramakrishna Mission that the true philosophy which brings tranquility to the mind under all conditions and circumstances was discovered to the world.

The great Mission inaugurated by your late revered Guru Srimat Swami Ramakrishna Paramhamsa, a truly great pastor and Master of men, has exercised an elevating influence on the character of all whom it brought within the pale of its influence and has proved the means of establishing an intellectual and religious communion between the East and the West The mantle of your predecessor and *Gurubandhu* the late Sri Swami Vivekananda as the pioneer and preceptor of the Vedanta Society in New York and other principal cities of the United States has worthily fallen on your shoulders. The phenomenal development of that Society since the demise of Swami Vivekananda bespeaks the intense devotion, deep erudition, noble self-sacrifice and superb eloquence you have brought to bear on the work of securing a permanent footing in America for the religion of our forefathers

In conclusion, we pray to the Almighty God, Who is the source of all light and the Giver of all blessings to grant you a long life and energy to fulfil the blessed work of carrying the

torch of true religious knowledge in Continents to which it has hitherto been unknown.

With a renewed assurance of the respect and love we bear towards you,

We beg to remain,
Revered Swami
Your admiring citizens of Bombay,
Nov. 6th, 1906 Sd. Gokuldas Kahondas Parekh
Chairman, Reception Committee.
Sd Bhalchandra Krishna
President of the Public Meeting.

The Swami in reply spoke for over an hour on *The Universal Religion.*

## THE UNIVERSAL RELIGION

*(The first lecture in Bombay)*

I heartily thank the Bombay public for the cordial reception that has been offered to me and the good words just spoken about me by the Chairman It is a great satisfaction that my countrymen have appreciated the work done by me in foreign lands. I was offered similar cordial receptions at Colombo, Madras, Calcutta and other places which I have visited during my tour, which indicates that we Hindus are not spiritually dead. We may be dead politically and in social condition we may be half-dead, but in religion we still live. Our life yet vibrates at the sound of religious utterances Everywhere we find signs of life and vitality when the names of Hindu religion and Hindu philosophy are mentioned

In foreign countries, especially in Europe and America, the religious preacher is not so much honoured as is a politician, or the soldier who conquers on the battle-field During the late Spanish-American war, you have heard how Admiral Dewey distroyed the Spanish fleet and became the master of the Philippine Islands. On his return to New York, triumphal arches were raised and the whole nation received him with open arms But when a religious preacher goes there, no-body cares

for him, nobody thinks enthusiastically of his work, because the Western nations are political nations, and not spiritual. They can understand religion through politics, but we understand religion as the highest and the only aim of our life. Every Hindu is required to eat, drink, and sleep religion,—in short, to live religion. It is impossible to find this kind of ideal either in Europe or America There are good men, spiritual men and women in Europe and America, who try to live up to the ideals of their religion, but India has always been the Motherland of all the religious ideals of the world,—the *punya-bhumi*, the holy-land. Why? Because its ideal is to attain spiritual perfection, even in this life.

The Western world is now looking forward with a great desire to receive its spiritual impetus from India, and is looking with great expectation to the Ramakrishna Mission, of which our worthy Chairman has so kindly spoken. The Ramakrishna Mission may be called a national movement for glorifying the Vedantic religion which we have inherited from our forefathers It advocates the precepts of the Vedas Our religion is not sectarian It has had no founder to start it like the other religions of the world. Christianity has its founder in Christ, Mohammedanism in Mohammed, Zoroastrianism in Zoroaster, Buddhism in Buddha, Judaism in Moses; but the religion of the Vedas has no founder and for this reason it is the universal religion. No religion that has clustered round the personality of a founder can claim to be universal, because the founder being a man, may not satisfy, and stand for all the spiritual ideals and needs of the whole of humanity, and if we reject the personality of the founder, the whole structure of religion falls to pieces If we take away Christ from Christianity, where will Christianity stand? If we take away Buddha, there will be nothing left of Buddhism, and so with other religions, but not so with Hinduism. Nevertheless, all religions, whether revealed or unrevealed, have one ideal, and that is to solve the problem of life and death, in short, to reach perfection and become divine All religions claim to have some revelation as their foundation. Christianity is a revealed religion, so are Mohammedanism, Buddhism and Judaism. Hinduism is also a revealed religion but with this difference, that it is not based upon any particular scripture, but on the

contrary, upon the eternal laws that govern all lives and souls.

All religions have two parts, the one is the essential, and the other the non-essential part. In the former we find the ultimate aims and ideals, but in the latter we find the doctrines, the dogmas, the rituals, the ceremonials and particular methods of worship and devotion. In the non-essential parts, religions whether revealed or unrevealed do not agree, but all religions agree in the essential part. What is the essential part? The aim of all religions is to solve the problem of life and death, to reach perfection, to become divine. Christianity teaches us to know the truth which will make us perfect, as the Father in heaven is perfect Mohammedanism teaches the same ideal, —to reach perfection, commune with Allah, and to become divine; and Zoroaster and Buddha taught the same ideal. Hinduism also tells us to attain perfection in this life, to commune with Brahman, the Eternal Truth, the foundation of the universe, the source of life and the end of all earthly existence. The religion which the Ramakrishna Mission preaches is the religion which holds the essential parts of all religions as its ideal, and the non-essential parts as secondary things.

The non-essential, parts which comprise the doctrines, dogmas, rituals and ceremonials, cannot be the same everywhere, because they depend upon the national traditions, upon local customs and other peculiarities that mark the character of individuals in different nations. If we try to make all these non-essential parts of different religions one and the same, we shall fail If we try to make all faces look alike we shall fail, but if we take the principles of all religions, there we shall have a broad platform upon which can stand a Hindu, a Parsee, a Mohammedan, a Christian, a Buddhist and a Jew, and embrace one another like brothers and sisters. That platform we want to establish over the whole world It is not a mere theory. The work has already begun, and we expect you to come forward and support this ideal, and holding the banner of this universal religion advance onward from place to place, and even cross the ocean to spread the mission amongst all nations We have been spiritual leaders of the world in the past, and now we want to establish the fact that we are still living, and that we are still the spiritual teachers of all nations In other

respects we have become slaves, but in religion we acknowledge no slavery to any nation There we are free Freedom is the goal of our religion, and spiritual freedom is known in Sanskrit as *moksha* That freedom is the freedom of the soul from the bondage of ignorance, selfishness and all other imperfections that make for slavery. How does that freedom come? Through knowledge We should know the truth which makes us free Where is that truth to be sought for? Is it in this universe, or is it outside? No, it is all-pervading, it pervades every atom of our system ; we live and move and have our being in the eternal truth We cannot separate ourselves from this omnipresent truth, which is the source of all existence and that truth was described in most glorious terms by the Vedic sage when he answered the question,—What is the Brahman? The "Brahman", he said, "is that which stands for that all-pervading substance. It is the eternal truth That from which the animate and inanimate objects come into existence, and into which they return is the Brahman Know that to be the eternal truth, realize that to be the Brahman." How can it be separate from the atoms and molecules that form this coarse material body Is it separate? No, the very substance of the atoms and molecules is what we call the Soul Those who are called atheists and agnostics are worshipping the same eternal truth under a different name What they call 'matter' is, in reality, the same substance that we call the Soul If we ask them the definition of matter they do not know To them it is an unknown and unknowable substance. But when properly known and realized it is found to be one with the essence of the universe, with the essence of the individual, the Soul , it is the same as the *Atman* It is the same as *satchidananda,*—Existence—Intelligence—Absolute Bliss. *Satchidananda* cannot be separated from our existence Because, we exist, we are intelligent, and we live in the hope of attaining eternal Bliss In fact, all the works we are doing in our lives have one ideal, that of happiness; and when that happiness becomes unconditioned, it is *ananda* Are we not all working for *ananda,* though in a relative sense? Do we not try to get the necessaries of life to support our families? Do we not love our relatives? What for? because at every moment we find a particle of this *ananda.*

All the pleasures that we receive through coming in contact with external objects, all are in their essence but infinitesimal parts of that one Bliss, which is called the Brahman. Who could live in this world if that *ananda* did not exist in the eternal space? Who could live in this world if there were no *ananda* as the basis of our existence? If there were no *ananda* how could we attempt to gain it in this life? What we by nature feel a desire to get must be there, it must be at the fountain-head, otherwise we cannot feel any longing for it. Whatever we long for must exist. *Satchidananda* is by its essence, *nirguna* i e. absolute, but it is also the foundation of all matter and forces in nature *Nirguna* is its one phase and *saguna,* the relative or the other. We cannot reject the one and take the other They are the obverse and the reverse of the sam coin. If you take *nirguna,* you have to take *saguna.* They are inseparable, and if they are inseparable, then where is the difference between the *Isvara* and the Brahman of the Hindus and the God of the Christians, the Allah of the Mohammedans, the Buddha of the Buddhists the Jehovah of the Jews? So is there any difference between *Isvara,* the Lord of the universe, and the Brahman, who is worshipped under different names from different standpoints by different nations?

As the same substance water is called by various names by different nations, so the same Reality is worshipped under different names, such as Vishnu, Shiva, Adya-Sakti, Jehovah and Buddha. The names and the forms vary, but the substance is one, and this unity of Godhead under the variety of names and forms, whether Personal or Impersonal, is the ideal of our Vedas. The most ancient Scriptures that exist in the world are the Vedas, and this is admitted by all the Occidental scholars of the world. What do we read in the Rig-Veda which is older than the other Vedas? *"Ekam sad vipra vahudha vadanti"*—"That which exists is one, men call it by various names; men worship it under different forms" You cannot find another passage like this in any other scripture of the world Ours is the universal religion, because it is ready to embrace all the sectarian and special religions of the world Well has it been said by Professor Max Muller that "The religion of the Vedas has room for all religions, nay, it embraces them all."

This unity in religion must be realized Let the Christian

realize that unity and he will be a true Christian Let the Parsee realize that and he will be a true follower of Zoroaster Let the Mohammedan realize that grand Truth, and he will no longer be fanatical, but he will embrace the followers of other religions as his brothers and sisters That grandeur in religion can be known more easily by studying the Vedas, because this ideal has been inherited from the ancient *Rishis,* the *mantra-drashtas* or the great spiritual Seers of ancient India. This grand truth can only be preached by those who have realized the unity of Godhead under the variety of names and forms.

The religion of the Vedas is universal, because it does not lay stress upon the rituals and ceremonials, doctrines and dogmas, but its one ideal is Godconsciousness We sit at the feet of those who have reached this consciousness, and such great souls are still to be found in our holy motherland In other countries you will very seldom find a man who has lived up to the ideals which he has received from his spiritual teachers Our religion is the most wonderful religion, because it is not based upon traditions, myths, or upon miracles, but upon rational and scientific truths The only religion which can stand upon rational truth in the present century, is the religion of the Vedanta To-day, we look upon the discovery of the evolution theory as the most wonderful in the world But it originated in India, at least seven centuries before the Christian era The whole story of creation is based upon the theory of evolution. Do you not remember the passage in the *Upanishad* that describes the gradual evolution of the cosmos from that one homogeneous mass which is known as the Brahman.

The *Upanishad* says: "From that one eternal substance came ether, then came that which is gaseous, then that which is liquid, then that which is solid, then the vegetable kingdom, then the animal kingdom, and lastly man"

Our religion does not advocate the theory of special creation which is accepted by the Occidental nations, and which is described in Genesis, in the Bible of the Christians and of the Jews, in the Koran of the Mohammedans, in the Zend Avesta of the Parsees This theory of special creation is not advocated by the scientists of the present day Most of the critics of the Bible, and the scientific men and women of Europe and America to-day, consider the source of creation given in Genesis

as mythological, having no rational foundation How is it possible for an extra-cosmic God to create this earth? Our modern science tells us that this earth has come in the train of that self-effulgent substance which we call the sun The religion of the Vedas is based upon the theory of evolution, and Huxley admits that when he says: "The doctrine of evolution was known to the Hindu sages long before Darwin was born They were Darwinians before Darwin, and evolutionists before any word like volution existed in any other land" This theory of evolution was first explained through logic and science by Kapila, the great father of evolution theory amongst the Hindus. So you see that this theory of evolution is not a new thing to us Our religion from the very beginning stood upon this rock of the theory of evolution.

Among the Western nations, especially those who are educated and who are scientific and rationalistic in their ideas, there are many who do not approve of the idea of special creation, but they are ready to accept a religion that is based upon the evolution theory, that is, upon the doctrine of cosmic evolution, the gradual evolution from one homogeneous mass into heterogeneous phenomena and the forces which are produced by these phenomena These natural forces are nothing but the manifestation of one eternal energy, which is called the *Prakriti*, same as Latin *Procreatrix*; it is the same substance which is called by Herbert Spencer as the unknown and the unknowable That unknown and the unknowable which gives foundation to all phenomena, is called *Prakriti* in the *Sankhya* system, and is used in the same meaning as *maya* in the Vedas Is there any difference between *maya* of the Vedas and the *Prakriti* of the *Sankhya*? That which is *maya* of the Veda is the *Prakriti* of the *Sankhya*. But there is a little difference, and that is only in the interpretation, in showing the relation between the Brahman and *maya* *Maya* is that minute, and indescribable force, the power of that eternal Being, who is the Lord of the universe and who is beginningless *Prakriti* is spoken of as insentient; it has three qualities, the *sattva, rajas* and *tamas* Its existence can be realized through inference by seeing the results Do you not see the results of the forces of nature which are constantly manifesting themselves in the phenomenal world?

It is now for us to show to the world that our religion, which we call the universal religion, is based upon scientific principles, and rational grounds We shall not have to accept anything on hearsay, but we shall exercise our reason. We shall use logic, science and philosophy to support our religion In India, religion has never been separated from science, philosophy and logic , but in the Western world, those who have read the religious history of those countries, will find how religion has been eternally separated from logic and science We know how Galileo was imprisoned, how the fire of Inquisition was kept burning in Medieval Europe. In our country that which is illogical and unphilosophical cannot be called religion, because religion, science, philosophy and logic must go together and must not contradict each other ; and for this reason we can face any theory of modern science, and with its help can establish the fundamental principles of our religion

This lecture and the one entitled *Responsibilities of Indian Students* were reported by Mr J B. Gadre for the *Indu Prakash* of Bombay under date of November 7 and 8, and November 9 and 10 respectively.

On the morning of the eighth in the course of a conversazione held at the Prarthana Samaj Mandir at Bombay, Swami Abhedananda was asked whether Vedanta is a philosophy or a religion ; and if a religion, whether one who accepts it, is obliged to give up Christianity. The Swamiji said in reply, that it is both a religion and a philosophy, and its ideals become religion in practice. It is not at all necessary for a Christian to give up his own religion, because the teachings of Christ are in accord with Vedanta, but behaviour of the missionary in Churchianity is quite different, nay, wholly opposed both to the teachings of Christ and of Vedanta It has developed since the time of St. Augustine, and it is a great mistake to accept the rituals, dogmas, and ceremonials of Churchianity for the religion of Christ, which latter was in fundamental agreement with the religion of Vedanta

In the evening the Swami delivered a stirring address on *The Responsibilities of Indian Youths.* Professor Wodehouse, the president of Elphinstone College was in the chair. The hall was crowded to the point of suffocation. The Swamiji spoke as follows:

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF INDIAN STUDENTS

Mr. Chairman, ladies, gentlemen and my young friends:

The enthusiasm which you have shown this evening is a great thing for our country. I wish that this enthusiasm could be a lasting one. In our country we need something that will carry us through the difficulties, the dangers and all the different discords and disharmony that we are constantly facing. We need an enthusiasm which will be absolutely unsectarian and undenominational, or in short, which will be national enthusiasm, Indian youths may be divided into three classes according to their religion, the Mohammedans, the Parsees and the Hindus These Indian youths who belong to different religions form the future generation of India. They may differ in their religious ideals, social manners, customs, and forms of worship, but as Indian youths they are one. Unity should be the ideal of all young men who are going to be the members of the future generations of India Like the young men of other countries Indian youths have similar responsibilities They are great, because the future of India depends upon them. How they should live, how they should behave, what should be their ideal, are the questions which we ought to decide this evening.

In the first place, if we study our religious Scriptures we find that the life of a man is divided into four stages The first stage is the life of a student, the second stage is that of a householder, and the third, and the fourth are for living in retirement This division is absolutely natural and we are proud of our ancient *Rishis* and forefathers who inaugurated such divisions in our midst; but today, we are not following the paths of our ancient *Rishis,* we do not know the four divisions as we used to do in ancient times, because our ideals have become more worldly, more commercial, more material than they used to be in former times Our ideals today, have become selfish, and we care more for our self-interest today than we used to do We do not care for spiritual ideals Spiritual ideals ought to be the highest ideals of our life, because spirituality is the foundation of our civilization Our civilization is not based upon commercial ideals, nor upon material principles as we find the civilization of Europe and America Our civiliza-

tion is based upon moral principles, and therefore, our first duty should be to devote our life to the practice of virtue and to the realization of spiritual ideals Students should always remember that the highest aim of life is not merely to make money, to earn their living, to support their families and to beget children, but to fulfil the higher purpose of life, and to obey the moral laws and to realize the grandeur of our own souls. Are we merely bodies, are we merely creatures of environments that we cannot live beyond the grave, are we merely the creatures of circumstances? Some people may say so, but our philosophy, and our religion tell us that we are not creatures of our environments, nor of circumstances, but we are souls eternal, birthless and deathless How are we to gain knowledge of our true selves as souls, as parts of the Eternal Being? We must learn that. And the practice of *Brahmacharya* leads the individuals to one goal, the attainment of spiritual perfection. We shall attain to that stage which will make us feel that we are not merely bodies but we are 'souls We are entities which are separable from the bodies, which can exist beyond the grave, and our souls can live in this world as masters and not as slaves to ambition, greed, sense desires and earthly pleasures. We are born as masters of nature Nature is bound to obey us and all the works that we perform throughout our life tend to that one ideal, that one goal, the mastery of Self over nature. And the developments that are made by modern science and the discoveries that have been made by the great thinkers and scientists of all times and of all countries, show that the mystery of soul over nature has been the ideal of these thinkers. Take for instance, the illustration of a steamship which ploughs her way over the deep. What does that show, that the mighty ocean is trying to destroy that ship at every moment by her waves, the storm is trying to shatter it to pieces, but the human intelligence is conquering those waves and storm at every step. This illustrates the mastery of soul over nature, not only of physical nature but also of mental and intellectual nature What power is there in the Soul by which it can manifest its superiority over nature? That power does not belong to any individual, as it is divine Its manifestation is to be found in all individual souls. And if we remember this truth that the mastery of our individual souls over nature, the mastery of the

will over nature as the ideal, then we can live in this world as masters and not as slaves

Self-control is the fisrt thing that every individual should practise By 'self-control' I mean the control of the senses and control of passions and desires that arise in our minds; and that self-control can be gained in this life If we do not possess self-control, we cannot live a life which is ethical, moral and spiritual. Ethical life is the beginning of spiritual life Morality is the gate of spirituality Those who are not moral, cannot become spiritual, so morality should be our fulness, absolute unselfishness, absolute love for our fellow-beings, self-sacrifice, charity towards humanity, nay, towards all living creatures, compassion and love for all, we should constantly practise If we only practise these, then we shall be able to understand what responsibilities we have during our earthly career We must live for others. Today we are living in our narrow circles. We take care of our wives and children, families and relations, but we do not extend the sphere of our care and anxiety and include our neighbours and our fellow-citizens That is a great mistake, we should include our fellow-countrymen as brothers and sisters and help them in times of need and in times of distress, we should take their burden upon our shoulders and try to remove their grievances as far as possible This ideal should be held before every individual

If we do not consider the conditions and circumstances of our neighbours and fellow-citizens, we shall live a very selfish life and that selfishness has been the bane of our country The Hindus have been extremely selfish, so are the Mohammedans and the Parsees I do not exclude any one, because we should feel we are all living extremely selfish lives and living like animals Remove it and be like true human beings If we do not practise these ideals from our youth, we shall never be great, and, therefore, my appeal to you all is to live up to these ideals.

Today in India we need unity of purpose. Whether we are Mohammedans, Parsees or Hindus, we must have one purpose. When we travel through different countries of Europe, England, America, and Japan, what do we find? That each nation has a unity of purpose The individuals feel that they

belong to a home and that home is their nation. Go to an Englishman and ask him whether he lives for his own self or for his nation, and he will tell you that he belongs to the English nation, and his works must help the nation. Ask an American youth he will tell you the same thing. He will stand by his own country, by his own people, and by his own nation. So you will find in Japan, in Germany, in France, and in every other country. Shall our country be different from all these civilized countries of the world? There are Forty millions of English people, and they have one purpose, one hundred million of Americans have one ideal, but I am sorry to say that three hundred millions of Indians have three hundred million purposes It is not a glory. We ought to be ashamed of this fact. We ought to be one. How are we going to unite our purposes, if we do not think ourselves as members of the whole nation? How many of you present here, and think that you belong to the Indian nation. There are very few. During my tour through India I have talked with all classes of people, but apparently they have no idea at all. They think of their own families, their own comforts and luxuries but very few I have found, who can identify themselves with the Indian nation. We must forget all our differences of opinion in religious matters, social customs and manners and then we shall be united in our purpose.

One thing we must remember that the unity of purpose will lead us to the highest goal; but where will that unity stand? Will it stand on commercialism or upon materialism? No, if we make that unity of purpose stand upon the quick-sand of commercialism, it will come down in no time as we have seen in the religious history of the world. Those who were commercial nations in the past do not exist today, but India is not dead because, India has never placed that ideal of unity upon the quick-sand of commercialism We must make our unity of purpose stand upon a very solid ground of spirituality, that is, the unity of our souls, the unity of our hearts. Our philosophy, and Scriptures unanimously declare that we are the *Atman,* and as such we are one in *Atman.* We are one, and the differences and distinctions exist only in the *upadhis,* in our minds, in our thoughts, in our desires, and in our physical forms. Beneath all these differences,

and underneath all these distinctions there is, one current constantly flowing and that is the spiritual current of the *Atman*. Each *jivatman* is the child of God, is eternal. Each individual soul is eternal and if we recognise this fact, then we can love our neighbours and fellow-citizens as we love ourselves. Jesus Christ gave this ethical law to the world when he said, "Love thy neighbour as thyself." Why we should love our neighbour as ourselves, was not answered by him. We do not find the answer to this question in the Bible but we find it in the Vedas, in that glorious truth declared by the great Vedic seer—*"tat-twam asi.'* The Vedas say, we must love ourselves not because they have done some good to us, but because they are *Atman*. On that plane we are one. Spiritually we are one with them. Why should we love our neighbour, because we are our neighbours in spirit. This is the solid ground upon which we should stand and from the beginning we should recognise the fact that we are the children of God There may be thousands of castes among us, but what of that ? Are there not millions of individuals ? Let each individual belong to his individual cause. Let our boys and girls be taught from childhood to cultivate this love for their neighbours, for their fellow-citizens ; then they will be able to cement all the differences that exist on account of social customs and social manners , then there will be unity

We must hold before us the ideal of honesty from our childhood and cultivate it. Honesty of purpose in all business affairs will make us command respect from all nations of the world The next thing which you should remember is, that your stage of life is that of a *Brahmachari*. You should live together and have one social, moral and spiritual ideal and your life should be pure and chaste. In ancient times, the students used to live with their teachers under their paternal care, but today, our system of education is different We do not live with our teachers and we do not find such teachers who will take care of our moral and spiritual culture. Of course there are schools and colleges which have been started by Christian missionaries who claim to do so, but their ideals are different. If we follow their ideals then we cannot ignore the all embracing truths, the virtues, the grandeur and the most wonderful spirituality of our religion. We must have schools

and colleges where we shall be able to cultivate our national virtues and practise morality and spirituality according to our ideals. Our wealthy citizens should contribute freely to start such institutions where young boys and girls could be trained in national ways and where national ideals could be cultivated. This is our need today, and I hope that in the near future our desires will be fulfilled because there is an awakening National schools and colleges should give national education where students will be made to understand that the spiritual ideals are the highest aims of our life.

Female education was always advocated and approved of by the ancient *Rishis*. In ancient times there were great scholars among women, such as Gargi, Maitreyi and Katyayani. How scholarly they were, but today, such women are not found because we have neglected the education of women. The *Shastras* tell us that the husbands should teach their wives and the parents should teach their daughters in various branches of knowledge, but today, parents are busy in earning bread and butter Of course, I do not find fault with them There however, is one remedy, and that is to stop early marriage In America we find young and middle aged women highly educated. There I have seen unmarried women living pure lives The young girl before they get married must study, must receive education in science, philosophy and in technical lines. There are women who are graduates of the university and who are intelligent than men and do all kinds of works. Women are less not intelligent than men, only you have not given them the opportunities Give them opportunities and they will glorify your country. Education for girls is necessary, and for that, early marriage should be stopped.

Next thing, character building should be our aim in the present generation How are we going to build our character ? We must have physical exercise Physical exercise will develop our muscles. We need muscles of iron and nerves of steel to face the difficulties that are existing before us The girls should also practise a little of physical culture Physical culture is introduced in American schools for girls and boys. They do not do hard exercises but only such exercises as will make them strong and healthy Physical training should be given to all.

In the Vedic period the Hindus used to go to foreign

lands. They had trade with Egypt and other countries They used to go to China, visited Philippine Islands, Japan, Sumatra and various other places. Why should we not go today, to other lands and learn from them all that is good and helpful ? But we must not imitate the vices of other nations. Whatever good there is in other nations make your own as the Japanese have done and are still doing I met a Japanese physician who was told by the Japanese Government to go to Europe and America and to study all the improvements in hospitals. For three or four years he has been travelling and studying the methods, the improvements in various hospitals and when he goes back to Japan, he will introduce all these things into the Government hospitals We have many doctors and many physicians, but how many of them can go to foreign lands to know what improvements have been made there and to introduce them into our country. If we do not go abroad, if we isolate ourselves we are doomed. We are reaping the fruits of the great mistake which our forefathers committed in the past by keeping themselves aloof from other nations But we cannot do so now. Conditions are changing We are under a different system of Government, which is encouraging us to go to other lands by giving scholarships to the students for finishing their studies in foreign lands, and I am glad that an Association has been formed in Calcutta under the name of the Scientific and Industrial Association to help the students to go to foreign lands for higher technical and scientific education. This year have been sent eight students to foreign lands, four of them have gone to America and four of them to Japan

Let those who are patriotic, and have national spirit arosed in them, send out students by giving them scholarships. Let them go to foreign lands and learn industrial methods and acquire other scientific knowledge as far as developed in other countries. In every branch of science we are backward. Today, we are backward in astronomy, in physical science, in chemistry, in philosophy We are falling behind. Our universities do not encourage us in making new researches, but notwithstanding all such difficulties India has produced a great original scientific thinker in the person of Dr. J. C. Bose We must have our own laboratories for making researches in chemistry. in physics and other sciences. In America the various univer-

sities that exist have a special department for the students to make researches. Our universities are very backward, but time has come when we should wake up and start such universities, such institutions where we can make fresh discoveries, new investigation in the various branches of knowledge. And another thing which we need is the technical and industrial schools Free-education we need in our country. In America education is compulsory and there are inspectors who go from house to house to enquire which families do not send their boys and girls to schools, and arrest them Education must be free. I have said this in England and I say the same thing here that we need free education and the Government ought to give it to us as we pay heavy taxes for such an expensive Government ; but if the Government is unwilling, let us have our own institutions ; let all the wealthy people subscribe for the free education of the boys and girls of our country. When we find that nearly eighty per cent of our people do not know how to read and write, what can we expect from them ? Through education we can make them understand the ideals of life, and we can make them know that they belong to a nation, and ultimately we can make them realize the grandeur of the ideals of the Hindu religion, and the grandeur of the philosophy of Vedanta.

The following afternoon the Swami visited a Parsee Fire Temple and at six o'clock Swami Abhedananda delivered his last lecture on *Practical Vedantism* in the Hall of the Framji Cowasji Institute at Dhobitala. Hon Mr. G. K. Parekh presided. The hall was crowded. The lecture follows:

## PRACTICAL VEDANTISM

*(The last lecture in India in 1906)*

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before going into the subject of this evening, allow me to give my hearty thanks to all the Hindu friends whom I have met from Colombo to Bombay by way of Madras and Calcutta. In the great and small cities of India, I have received kindly treatment and hospitality everywhere and on the eve of my

departure and last appearance in public, I should like to thank every one of my countrymen irrespective of caste and colour for the kindness that I have received.

The subject of this evening is, *Practical Vedantism.* Some people have an idea that Vedanta is absolutely theoretical and that it is merely a speculative philosophy, which cannot be carried into practice. The general belief is that for the study of Vedantism, one will have to leave one's family and go to the caves in the forest. Such ideas you should drive away from your mind Vedantism is not a mere speculative philosophy like the philosophy of Germany, Greece, or Europe in general, but it is the most practical of all philosophies that exist in the world. Well has it been said by Prof Max Muller, that Vedanta is the most sublime of all philosophies, and the most comforting of all religious,—that it is a philosophy which holds the most sublime principles before the spiritual, intellectual and mental eyes of all individuals. It does not end in theory but goes further and covers the ground of religion. Prof. Hamilton, the great philosopher, said that where philosophy ends religion begins—where theory ends religion begins.

In our country, philosophy has always been considered as the theoretical side of religion, and religion has always been the practical side of philosophy Of the tree of knowledge, philosophy is the flower, while religion is its fruit. If we remember this idea then we shall be able to understand, whether Vedanta is practical or not.

What is Vedantism ? Generally it gives an idea to the mind of the listener, that it may be a kind of philosophy which is almost impossible to be grasped by the human mind. But if we analyse the meaning of the term Vedanta, we find that it is a compound word made up of *"veda"* and *"anta,"* and again the word *"veda,"* is derived from the Sanskrit root *"vid"* "to know," and *"veda"* therefore means knowledge or wisdom. The word *"anta,"* is the same as the English word "end".

Where is that end, and what is it, as the next question to be solved Where can we find the end of wisdom ? All the sciences and philosophies of the world are trying to discover the truths of Nature, and to know the truths as they are in reality. But there is no end of their knowledge ; the end of knowledge will be where there is no more reality, no more

relation between time, space and causality; there alone we shall find the end of wisdom. The end of wisdom cannot be limited knowledge, cannot be the knowledge of a particular portion of the phenomenal world, but it must be the knowledge of the Universal Being. The answer which was given to the question asked by Vedic Seekers after truth is, "By knowing that, you can know everything of the universe" The Infinite ocean of wisdom is described as the Brahman, and the Infinite ocean of wisdom is the source of all phenomena, is the foundation of our life, and of our earthly existence That source of the phenomenal world is also the end of all wisdom

The divinity is the end of all wisdom. What can be greater than divine wisdom? What can be higher, what can be nobler, what can be truer than the infinite wisdom of the Lord of the universe? That is the end of wisdom. We must reach that end sooner or later. All the philosophers are trying to discover that end. Some of them, call it by one name, some by other names. Plato called it the "Good", Spinoza called it the "Substantia"; Kant called it the "Transcendental Thing-in-itself"; Emerson called it the "Over-Soul" In fact, the term "Over-Soul" is the translation of the Sanskrit word *Paramatman.* Some called it the "Noumenon," others Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, Father-in-Heaven, Allah, Ahura Mazda and by other names. The ocean of wisdom is one, although it is called by different names, and although it is understood by its different phases. We may not see and realise the whole of it, but we may get a partial glimpse at certain moments of our life, and if we try to understand our own existence, if we wish to realise who we are, and what we are in reality, we shall find that within our bosom there is a spark which is potentially divine, and which has emanated from that Infinite ocean of knowledge and intelligence, and which like a bubble is floating in that Infinite ocean; or, we may say, which is like a wavelet in that infinite ocean of Reality. All these phenomenal objects which we perceive with our senses are mere expressions of that one will power, which is the mother of all forces in nature Whatever we perceive with our senses, or can conceive by our minds and intellects, is the result of that stupendous Will power of the infinite Being, which is described in our Vedanta as *maya. Maya* is the source of all phenomena, and

modern science has proved to us that all the physical forces of nature are interchangeable. In fact, heat, light and motion are interchangeable.

The whole world is the result of the vibration of the will-power of the infinite Being, described in the Vedas as *prana*. Whatever you see in this universe is the result of the *prana*, the vital energy which keeps the world alive, which makes the earth rotate round its own axis, and which makes us move and act in the way in which we live, move, and perform our duties. The force is one, but the manifestations are many. The force of *prana* or the will-power of the Infinite Being is described in Vedanta as *maya*, and is called Nature in Modern Science.

What is nature? Nature is nothing but *Prakriti*, and *Prakriti* is the same as *maya*. Is *maya* separable from that Infinite source of wisdom, that Infinite ocean of wisdom? No It is inseparable As the burning power of fire or heat cannot be separated from fire itself, so *maya*, the will-power of the Lord is inseparable from the ocean of Wisdom which is called the Brahman. But sometimes this power remains latent, at other times it is manifested in the form of the phenomenal world. Now we have found that the infinite ocean of Wisdom is, as it were, on one side, and *maya* or will-power, nature or *Prakriti* on the other. When we combine these two, and consider these two as one, we have got both these,—*Isvara*, the personal God, the Creator, the Preserver and the Destroyer of the universe, and the universe, in one If we separate these three functions of creation preservation and destruction the universe, one from the other, then we have three entities, called Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. In fact, they are all inseparable.

Now, my friends, there are three systems of Vedanta, the *dvaita*, the *advaita*, and the *visishtadvaita*, and the question is which we are going to take. We shall take all the three and harmonize them. Let us take the dvaita system first. So long as we are thinking of ourselves, as the body so long as we are conscious of the external world, the world of senses, we find that there is a Ruler, a Creator, a Governor of the universe; and that Governor is the *Isvara*. At first we think of Him as extra-cosmic, sitting in the heaven beyond the clouds. We cannot reach Him. He is beyond the reach of our minds, and that phase we find in Judaism. God cannot be perceived, He cannot

be realised He is too far away from us. He is too majestic to be approached That idea is also developed in Mohammedanism. And, therefore, we must consider that as the first step in the realisation of the Infinite Being, in the realisation of the infinite ocean of wisdom, the foundation of the universe. In that stage God appears to be extra-cosmic, that is, outside of nature Then gradually, as we understand the true nature of the Divinity and our relation with that Divinity, we find that, He is not very far away from us. He is here, He is there, He is everywhere, He is within us. He pervades this universe. In fact, He is immanent and resident in nature He is intra-cosmic He rules not from outside but from within. As the soul is the ruler of the body, and at the same time rules over the body so, the Lord of the universe has entered into the phenomenal world, and is ruling over every particle of this phenomenal world from within, and not from outside All the individual souls form parts of the Deity, *"chit, achit* and *Isvara."* The relation between *chit* and *achit* on one side and *Isvara* on the other, is the relation of the body to the soul.

Sankaracharya, the great exponent of the Advaita, teaches that you must rise above all anthropomorphic tendencies, and then you realise your true Self, the essence of your inner-self, the essence of the *Jivatman* and of the phenomenal world, and then you find perfect unity and harmony. You attain to absolute oneness in spirit with the *Paramatman* and all external things drop off. That is the meaning of the Vedic word *"so'ham"*—and that is what Christ also says, "I and my Father are one" The best reconciliation between the Dvaitavadins and the Advaitavadins is to be found in the words of Hanuman: "O Lord, when I think of myself as one with the body, I am Thy servant , when I think of myself as Jiva, I am Thy part ; but when I think of myself as the *Atman,* I am one with Thee." So also goes the prayer of Prahlada,—"I bow down to myself." What does Sankaracharya say ? He holds same ideal, the same truth: "When I think of myself as one with the body I am Thy servant ; when I think of myself as Jiva, I am Thy part ; but when I think myself as Atman, I am one with Thee." Here we find the absolute harmony that exists ; the absolute harmony that underlies sectarian doctrines, dogmas, faiths, rituals, ceremonials and beliefs. Now, here you will find the most

practical side of Vedanta First realise the unity of the Godhead underlying the authority of all religious sects and creeds.

This is the most important thing and we, Hindus can more easily practise it, because we are born and brought up in such teachings But with other nations it is very difficult for them to grasp this ideal of toleration However, this ideal will produce most wonderful results in the end. We shall find that we are not only one as a body, not merely one as a nation, but as a whole humanity we are one ; and also that we were worshipping the same Lord under different names and under different forms, that everywhere the ideal is the same ; and thus we shall be able to love all human beings under the same laws as we love all our family members, all our friends and all our reatives. We shall love not only all human beings but all living creatures. This ideal in its practical shape was reached to the world by Gautama, the Buddha , but if we study the Vedas, there we shall find the germ of the ideal, the love for all living creatures. Christ preached love for humanity, but he did not preach love for all living creatures Buddha did that Therefore, the scope of our love should be more universal, that it should not be merely love for all human beings, but we should practise love for all the lower animals. I have found in India, there are men who love the lower animals more than humain being, and treat human beings worse than beasts or slaves They will feed the lower animals with good things, but they will not mind if human beings starve under their very nose. Such ideas we ought not to encourage That is not religion ; that is fanaticism. Our religion is love. Our religion is practical. What we believe we must live up to ; what we have learnt we must practise Religion cannot be in theory, it must be in practice This grand idea we get from the *Upanishads.* We shall have to cover the whole Universe by the Lord Himself If we cannot do that, how can we expect to reach perfection, to realize the eternal and infinite ocean of Wisdom as pervading the universe We must see the Divinity, we must not hate our fellow-brethren, but realising that God is within each one of us, we should love them, and help them wherever they are in need You know that in Southern India there are Brahmins who walking in the streets if they happen to tread on the shadow of a Pariah, will go and bathe. A Pariah or a poor

Sudra when he goes to buy something, say, oil from a grocer, will have to take a cup in his hand and place it and the money several yards from the shop and move away several yards further. Then the grocer looks around, brings the oil and pours it in the cup, takes the money and runs back. Then the low-caste man comes and takes away the cup What kind of thing is that? Is that religion?

Let us see what our *Shastras* say, and where are we standing to-day Can we not practise that universal love and see divinity in a well-qualified Brahman as well as in a cow, an elephant, in a Chandala or a Pariah, as our *Shastras* teach? Yes, that is our foremost duty to-day. We must practise that, and then the condition of India will be raised. Our masses are in ignorance, they are grooping in darkness, they are sinking into the abyss of dark ignorance How are you going to help them? They are the backbone of India. From amongst them will rise great souls, great philanthophists, great workers, great Masters. Give them the chance and the opportunities. How? By the practical application of Vedanta. Vedanta will help you in bringing that unity, in bringing that light amongst that poorer and the lower classes and giving the privileges which they need and which they are worthy of, and which they have a right to demand. What other religion of Vedanta, which accepts the universal oneness as the ideal? Our Vedanta is not merely the most spiritual of religions, but the most practical. That religion must be practical which was practised by Krishna, by Arjuna in the battle-field of Kurukshetra. Why are we degenerated today? Because we do not study and practise the Vedanta, which will make us great. Therefore, let us study and practise Vedanta, which will make us great. Therefore, let us study and practise it in our daily life

Vedanta was the first proselytising religion in the world ; afterwards came Buddhism then Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism. But today, we have forgotten that millions of non-Hindus were made Hindus by the Brahmans, in the ancient times. They have still that power in their hands. We have also forgotten that Guru Nanak converted many of the Mohammedans into Hindus So, my friends, in Vedanta there is no caste distinction, there is no distinction in *Atman.* Can you show any passage from our Vedas or from our *Upanishad,*

or from our *Puranas,* which tells us that the *Atman* has caste? *Atman* is without caste *Jathibheda* is only a social thing; it is a folly to suppose that the gate of *moksha* is thrown open to a few high caste men only. To every creature of God irrespective of his caste and creed, that gate is always wide open. Caste distinction cannot touch the real nature of the soul, which is always the child of God. Whether you are a Parsee or a Hindu, Mohammedan, Christian or Buddhist, your *Atman* is a child of God, pure, spotless and divine. There, in *Atman,* we shall find the most wonderful grandeur, and that grandeur will make us live a life which will lead us to the highest ideal of all religions.

Vedanta is the most practical of all religions, because it teaches that there are many ways by which this grand ideal of unity, the one ocean of wisdom can be reached Take, for instance, one of these ways or methods, which are called Yogas in Sanskrit, and by the practice of which we can realise the eternal truth, can know our true life, and we can become one with the Infinite Can there be anything more practical than Karma Yoga, for instance. It is the most important thing ; we have to work constantly during our earthly existence we cannot live for a moment without doing some kind of mental, physical, intellectual or spiritual work. But how to work? That idea is taught by Sri Krishna in the *Bhagabad Gita.* In the midst of all our work we shall have to find a way by which we can transcend the law of *karma.* Every act that we perform must produce its result, and that result will come back to the doer of actor. You must work constantly ; devote your whole energy day and night in the performance of work, but be unattached, and let the results remain in the hands of the Lord Let every action of your daily life be a free offering to the world Let us all work for others, and die if need be for them, and if you do this you will be worshipped to-day as living Christs of the earth Therefore, stand up and work for work's sake, and not for results

The path of Karma Yogas is for those who are tremendously active and who are constantly engaged in business, trade, commerce and in other kinds of industries. But there is another method for those who do not care to bother their heads about these things ; but who are meditative in their nature, who like

to sit in solitude. For them there is the method called Raja Yoga, which teaches them, how to perform certain helpful functions of the mind known as concentration, meditation, *samadhi*, and so on. If we practise Raja Yoga we shall get wonderful results in spirituality. And not only in spirituality, but we can apply them to our respective spheres of life. Take for example, concentration. Without concentration can you expect to become an artist, or an astronomer, or a musicians, or a painter, a sculptor, or say, even a motor-car driver? If you work without concentration on the Stock Exchange you will ruin your business To the merchant, concentration will bring money The Americans are the most practical people in the world Every minute is money to them And if they take to Vedantism, you must know that it is because Vedantism is the most practical thing. There are a good many souls who are earnest and sincere in their self-sacrificing principles. They don't care for money. There are many such examples among men and women in the United States. They are more earnest and more sincere than Europeans, because they are a young nation full of enthusiasm. They are ready to perform anything which they believe will do good to them. You will find that their principles of science are at one with ours. They do not give credit to Vedantism, but if we analyse their methods and if we study their systems we find that they are based upon the principles of Vedantism. Raja Yoga teaches us full well that to gain concentration the practice of *pranayama* is absolutely necessary, *pranayama* will produce perfect health. Many of my students who are physicians, give breathing exercises to their patients and cure many diseases, with complete success.

Then there, are other methods which are equally practical and beneficial to us One of them is Bhakti Yoga ; it is the path of devotion or that power which will make us realise that we are not of this world ; it is the path of tremendous love for the Lord, and for all What can be more sweet, more tender than this feeling of love and devotion, which is manifested in the life and character of a true devotee of God. A true devotee does not care for the world ; his whole heart is merged in the love for humanity; he sees the Divine will everywhere When any disease comes, he considers that the Lord has sent him a guest, and so he should take care of him! When death comes, he

welcomes it as a friend. What realisation in life can be more practical than this? Vedanta will make you live the right kind of life, will bring freedom to your soul, and ultimately will make you happy throughout eternity. All other things which you call practical may bring temporary results, but you cannot get the real and abiding results anywhere except in the religion and philosophy of Vedanta.

I may now turn to Theosophy and tell you that it is an imperfect imitation of Vedanta It would not do any permanent good. There have been some good workers among the Theosophists to whom we are grateful, especially to Mrs. Besant because there has been some good educational work done But she has only set an example, and now it is for us to stand up and do better work. People of India have become so degenerated that they consider that when certain truths fall from lips of the white faces they must be revelations Truths are always truths, eternal truths, whether they fall from white or dark lips Therefore, we must revere the truth and not the personality of any man or woman. We have our, Vyasa, Narada, Yajnavalkya, Janaka, and a thousand and one great *Rishis* and *Raja-Rishis* In conclusion, I would entreat you to follow in their footsteps, and strive to reach the same goal which was attained by our glorious ancient forefathers

On November 10, 1906, Swami Abhedananda and Swami Paramananda sailed by the P. & O. S S Marmora for London

The Swami Abhedananda stayed in London for two weeks, and met many of his English friends who were deeply interested in Vedanta, and who wished to have a centre established in London

A flourishing centre has since been established there through the untiring efforts of the Swami Abhedananda on this and subsequent visits to England