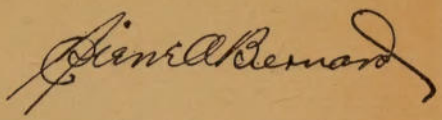
Lectures
on
Vedanta Philosophy
by
Swami Bodhananda

If the heart dictates and time permits
wouldst peruse
On this good old Pagan holiday?



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LECTURES
ON
VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY

Delivered by

SWAMI BODHANANDA

AT

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DEDICATED

TO

THE HOLY ORDER OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

FOUNDED BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

At whose feet I had the privilege to sit and learn

PREFACE

THE lectures contained in this book were delivered before the congregation of the Vedanta Society of New York during the season of 1924-5. They were originally taken down by a stenographer engaged by a very dear friend and a member of the Vedanta Society, who could not attend them owing to her absence from the city. She was very kind to lend me copies for improvement and correction before she retyped them herself.

With her permission, I presented another friend, equally dear, with a few copies, since she, also, could not attend the lectures for the same reason. After having read them, she enquired whether they could not be published in book form. These lectures were to me so unimportant and insignificant that I had never thought of publishing them. However, I gave her my consent and it is she who has enabled me to get them out in their present form.

I can never fully comprehend the depth and devoutness of her interest in my humble work and in the Vedanta Society of which I have had the privilege to be leader for the past fifteen years. And it is impossible for lack of adequate words to express my appreciation of it all. Feel-

ings can never be translated into language. If there be any credit in this work, it belongs wholly to these two friends of mine. I am deeply indebted to them for what they have done for me—not only in this case, but also in many others.

If the reader derives any benefit from these pages, we shall be amply rewarded for our joint labors.

BODHANANDA.

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LECTURES

ON

VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY

THE LAW OF KARMA

THE whole universe is governed by a law which is most inexorable and unescapable. We call this law, in Sanskrit, "*Karma.*" It is derived from the Sanskrit root "*Kri*" which means "to do"—so, whatever is done, either by thought or by deed or by word, is "*Karma.*"

We have three bodies—the physical body, the desire or mental body, and the causal body. All deeds leave their impressions upon the causal body, and this body carries with it all these past impressions—the result of all acts, at the time of passing—death. This result shapes what we call "personality" or character—that individual credit which each one carries with him.

It means also compensation, as Emerson says: "Thou shalt be given just what thou hast paid for—neither more nor less."

Here we find the exactness of *Karma;* which is like a mathematical equation: whatever comes to us is the equitable result or consequence of our own doings. Thus it means justice or equity. In a general sense it is reaction or responsibility, or the return of the deed to the doer.

According to the orthodox belief, there is a relation be-

tween what precedes and what succeeds, or between cause and effect; nay, the cause and the effect are identical. In other words, the effect is the cause evolved, and the cause the effect involved.

Then there is another opinion, and that is the Buddhistic conception of *Karma*. Buddha did not believe in an individual soul. That is, the soul as a persistent and permanent entity—and yet he believed in reincarnation. To this question, if time permits, I shall return later.

He believed in character. According to him, soul, or self, is nothing but the aggregate of thoughts, knowledges, impressions, and so on. This sum total of impressions produces what we call self or soul. That is, the soul has no separate existence from the character, which is the sum total of consciousnesses.

Buddha denied on one hand the soul or the knower—the subjective self, and on the other hand the known—the objective world, but he believed only in knowledges. A man, or better still, the soul of man, is nothing but the aggregate of his knowledges, his thoughts, his ideas. This, from time to time, manifests itself or is incarnated.

It is not the incarnation of a permanent entity, but it is the incarnation of *Karma* or bundle of ideas. He called this "Succession," but the orthodox call it "Causation." The difference between these two is this:

According to causation there is the identity between what precedes and what succeeds, or the identity between cause and effect; there is a permanent entity, and this

entity is reincarnated. I might say according to this opinion there is no substantial difference between the evolved and the involved states; there being the same self in those two states.

Buddha was a Hindu, but he was a reformer. He borrowed most of his ideas from the older systems of philosophy, but he departed from some. He introduced something new, and one of the boldest steps he took was this:

He denied the existence of a soul. He also denied the existence of God, but this point we shall not discuss today. He says reincarnation is not the evolution of a pre-existent soul, but it happens by mere succession of consciousnesses or force of character.

There is no doubt that he denied identity and based his theory of evolution upon non-identity, or mere succession.

Looking around him and watching and observing all the facts and phenomena that happen almost every minute, man asks himself this question: What is the cause of all this? He advances many theories in order to solve these apparently paradoxical and inexplicable conditions around him.

One of them is the theory of *Karma*. Of all theories, that one is retained which explains the largest number of facts, and the theory of *Karma* does so.

This is a theory, but if you can give to the believers in evolution in India another theory which can explain a still larger number of facts, they would accept that, but

so far no other has been advanced which can explain most logically, and satisfactorily, all conditions of life.

This, therefore, is the best working hypothesis. It strikes the mean between scientific skepticism on one hand, and the theological dogmatism on the other. It can satisfy each and all rational minds. It explains from the standpoint of reason all the inequalities in our life, and at the same time it vindicates the dispensation of a God. Those who believe in a God can find some satisfaction of their sense of justice only on the basis of *Karma.* These believers in the doctrine of *Karma* do not all deny God, but to them God is not the creator. His position is like that of a judge in a court. The judge has to render his decisions according to the law, and the facts. He can do nothing arbitrarily. He cannot be biased or partial, but he has to consider the law and the facts, and to give his decision on their merits.

So, God, according to the theory of *Karma,* is the dispenser of justice. He is not the creator. The theory of Special creation has no room in the law of *Karma,* because, if God is our creator, and if we have only one term of life here, how is it that we find so much injustice in His creation?

If we have only one term of life here (according to Christianity we came here only for one incarnation), how can we explain the following facts? Here is a little baby. He dies, say, only five days after his birth. Why? If this God is a just God, why has He not given us all the

same equal opportunities? Why are some rich and some poor? Some healthy and some sick? What is the cause of it all?

These inequalities in life can be explained only on the grounds of *Karma,* or pre-existence. According to our theory of evolution, we are here not for one term of life. This is not our first incarnation. We have existed in the past, and we shall exist in the future. The basic principle of the Hindu theory of evolution is, as I said, the identity of cause and effect—and this principle of identity holds on all phases of existence.

This external universe, this cosmos, is governed by this law. That is, whatever we find in this universe is not a new thing. It is a repetition of something that existed before. Nothing comes from nothing. In other words, what is has come from what was.

That is the basic principle of the Hindu theory of evolution. Nothing happens by chance or accident. Chance is the name of the law unrecognized.

The right place to seek for the reason of a person's being what he is, is the person himself. For instance: if a person is strong and healthy, wealthy and successful, lovely and beautiful, the reason for all that is that man himself. He has paid for it. He has earned it. He deserves it. It has not come from nothing. That is, this present condition is the reaping of what he has sown in the past. There is no accident or chance in it. You get what you deserve, neither more nor less.

What we are is the result or effect of what we have been

"Our deeds still travel with us from afar;
And what we have been makes us what we are."

Knowing that, the Hindu evolutionist seeks for the reason of all conditions regarding a person or a thing, whether external or internal, in that particular person or thing. To this point I shall come again later.

We have so far established the identity of cause and effect. The Hindu evolutionist, in the most ancient times, believed in the law of conservation of energy. That is, the sum total of the mass of matter and the quantity of energy is a constant reality.

That is, this universe of matter has not come from nothing. It is not the creation of God either; but it is its own evolution. There are two states in this theory of evolution, and they can be found both in the outer universe, in Macrocosm, and also in the smaller universe, the Microcosm. Whatever is true of the outer universe is also true of man.

Everything that we find in the external world has its counterpart in man. Man is the epitome of the universe. The best means to know the universe is self knowledge. If you can know yourself, then you will have known everything in the universe, because the universe is nothing but the expression of your own self, or whatever is in

your own self can be found in the universe in another form. These two states are called *"Kalpa"* and *"Pralaya,"* the evolved state and the involved state.

Just as the same person sleeps and works; that is, when he is asleep and when he is awake, he is the same person. So the sum total is the same whether the universe is in the one state or the other.

Applying that law to our own lives, I mean to individuals, we find this: that we, as individuals, represent only one link in this infinite chain of causation, the law of cause and effect. We recognize the same soul in all beings, that is, there is no substantial difference between one being and another, except in the degree of manifestation of the soul. Or, in other words, there is the same soul in all forms of life. Take, for instance, the amœba, or the protoplasm, and a highly developed being, like Christ or Buddha; and we shall find in them the existence of the same soul. These are the two extreme links in this chain of evolution. The protoplasm will be developed into the Christ by the process of evolution.

You do not have to go to a Saviour for salvation. You have to work for it. "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." Unless you have paid the legitimate price for your salvation, you cannot be saved, but you are constantly progressing toward perfection.

So, that is the principle of evolution—slow and steady development from the lowest to the highest—and this is a continuous process. There is no halt in it. All indi-

viduals are, consciously or unconsciously, advancing to that goal of perfection—salvation.

There are three kinds of *Karma*. The first kind of *Karma* is called *Sanchita*. There is a deep psychology in it. It means "accumulated" or "collected;" *i. e.*, that amount of *Karma* which has not yet been worked out, which has not yet produced its effects. The seeds of impressions which have been sown by your thoughts, acts or words, but have not yet begun bearing fruits constitute *Sanchita Karma*. The deeds that you have already done, must return to you. There is no escape from this reaction. The sooner you work them out, the better. I often call it like paying taxes before they are overdue. If the taxes are not paid in time and become delinquent, you have to pay the compound interest. This law applies in the case of *Karma* also.

All these incidents—disease, deformity, and even death, are the results of your *Karma*, or they are your own creation; you deserved them; you sowed the seeds for them. As they say, "What a man sows, that he shall reap." If you can in a short time reap what you have sown, then it is all the better for you. So, you must not regret if you meet with these conditions, because you are really working out your *Karma* through them. Your debt is being paid through them.

The second kind of *Karma* is called *"Prarabdha,"* which means that which has begun bearing fruits. That is, that part of accumulated *Karma* which has begun pro-

ducing fruits falls under the category of *Prarabdha.* While we reap the fruits of past *Karma,* at the same time we sow seeds for a new reaping, and these new seeds must in their turn produce fruits. All deeds, whether they be of this incarnation or of any past incarnation, that have begun producing fruits are technically called *Prarabdha.*

That is the law of reaction. I have to tell you the right things, and not the pleasant things. We are now discussing facts, and not fancies.

Then comes the third kind of *Karma.* This is called *"Agami."* This means, literally, that *Karma* which we do after we have attained perfection, become freed from the round of births and deaths, after we have reached perfection, after we have become Christ (Christ, by the way, is not a personality, but a principle). We are saved through the Christ only when we become as perfect as Christ. Then we shall transcend this law. But still we have to work out the unexpired part of past *Karma,* and there shall be no new *Karma* or its reaction after that.

A philosopher gives us this illustration: you are driving in a car, and one wheel is broken off. After that wheel has been broken off from the car, it still rolls a little way. It has been detached from the car itself, still there is some momentum in it. The *Agami Karma* is like that.

The perfected person has become liberated from all bondages, but still a little *Karma* remains. That *Karma*

is done, mechanically; without any desire on the part of the doer. The little force that remains unexpired makes that body work. Only the perfected men and women do that kind of *Karma,* and there is no new *Karma* after that.

Now, let us discuss for a moment the place of the theory of heredity in this law, the law of *Karma.* As I said, according to the law of *Karma,* every man and every woman is his or her own ancestor. What do I mean?

We are born of certain parents, according to the nature and character of our *Karma.* We are thrown into that parenthood, by the force of *Karma* at our backs. You might say that in the opinion of modern scientists heredity plays a great part in the shaping of our character. They say that we find in many people ancestral or parental traits, so how can you entirely deny the importance of hereditary transmission?

To that, the Hindu evolutionist replies that if the *Karma* is such that it must be worked out in a certain physical or mental condition, the person must be born of parents who can furnish him a suitable instrument, body or mind or both, to work out that *Karma.*

If a person is insane they trace the cause of his insanity to his parents or ancestors. Physically that may be true, but this person's *Karma* is the most important factor. His *Karma* led him into that condition. Because he must become insane that his peculiar *Karma* might be

worked out, he had to be born of insane parents or ancestors.

Then, the place of salvation in *Karma*. *Karma* does not attach any importance to proxy or substitution, or vicarious atonement. On the contrary, it holds we cannot escape from the consequence of our errors, but we should endeavor to escape from the errors. That is, if we have erred, or made mistakes through our deeds, thoughts or words, the consequence must come. The consequence is unescapable, but if we abstain from doing the mistakes, then we can escape the consequence.

Herein lies the most rational basis of morality. The theory of *Karma* teaches us self-reliance. It teaches us how to be strong, how to confess our own mistakes, how to shoulder our own responsibilities. The doctrine of vicarious atonement is one of the main pillars of Christianity. Instead of teaching how to shoulder our responsibilities, it asks us to shift them upon somebody else. Adam blamed Eve for his temptation. Eve blamed somebody else. The fact is that if Adam had the real moral courage he would have said: "I have done the sin, and the responsibility is mine." Whether you will take them or not, the consequences of your actions must return to you. You cannot burden someone else with them. That is not the right way. Each back must bear its own burden. This is justice and fairness.

In India we are accused of having not produced a saviour of sins. To that we say that we do not believe in

saviours. But we believe in salvation, and we must individually pay the price for salvation. We endeavor to escape from sins by not committing them and not from their consequences, if they have been once done.

We can attain salvation by ourselves. Our belief is that we can't be a saint on Sundays and a sinner on the other days. We have to be saints every day. In the Christian way, there is an inducement for sins. At least the Christian thinks that because he has a Saviour he can commit any sins and be saved through Him. The moment he comes to that mighty Saviour, his salvation is secured for him.

We can never be saved that way. In the doctrine of *Karma* alone can we find a rational basis of morality.

There is no room in this law for a substitution or proxy. You must suffer for your sins. In our ordinary courts of justice, when someone commits a crime, the judge sends him to prison. If his friends want to go to prison for him, the judge will not accept that substitute. How can that great judge, who is justice itself, make such an unjust dispensation—to wit, to sacrifice His own innocent son for the sins of the guilty? Can anything be more shocking than this scheme of salvation?

Then the place of Fate in *Karma*. Some people think that *Karma* is the same as fatalism. On the contrary, according to *Karma* if you have made errors that is your own personal act, and the responsibility is yours. By doing good work by your own will, you can shape a good

future. The belief is that a man makes or mars his fortune or future by his own acts. Thus there is no room for fatalism or chance in this theory of *Karma*. It teaches one how to boldly assume his own responsibilities; how to work out one's own destiny, and how to mould his future by his action.

Lastly, the place of God in *Karma*. As I said, *Karma* strikes the mean between scientific skepticism and theological dogmatism. The theologian presents to you an unjust God, or at best his idea of God can establish only a divine caprice. That is, his God is nothing more or less than a despotic God. He says that this God is all-merciful and omnipotent, just and so on. But when you corner the theologian by showing him His injustices, he cannot give you an answer. He says it is a mystery.

We must solve all mysteries. There is no such thing as a mystery or miracle. We must know everything in this universe. Everything can be explained on the ground of this law. There is no miracle, no mystery.

God is not the creator, but He is the assigner or awarder of fruits of action. One Hindu philosopher wrote a treatise on Vedanta philosophy. He wanted to offer a salutation before he finished it. He said: "Whom shall I salute, the Gods and Goddesses? No, they follow the order of God. Shall I then salute God? No. He is only the assigner of the fruits of action. The fruits are products of actions, whether they are done by angels

or archangels. Therefore I bow to *Karma,* because none can escape from it."

Of course we can only escape from this law after we have attained perfection, after we have become illumined. Until then we remain bound to it.

The law of *Karma,* rightly understood, shows man that he is the arbiter of his own destiny; he is his own ancestor; he is his own saviour and he cannot blame any being for his unfavorable conditions of life. He knows that these conditions have come to him as the consequences of his *Karma,* and he reconciles himself to them.

I am a firm believer in this law. It has stood me in great stead in my trials and tribulations, and I can stand any amount of cross-examination and criticism in my defense of it.

WORK WITHOUT WORRY

THERE are two elements in *Karma Yoga.* One is ethical, and the other psychological. The former pertains to the amount or quantity of result, and the latter consists in right thought or purity of intention. Krishna, in his teachings, has attached greater importance to the latter than to the former. In one of the verses in the Gita he says: "Whoever, with sincere love and devotion offers to the Lord a glass of water or a flower or a leaf or a fruit, any simple thing, that is more acceptable to Him than any pompous gift." I want to tell you a story that will illustrate this:

Once Arjuna, the great hero of the Mahabharata, performed a great sacrifice, and he thought that he was a great sacrificer, because he had given away many precious things in that sacrifice. In order to humble his vanity, Krishna once called his attention to a little mongoose, one-half of whose body was natural, and one-half gold. When Arjuna saw this strange animal, he asked Krishna how this animal could be one-half natural, and the other half gold; and Krishna said, "Why don't you go to him and ask the reason?" Then Arjuna goes to this animal, and asks him, "How is it that half of your body is

natural, and the other half gold?" The mongoose says: "Sir, many hundreds of years ago there was a great sacrifice performed by a small family of Brahmins, and I happened to crawl along that place, and one-half of my body turned gold. I heard a voice say that if I ever came to another place where a similar sacrifice was performed, then the other half of my body would also become gold, and I heard that you had performed a great sacrifice right on this spot and I am crawling here, but the other half of my body has not turned gold yet."

Then Arjuna says: "Will you tell me how this sacrifice was performed, and who performed it?"

The mongoose says: "Sir, there was once a great famine and there lived a family of Brahmins, a man, his wife and two children, and they did not have any food for several days, and one afternoon this Brahmin got some flour and when they were going to eat the bread that they had made from it, a guest came to the door and said: 'I have not eaten any food for several days. Give me something to eat or I shall die.' Then this Brahmin family opened their door, and invited him and gave him the bread that they had made, and the result was that they all died that night from starvation." And this was the greatest sacrifice, although it was done unnoticed. Nobody knew how it was done, but the spirit of it was great, the intention, the thought was pure.

So, we must endeavor to have that right intention. Our object should be not only to perform great works, works

that can commend themselves to ordinary peoples' attention, like the building of large hospitals, or school houses and things like that, but also to develop purity of thought. Of course, these institutions are great, but greater far than the building of these institutions, is the developing of the right spirit and purpose.

If a person does not know how to be good himself, and wants to do good to others, his actions are not so meritorious as the intentions of those who know how to live right, and be good rather than do good pompously.

If you can be good, then whatever you do must necessarily be good. So, in our philosophy, greater importance is attached to psychology, to right disposition, and right thought rather than to mere achievement or success. That is, that man who can maintain an attitude of even-mindedness, who is pure from within, from conscience, that man is a greater worker than he who does works for the sake of name, fame, praise or honor.

Those who work for name or fame, get the merit right away; but those who can work without any desire for name or fame, those who can work for the sake of the work, for the love of the work, they are great; they may not build hospitals, they may not build schools, or roads, but they build character. Their thoughts work, their thoughts can cross the ocean, and can penetrate mountains. They are the ones who keep the fire of spirituality ablaze on earth.

In the Western countries any work that does not bring a grist to the grinding mill is not considered great, but

in the East, particularly in India, we call those men who have developed purity of thought and purpose, and can maintain equanimity in regard to all pairs of opposites, we call them real workers.

By worry we waste our time and energy. And what is the cause of worry? Intense desire for the fruits of action. Those people who desire fruits of action as a rule never succeed. Those alone succeed who do not speculate upon the result. Says Krishna:

"You have a right to the work, and not to the fruits thereof." That is, dedidate the fruits of work to the Lord, and if we can do this, then the results come to us many, many times multiplied, but if we work for actual and immediate results, they come just in that form. If we can work with love and devotion without wishing for the results then they come many, many times more in quality as well as in quantity.

That is, those people who have that devotion, they are always equanimous, nothing can disturb their calm, their peace and poise, but those who are impatient and anxious for the fruits of their work are not well poised; they worry and as a rule do not derive real benefit from what they do.

I will tell you another story:

Once the great sage Narada was going to Heaven to see the Lord, and on his way he met two *Yogins*. They had been practising for many years, fifty or sixty years, and they asked him to inquire of the Lord how many

more years they would remain there and meditate before they could see Him. Narada delivered the message to the Lord and when he returns these two men see him again, and ask him what the Lord said. Pointing to a large tree, says Narada: "The Lord said that you, both of you, would see Him after as many years as there are leaves on that tree." There were thousands and thousands of small leaves on that tree. And one of them, when he heard this, began to dance with great joy, saying: "After all, I shall see the Lord." And the other man grumbled: "I have been practising so many years, and I have to wait still so many years before I can see Him." Then Narada said to the first man: "You have already seen the Lord." So, those who can work with patience, who can make work their worship, they have seen the Lord, have reached the spiritual goal, because they have attained the state of peace and poise.

So, we must have this poise, which Krishna calls *"Samattwa,"* even-mindedness. *"Yoga* is the state of equanimity in regard to all pairs of opposites, like success and failure, victory and defeat, profit and loss, praise and dispraise." That is the lesson Krishna has taught in the Gita. Develop that attitude, that perfect poise, and you will ever be in peace in the midst of all actions.

He says: "Why do you worry about these things, wealth or poverty, health or ill-health, success or failure? These things come and go. No one can have those things throughout his life. But he is great who does not attach

any importance to them, can treat them alike, yet remains devoted to work."

Those who are undeveloped attach greater importance to the first one of these opposites than to the other and suffer the consequence. For instance, they are very susceptible of praise, they appreciate it, but when its opposite comes they feel sad and unhappy.

This does not mean that we must not work. Krishna has emphasized work. "No one can live even one moment without doing some kind of work. He knows the secret of work who can make all work into the worship of God." And we can convert all work into God's worship by maintaining the right disposition.

"Whoever can consecrate the fruits of action to the Lord and can live in this world like a lotus leaf which floats in the water, but is never wet with water, that man is a great worker." We must live in this world without being of it. So, Krishna advocates work for its own sake, love for the sake of love.

In the Western countries if there is no return in love, then that is not considered as love. We in India consider that a true lover is a great sacrificer. His is not a shopkeeper's love. The shopkeeper buys something and sells something, and he always balances his account to ascertain whether he is gaining or losing. But the true lover considers it a privilege to love without any thought of return in any shape or form. He likes to die in his love. That is his highest reward.

I will tell you another story:

"Yudhisthira, the older brother of Arjuna, was famous for his truthfulness. He never uttered a prevarication in his life. But he suffered so much; he lost his Kingdom, he was separated from his brothers, from his sisters and mother, and sometimes even from his wife, and, mind you, Krishna himself was his greatest friend. But he took his suffering in a most philosophical way, with calmness and cheerfulness. Neither joy nor sorrow, nothing, could disturb his mind. His wife, Draupadi, once asked him, "How is it that you who are so virtuous, so good, loving and kind to everybody had to suffer these hardships?" "But my beloved one, I love the Himalayas for their beauty; so I love the Lord because the Lord is beautiful. I do not expect any return for my love. It is my nature to love, to sacrifice. I do not calculate the results." This was Yudhisthira's reply.

So, we can dedicate all our works and their fruits to the Lord. He who thinks constantly of the fruits of action does not get them, but he who does not care for them, and works constantly, to them they come in manifold ways and forms.

We have no faith in the Lord, we have no faith in ourselves, we have no faith in the teachings of the great Masters. That is the reason why we don't accomplish much spiritually.

"Those who, with whole-hearted love, can devote themselves to God, He brings unto them whatever they need."

Those people don't have to worry about things; if they have the right faith, faith which is the result of knowledge, then all these things that they need come to them. The Lord Himself brings all things to His devotee.

One commentator, a great devotee, made some footnotes on that verse in the Gita, where Sri Krishna has said that the "Lord brings with His own hands what His devotee needs." The comment was that that verse is not literally true. After making that remark, he went out for his ablution. He was worried about his needs. He had nothing to eat at home, and out of that anxious thought he made that remark. He did not find consistency between the Lord's action and His promise.

In the meantime, a young boy, with a basket filled with fruits, rice, butter, bread, etc., comes to his wife, but his body was streaming with fresh blood as if somebody had whipped him. When the wife saw this young man she asked, "You are covered with blood, fresh blood, who beat you?" Then he said, "Your husband," and saying that, he disappeared and when her husband returned home, she scolded him saying, "That beautiful boy; you beat him!" He said, "What do you say? I did not beat any boy." The wife said, "He came with these things, and you beat him." Then he realized what had happened: "Oh, Lord, I made that remark, ignorant as I am, forgive me. Now I realize that you actually supply your devotees with all their needs."

So, my dear friends, if we had that sincere faith in

the Lord, I don't think we need worry about anything. All these things come. So, the cause of worry is our lack of trust and faith in the Lord.

The great cause of all our worry and suffering is the mistaken identification of the self with the non-self. When we have things, when we have a beautiful body, a comfortable home, riches, etc., we think that we *are* these things. We all think that we are the body. All of us have that mistaken notion that the body is the same as the self or the soul, and that mistaken attachment to the non-self is the cause of all our troubles here.

It is not that we must not have these things; if wealth comes, take it and enjoy it. If poverty comes also take it and don't complain. We welcome certain things and we resent certain other things. That is wrong. There are people who are so stoical, so pessimistic, that they seek sorrow and suffering, so that they may remain pure and God-fearing. But that is not a right thing, either.

That attitude is just as wrong as that of those who seek only the other set of opposites like health, wealth, success, and so on. The right attitude should be the attitude of evenness, or equability in regard to all these things. Do not seek or reject either. Take them all with calmness, serenity and cheerfulness.

So, if you have homes, estates, children, always know that these things do not belong to you; that thought of ownership is the cause of all sorrow and distress.

Those people who have identified their true self with

these other things, when these things are lost they think that a part of their own self has been lost. The right thing is this: while you have a home, while you have children and wealth, take good care of them, always remembering that these things are not yours forever—that they shall not remain forever with you. Not that you must find fault with them. Try to be calm and cheerful in the midst of all conditions, pleasant or unpleasant.

We must always hold ourselves as trustees. If we have children, we must love them and do our duties by them; educate them; feed them; clothe them; shelter them. If they die we must not mourn. We must not think that we have lost everything.

That is love. Ordinarily we love through selfish attachment to the body, to the person; we do not love the spirit, the real man. If a man really and truly loves a friend or a relative when he dies he will never mourn. On the contrary, he will rejoice. He rejoices because he knows that the deceased is now freer and happier in the care of the Lord Himself, who gave him to him for some time. Such things have actually happened. This is not a story:

A friend of ours had only one son, and while the son was living he was very devoted to him, and when he died, he actually rejoiced and said: "I know that my son will be better cared for now by the Lord Himself and be happier there."

To illustrate the evil that comes to us from selfish attachment, I will tell you a story:

Once there lived a grocer. A holy man came one day to his house, and was his guest for a few days. He gave his host some spiritual instructions. Of course, spiritual instruction is the greatest gift. Thoreau once said: "One word of wisdom is worth the State of Massachusetts, many times over."

This man asked the grocer: "Now you are an old man, and it is time you retired to spend the remainder of your life in practice of religion." But this man was very much attached to his store, children, money and farm, and he said: "Sir, what you say is the right thing, but do allow me one year more"; and the holy man said, "All right, I will come after one year, and then you must do as I say."

After one year, he came again, and inquired of his sons for him, and they said: "He is dead, sir." But the holy man, by his meditation found out in what incarnation he was living; that man was living as a horse in that same house. He goes to this horse, brings him his past memories, and asks him: "Why did you not come with me last year. You have died since and now you are a horse. Will you come with me now? I can give you back your human body."

He answered: "My sons don't know much about farming, and that is the reason why I am born as a horse to plough their fields."

The holy man said: "Well, then I will come again for you after another year."

Another year passes, he comes again, and finds that the horse was dead, that he was born as a dog, and was living in that same barn. He goes to the dog and speaks to him the same way as he did before and asks him to come with him, and the dog says: "Give me a little time, sir. I am born as a dog to watch the farm." Then the man answers: "All right—I will come for you again a year after."

Another year, and he came again and found out that the dog was dead, and by his meditation he also discovered that he was born as a snake. Then he said to the sons: "Do you want some money? I will show you where to find it." He takes them to a room in the house and asks them to dig a particular spot. In India people put their money in a pot or a jar and bury it under the earth. They saw a big snake coiling around the jar. The holy man spoke to him again: "You chose to be born as a snake to guard the money you saved as a grocer. Are you now ready to follow me if I restore you to a human body?" This time he realized his mistake, and begged the holy man to make him a disciple. This is the evil of attachment.

So, it is not the right thing to have any attachment for anything, but at the same time do not feel discontented if you have anything. That will be wrong. Always remain separate mentally and spiritually from these things.

That is the spirit of renunciation that Krishna has taught in the Gita.

"Live in this world without being of this world." That is His idea of renunciation, and He also advocated work —of course, unselfish work, work as a duty. If you study the fifth and sixth verses of the third chapter, you will find how He has expressed this idea.

"Those who do not work with the hands and feet, with the senses, but retain in their hearts the desire for the objects of the senses, that is, in whom the relish remains for sensuous objects, such men are hypocrites. They are of false character. They are not practicing renunciation. But that man who has eliminated all desire for objects and can still remain engaged in work, considering work as worship, that man practises renunciation."

So, we have to eliminate all selfishness, all sensuality and all desire for show from our hearts and minds.

You can't attain that state of peace and poise by mere intellectual comprehension of the teachings. Work for it. Incorporate it into your soul, and you will become like the flint-stone. The flint-stone can remain immersed in water for several years, and when you take it out of the water and strike it with a piece of steel it will give out sparks of light. Water cannot enter it and destroy its power. With that power of poise you will have to live in this world. That is the great lesson that Krishna teaches in the Gita.

He has taught us how to develop all the great powers

and potentialities already within us, how to become strong and spiritual while in this life.

A coward is always afraid of this world, he is afraid when success, health, wealth, etc., come lest he should lose them. He is afraid when their opposites come lest he should be crushed under them.

Never worry about these things one way or the other. If you can love the Lord truly and really, and if you can do your duties well and unselfishly, all these things shall be added unto you and more. You will attain everlasting peace and bliss in this life.

If you can make all work subservient to the Lord, and not to your small self, then you will understand this philosophy of conduct and abundant peace will be yours.

Wherefore we must know how to combine ethical energy with philosophic calm.

YOGA AND YOGA POWERS

THE word *"Yoga"* literally means acquisition or attainment. In Sociology it means "order" and "progress"; in Science it means "discovery"; in Ethics it means "efficiency" and "unselfishness". It means "divine realization" or "union" in Religion; in Mathematics it means "addition," and in Psychology it means "concentration." It is derived from the root *"yuj"* to join.

This afternoon I will confine myself to the psychological aspect of *Yoga.*

We are all different from one another, and no two of us are alike, and because we all are different from one another, we each need a particular kind of spiritual help —that is, that help which is suited to our individual natures.

According to our philosophy of evolution, the universe is the product of lost balance. *Prakriti* is the Primordial substance; the subtlest of all energies and matters, and when it loses its equilibrium then starts evolution. This substance consists of three great elements: *"Sattva", "Rajas"* and *"Tamas".*

Sattva is the element of rhythm; *Rajas* is the element of action, and *Tamas* is the element of inertia. These

elements of *Prakriti* conform to the three laws of motion, according to Newton.

When these three elements remain in a state of equipoise, there is no action, no creation; but as soon as this equipoise is disturbed, creation sets in. So, the universe is the product of lost balance, and we individuals, being a part of this universe, we also have lost our balance, and we, consciously or unconsciously, are endeavoring every minute of our lives to regain our normal equilibrium.

There is this constant urge in every individual. Under that urge all our acts and deeds are done. The mother loves her baby under that urge, and the murderer also kills under that same urge. The methods are different, but the urge is the same. We are all advancing to the same goal, whether we know it or not.

We occupy different stages in this process of evolution; and because we are at different stages, we need different helps. What may be good for one may not be good for another. What is true to some may not be true to others; but, mind you, we advance not from errors to truths, but from lower truths to higher truths. There is a continuity in this infinite process of evolution.

Just as in our growth we were once little babies, and now we are adults—that body we had in babyhood was not an error; we have now outgrown it, then it was an essential stage; so also in this process we do not proceed from errors to truths, but from lower to higher truths.

It would be a great mistake if we were to set up to the whole human race only one standard of morality and spirituality. There must be different standards. If any person is so dogmatic as to say that one religion, or one rule of morality is the only one that must be followed by the whole human race, that man is mistaken. But he understands psychology or human nature who can give different helps to different individuals; who can prescribe different methods of morality and spirituality to different people according to their needs.

In India we believe that there are as many religions as there are human beings, because religion is my own conception of the truth. It lies entirely between me and my ideal. We must have different *"Yogas,"* methods of Truth realization.

There are four principal *Yogas;* there is *Karma Yoga,* there are *Jnana Yoga* and *Bhakti Yoga,* and there is the fourth, *Raja Yoga.*

That is, mankind may be divided into four groups, each under a system of *Yoga.*

There are some people who are naturally devotional, and for them the right *Yoga* is *Bhaktiyoga.* Then there are others who are ethical—they should follow *Karmayoga.* Then there are others who are of a philosophical turn of mind. They should follow *Jnanayoga.* And there are still others who are naturally calm and meditative; they should follow *Rajayoga,* the *Yoga* of concentration.

This is Patanjali's definition of concentration; before I explain his definition, I want to show you some relation between the system of Patanjali and the system of Kapila. In fact, these two are two sister systems; both are called sometimes *"Samkhya"*. This word is derived from the word *Samkhya,* which means number. The Samkhya philosophy is essentially the philosophy of numbers. According to that philosophy, by right understanding of the twenty-four categories of nature we attain to the highest object,—the Summum-bonum, of life. Technically, it is called *Purushartha.*

That is the reason why this philosophy is called Samkhya, the philosophy of numbers, and the other system, to which I referred, came after it. The Samkhya philosophy admitted twenty-four categories, but the other system added one more to them, and called that *Isvara,* God, so that system is called Theistic Samkhya.

The original Samkhya system did not believe in God. But according to Patanjali God is not the creator of the universe, but the ruler or governor of the universe. If you want to be a God, you can be the ruler of a certain cycle, or world period. But you have to come back again from that state. By your power you can become even a God, and you can retain that power for a certain number of years, several centuries—say one million years, but after that you will have to return again. This is called *Kalpesvara.*

It is said in the Gita: "There is a return even from the world of *Brahma*". That is, after that period is over, they have to come back and they have to work again for spiritual perfection here.

That is, until one can attain to that supreme God-consciousness, or one can realize the identity of himself with the supreme one, one is not *mukta*—free.

The Samkhya philosophy is most rational. It endeavors to give an answer to all the problems that we face every day, from the standpoint of reason alone. Kapila argues: Why should we believe in a God? There is no proof of the existence of a God. And is this a free or bound God? If He is free then He can not create, because for a free being there can be no desire of creation—and if He is not, why should we worship Him?

Patanjali's system believes in a God, as has been already explained.

In the Western world the people believe in an anthropomorphic God, a God who dwells in a particular place, has a head, arms and legs, and His face is full of frowns. But in India we have complete religious freedom. You don't have to believe in a God to be a spiritual man or woman. All you have to do to be a spiritual person is to be true to your own self. If you don't believe in a God don't say, "I believe in God." If you have no proof of the existence of God, and can't believe in Him, why should you be false to yourself by saying "yes"? In the West-

ern world many people don't believe in Him. They are rank atheists, yet they pretend belief in God and go to church.

We believe that we must be absolutely honest and sincere. Has anybody seen God? Not only that; some people believe in a God who is so transcendental, so aristocratic that He has never revealed Himself directly to any man or prophet. No one can approach Him. They are hypnotized into that belief that there is a God.

If you believe in a God, and don't walk on the right way, you are not only not true to yourself, but you are mocking with God. To be truly moral and religious, you have to be true to yourself, to your convictions, and if you are a lover of truth then you will surely know God. But what that God is, no one can define or describe.

That word "God" is so much talked about and yet so little understood. "God is known to the ignorant and unknown to the wise. He who says he knows God knows not, but he who knows that he can't know God, he knows God." This sounds like a paradox, but there is a great deal of truth in it.

So, God is not an epistemonical being. He is not a being that can be brought down to the plane of knowledge—not a known being. Spencer defined God as "unknown and unknowable." In that definition he brought God down to the plane of the known and knowable. If He was really unknown and unknowable there could be no definition of Him. That is why Buddha was silent

upon that great question. He never committed himself to any opinion about God.

Now to return to Patanjali's definition of *Yoga: "Yoga* is the *nirodha* or restraint of *Chitta* from its various *vrittis*—transformations." The whole system of this Yoga Philosophy hinges upon that one aphorism; in fact, in that he puts the whole essence of it.

Chitta is the mind stuff. You see, these psychological terms are untranslatable. They have no equivalent words in English. Let us call it "mind stuff". Each *Sanskrit* word has its own individuality. I wish you all knew *Sanskrit.*

Vritti means that which moves like waves. *Nirodha* means restraint or control. Literally, the control of the waves of the mind is *Yoga.*

In this *Chitta,* mind stuff, there are four functions; one function is called *Manas.* That is the perceptive function. Principally, it ascertains and doubts.

The next function is *Buddhi. Buddhi* means discrimination. *Chitta* is the name of that function which deliberates or thinks. And then there is another, the ego or subjectivity, which is called *Ahamkara.*

This way all perceptions happen. We have five senses of action, and five senses of perception. These ten senses are called *Indriyas*—instruments through which the mind operates.

We see something, for instance, we see the color. The color comes through light. The light brings the

color or form to the retina of the eye. The eye is the external instrument, and then it is carried through the optic nerve to the brain, and from the brain to the different faculties of *Chitta.* The first stage of this process is called *Manas.* Let us call it the uppermost layer of this mind stuff, but the sensation is not complete yet. It is carried to the next layer, *Buddhi,* the discriminating faculty, and from there to *Chitta,* the deliberating faculty, and from there to *Ahamkara,* the subjective faculty or the ego, and the ego reacts to it, and when this reaction comes, then there is the complete sensation.

That is why when you withdraw all these energies into the ego self you do not respond—you do not sense the perceptions.

In India once a man had to undergo an operation, and the surgeon wanted to put him under an anesthetic. He said: "I do not wish to be put under it, I shall withdraw physical consciousness into myself. And in a few minutes he did so, and was in a condition similar to that which the surgeon puts a patient into before performing an operation—under the influence of an anesthetic—and then the operation was performed. And a few minutes after that he came back to his physical consciousness.

If we can withdraw our energies into ourselves by that process, then we do not have to undergo these crude methods that the doctors employ before performing an operation. If one can possess that control, or can withdraw himself from all these outer things by the power of

the will, then one can get back easily into that super-sensuous state, the state which we are constantly endeavoring to reach. That is the state of poise and peace.

Patanjali further says: "Then a person dwells in his own true self. At other times he is the same as these different waves or forms of the mind."

In order to be fully and completely self-possessed we have to go back into that state. That is, we have to withdraw ourselves from all these external objects.

Mind has five states; in the lowest state it is called *Kshipta*—scattered; the second is called *Mudha*—overpowered; the next state is called *Vikshipta*—the state in which the mind tries to concentrate upon one or two things excluding others. The next is *Ekagra*—one pointed state. The fifth and last is *Niruddha*—concentrated.

This power of concentration is the cause of all powers.

This system of psychology (Raja-yoga) to which I have referred consists of four books. The first book deals with various kinds and states of *Samadhi*—concentration and meditation. The second book describes the different methods of attainment to *Samadhi*. The third book is devoted to the description of various *Vibhutis*, powers, and in the fourth book the state of *Kaivalya*—liberation, is expounded.

The 41st aphorism of the first book says: "To one in whom these various modifications of the mind have lost their powers, to him comes complete identity with and

absorption in the objects of perception, the senses and the ego—even as colors are reflected fully through the crystal."

After one has been able to control his mind—to withdraw all the scattered forces from various objects, "Then," he says, "He dwells permanently in his own Self; at other times he is the same as the *Vrittis*—the waves of the mind."

These three words *Grahya, Grahana, Grahitri* in that aphorism require explanation. In our present state of development we are conscious of these three entities. We have the consciousness of the ego, or the knower, we are also conscious of the external objects, and we are also conscious of the instruments of cognition. *Grahya* is the external world of perception; *Grahana,* the senses or instruments of perception, and *Grahitri* is the ego or perceiver.

There are two kinds of *Samadhi;* the lower and the higher. The lower is called *Samprajnata,* which means concentration with consciousness; and the higher *Asamprajnata* means complete absorption—or concentration without consciousness.

Samadhi without consciousness of external objects is the higher—why? In the former you become absorbed either in the five gross elements, or their subtle essences, or in the instruments of perception—eyes, ears, etc., or in the ego; but in this latter *Samadhi* there is only Bliss consciousness. The lower *Samadhi,* or samadhi with

objects, has four states—first, *Vitarka* or discriminative, is that state in which you meditate upon the five gross elements in relation to time and space. For instance, you meditate upon that picture. If you meditate being conscious of time and space, that particular kind of meditation is called *Savitarka*—with discrimination; when it becomes deep and intense, when you lose all consciousness of time and space, but only remain conscious of the thing itself, that particular development is called *Nirvitarka*—literally, without discrimination.

Then, when you concentrate upon the five subtle senses, in time and space, that kind of concentration is called *Savichara,* with deliberation, but when you lose consciousness of time and space and become lost in the essence of these elements, that is called *Nirvichara*—without deliberation, and then when you meditate upon the senses within yourself, that state is called *Sananda,* blissful, and meditation upon the ego itself is called *Sasmita.*

When you become absorbed in any of these states of *Samadhi,* there is cause for return; that is why it is also called *Savija* or *Savikalpa*—with seed or with thought. And the other *Samadhi, Asamprajnata* is called *Nirvija* or *Nirvikalpa,* without seed or without thought, because there is no return from that; all seeds of action become roasted and lose power of germination; all your *Karma* becomes extinct in that *Samadhi* and there is no cause for further incarnation. It is the highest *Samadhi.*

If you will read that book you can find the description of these two kinds of *Samadhi*. Perhaps by reading the translation you will not understand the real meaning, as I said the other day, these aphorisms are only short mnemonic sentences; they are intended not to teach the practice or expound the philosophy, but to enable the student to memorize the principle by the briefest possible sentences. You have to study it under a teacher. It requires comments and explanations.

The third chapter is devoted to the description of powers, *Vibhutis*. In the fourth aphorism the application of the *Will* is explained. That is, that one aphorism contains in a nutshell the meaning of all the other aphorisms that follow. How to control the Will, and how to operate it. That is the secret of all powers, the control and application of the Will.

You hear so much about healing methods, such as Christian Science, Psychotherapy, etc. He who possesses the control of the Will knows how to apply it and can heal almost any disease.

I have not much time this afternoon, but I want to describe to you briefly the great powers that sometimes come to the *Yogin*. Patanjali, the author of this system, while he described, as a scientist, these various powers and how to cultivate and concentrate them, has warned us against them. He said: "These powers are powers in the *Vyutthana* state (in this state we are conscious of all external things). While we dwell in this

state of lost balance, they are powers, but they are obstacles or hindrances to *Samadhi,* the state of supersensuous realization." You will find this in the 38th aphorism of the third book.

If you are curious enough you can cultivate these powers. These are possibilities, but to cultivate them, you have to practice various exercises, perhaps for fifteen years. Just as, if you want to become a musician, you have to study for ten or fifteen years; so, if you wish to develop and employ these powers, you have to practice certain methods; and there are eight powers that the *Yogin* can attain.

To develop these powers you have to practice many exercises in posture, breathing and concentration; then you will gradually learn how to apply your Will and operate them.

There is only one substance or energy; out of that one the many have come; if you can get in touch with that one fundamental energy you can know the secret of all these things that represent various units of Power. For instance: you can remain here and hide yourself so that others will not be able to see you. By converting your physical self into that invisible substance, you can practice this. It is called *Antardhana*—disappearance. Before all these people you can hide yourself—not by going behind a screen, but sitting right here and detaching yourself from their sight. The first of the eight great powers is called *Anima*—making oneself as small

as an atom. The next is *Laghima,* or levitation, the power to become as light as wool. I knew a man who had this power, but I did not see him do this lifting of himself into the air. He did it once or twice in his life.

This you can do by *Kumbhaka,* an exercise of *Pranayama.* There are three exercises in *Pranayama:* first is *Puraka,* the filling—you fill your physical self with the essence of air. Then you hold or retain it, and when you hold that air you make yourself as light as a piece of cotton wool. Then you can rise into the air like a balloon. It is not a miraculous thing. If a balloon can rise when it is filled with coal gas, or hydrogen gas, why can't you fill your body with the essence of *Prana* and lift it in the air? The third exercise is called *Rechaka*—exhaling or emptying the body of the air you have charged it with.

You can photograph through the wall by means of the X-Ray. If the X-Ray can do that, why can't your mind do it? Mind is subtler than the X-Ray. But we have to develop that power gradually.

The third power is called *Mahima,* the power to expand oneself into space; just as in the first you can reduce yourself to an atom. By this power you can enlarge yourself.

The fourth power is called *Prapti,* by which you can reach anywhere.

The fifth power is called *Prakamya.* By this all your wishes are realized.

The sixth power is *Ishitwa,* the power to create.

The seventh power, *Vashitwa,* is the power to command.

The eighth power is called *Yatrakamavasayita*—literally, the power to transmute.

These are the powers that the *Yogin* can attain, and they are called *Vibhutis.* However, all the great teachers have warned us against the attainment of these powers. Toward the end of this book Pantanjali says: "Supreme union, or *Kaivalya,* is attained only then when we can realize the vanity and hollowness of these powers."

The highest power is the power to renounce all powers. After all, these powers come and go. As I have said in the beginning, you can become even a *Brahma,* a ruler of the universe, for a period of ten million years. Even then you will not be free, because you still remain bound to the chain of *Karma.* You have to come back. You see all great teachers have taught us to renounce all desire for powers.

We are told a story to illustrate the emptiness of powers. Once a man attained the power of walking on water, after fifteen years of practice. You know, we have to practice certain methods for many years to attain to a *Vibhuti,* power, and the attainment of this one power took him fifteen years, and then he came to his *Guru* and told him that he could walk on water. The *Guru* said: "Those fifteen years you have wasted, because the practical value of this power is only one penny. When you

wish to cross a stream or a river you can do that by paying one penny on the ferry."

All people are seeking for freedom from misery. There are the seekers of health; why should we seek health? Because we want to be free from sickness. Then there are the seekers of wealth and power, and again the seekers of knowledge. Those who seek after knowledge are the wisest. Because knowledge alone can give us eternal freedom.

If one can ever acquire the power to so expand his body as to contain in it the whole universe, even then one is not free from all misery. When you have attained that great power, when you can put the universe in yourself, even then you are not entirely freed from all sorrow and suffering, because you have not yet seen the light of knowledge.

So, that light alone can dispel all ignorance and lead to eternal freedom and peace and bliss. Knowledge is the Highest Power.

THE SCIENCE OF BREATHING AND CONCENTRATION

BREATHING is such an important function in our life that the Sanskrit word *Atma,* which literally means the soul, or the self, is a synonym of the word *Prana,* which means breath. In the Bible we read: "God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living spirit."

The most obvious manifestation of life is breath. As soon as the baby is born we try to know whether the baby is alive or not by feeling the breath. If it is breathing we consider it alive; and the sign of death is the cessation of breathing. But, unfortunately, very few people know how to breathe correctly. I believe that if everyone knew how to breathe correctly, there would be no disease upon earth.

In India, our philosophers, in the most ancient times, developed a most perfect system of psychology. This system is known as *Rajayoga.* In it we find eight steps of yoga, and breathing is one of the most important of them. The Sanskrit word for the science of breathing is *Pranayama.* There are two words in it, *Prana* and *ayama. Prana* means the spirit, or the breath, and *ayama*

means control, so *Pranayama* means the control of breath. From this control of breath follow health, strength, longevity and many powers like thought transference and clairvoyance. The author of this system was a scientist, and he developed these powers for the sake of experiment, but has warned us against them. If these powers are not properly used they act as an obstacle in the way of our further spiritual development; but if we can use these powers as an aid in our spiritual progress, they are harmless, but otherwise they are very dangerous.

This description of *Prana* we find in the Upanishads: "Whatever we find in this world of ours, whether moving or unmoving, has come from *Prana*." *Prana* literally means that which vibrates, that which moves. Here we find a brief account of the theory of vibrations.

According to Newton, there are three laws of motion: rhythm, inertia and activity, and, curiously enough, these three laws correspond to the three elements of *Prakriti*, and these three elements were discovered by Kapila, the first Hindu psychologist, at least 1500 years before Christ.

Let us discuss for a moment Kapila's conception of *Prakriti*, the primordial substance. Out of it all these things have come. *Prakriti* is the undifferentiated cosmic essence. All these things that we perceive around us can be reduced to something that is incomprehensible, unthinkable, something that can't be analyzed into still finer

or subtler substances. *Prakriti* is that substance from which atoms and electrons are formed.

Out of the vibration or motion of these three elements, the whole universe has come into existence. We will take up this subject in one of our classes this season. It is a very interesting study because, while the author as a scientist has dealt with *Prakriti,* the first material principle of the universe, at the same time has not overlooked the spirit principle, and that principle he calls *Purusha.* According to this philosophy, the whole universe is the product of the conjunction of *Prakriti* and *Purusha. Prakriti* represents the material cause, and *Purusha* the intelligent cause. That is, one without the other cannot create. There is an eternal contact between them, and that is the cause of creation or Evolution.

When these three elements lose their equilibrium, then there is developed a sort of motion or action. The first evolute of this action is called *Mahat*—the great—the universal mind; the other evolutes follow further motion.

The whole universe is nothing but different modes or manifestations of these vibrations. What we call solids, gases and liquids, are nothing but representations of the different states, or degrees of the vibration, of these elementary atoms, or electrons. There is no substantial difference between a gas, a solid and a liquid. They contain the same energy or the same substance only in different degrees.

Then, lastly, he says that these five gross elements, ether, air, fire, water and earth, are nothing but the gradual evolution of five subtle elements called *Tanmatras*. From the first principle, *Prakriti,* comes *Mahat,* which means the great mind, the universal mind.

You see, mind is the cause of matter. Matter is not the cause of mind. According to the materialist, mind or intelligence is the result of the combination of the cells. According to our theory of evolution, mind is the first. Mind creates matter. Without mind matter cannot exist.

Ahamkara, the next evolute, is the name of the individual mind. Literally, it means the subjective mind, or the ego. Then from *Ahamkara*, subjectivation, come the five subtle elements, *tanmatras*, and the ten senses. From the *tanmatras* evolve the five gross elements.

What are these five subtle elements? They are the essences or the rudiments of the five gross elements, but these rudiments or subtle essences you cannot detect with the eyes, even by a microscope you cannot see them, and out of their combinations in different proportions have come these five gross elements.

Last of all are the five gross elements. There is no substantial difference between one element and another. If you analyze them, you will have to trace them back to the mother principle, *Prakriti.* So, what we see and what we hear practically are the same. In fact, we do not see a thing. When we see, we perceive the vibration

of color through light. We don't hear, we hear the vibration of sound through ether and these senses of perception are only instruments. To understand this psychology we have to study the triune nature of man.

We have three entities in our nature: a mind, a body and a soul. A thorough and complete knowledge of these three entities that constitute man leads one to the supreme goal.

Only intellectual knowledge will not be sufficient; you have to first know the nature of the body and the nature of the mind and their relationship; then to realize the true nature of the spirit or soul.

According to *Samkhya,* the whole universe is nothing but spiritualized matter. You have to know the spiritual laws before you can know the relation between matter and spirit.

Now, by the way, according to the *Vedanta* philosophy, which is sometimes called *Uttar Mimamsa,* the whole universe is nothing but materialized spirit.

The most obvious difference between these two systems of philosophy is this.

Samkhya literally means the philosophy of numbers. It comes from the Sanskrit word *Samkhya* (number). It is a scientific philosophy of numbers. By right knowledge of twenty-four principles, as described a few minutes ago, we attain to the supreme truth.

You all know, Pythagoras believed that number is the cause of the universe, or first principle of the universe is

number. You find it even in music. In music there is nothing but the rhythm. In art there is the dimension, in poetry—metre, and all these things are measured by numbers. Meter, lines, rhythm, etc., are expressions of ideas in terms of numbers.

Pythagoras derived this idea that number is the cause of the universe from *Samkhya* philosophy. According to some scholars, he came to India, and most probably was influenced by the teachings of this philosophy. Kapila endeavored to explain all the conditions of life on the grounds of reason. He was the first evolutionist. Monier Williams once said that the Hindus were Darwinians centuries before Darwin, Spinozites centuries before Spinoza, and evolutionists centuries before the word evolution existed in the vocabulary of any western language.

We can find defects in the Darwinian Theory of evolution, because Darwin has left the soul out of the scope. He was a biologist and believed in the "Survival of the fittest," "Natural selection;" and so on. He took no cognisance of the soul. In fact, he openly ignored it. He was concerned with the evolution of species through "Struggle for existence."

But Kapila has accepted the Soul as one of the most important principles of his Theory of Evolutoin. Darwin holds that one species physically evolves into another through struggle for existence, but Kapila says: "The evolution of one species into another is effectuated by the

struggle of the soul, to become perfect and free from bondage of matter;" that is, the soul itself endeavors to assume these different forms to accomplish its own liberation, "Just as when we remove the obstacles from the channel of the water, when we irrigate our farms and the water flows by its own power of mobility; so the soul, through its own power, passes from one body to another until it becomes entirely free."

The principle of evolution through vibration of the spirit—*Prana*—we find further described in the Upanishads: "Whatever we see in this world has come from the vibration of *Prana:* By the command of *Prana* the fire burns, the sun shines, the wind blows, and death stalks upon this earth."

So *Prana* or spirit is the cause of all *Sristi*—projection. *Pranayama* literally means the control of Breath. In our individual systems we have these three entities—mind, body and soul, or spirit. When these three remain in a state of balance or harmony, then there is no disease. Disease means want of harmony or ease in the spirit, mind and body.

If we can keep the spirit and mind in a normal state then there is no disease. But few people can keep the mind and the spirit well poised, harmonious and peaceful.

By practice of *Pranayama* we can restore these three elements in us to a state of harmony and poise. We can overcome all physical ailments if we know the secret.

When these entities get out of harmony with each other, then follow disease, distress, and even death.

We shall come again to this point later.

Pranayama is the fourth step in the eight steps that Patanjali has put forth in his philosophy. The last is *Samadhi,* complete absorption in the Bliss of Brahman. We can reach this through concentration. Concentration is impossible unless the body is in a normal state. How can we restore the body to at least a partially normal state? No doubt it would be best if we can make the body perfectly normal.

According to *Hatha-yoga* the control of the mind, or concentration, follows the control of the breath. The body is compared to a pot or pitcher—an epitome of the macrocosm—the great universe. If we can know all the elements and powers in the body, then we can know everything in the universe. Whatever is here, in this body, can be found also in the universe; and conversely, whatever can be found in the universe can be found also in the body.

So, to know all about the universe, all its forces and elements, we have to study this microcosm, the smaller universe, the embodied self.

According to *Raja-yoga* we have three currents in our physical system. *Ida* is the sensory current and *Pingala* is the motor current and *Susumna* is the current lying evenly between them.

Studying the human nature, one finds that the spinal

structure is the most important factor in Physiology. There are two nervous systems, cerebrospinal and sympathetic, and to have a complete knowledge of them you have to study the spinal structure.

What is the spine? There are thirty-three bones in the spine. The two currents *Ida* and *Pingala* pass along each side of the spinal structure and *Susumna* passes between them through a narrow channel in the spinal cord. By right breathing we can open this channel. In ordinary humans this channel is closed at the bottom. Only those who practice *Pranayama*, in them this channel is opened.

It extends from *Muladhar* at the root of the spine, to *Sahasrara* or the pineal gland in the brain. There is action in this channel. If this channel functions properly, then there follows a harmony in the physical system, and that makes for health and happiness.

We live neither by inbreathing nor by outbreathing, but we live by a different principle, the spirit. If the spirit is in perfect condition, then all parts and organs in the body function perfectly.

Prana energy has five functions; the upper function is also called *Prana*. The lower is called *Apana*. *Prana* controls the respiratory system, and the lower, *Apana*, controls the digestive function.

Then there are the equilibrating function, the distributing and the projecting functions. If these functions are performed in the right way, then the result is harmony

and health. These last three functions are called *Samana, Udana* and *Vyana.*

Let us discuss for a moment the different steps in Breathing. First of all, deep breathing. We must always breathe deeply, and by deep breathing the lungs are properly exercised. The lungs cannot be exercised in any other way. Because our breathing is very shallow, only a part of the lungs is used and exercised. The lungs are never exercised in the ordinary way of breathing—I mean the whole lungs, including the lower lobes—and the result is that that part of the lungs which is not exercised becomes the breeding ground of disease germs. The neurones become atrophied, and that is the cause of consumption.

But, if we know how to breathe deeply and practice it, we can properly exercise the lungs. In ordinary breathing, only one-fifth of the lung power is used, and four-fifths are never exercised. Just think of it. In twenty-four hours, 35,000 pints of blood traverse the capillaries of the lungs. The blood is one-sixth of the weight of the whole body, and this blood must be properly oxygenated. If blood is properly exposed to ozone, then it contains more than fifty percent of red corpuscles, and becomes pure. Pure blood means pure body and mind, and better health.

So, by systematic deep breathing we not only strengthen the lungs, but purify the blood, too. Those people who have liver troubles or intestinal troubles, if they

practice correct breathing together with some physical exercises, they can derive great benefits. They should practice deep breathing—inhaling and exhaling—with this exercise: First stand erect for a moment, then while breathing in slowly, lower the upper part of the body, holding the lower part firm; and when breathing out, slowly raise the upper body until it is erect again; by this exercise liver congestion can be removed. This and similar exercises will also strengthen the abdominal walls. In fact, all the muscles in the abdomen become strong and normal through these exercises.

Not only that, but deep breathing leads to longevity. You know, a certain number of breaths are allotted to our life time. In ordinary breathing, I think we breathe fifteen times per minute. In one hour we breathe nine hundred times, and in twenty-four hours we breathe 21,600 times. Now, by the use of economy in breathing, we can reduce this number. Remember that a certain number of breaths are allotted to our life-time, but if in one hour instead of breathing 900 times, you breathe 1,800, then so much of your life time is exhausted; but if, on the contrary, you breathe 600 times instead of 900 times, you save that much, *i.e.*, you prolong your life for another 300 breaths.

By practice you can reduce the number of your breaths. Remember this: always breathe through your nostrils, and not through your mouth. Your mouth is not intended for breathing—it was intended for eating. The

nostrils filter the air and in cold weather the membranes in the nostrils warm it, and in hot weather they cool it. Therefore, always breathe through the nostrils, and not through the mouth.

In India we say that the people who talk much do not live long, because they have to breathe through the mouth, but if you can practice nose breathing systematically, even when you sleep, you can breathe through your nostrils. By slow and deep breathing we can reduce the number of breaths to nil and yet we can live.

Here is an illustration. In India two men were dug out from thirty feet under the earth, and when they were brought out, they were alive, but they were not breathing. The physicians declared that there was no respiration—no inhaling—no exhaling. Yet they were alive. How? Because they were attuned to *Prana* and lived in and through the spirit itself.

Then in the next step, we practice what is called *Puraka, Kumbhaka, Rechaka*—inhalation, retention and exhalation. After you have practiced the inbreathing and outbreathing for a long time, you should take up this exercise.

In this way we practice these three acts. You breathe in slowly and gently. When you breathe you have to add a thought. You have to think that you are filling the whole system with *Prana* substance. Without that thought you do not get the best results. Relax the body—do not stiffen it, and breathe slowly and gently. Think

that you are filling the whole system, from head to foot, with *Prana* energy. Then hold the breath, feeling the fullness of *Prana* essence. The exhalation should also be equally slow. This is called the process of equalization. In breathing, inhaling and exhaling should be equalized; *i. e.*, these three acts should be done in the same length of time.

To practice *Pranayama* you will have to practice some exercises in posture. Always try to hold the body straight yet not stiff.

When you breathe in, think that you are taking in the best and purest substance from the air. When you practice retention, think that the whole system has been filled with it, and when you breathe it out, think that you are sending forth to all beings vibrations of health and happiness.

Then, lastly, we practice alternate breathing. We close the right nostril with the thumb of the right hand, and breathe in through the left nostril. Then close the left nostril also with the other fingers of the right hand and retain the breath, then breathe out through the right nostril. Then reversing the order, we inhale through that nostril through which we have exhaled and so on. When you inhale, count 4; when you retain, count 16, and when you exhale, count 8. The ratio of inhalation, retention and exhalation is 1:4:2. According to the preponderance of the *gunas*, elements—viz., *Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas*—the length of the currents changes. So, by feeling the

length of the breath, you can tell which *guna* or element is preponderant and change the currents. In the normal state you breathe equally through both nostrils. In this practice we keep the counts by muttering sacred words like *Aum.*

Says Krishna in the Gita: "That man indeed is free who has been able to concentrate upon the space between the eyebrows, shutting out all external objects of perception, and equalizing the two currents—*Prana* and *Apana* —that pass through the nostrils."

There are six important centers in the spine, but I have no time now to describe them. We should concentrate upon the space between the eyebrows, and we should equalize the ingoing and outgoing breaths, and by that way we should control all our desires and thoughts.

This is the moral effect of breathing. If you can restore yourself to that serene, normal condition, which is called *Samattva,* you will remain at peace everywhere and always.

GOD AND METHODS OF WORSHIP

THREE things constitute the subject matter of all religions and all systems of philosophy, God, Soul and Nature. This afternoon we will discuss the first one, God.

This is Emerson's definition of God: "God is an infinite circle whose center is everywhere, but circumference is nowhere." This center is the soul of man. Man and God are eternally one. In our philosophy, man and God are not only co-eternal but co-equal. When the Supreme Brahman manifests Himself behind the universe He is called "God," and when that same Brahman manifests Himself in a form like ours He is called a "man." Our philosophy is primarily based upon the principle of oneness of man and God.

Krishna says: "God dwells in the hearts of all beings; Oh Arjuna!" In that verse he gives his own definition of God. God dwells in the hearts of all beings; not only in the hearts of men, but in the hearts of all beings.

God is here, there and everywhere. According to Vedanta, God is not a person who dwells in Heaven, a place beyond the region of the clouds. No. The Vedantic idea of God is not a homo-centric idea. According to some, God exists only for the welfare of man; He has

created man, and He takes care of man only. I call that God homo-centric. And then there are others who say that God created this world in six days, and that on the seventh day He rested. I want to point out to you one absurdity in this conception of creation.

In this same account of creation you will find that one afternoon God created all the planets. Now, those of you who have studied astronomy will know how large some of these planets are. Light travels at a velocity of 186,000 miles per second, and the lights from some planets have not yet reached this earth. And there are some planets like the sun, which are three hundred million times larger and hotter than this sun; and if this earth comes as near one as it is to this sun of ours, it will be burnt into ashes in a moment. So, how could God create in one afternoon all these great planets, when it took him six days to create this earth of ours?

We do not believe in the sort of a God who, if you praise Him, is pleased and will reward you, and if you do not praise Him, will be angry and punish you. Our God is a God of love whether you worship Him or not. The higher the culture of a nation, the sublimer is its conception of God; and to this point I will return later.

In this country you have people who through prejudice and ignorance think that the Hindus in India are all idolatrous. There are some idolatrous people in India. But the Hindus do not worship idols, they worship the ideals. These idols are only symbols representing a great

idea, in fact, they worship the One Infinite God through these emblems.

In India again, we have this other conception of God. There religion has never been narrowed by dogmatism—the religion of India is a record of spiritual experiences of man from the lowest to the highest. That is what is meant by the Hindu religion. It is not a religion, but it is a synthesis of all spiritual ideas and thoughts. It is not based on personalities. It believes in personalities, but it does not stand entirely for them.

"God is that Being who has never been touched by affliction, action, fruition and disposition." This definition presents to us a personal idea of God, but it is not entirely personal. This is an impersonally personal God. Why is this conception impersonally personal? Because He has a name and qualities, He may be called personal, and because He has no form He is impersonal. He is not the creator of the world; but the ruler of it.

Let us discuss for a moment the three answers that are advanced to this most important question: "Is there a God?"

The first answer is affirmative, "Yes." Now, the man who believes in the existence of a God, or who advances that answer "Yes," I have a right to ask him to produce evidence in support of his assertion. He says: "How is it possible that there is no God? When we perceive in this world so much intelligence—why, the creator of this world must be an intelligent Being."

Now, my dear friends, this inference or conclusion that there is a God, from the existence of this world and its intelligent mechanism, is not correct. It is not analogous to the suggestion of a watchmaker from the ingenuity of the watch.

Why should we postulate a God to account for creation? Because of the existence of this world, and the presence in it of ingenuity—why should we say that the creator of all this is an intelligent Being? We need not assume a God in order to explain creation. That is a far-fetched conclusion.

Then there are others who deny God. I might ask them what proofs they have that there is no God. Just as I ask the other man who believes in a God, to advance satisfactory evidence to substantiate his belief; so I might ask these men to produce proof that there is no God?

The unbeliever cannot produce any satisfactory evidence, either.

Then, the third answer is: "I don't know."

If I have to be sincere, to be true to myself, and since I have not perceived God, would it be right for me to assert that there is a God? Our belief in God is based upon hearsay evidence. These people who preach God, give long sermons on God, do they know Him? They speak from hearsay only. They base all their arguments on what they hear from others. It is not a matter of knowledge with them, why should we be satisfied with theories only? Why should we not have our own eyes

opened so that we may see God and have all doubts removed by that direct knowledge?

I do not believe that there is any person without a God. When I say this, I do not mean of course an anthropomorphic or extracosmic God, but I mean the infinite and universal spirit. There is no man who does not believe in an idea. Even the rankest atheist believes in something. Whatever he believes in is his God. This relation of man to his ideal is religion.

If we dogmatically hold that God is our "Father in Heaven", He cannot be our mother, he cannot be our friend, but just that "Father in Heaven," then we make a terrible mistake.

In this sort of dogmatic religions one great factor in our human nature is ignored, and that is the psychological factor; no two of us are alike, each has his own tendencies and taste and capacity for religion; one must have his own religion. That is, that religion or ideal which is suited to that individual. It is his private affair. It lies entirely between him and his ideal.

By being good we do good to ourselves, just as by being bad or wicked we do real harm to ourselves and not to others. That man who can recognize his relationship with his ideal, and can finally realize it, is a religious man. I believe that every man believes in an ideal, that he has a kinship with this ideal, and the realization of it is his religion.

There is one urge constantly prompting us—the de-

sire to be happy—and under this urge all our acts are done; the mother holds her baby in her arms and kisses him, and the murderer kills a man under that same urge. The motive in its last analysis is the same—only the methods of its expression are different—one is called right and the other wrong.

So, everyone believes in a God. He may not call this God a personal God with name and form, he may not worship Him as "Father in Heaven", but he believes in something and that something is his God.

We do not curse a person who, through scientific scepticism, cannot accept this anthropomorphic conception of God—that God is "Our Father in Heaven." We do not curse anybody. There is no curse in our religion. The difference between one man and another is in the degree of expression of the self within. There is no other difference. We believe that the soul of one is just as divine as that of another man—the Buddha or the Christ, for example.

There are in India many theories to determine the nature of God. As I said, in India religion is the field of infinite variation. In fact there are many religious beliefs in India. We hold that there should be as many religions as there are human beings, because religion is our conception of truth, and truth is truth only when it is our truth by our own realization.

I appeal to all men and women that no self-respecting person should accept anything dogmatic as final. Al-

ways reserve your right to reason for yourself. To think wrongly is far better than never to think at all.

So, never sign away this right for a mess of pottage. Always reserve that right, your God-given right, to reason and to think and to know for yourself. There is no second-hand knowledge in truth. There is only one knowledge, and we call it *"aparoksha anubhuti"*—direct perception. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

The Hindus never believed that God created this world from His will. Will is not a material substance. Now, if you say that God has not created this world from His will, but a pre-existent substance like the nebulous masses, I say "Who created the nebulous masses"? Then you will never come to a stopping point and make the fallacy of *"regressus ad infinitum."*

People say that God is merciful, God is just. If He is a just God, an omnipotent God, an all-wise God, then how is it that we do not find in His creation justice and impartiality? Mind you, these believers believe that we are created only once—that we come here for one term of life only. We do not find justice in this world; some are rich, some are poor, some are sick, some are healthy and so on.

What is the cause of this inequality in the lives of men, if God is just, merciful, wise and omnipotent? Why, in His infinite wisdom, love and power, did He not give us all the same equal opportunities, when we are here only for

one incarnation? That establishes only a divine caprice. That is not justice and love and wisdom.

Buddha never believed in this sort of God. He said that if this God is an omnipotent and benevolent God, why by His infinite power and love did He not make us all equally happy and healthy and prosperous? Then he says, if this God cannot give you a comfortable life here, a shelter, food, clothing and so on, how can He give you eternal happiness in a future existence? I will have nothing to do with that God. In the Western World this idea of God prevails even to-day. They do not dare to question it, and if you reason and question they will tell you that the devil is working in you—that you are possessed by the devil. What is all this?

Some people go to India and stay a few days, they rush through some cities, and come back to America, and then say that the Hindus are idolatrous—that they worship stones and images. We can explode all their conception of God. We worship ideals, the things that are eternal; things that can make our life really beautiful and blissful. We are not lost in the glamour of materialism.

When these people return from India and say that we in India are idolatrous; we may say that in the Western World the dollar is the first thing. In India we place our religion before the dollar—God first, then come other things. We must practice our religious exercises first, and then attend to other things.

Let us discuss this question more fully: This God who

creates, is He a free God, or is He a bound God? And if He is not a free God, why should we worship Him? If He creates, then He is not free, because that means that He is in need of something. A God who is in need or want cannot be a free God, and if He is bound by desire, why should we worship Him? Conversely, if He is a free God He cannot create.

If you study the dogmatism and materialism of the Western World you will be in a position to know how the Hindus are idolatrous. Of course, we have a phase in our religion called *Pratika* worship, or worship of symbols and substitutes. It is only a lower phase and not the whole of religion.

When the theory of evolution first made its appearance in the Western World it was fought by the Church as calculated to destroy all religion by overthrowing the Bible account of creation. If it had come in the days of the Inquisition, it is easy to guess what fate would have befallen its adherents.

Religious persecution is unknown in India. Although we have so many theories of religion—yet no blood was ever shed in its sacred name. And every man has a right to advance his own theory of God. Every man is free to choose his own religion—*Swadharma.* Freedom must be given to every one, even if we make mistakes by that freedom. We learn by mistakes. He who thinks and works makes mistakes, and he who does not think and work does not make mistakes.

Salvation does not come to the individual who is lazy. Salvation comes to those who work for it, who pay the price for it. You have to pay for everything here. Do you think that religion is so cheap that you can buy it for money? You can deceive mankind, but you can not deceive God.

There are some disbelievers who have a dread in their hearts for being known as atheists, because if they are known as such they will lose their positions. In these people the fear of man is greater than the fear of Truth. In India even in the ancient times there were fearless people like Kapila and Buddha, and to-day too, in a family different members have different religious ideas; one may be an image worshipper, another a monotheist, a third a monist, and so on.

Then there is the theory of Monism. According to this theory, the whole universe is the projection of one infinite, eternal Brahman. That is, Brahman is both the material as well as efficient cause. Just as the spider can produce a net out of himself and take it within himself, even so this whole universe has come out of this Brahman, as easily as we breathe out, and can be taken back into Brahman, in the same way. This process of evolution and involution is going on for all eternity.

One missionary, after reading this passage, said,—just imagine this spirit of misrepresentation:— "The God of the Hindus is a big black spider—He sits in the middle of His net." But that is only a simile to illustrate the idea.

Then there is another theory, which is still higher, *"Ajatavada,"* which does not believe in manifestation at all, not even in evolution. Then, when we ask the follower, "How do you account for this creation?" he replies "This is just a dream; you see so many things in the dream of your sleep, but when you wake up they all vanish. This is a world dream, a longer one, and there is an awakening from this dream, and when we shall awaken from it then we shall know the Truth. This universe and all these things that we now perceive shall cease to exist."

In India God is worshipped in many forms. We establish different relationships with God. We may worship God as father, as mother, as master, as friend, and so on. These are only different devotional attitudes, but there is the common element, love, in them all. We have a certain kind of relation to our father, a certain kind of attitude to our mother, and so on, and we can also have the same relationships with God. Whether you worship Him as father, mother or master; it makes no difference, as long as you love Him.

In the most ancient times in India the conception of motherhood of God was fully evolved, because we never believed that woman is man's inferior. On the contrary—we believe that woman is superior to man. In the house the mother eats her meals last. First of all she serves her guests and children. That is her privilege, —and then she eats last.

The missionaries say we do not pay respect to women. That is their idea. This idea of motherhood of God explains the Hindu attitude toward womanhood. In the Western World there is only one woman who is worshipped, and that is Mary. But in India we pay divine honor to all women. "All women are the incarnations of the Divine Mother."

So, we have in India these different attitudes toward God, just as we have different attitudes to our parents, children, friends and relatives. Through these attitudes we endeavor to realize relationship to our ideal. That is religion. There are four forms of worship. In the lowest form we worship with external things. In the next higher grade we worship with chanting hymns, and in the next higher form we worship with meditation. In the highest form we realize our oneness with God.

In closing, I will translate one verse to you. It is attributed to Hanumana—the great devotee of Rama:

"When I am a dualist, I worship Thee as my master; when I am a qualified monist I consider myself as Thy part; and when I am a monist, I know that Thou and I are one."

So, we proceed from the lowest to the highest in the process of spiritual evolution. Religion is the record of the experiences of man through all these stages. When we can realize that, we can find harmony and peace everywhere and with all men.

LOVE OF SILENCE, SOLITUDE AND PEACE

SILENCE is a great power. It is the language of the soul. Sometimes out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaks, but more often, out of the fulness of the heart the mouth stops. Realizing the inadequacy of language, all the great teachers and masters of the world have advocated silence. Silence is golden and speech is silver.

In the Yoga philosophy we find this passage: "The first gate to meditation is silence." Confucius, the great teacher in China, lived in the fifth century B. C., and was a great lover of silence. Once he took some of his students out on an excursion and they came to a museum. In the museum there was a statue and on the lips of this statue there were three clasps. Under it were written these words: "The ancients talked little; it is good for us to imitate them; those who talk much are liable to say things that should not have been said."

We have to control the thoughts; true inspiration always comes through silence. That is why all the great masters were themselves silent, and taught their disciples to be silent.

After drawing the attention of his disciples to that

writing, Confucius told them that this virtue cannot be practiced too much. We must always be silent. By unnecessary talk we waste energy. Those people who have the fulness of thought, talk very little. If a vessel is empty it sounds, but if it is full it does not sound. As long as the bee does not sit upon a flower and eat the honey, she buzzes; but as soon as she sits upon the flower and tastes the sweetness of the honey all her buzzing ceases.

Once a disciple came to a master and asked him to tell him about Brahman, and the master remained silent. He endeavored to express his knowledge of Brahman in the language of the soul, but the disciple could not respond to it and asked him a second, a third and a fourth time to tell him about Brahman. But this man still maintained his silence. Then after a long time he said: "I have been trying to tell you about Brahman, but Brahman is silence. The knowledge of Brahman has never been desecrated by being expressed." So, to know Brahman, we have to be silent; to express that knowledge we have to be speechless.

Once three poets arranged a meeting and they planned a long conversation, but after they had met they went into silence, and remained in that state for several hours, and when they departed they said: "We have had the best conversation to-day." If we can be silent out of that fulness of knowledge and understanding, then we don't have to speak in words. Words are a very inadequate method of expression of thought. We have to talk, be-

cause we don't possess that power, but if we can be silent through right knowledge and understanding, our silence will speak much louder and more eloquently than words.

We have to understand the principle or the spirit and if we can do it, we naturally become silent. The *Vedas* were *Mantras,* which mean "The expressions of the inner realization of the truth." That which is inspired through the mind, and expresses itself spontaneously, is a *Mantra.* The *Vedas* were not ordinary conventional words, but outbursts of the inner understanding. If we can have that inner understanding we naturally become full and firm and noiseless, even like the bee gathering honey from flowers, or the pitcher filled with water.

There are three kinds of silence; first of all, there is the kind of silence in which we are told to speak in moderation, partial silence and that requires great self-control; to use only such words as are necessary. Then, there are some people who take the vow of silence, but occasionally chant some sacred names or verses from the Scripture. And then there is the total silence.

In India I saw many people who betook themselves to total or complete silence for several years. Some take the vow of lifelong silence and never talk. Those people who do not talk much, or who do not talk at all, make a great moral and physical progress; even if they do not make any spiritual progress. They derive a great physical benefit from the practice of silence, because they conserve their energy. In the Gita Krishna says: "Of all the

secrets, I am the secret of silence," and when describing the three kinds of *tapas* or penance he says: "Contentment, kindliness, silence and self-restraint, and purity of thought constitute mental *tapas*." So, silence is a most important discipline in our spiritual life, and if we can practice it systematically then we can find illumination in the soul.

Pythagoras, who according to some scholars had visited India, after his return to Greece, founded a school where he introduced the practice of silence as a part of discipline. The students had to undergo five or six years' training, and for one or two years they had to practice silence. We must practice that great virtue. Those who talk too much of God, even they are apt to take the name of God in vain. In silence we find a great moral and spiritual power through which we can become seers of truth. To live in solitude is not the end of life; the end of life is to practice spirituality in the street as well as in the retreat. We must retire into the retreat from time to time where we can be alone and where we can commune with Nature and Nature's God; there we find the deepest inspiration and the greatest illumination. From time to time everyone should retire and live at least a few days in solitude. Three places are most congenial for meditation; a retreat, a chapel and the mind. We can meditate best and commune with God in the mind after we have attained the power of concentration by practice of silence in solitude, or a secluded corner of the chapel.

How to maintain the calm and freedom of solitude in the midst of the crowd is the lesson that Krishna has taught in the Gita.

The Gita was taught on a field of battle, when two armies were going to engage in a great fight. At that critical moment Krishna taught Arjuna the *yoga* of calmness and peace.

You might ask, "How could lessons of serenity and calmness be taught on a field of battle?" That is the most appropriate time to think most seriously of the conditions of life and that is the test of power, the power of concentration and self-control.

Nowhere in our Scriptures do we find it ordained that one must retire all his life from the duties of this world and live a life of inaction in the forest; it is only a means to the attainment of that spiritual harmony which is the end of life. Krishna in the Gita has emphasized mental and spiritual non-attachment; no matter where we are, we can maintain constantly the disposition of calmness and tranquillity. We must always endeavor to develop that state of the mind. There alone is power and peace.

Why did these great teachers become silent? Because this peace that they experienced defies all description. From that understanding word returns baffled with the mind; the mind can never comprehend it and words can never express it. In that state one becomes mute like a dumb person. When a dumb person eats something very sweet he can't express it; he has not the power of

expression, when he eats something more sweet, he becomes still more silent. How can there be any expression? "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." Those who have real spiritual realization are always silent and quiet.

Here is a simile to illustrate that: If you put some fish, like the minnow, in a bowl of water, they splash and flutter; but a whale in the deep waters makes no motion or signs on the water's surface.

Those who have the understanding inwardly, in the depths of the soul, do not know how to express it. Silence is the sign of spirituality. That is the reason why Buddha never talked of God. Because God to him was an object of great reverence and love and he did not want to take the name of God in vain. When we utter that name without response from within, it is taken in vain, and those who only talk much of God sanctimoniously are irreverent. If you know God you can't talk of Him. If you utter His name once in the day that is enough.

There was once a mischievous boy in a certain village. There was a dilapidated Shiva Temple there. One evening this boy came to that Temple, and saw a gong still hanging there, and he rang the bell to make a fun and the people in the neighborhood thought that a holy man had come and installed a new Shiva emblem there. They all hastened to the place at the sound of the gong; but when they came there they saw this boy laughing in glee, and they said to him: "Oh, Podo, in your Temple

there is no Shiva, but you have made this noise for nothing."

We often make that noise, but there is no God within our Temple. If we can re-install that God and retain that consciousness, then we naturally become mute and silent. Silence is the most omnipotent power. If you can become silent out of abundance of knowledge, you do not have to speak.

The teachers of the *Vedas* were great lovers of peace. In the beginning, as well as at the close of the lessons, they always chanted a peace prayer. But what sort of peace did they mean by *"Shanti,"* the Sanskrit word for peace?

The Hindu, first of all, tries to reform himself. He tries to find peace within himself and to have his own blind eyes opened first, and then to lead others that are blind. "Fools wise in their own conceit, themselves dwelling in ignorance, go staggering to and fro like blind leaders of the blind." When a blind man leads others that are blind, they all fall into the ditch. So the Hindu prospective teacher wants his own spiritual eyes opened first. He attaches greater importance to self-discipline than other external things like preaching and writing. He knows if he can reform himself, then he will see the whole world reformed. If you have peace within yourself, then there will be peace on earth, and that was the kind of peace that these great teachers of the *Vedas* advocated.

How to attain to that peace? That peace can never be attained by talking, argumentation or by study, but that peace must reveal itself from within the soul. There is no royal road to it, but we have to fulfil certain conditions. These conditions are not the cause. For instance, if I ask a man to go to a tree and get a fruit that has already fallen on the ground, he may be fortunate enough to find a fruit on the ground when he arrives there; otherwise he will have to wait until the fruit falls. The fruit must fall in its own time. Sometimes you may find it already on the ground, but sometimes you will have to wait for it.

Worship, meditation, study, the company of good people, all these are accessories. After you have gone through all these processes you have to wait for that calmly and patiently and it shall come.

After we have practiced these exercises of meditation and concentration, we develop patience and perseverance. Sometimes we have to wait several incarnations for that, but we must never become impatient and always entertain faith and hope. It must come. It is already there, only we don't see it. So, that peace which brings real harmony and bliss to us must be sought for in the soul. "Those people who do not abstain from wrong-doing, who do not possess control of the mind and the senses, by mere intellectual comprehension they shall not reach the goal."

In this age we need a great spiritual leader. One who has attained to peace consciousness within—by spiritual

practices, and after having attained it works for others. Such a leader we need to-day. There are men who advocate peace in their utterances, but their hearts are peaceless. They are extremely insincere and selfish. These so-called "statesmen" can never establish peace on earth. I am not a prophet, but I can say this, that peace shall never be established on earth by these men, because their hearts go one way and their mouths go another way. These two do not agree. They are morally unclean and spiritually yet unborn and try to give the veneer of justice and fairness to all their endeavors for peace. They are so undeveloped that they even don't know that they are selfish and wicked.

As long as a person is selfish and has lust and greed and pride and jealousy, that person can never be peaceful and he can never establish peace on earth. This spiritual discipline is what we need to-day. Every person should be spiritual, must reform himself—self reformation is the best reformation—but unfortunately, we try to reform others without reforming ourselves. If we can reform ourselves, then those who will come to us, will also try to be reformed. We must teach not precepts alone, but also by examples. Example is more potent than precepts, and we must live our own teachings. That fact has been ignored so long. There have been very few people within the last fifty or sixty years whose thoughts and words were in harmony, and who taught only what they felt; and there was no discrepancy between their words

and their actions. Through their lives, their examples, this idea of peace must come, and it must inspire us. We find this passage in one of the *Upanishads* "That is the reality of the real; that is the life of the living; that is the one in the many, those who realize that within themselves to them belongs eternal peace and to none else, none else, none else."

That man who can renounce all lust and greed, and who has no attachment of any kind, who moves on the face of this world without any hope of gain, without any fear of loss, deserves peace.

Just as the ocean is always full, even so that person who has attained that fulness and firmness through spiritual knowledge, that person attains to peace, and none else. This shall be our idea of peace and that other method of peace shall never be a success. Just as there is a war to end war, so there is a peace to end peace. Most of the leaders boasted that this last war would be the war to end war; but one might just as well say this peace that they attained was a peace to end peace. There will be fights and wars because, in the first place the peace was not based on love and equity and then, these peacemakers did not know peace themselves. In fact, they were war-makers. The way of salvation lies through spiritual peace and silence. Therefore we must constantly endeavor to develop the power of silence, the most omnipotent power; by feeling the fulness of the spirit of the living God here and now in this most sacred Temple—

this body. There and there alone can one find harmony and peace and bliss. You do not have to preach peace in that state. Wherever you go you will diffuse it. It will act like a contagion. Those who come in contact with you will be infected with it. Let each of us become a center of true love, true bliss and true peace. In that way we can become a blessing to ourselves and we can make others, who come in contact with us, blessed.

THE PRACTICAL SPIRITUALITY IN THE GITA

No other religious book in India enjoys so much popularity as the Gita. Edwin Arnold has translated it under the most appropriate title, "The Song Celestial." The Gita is an episode in the sixth book of the great Hindu epic, the *Mahabharata.*

There are eighteen chapters in the Gita. The word *Mahabharata* means Great India; according to modern scholars, India attained the very zenith of her culture, power and civilization during the period of which the *Mahabharata* is a narrative. The *Mahabharata* is the greatest epic of all, both in size as well as in thought. It contains 220,000 lines, and it is therefore six times as large as Homer's Iliad and Virgil's Aeneid. The Iliad contains about 25,000 lines, and the Aeneid contains about 12,000 lines.

The other great Hindu epic is the *Ramayana,* and it contains 70,000 lines. The *Ramayana* is nearly twice as large as the Iliad and the Aeneid put together.

The central story of the *Mahabharata* relates, as I presume most of you know, to a rivalry between two parties of cousins entitled to inherit the same ancestral kingdom, and its associated rights and privileges.

This rivalry attained its culmination in that great War, at the commencement of which Sri Krishna is said to have taught the Gita to his friend, disciple and relative, Arjuna. The Gita is thus a dialogue between this inspired teacher and this great disciple.

There are 700 verses in the Gita, of which 600 are the utterances of Krishna Himself, and the rest are the utterances of Arjuna, Sanjaya and Dhritarastra. Before the commencement of this great War, a sage by the name of Vyasa came to the blind king, Dhritarastra, who was the father of one of these parties, asking him if he would not have his blind eyes opened so that he could see with his own eyes the events of the coming War. But Dhritarastra declined, saying that he did not wish to see with his own eyes the slaughter of his own kinsmen, but he requested this sage to so arrange that all the events of the War might be reported to him from time to time.

Accordingly, this sage conferred upon Sanjaya the clairvoyant power, the power of seeing events happening at a great distance, and Sanjaya, by that power seeing all the events of the War, reported them to this blind king.

You are all aware also of the fact that this War which is mentioned in the very first verse of the Gita is called *Dharma Yuddha,* which means "righteous war." Krishna was a great peacemaker, although he was Arjuna's Director in this War. In fact, he induced Arjuna to this War. You might say "How could a peacemaker advise another man to engage in War? War

means destruction of property, of estate and life. How could a man who advocates war be a great peacemaker?" To this I shall reply later.

Now, let me discuss for a moment the circumstances that led to this War. Yudhisthira, one of the great heroes in this epic, was the legitimate heir to this kingdom. His father was the younger son of his grandfather, and the elder son, Dhritarastra, being blind, was not considered qualified to reign. So his younger brother, Pandu, became king. Yudhisthira was his eldest son. After having reigned a number of years, Pandu retired and Yudhisthira succeeded him. His cousins, the sons of Dhritarastra, the blind king, became naturally very jealous of Yudhisthira and his four brothers.

Yudhisthira was famous for his virtues. In the *Mahabharata* we find many stories about his virtuous deeds. It is said that he never spoke even a half-truth in his life, and his four brothers were also famous for such virtues as courage, calmness, charity, etc. These cousins, the sons of the blind king, were equally infamous for their vices.

This was practically a War between virtues and vices. Among the Hindus there are many scholars who give a metaphysical interpretation of this warfare. They say that this was not a physical War, between two armies, but that it was an internal War, a War that is constantly waged between two natures in man, the higher nature, his conscience, and the lower nature, like lust, greed,

jealousy, anger, etc., and this field of battle is the heart. Krishna is the Supreme Self and, naturally, he takes the side of the virtues, and this side wins in the end.

This is the metaphysical interpretation of this War, but the orthodox people believe that this was an actual War, and that beings like Krishna and Arjuna were historical figures, and that this War was fought on a sacred plain between two great rivers, Saraswati and Jamuna, and that its name was Kurukshetra.

This War is mentioned in the very first verse in the Gita. This blind king inquires of Sanjaya, upon whom the clairvoyant power was conferred by Vyasa: "Oh, Sanjaya, after having been assembled on the sacred plain of Kurukshetra, what did my own sons, and the sons of my brother do?"

The commentators make a very interesting point of this verse. They argue: "Why did Dhritarastra, instead of asking, 'How did my sons and my nephews fight?' asked, 'What did they do?' Because it is evident they could do nothing but fight on a battlefield."

What he had in his mind was this: Kurukshetra was a sacred field. You will find mention of it even in earlier scriptures. Before this War was fought on this plain, many great religious sacrifices were performed there, and Dhritarastra had the idea that the influence of this great field might have produced a moral change in the minds of his own sons and also in the minds of his nephews. This was the reason why he asked, "What did they do?"

i. e., whether the minds of his own sons changed from bad to good by the sacred influence of Kurukshetra, or whether this same influence further deepened and strengthened the virtues of his nephews, so that they became unwilling to engage in war and retired from the field.

So, either way, this War might have been avoided. That was the reason why he asked that question. After Yudhisthira had succeeded his father to the throne, Duryodhana, the eldest cousin, by a series of plots and intrigues, put him off the throne. These intrigues were most inhuman and atrocious. Yudhisthira and his brothers were exiled for a period of long years from their kingdom. During that time Duryodhana reigned supreme and undisputed. After the expiration of that period of exile, Yudhisthira and his four brothers with Krishna, returned to the capital, and Krishna asked Duryodhana to renounce and return the kingdom to Yudhisthira, to whom it lawfully belonged.

Krishna acted as an arbitrator. You must always remember that he was a great peacemaker; he went to the Court of Duryodhana and proposed an amicable settlement. He requested him to give Yudhisthira a small portion of the kingdom and assured him that he would be satisfied with it, but Duryodhana rejected that proposal with scorn and disdain and declared that he would not part with even an acre of land without fight.

War should be avoided whenever possible, but when

the issues rest upon justice and truth and righteousness, no man should yield to the oppression and tyranny of an aggressor, a man who has no respect for others' rights, but usurps and rules by the right of might. If anyone does that Krishna calls him a "coward."

You will remember when Duryodhana in his pride and arrogance insolently refused to give a small portion of land to his cousins, while the whole kingdom legitimately belonged to them, and indignantly rejected all overtures towards an amicable settlement, it was then that Sri Krishna advised Arjuna to fight to regain his rights and put an end to this tyranny.

To champion the cause of the righteous and exterminate mischief done by the unrighteous is part of the purpose of a Divine Incarnation. In the fourth chapter of the Gita, Krishna describes the great object of His incarnation. "Whenever there is prevalence of vice and decay of virtue, I am born for the protection of the righteous, and for the correction of the evil-doer, and the establishment of *Dharma.*" The evil-doer, the aggressor, must be corrected, and if he is incorrigible, he must be destroyed for the safety and protection of the innocent.

Krishna was a great teacher of love and liberty, but his love was a hero's love, and not a sentimental love. So he said: "If one uses forgiveness as an excuse for his weakness, that man is a coward. Oh, Arjuna, shake off all weakness from your heart, because weakness is the

greatest sin. Stand firm and erect upon your own feet and engage in this great War. Consider this as your sacred duty."

After this War was declared, and the opposing armies met, sentiment and fear, in the guise of nonattachment and universal love overpowered Arjuna's heart, and he became unwilling to fight. Not only that, but he advanced very plausible arguments against War, and Krishna as a great prudent statesman and leader, listened to these arguments, and finally showed Arjuna his fallacy and persuaded him to engage in this fight.

Why? Because, in the first place, with his divine power and insight, Krishna detected in the heart of Arjuna a desire to regain his lost kingdom, and at the same time an unwillingness to fight through unmanly sentiment. He tried to conceal his real feeling with profession of love for all. It makes an appeal to everybody to preach against War; but with Arjuna that was not his sincere belief, and Krishna easily found it out.

He wanted Arjuna to be absolutely frank and sincere, a real lover of humanity at large, and after having listened to the arguments advanced by him, Krishna said: "You are talking as a great philosopher, but not acting as one, because a philosopher, a wise man, mourns neither the dead nor the living, but you are grieving and sorrowing. A philosopher knows that the soul is immortal, and you ought to know that. I do not find consistency between your words and your doings; your knowledge of

the soul, and your grief and sorrow at the loss of the soul."

He wanted Arjuna to be entirely sincere. He found his practice not in keeping with his professions, and then he preached to him the doctrine of immortality.

"Why do you mourn the prospective death of these men? That is of your foes as well as your friends?" There was one very remarkable point in it. Arjuna was more apprehensive of the loss of his foes than of his own men. He begged Krishna's leave to depart from the field of action. Krishna wanted him to be a strong-hearted man; to love through reason and knowledge. And he went on, saying:

"There never was a time when we did not exist, and there shall not be the time when we shall cease to exist. Why do you mourn? You ought to know that the soul, the real man, is deathless, immortal."

This dialogue lasted for about one hour. In the end Arjuna said: "I shall do your command, tell me what to do, sir? All my illusions are gone, now I am at your feet, and I will do just as you direct me."

The Gita is a great spiritual book. In this we find lessons of duty, love and peace. Now, one might raise this question: how could such a profoundly philosophic discussion have been held on the field of battle in the din and noise of War? To that question we answer, that War is the most appropriate time to think most seriously whether by inflicting injury or death upon others,

we are going to jeopardize our own destiny, as well as of others, or whether by being killed we are going to be completely lost. So, that is the best time to think most seriously of the great problems of life.

If one can not find calmness, quiet and serenity in the midst of the noise of War, one is not fit to practice *Yoga*. In the teachings of the Gita you can find how to practice peace and quiet in the midst of tumult. Krishna has taught how to practice spiritual calmness and peace in the midst of the crowds of the street as well as in the retreat.

"He is the greatest *yogin*, the greatest doer, who can find inaction in action, and action in inaction." How can we find inaction in action? If we can keep the soul immersed in the peace of Brahman, we can find inaction in action. The body can be all action, but the soul can remain absorbed in the serenity and peace of Brahman. That is the climax of this teaching: How to live in this world without being of it.

Krishna never said that one must withdraw oneself from this world and renounce his duties, to be spiritual. On the contrary, he said: "No one can live even one moment without doing some kind of work." So we must keep constantly engaged in work, but see that no selfishness remains in us. There we find another illustration of the practicality of these teachings. Then to return to another point—the War itself which rests upon justice and righteousness.

Krishna was a great advocate and lover of peace, but

at the same time he did not have any delusion about it. This was Krishna's idea of peace. Peace can never be established by a sort of treaty or covenant made by a few diplomats belonging to different nations, but peace, a lasting and consoling peace, must come from within. If we do not find peace in ourselves, how can we establish peace on earth?

He was a great reformer, almost a radical one. He never believed that by any amount of laws we can correct the world; but if a man, after becoming spiritually awakened, can work among others and can teach and lead them by his example, he is the greatest reformer. So long as such things as anger, lust, hatred, passion, etc., remain in man, there shall not be peace upon earth. The unreformed can never reform others.

To-day in the Western world, among the most aggressive and arrogant nations, the talk of world peace is so rife that one cannot help laughing at the inconsistency between their words and practices. They do not know they are selfish, and they justify every action they do. They claim they are very just and that they love humanity and respect everybody's rights. The fact is that they are very keen about their own rights, but they don't respect other people's rights. They are morally and spiritually so undeveloped that they cannot even realize their selfishness. They have not the courage to confess that they are selfish. They say: We are just, we are lovers of peace. But that brand of peace shall never be established.

We want a radical change. We want man to be truly reformed and spiritual. He must first have the moral courage to confess his faults and shortcomings, and then to reform himself by spiritual discipline. If I can keep my house clean, and you can keep your own house clean, and everybody can do it, then the whole city, and eventually the whole world, will be made clean.

When man will be awakened spiritually there shall be no more war on earth, but so long as he remains selfish and unspiritual there shall be no peace.

When Krishna failed by all peaceful methods to avert this War, and when he found Duryodhana to be hopelessly wicked and unjust, he asked his mighty disciple, Arjuna, to do away with him and to establish peace among his fellowmen. The evil-doer must be checked by all means, and the innocent protected and made safe. Of course, the evil-doer must be given an opportunity to correct himself. Sometimes those people who are habitually wicked misconstrue your forgiveness, if you forgive them; and we often find instances of it in our daily experiences. Again, sometimes we use forgiveness as an excuse for our weakness. Says Swami Vivekananda: "Forgiveness, if weak and passive, is bad. Fight is better. Forgive then when you have the power to lead an army of angels to an easy victory."

Here is a murderer in the street. He has killed a man, and he comes to your door to kill you and your family. Of course, your first duty should be to stop him

by appealing to his higher sentiment, but if he does not respond to it, and wants to kill you, and then your neighbor, do you think that it is a right thing to let that man remain unchecked and kill people as he meets them? I would rather kill that man or be killed myself in the attempt to kill him than to let him do what he is doing.

That is the reason why Krishna induced Arjuna to enter into this War. The issues are clear now, and he selected him for this work, because he knew that he was the right person to do it effectively. But he said: "While you do this work of exterminating the wicked you must not have the least hatred toward them. Do it with an altruistic motive, for the larger good for humanity. Do it for their own good, because if they are allowed to pursue their wicked ways they will do more harm and incur greater responsibility with serious consequences. So, do that great work with love for your enemies, and remain unattached to the results of your work."

There are eighteen chapters in the Gita, and each chapter is called a *Yoga,* which means a method of divine realization, and of these eighteen lessons, or discourses, four are very great. In these four chapters are taught the four great *Yogas: Karma, Bhakti, Jnana* and *Dhyana.*

Krishna's idea was that one must perform unselfishly and efficiently the duties that have been assigned to him, and at the same time he must be a lover of God. He says that it is not the position that makes a man great,

but it is the disposition or the spirit in which one acts. One may occupy a high position, but if one is selfish, then the man who occupies a lower position, but is dutiful, honest and righteous is far better than the former.

We find this story in the Mahabharata: There was a man who was a butcher. In India, the butcher's trade is regarded as the most abominable, but this man did that work as a duty. He was honest, upright, just, faithful, and devoted to his friends, parents and family. Finally he became a great sage. His utterances were recorded, and are known as the *Vyadha Gita; i. e.,* the Gita of the Butcher. This Gita is just as interesting and enlightening as the one we are discussing to-day. So, no matter what you are, and where you are, try to do your part well; even if you are a sweeper of the street. If you can do that work unselfishly and efficiently you will have a better chance for spiritual progress than a Secretary, if he is not an honest and dutiful man.

Just let me give you another illustration: There was once a great King, and one day there came to his house a *Yogin,* and this king asked this holy man to accept some gifts from him, and before he gave him the gifts he went into his chapel and prayed for more wealth, territories, houses, elephants, etc., and this *Yogin* overheard his prayer and he left his palace to go away. Presently the emperor came out of the chapel, and did not find this man waiting. He asked his servants where he went. The servants said: "He is going there." The

emperor followed him and asked him: "Sir, you promised me that you would accept some gifts, but you left before I came out of my chapel." Then this *Yogin* said: "I do not accept any gifts from a beggar. You are a king, you have all these things, but in spirit you are a beggar. You are not satisfied yet, I will not accept your gifts."

It is not the position, the external, that makes a man great, but it is the spirit, the cultivated spirit, the spirit of humility, sincerity and devotion that makes a man great.

Says Krishna in the Gita: "Whoever gives me a glass of water, a fruit, a leaf, a flower, with love and sincerity, that gift of *Bhakti* I accept, and not any pompous gift from insincere and unclean and unrighteous people."

THE WISDOM OF THE UPANISHADS

THE *Upanishads* are a part of the *Vedas*. There are four *Vedas*, the *Rik*, the *Yajur*, the *Sama*, and the *Atharva*. These *Vedas* were compiled and arranged by Vyasa, to whom also is attributed the Vedanta aphorisms and the Mahabharata. After the compilation was completed he delivered the four *Vedas* to four of his disciples. They were taught orally by teachers to students who, in their turn taught their students, and in this way they came down from generation to generation for at least three thousand years. They were committed to writing probably in 1000 B.C.

The literal meaning of the word *Veda* is "knowledge." These *Vedas* that we find in India to-day contain the germs of all philosophies, faiths and religions.

The *Vedas* are the records of spiritual experiences of man, from the earliest to the latest. In fact, the process of spiritual evolution is not limited to any particular race or land or time. Truth is Universal and Eternal. All those spiritual truths that have already been revealed to man as well as those that are yet to come, fall under the category of *Veda*—knowledge.

I want you to remember that general meaning of the term *Veda.* Each of these four *Vedas* has three distinct parts or divisions. The first part is called *Samhita* or *Mantra;* it contains the original hymns. The word *Mantra* is derived from the *Sanskrit* root *"Manas,"* which means the "mind"—that which is revealed through the mind is *Mantra.* Teachers of the *Vedas* were called *Rishis,* which means "seers." They did not go to any temple; they did not hear any sermons; they did not read any books, but they meditated and realized the truth in the soul within.

Mind you, these men, these *Rishis* of the *Vedas,* were not the sole custodians of this wisdom. They did not possess the charter of all truth; they never made any such claims. But they said that this truth was revealed through their souls, it must be revealed through every human soul—and unless and until it is a matter of direct revelation, it does not benefit us. Truth is truth only then when it is OUR truth—by our own realization. You must feel it, you must be it, you must become it. This being and becoming one with Truth constitutes Rishihood.

The second part of the *Vedas* is called *Brahmana.* It contains comments and glosses on the *Samhita* and also some ceremonial codes.

Then the third or the last part comprises the *Aranyakas.* That word is derived from the Sanskrit word *"aranya,"* which means the forest. The *Aranyakas* were

intended for those who live a contemplative life in the solitude. The *Upanishads* are a part of the *Aranyakas*.

There are one hundred and eight *Upanishads,* and of these twelve are most important, and these twelve have been translated by Professor Max Muller. Some Hindu scholars have translated more, and I propose to give you an outline of the common theme of the *Upanishads* —the Knowledge of Brahman.

One Hindu scholar said;

> "There is wisdom in the beginning,
> There is wisdom in the end,
> There is wisdom in the middle."

in the *Upanishads.*

Apropos of this wisdom, I want to read one remark to you by the great German philosopher, Schopenhauer. He was one of the greatest of the German philosophers. The German philosophers are all more or less proud of their acquirements, but none was prouder than Schopenhauer. He read an imperfect translation of some of these *Upanishads* in French, and expressed his appreciation in these words:

"From every sentence of the *Upanishads,* deep, original and sublime thoughts arise, and the whole is pervaded by a high and holy and earnest spirit. In the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the *Upanishads.* It has been the solace of my life, it will be the solace of my death. They are products of the highest

wisdom. It is destined sooner or later to become the faith of the people."

With your permission, I want to make one remark in this connection: The *Vedas* are the original scriptures of the Aryans, and you people have descended from the Hindu branch of the Aryan race and your religion is the religion of the *Vedas;* as I told you a minute ago, in the *Vedas* you will find the germs of all philosophies and faiths and religions. Christianity is your adopted religion. Thus we find the great Ethnological importance of the Religion of the *Vedas.*

Professor Max Muller, who was one of the greatest authorities on Philology, once expressed some remarks upon the Civilization of the Hindus. These remarks you will find in his six lectures entitled: "India, What Can It Teach Us?" He delivered them before the graduates of the University of Oxford.

"If I were asked under what sky the human mind has developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered on the greatest problems of life and has found solutions for some of them which well deserve the attention even of those who have studied Plato and Kant,—I should point to India. And if I were to ask myself, from what literature, we here in Europe, who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thought of Greeks and Romans, and of one Semitic race, the Jewish, may draw that corrective which is most wanted in order to make

our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact more truly human—a life not for this life only, but a transfigured and eternal life,—again I should point to India."

The subject of the *Vedas* consists of three great entities: *Brahman* or God, the *Atman* or the soul, and *Jagat* —the world or nature.

Man, after watching and observing all the phenomena that happen around him almost every moment, asks this question: "What is the cause of all this; what is the cause of my being? Is *Brahman* the cause, or chance or nature, or what?"

These *Vedas* were taught at least three thousand years before Christ, and in those ancient times these sages raised these questions: What am I? Am I the product of combination of cells only? Did I exist before this? What will become of me after the death of this body? Is there a hereafter? These are the most momentous questions.

Man does not live by bread alone. While we must make a living, we must know what life is. We must know how to live. Do you know what life is? We seem to be lost in the mazes of phenomena. We do not ponder the realities that underly these things.

We are so tremendously busy making a living that we have no time to know what life is, or how to live. One should have profound leisure to think upon these great problems.

In India we have that. We are reproached with being

inactive, being too prone to a meditative life, but, my dear friends, unless you meditate, and you retire from time to time from the hustle and bustle of this life, you do not know, you cannot know, what life is. So, from time to time we have to retire and we have to go back to the inner life—the source of all activities, and to think and meditate upon and realize these deeper realities—realities that mean and matter most.

What is *Brahman?* Is it only a speculation or a theory? This word *Brahman* is derived from the root, *"Brah,"* which means "to grow"—"that which is constantly growing." *Brahman* is the abstract reality; we should not call it a person—it is a principle, which is both *progressus* as well as *regressus ad infinitum.* If you trace it one way or another—neither the beginning nor the end will ever be reached.

So, *Brahman* eludes both these investigations—backward and forward, but it is that which constantly grows —the eternal, universal all embracing Principle is *Brahman.*

From *Brahman* all things have come. *Brahman* is qualityless, nameless, formless. How can that eternal principle have a name and a form? Names and forms are only limiting conditions. I have a form and a name, because I am a finite being. But *Brahman* can have no form, no name, because it is Infinite.

Mind you, this *Brahman* has no quality, because you cannot think of quality without substance. There must

be a substance to make the concept of quality possible. *Brahman* is not a person who possesses qualities, because qualities, after all, are finite and transient things.

Another German philosopher criticized the idea of God who has no form, but possesses qualities like love, forgiveness, etc.; who punishes the wicked and rewards the righteous. Criticizing this conception of God, the German philosopher said: This God is a "gaseous vertebrate," because to think and act He must have a spinal structure —a nervous system, otherwise He cannot think and act. How can this God take cognizance of our actions without a body? Most of these people think that God is a being. But though He has no form, He thinks without a mind, and sees, feels and hears without a body; that is a fallacy. God is beyond all good and evil, beyond virtue and vice; beyond love and hate.

One student of the *Upanishads* once asked his teacher this—"Please tell me about that which is other than virtue, and other than vice; other than that which is made, and other than that which is not made. Other than that which was, and other than that which will be."

Brahman is neither known nor unknown. He is both known and unknown, and again, beyond the known and the unknown. That is *Brahman.*

This *Brahman* is both the material as well as the efficient cause of the universe. Not only that, one idealistic philosopher expressed this conception of *Brahman,* rather metaphorically, in these words: "In one single pore

of the body of *Brahman,* millions upon millions of worlds like this can lie buried." That is *Brahman.* Just think how infinitely vast it is.

The evolution and involution of the universe are like the outbreathing and the inbreathing of *Brahman,* just as we breathe without any effort of consciousness on our part, even so this whole universe comes out of this outbreathing of *Brahman,* and again it is taken into itself by its inbreathing. And in this way it goes on for all eternity.

There is neither beginning, nor end of anything. Whatever exists in this universe is a constant reality, only the order is changed. Take a lump of clay. You can make many figures from it, and then break them and you can reconvert them into that clay again. It is even so with *Brahman*—all these things came into existence out of it and they remain in it and then are taken back into it at the end of the cycle. *Brahman* is eternal. Few people can conceive the idea of eternity.

Here is an illustration of eternity. Here is a little robin. He flies to Sahara in one million years, takes one grain of sand from that desert, and flies back in another million years. He flies back and forth that way. The time which this little robin will take to remove the whole Sahara desert—that time, compared to eternity is like a drop in the bucket.

God created the world 6,000 years ago out of nothing and 2,000 years ago He sent His son here to save man

from his sin. Why, that is childish. The sun, the moon, the stars, the whole universe is only a repetition of the past. It is not a new order. History repeats itself. There is nothing new. Whatever we see to-day is only a repetition of a former arrangement or order, and, believe me, these orders or changes are constantly occurring in infinite existence of *Brahman.* Infinite existence, infinite knowledge and infinite bliss—these are the elements of *Brahman.* Existence is the broadest possible generalization of the Universe. Existence is the common property of all things. We all exist; the world exists, the state exists, the city exists, the house exists, everything exists; and whatever exists is luminous and blissful, so that this covers the other two elements, knowledge and bliss.

Paul said: "In Him we live and move and have our being." That conception, of course, was not originally a Christian conception. He got that idea from the Greek philosophers. If we really live and move and have our being in the spirit of God, then there is no occasion for disease, sorrow, sin, suffering, etc.

The *Vedas* are a sort of encyclopedia of all spiritual thoughts: From the crudest, to the most perfect—all you will find in them. You will also find in the *Vedas* such passages as describe the dualistic conception of *Brahman.* The primitive man looks at the sky, the stars, the moon, the river, the sun, the snow-capped mountains—he begins to admire them. He becomes ecstatic at times, and then beyond this universal manifestation he conceives

a deity, a God, and then over them all as he proceeds on, he conceives a Supreme God. So far, he has passed through three great stages,—from Nature to Nature's gods and from that to the One Supreme God. Most of the religions of to-day are more or less monotheistic. That is, the Jews at one time worshipped many Gods, but some prophets evolved the idea of one God. They could not go beyond that one God conception; but the Hindu philosophers did not stop there. Not that they did not believe in one God, but they sought for something still higher and sublimer.

Then, to crown all these ideas of the Deity comes the idea of monism, Supreme Oneness; one indescribable, inconceivable, eternal reality—that which human mind cannot comprehend. The human mind can go to a certain limit and beyond that it cannot. What does it experience then? It becomes silent. Then the soul reaches the ecstatic state; this state is still higher than the others; the conception of the oneness of *Brahman*. Man becomes a transfigured being. Jesus reached that state when he delivered the sermon on the mount. Our lives must be transfigured by that ecstatic Joy—by Divine Communion; and it must come to every soul.

This is the idea of *Brahman*. *Brahman* is that which embraces everything, but is limited by nothing. *Brahman* is one, without a second. Nothing other than that has ever been since. Whatever thou perceivest by eyes, ears, or skin or nostrils or tongue that is *Brahman*. This is

expressed variously by various sages. We have to realize first that, and then whatever is expressed spontaneously in words will be a *Veda.* You do not have to study books for this revelation. Do not depend upon the books for your spiritual illumination. True inspiration and true illumination must be intuitive, must come from within the self.

Then the *Vedas* finally establish the identity of man and *Brahman.* One philosopher said this: "In one-half a verse I will tell you the whole truth which has been told in millions of volumes. *Brahman* is the eternal truth, and the only truth. Then, all these things that you perceive around you—the whole universe is an illusion; they do not exist, and your soul and *Brahman* are one."

This philosophy not only establishes that *Brahman* and soul are co-eternal, but they are co-equal. There is no part in it. A part means a detached portion; you cannot detach anything from the whole, and you cannot attach or add anything to it either.

After employing various methods of comparison and classification this is the final conclusion of the philosophy of the *Vedas:* "That and Thou are One."

In that conception of spiritual oneness, certainly there is no room for disease or distress or death. We have to live eternally in that consciousness.

This is the message of the *Upanishads:* That *Brahman,* the eternal principle, is one without a second, the *alpha*

and the *omega* of all existence, and we are inseparable in the existence and knowledge and bliss of *Brahman.*

I will give you one more idea of the union of *Jiva* and *Brahman,* the soul and the oversoul. This occurs in the *Shvetashwatara Upanishad.* The author metaphorically describes the soul and the oversoul as two birds, and the universe as a tree. That is, the universe is the infinite body of *Brahman.* On this tree are seated two most beautiful birds. One is seated on the top of the tree and the other on a branch below. This lower bird eats the fruits of this tree, both sweet and bitter. In the last analysis of these phenomenal things we find the existence of two potent entities here; good and evil, which like the obverse and reverse of the same coin are inseparable. If you taste a sweet fruit, you have to taste a bitter one also, and if you have to taste a bitter fruit, you have to taste a sweet one. If you seek pleasure you cannot escape from pain. If you seek health you have to expect ill-health. If you seek praise you cannot avoid dispraise. These pairs of opposites are inseparable concomitants.

Now this bird eats a bitter fruit and feels an unpleasant sensation and looks above and sees the other bird who does not eat any fruit, he just sits serene and peaceful on the top of the tree. And after a while he eats a sweet fruit and the unpleasant sensation passes away, and he says: "why, this life is very pleasant." Then, in the course of time he eats another bitter fruit and he again

feels miserable. This way he goes on, eating alternately the bitter and the sweet fruits on the tree of life. Finally becoming wise with his experiences he flies upwards and loses himself in the freedom and peace and bliss of the bird on the top.

You will find many beautiful similes and allegories like this in the *Upanishads* which illustrate their wisdom. But we have no time to describe more now. We must stop here.

THE POWER OF SUGGESTION

We live in a world of suggestions, and there are two kinds of suggestions; the subjective or self-suggestion, and the objective or outer suggestion. Certain suggestions come from within, from the self itself, and there are others that come from outside, but whether they come from within or from outside, they have a great influence upon us, and as we proceed, we shall have occasion to determine the origin and nature of these suggestions.

Mind is both active and reflective; mind can imagine and create, and mind can meditate and respond. According to some philosophers, the universe is nothing but the product of these two functions of the mind—the active and the reflective. What the real universe is nobody knows; it is unknown and unknowable, but that something which is unknown and unknowable reflects itself upon the mind and mind reproduces that, and the result of this action and reaction is this universe.

The illustration is made of the pearl. A grain of sand gets into the oyster and causes an irritation, and she puts a sort of enamel upon it and that way it gradually develops into a pearl.

This universe as it appears is not a reality. It is that something which is unknown and unknowable plus the mind. So, it is a compound phenomenon.

There are idealists who believe that the universe is nothing but the product of the mind; *i. e.*, it has no existence independently of the mind. Then there are realists who believe that the universe has a distinct and independent existence, but the truth lies between the two extreme opinions. This universe is neither entire realism nor entire idealism, but it is the blending of both the real and the ideal. Just remember that illustration of that grain of sand and the enamel put upon it by the oyster.

Mind takes the form of the thing it meditates upon. Sometimes it converts even its own body into the form of that thing. For instance (we find this in our psychology): when a cockroach is seized by a wasp, that cockroach, in that intense fear of death, concentrates so much upon the wasp that it becomes metamorphosed into a wasp. Our psychologists have observed this phenomenon and it is not an impossible thing. You may have heard similar stories.

I heard another story, too, in this respect: Once a man was working in a mine, and over his head was hanging a piece of stone, which might fall upon him at any moment and in that fear of the stone falling upon him and killing him his black hair turned gray in one minute. And in our Ramayana we have another story: There was a woman named Ahalya, who became converted into

a block of stone through intense fear and anxiety. In the Mahabharata we find another story. There was a man by the name of Kamsa who was very much afraid of death. In fact, at the time of death he saw Death in person. That man's intense fear of death made him actually visualise death, and it became a reality to him, nay, the story says, he was constantly haunted with shadows of death on all sides.

So, there is a great psychological truth in this matter of suggestion. Sri Ramakrishna said many times illustrating this power of suggestion: "If a person is bitten by a cobra, and if he can constantly assert with faith, 'there is no poison, no poison, no poison, and this can't kill me, this can't kill me, this can't kill me,' then that person actually becomes freed of the effect of poison." So, by the power of the mind we can overcome all external conditions. Mind is the cause of both our bondage as well as freedom. That man who constantly thinks that he is free, and knows that he is free, he really becomes free from all bondage. Once there was a man who was a so-called Yogin, and in his neighborhood there lived a prostitute. That man was self-righteous and vain. He used to watch this woman. Each time she committed a sin, he placed a piece of stone to keep the number and there was a big heap of stones, but this woman constantly thought of the purity of this man. Although she committed mistakes her heart and soul ever hankered after this man's holiness, but he was not really holy; she

created the holiness by her power of thought and benefited by it. Finally after their death, the man, although outwardly righteous, went to a lower state of existence, and this woman, although she made mistakes, but her constant thought was this man's holiness, went to a higher state of existence. This is natural.

So also people who constantly think of sin, naturally remain in sin. By this I do not mean that there is no such thing as mistakes: all mistakes come from ignorance. But the doctrine of the original sin, that we are all born sinners, is doubly criminal. It is a crime to the person himself who thinks that he is a sinner, and a crime to others, because of his sinful notion about them. Sin is the most unkind word. You should never think of others as sinners, and not, of course, of yourself. We all make mistakes, and mistakes are our teachers. We learn through mistakes. That man who works and strives for progress makes mistakes, but that man who does not work will never make mistakes. Never be discouraged if you make mistakes. In this world we learn through our experiences—experiences both good and bad. They have a great power in the making of our character.

I don't believe in confession to a priest. Be remorseful for mistakes done and don't commit them again. Why should you confess to a man whom perhaps you don't trust and love. Of course, if you can find a congenial person, a trustworthy friend, you can unburden yourself to him and find relief, but don't confess in that mechan-

ical form. Rather confess to your conscience and the best result of this confession is that you will not make that mistake again.

We are influenced by both good and bad suggestions. Once a man to avoid responsibility of his debts, feigned madness, and the result was that he actually became mad. Then there is another story of a man who feigned goodness and holiness, and he also could not escape from the consequence of it. He became good and holy.

A thief once entered into another man's house and he made a noise while he was stealing. The people woke up, and before he was found out, he sat like a great Yogin in meditation smearing his body with dust and ashes, but when they saw him absorbed in meditation, they said: "A great holy man has come to bless our house." And this man was listening to it. Then this reflection came to him: If I were a true Yogin, how much more would have been their reverence for me. Now I am a hypocrite, but I must be a sincere and real Yogin.

From that moment he changed his life—he became a different man altogether and finally became a great Yogin. So you can't escape from the consequences of feigning—good or bad.

There once lived a great Queen by the name of Madalasa. She had a little baby and whenever she would rock him in his cradle, she used to sing this lullaby: "Thou art that eternal one; thou art that holy one; thou

art the immortal spirit!" And the result of that suggestion was that that baby grew up to be a great sage.

You must always have that positive and constructive suggestion to yourself as well as to others, and by that alone can you do good to others and yourself. Always entertain that sound and wholesome thought. And what you give forth comes back to you—that is the law.

If you can constantly think of good within yourself, and can impress that thought of goodness upon others who are not good by nature, you will make them good, and if that is not possible, you will be benefited yourself, anyhow. Every good thought is a flower and every bad thought is a thorn.

We see this world of ours in the color of our own thoughts. "There is nothing good or bad, but thinking makes it so." That man who is good inwardly gives a good interpretation of everything. He always learns from other peoples' mistakes and errors and is more exacting of himself than of others. Self-righteous people are intolerant and find fault with others, because they have an overweening opinion of their own spirituality.

Once three men saw a stump in the twilight. They were of different natures and saw in it three different things in the light of their own thoughts. One man was a believer in ghosts and spirits, and in that stump he thought he was seeing a ghost. The other man was a thief, and he thought the stump was a policeman, because his mind was haunted with the thought of the police-

man. The other man was a lover, and when he saw that stump he naturally thought it was his beloved waiting for him there. That same thing was seen and interpreted in three different ways by these three men. So, our interpretations reveal our inner natures and show what we are.

By our own thought we can make this world good or bad. "Mind is its own place and can make in itself a Heaven or a Hell." That idea has been very strongly emphasized in our Scriptures. Mind can create Heaven. Mind can create Hell. Mind is both pure and impure, and that mind which is free from all attachment is pure and is Heaven itself, and that mind which is attached to worldly things is impure and is Hell itself. For Heaven and Hell we don't have to look outside; they are right here. Our own mind can present to us both these states.

If you can train your thoughts and cultivate your mind by the practice of Yoga you will find Heaven right here within yourself, and you can eternally dwell in it. All these metaphysical states and ideas become very plain to the Yogin. Everything in this world of ours produces values in terms of thought, and that thought has been described in the Gita as *"Buddhi."*

"That man who is endued with right disposition and right thought can remain spiritual in the midst of all circumstances—good and bad. Therefore, oh Arjuna, you should try to find a refuge in your *Buddhi,* in right disposition."

If the disposition is right, if the mind is clean and pure, then whatever comes from that mind is pure and clean, but if it is impure, the mere external observances of righteousness do not produce moral and spiritual values. If you do a little thing in the right spirit that produces a great deal more result than things that are done ostentatiously without sincere love and faith.

There once lived a man who was refused the art of archery by Drona, a great master. He sincerely desired to become an archer. Although he was refused, he had such a great love for Drona that he retired into the forest and erected a statue of Drona to worship him. In front of that statue he practiced archery and became a great master in that art. In this case, this suggestion was most effective. To this man, the statue was not a mere image, but a reality. There are many people who scorn the idea behind an image, it becomes an actual God to you; thing is imaginary and the purer the imagination, the deeper and stronger is the reflection and the greater the realization. If you can entertain genuine love for the idea behind an image, it becomes an actual God to you; whereas, if you actually see the form of God and have no love for Him, that God is nothing but a ghost to you.

Once a lady came to Sri Ramakrishna and told him that when she tried to meditate upon her spiritual ideal, the form of her little granddaughter would invariably come up to her mind, and this worried her very much.

He said to her: "You think of her, and try to see God in her." The Christians might call this blasphemy, but when you take the name of God without love, that is more blasphemous than what this lady was told to do. Those of you who are musicians actually see God in your art. In the last analysis, what counts most is your attitude toward things. God is not a person. He is an indwelling spirit and we create God and see Him in the light of our inner understanding of Him. In India we attach greater importance to the development of the attitude or disposition than to the mere name and form of God. You may have a great ideal, but if you do not have the power to respond to it, if you can't reflect upon it, that will not help you. But if you can take a small ideal and respond to and reflect upon it, you will get better results.

There lies the importance we attach to psychology. You must give to people just what they are capable of receiving. Take, for instance, a child who goes to the Kindergarten; if you teach him mathematics or science he will not respond to it; to him there is no truth in it. Teach him some simple and concrete things that he can understand; that will be good and true to him. In that way you have to develop him from a lower to a higher state of understanding. In our spiritual progress we do not proceed from errors to truths, but from lower truths to higher truths. There is truth in everything. If we

can see the truth and meditate upon it and realize it, the whole universe will be transformed into God, and all men and women will appear as living gods on earth.

We receive all great ideas through suggestion. A story is told of a man who lived perhaps one hundred years ago. He was a wealthy man, a Prince, and he lived in the vicinity of Calcutta. He was old and one day he heard from his window his washerman say: "The sun is setting and we must burn our *Vasana.*" Now this word, *Vasana,* has two meanings, "desire" and "banana stalk." In India they make a kind of washing powder from the dry stalk of the banana plant. When this man heard this word *Vasana,* he reflected this way: "Oh, yes, now the sun of my life is about to set. It is near the end of my life, I am an old man and I must burn my desires. I still cling to these things, my palace, family, servants, etc. It is high time that I burned my desires for these things." That one word suggested to him a great spiritual thought and he immediately left his palace and became a recluse and spent the rest of his life in a retreat in Brindavan. His name was Lala Babu and even to-day if you go to Brindavan, you will hear of his renunciation and saintliness.

Sri Ramakrishna, whenever he saw such things as a bird, or a flower, or a cloud, he would reflect upon their associations and go into *samadhi.* When you see the picture of an absent friend, it reminds you of him—nay, sometimes you can feel his presence. Once three young

men heard the words "It is evening." One young man was a devoted scholar, and he naturally thought "It is evening, and I must wash myself and practice my religious exercises." Another man was an adulterer, and he said, "My time is coming now." The other man was a thief and by that word he was reminded of his business. So, you see just how differently these words meant to these three different young men.

Once there was a man who was very licentious, but a loving man. One night, when there were thunder, rain and high wind, he crossed a great river and went to see a woman, his mistress. When he reached there, this woman asked him how he could come in that bad weather, and he said: "I came to see you, because I love you." Then she looked at him and said: "This love that you have given to me, if you could give it to God, then you could see Him." That acted as a great suggestion to him, and he said: "That is true; why am I wasting my love? You are my *Guru* because you have given me this great *Mantra,* advice, and from now on I will give this great love to my God."

Then, this man left home and became a Sannyasin and begged his bread from door to door and one day he saw a beautiful lady bathing in the Ganges. Sometimes, you know, the old lust reasserts itself. He came to her house. In India it is customary to receive the guests very kindly and respectfully. Pardon me, you do that, too. But our doors are always open to guests. Then he said to her

husband: "May I see your wife for a few moments? I want to talk to her." Maybe this is shocking to you, but the host said: "Yes, certainly, I would consider it a great privilege if you see my wife." Then, this man, when he sees her, says to her: "I want to conquer this weakness of mine. Will you do me a favor?" She says: "What is it?" Then he said: "Will you lend me your hair pin?" Then she gave him one and he pierced his eyes with the pin and said: "These eyes tempted me and it is right to destroy them." Then Krishna in the form of a cowboy came to him and led him from door to door.

"Seek ye the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and these things shall be added unto you."

There was once a man who used to take coffee in the morning, and a woman from the village used to supply him with milk for his coffee. There was a river between their homes; the woman lived on one side and the man on the other side of the river. One day there was a flood and this woman was late in arriving. When she arrived, this man asked her why she was so late and she said: "Sir, there was a flood in the river and I had to wait long for a boat and I was delayed." And he said to her: "Well, woman, why did you not take the name of *Rama* and walk on the water? You faithless woman!" So she said: "Sir, I did not know that before, but I will do it now." The next morning, although there was still the flood in the river, she came early and this man inquired: "How is it that you come so early and still there is the

flood!" Then the woman answered: "Why, I did not come by a boat this time. I took the name of *Rama* and walked over the water." This man, although he gave her the suggestion, he did not believe in it himself. Then she showed him how she did it. She went to the edge of the water and walked on it, saying, *"Rama, Rama, Rama."* Then he tried to follow her, saying, *"Rama, Rama, Rama."* But while he was taking the name of *Rama* at the same time he was taking care of his clothes. The woman looked back at him and asked, "What are you doing, sir?" He answered, "I am taking care of my clothes." She then said, "Well, if you take care of your clothes while you are uttering the name of *Rama,* you can't walk on water, sir. You have to do either the one or the other." If we can have absolute faith, and resignation and reliance, all these powers will come to us. If we can truly and really love God, for His sake only, is there any wonder that these things come to us? In that supreme love and resignation we can find all power and happiness that come from success, wealth, etc., nay more. What a great joy that is! It is like the sun and all these little joys are like the glow-worm.

We are all children of God. Through wrong teaching and wrong environment we have been hypnotized into the notion that we are born sinners, and that we are helpless and powerless.

No, all powers are within you. Just lift this veil and you will find them.

Once there lived a little bird on the top of a mast of a boat in the ocean. He grew weary of that monotonous condition and wanted to find something new. So, one morning he flew into one direction, but did not find another shelter. He returned disappointed to the top of the mast. The next morning he flew into another direction and the following morning into still another and each time he came back disappointed. He then realized that that was the only place of shelter for him in the ocean, and after that he did not move from there.

So, we think that this church or that church can give us what we desire, but the real thing is in yourself. If you have sincere faith and devotion, you will find freedom and everlasting peace within yourself.

Once a little lion cub was picked up in the woods by a farmer and he brought him home and raised him among his sheep. One day this little lion was playing in the pasture with the lambs and a larger lion came there. At this sight all the lambs were running away and this lion also ran away with them. Then this wild lion went to the little lion and said: "Why do you run away from me?" And the little lion said, trembling: "Oh, you are a lion and I am afraid of you. You will kill me."

Then the wild lion said to him: "You too are a lion; come with me and I will show you." Then he took the little lion to a brook and told him to look at his shadow in the water. When he saw that he realized that he also was a lion and all fear departed from him.

When we see the truth with our inner eyes, we know what we are, and all these things that are now so dreadful to us depart, and we remain forever in the consciousness of our inner divinity and of eternal freedom and peace.

We must de-hypnotize ourselves. This false notion of weakness and sinfulness must go, and we must realize once more that the real Kingdom of Heaven is within us and its peace and happiness are our birthright.

SPIRITUAL REGENERATION

THE main theme of the Vedas, the Scripture of the Indo-Aryans, is the *Brahman,* or spirit. This *Brahman* is described as *"Ekam,"* which means "one without a second." *Brahman* is the beginning, the end and the middle of all this that exists. There has not been anything other than *Brahman.* Now, if this is one, infinite, eternal and without a second, where can there be room for matter? The issue is between the real spiritualist who believes in *Brahman,* which is without a second, and the materialist who believes only in matter. There is either the whole of spirit or the whole of matter.

What is matter? According to the scientist, matter is the permanent possibility of sensation, or matter is that which affects our senses of perception. Matter has weight. It occupies space, offers resistance and transfers motion. Matter is *jada*—inert. Spirit is *Chetana*—intelligence. If the one is, the other is not. Still we say "all" is spirit. That statement is self-contradictory. If all is *Brahman,* or God, then that *all* can't be *this,* because these two consciousnesses, the *Brahman* consciousness or God consciousness, and the matter consciousness can't co-exist. When we really become conscious of the spirit,

then matter consciousness departs. Or while the matter consciousness is, the consciousness of *Brahman* or spirit is not. This "all" can be either of matter or of spirit. It cannot be a blending of both.

Those who believe only in matter, they are right if they can prove that all is matter and that there is nothing but matter, and that the thought is only a transformation of matter. The spiritualist is right, if he can establish that this *all* is nothing but spirit. This has been the issue between these two schools of thinkers from time immemorial.

In India, in the most ancient times, there was a School of materialists, that is, the School of "Charvaka." He believed that matter alone is real, and all such thoughts as God or spirit or soul or the hereafter, are false, and he also maintained that those people who believe and teach that there is a God, and a soul which can exist independently of the body, or that there is a hereafter, are either hypocrites or self-deluded. He believed only in the things that can be perceived by the five senses—and other things that we imagine, or have believed traditionally, are all false. Not only that, but some of the students of this School went so far as to declare that what we call thought or mind or ego is nothing but transformation of material substances. When these substances are combined, a certain chemical force is generated, and out of that thoughts spring. Just as certain things which do not possess intoxicating powers, but when combined produce

liquor or wine, so when the material substances are combined, the result is thought or ego or self.

Then, if you ask these materialists, "How is it that we can imagine or conceive of things that we do not directly perceive?" I saw many things yesterday and the day before; there is no direct sense contact now, but I can think of them. How can I do that? They cannot give a satisfactory answer. They do not believe in the existence of a soul as the perceiver behind the senses.

This question, whether it is all spirit or all matter, can be convincingly and finally settled only when the realization comes, through spiritual awakening. I have not yet that awakenment, but I am a seeker after it, so, what I am going to present to you this afternoon is only my intellectual comprehension of it. I firmly believe in the existence of spirit or *Brahman,* because in the last analysis of all these concrete realities we find that absolute reality as the basic principle. The many can be finally reduced to the fundamental or eternal one.

All *this* has come from *that.* Its origin is in that absolute reality.

If there is only one *Brahman* which is good itself, which is knowledge itself, which is bliss itself, how can there be their opposites here? The Hindu philosophers don't call *Brahman* good in the sense it is generally used. That is, goodness is not its quality. If goodness be its quality, then the whole of it is not good and it would be subject to improvement. If I call a man good, that man

can be made better, and still better. But *Brahman* is goodness itself, and *Brahman* is bliss and knowledge itself. Then, if that is so how can you account for the existence of matter or the things that are opposites of the so-called "essences" of *Brahman, Sat-chit-ananda*—truth, knowledge and bliss?

In this way you can corner the monist. So, in order not to make a fool of himself, he explains this phenomenal universe on the ground of Maya. In explaining matter, he says: so long as we think that there is matter, matter remains. If we do not think of matter, but only of spirit, then there is only spirit. He makes a sharp distinction between the permanent or everlasting reality, and the phenomenal reality.

These things are real so long as we allow them to appear as real. So, we are the cause of their so-called reality. They are not really real, but only practically real. There is a state of consciousness which has been reached by many monists, where this universe is not—at least, not as it appears to us. Of course, these monists never say that what they experience in that moment is the final proof of the reality. It is proof enough for them, but they ask each one to verify it. That is the highest proof.

If one person can ever reach that state of consciousness, that is proof enough of the existence of that state. If the materialist can prove that there is only the *all* of matter—then that conclusion can never be contradicted even

by the experience of one man. The contradiction will prove the falsity of his statement.

The materialist never believes in a supersensuous existence, but those who believe in the existence of the infinite spirit of *Brahman,* or have transcended the sensuous plane do not entirely deny matter. So, whose experience is the more perfect and more complete? Certainly the experience of the monist or the mystic.

The monist is not a dogmatist, but the materialist is. Even the scientist is sometimes a most dogmatic person. He will never believe in the hereafter or the things that can't be demonstrated by instruments, but he forgets the saying, "There are more things in Heaven and Earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy, Horatio."

From the concrete we proceed to the abstract and from the abstract to the absolute. The absolutist or monist is the real seer, because what he perceives is not contradicted by a later experience, but is completed by it. But these other people's perceptions and experiences are constantly contradicted. What they prove to be true to-day to-morrow will become false. This monist, who believes that *Brahman* or spirit is the only reality says: "If you are conscious of this world as it is, it is nothing but the spirit materialized." If it is only spirit, and that spirit is infinite and without a second, and at the same time if we are conscious of this other thing, then the natural and logical conclusion is that it is the materialized form of the spirit. The monist concedes to that existence.

What is the relation of the soul to the spirit? Soul is the individualized spirit. Spirit is the universal soul. Sankara has established the identity of the soul and *Brahman*. Not only that, but he says: "Why do you think that there is matter, body, sickness, distress and death? These are all false imaginings." I wish you could read his introduction to the commentary upon the Vedanta philosophy. He has called it *"Shariraka Mimamsa."* That word means "the philosophy of the embodied," but, in fact, it is the "philosophy of the spirit." By knowing the body, we know the spirit. One poet said, "The proper study for man is man himself." Of course, we have to study the physical man first, and then we know the real man, or the soul of man.

Sankara, in his introduction to "The Philosophy of the Embodied," has postulated two entities as constituting the subject matter of his philosophy. They are *"asmat prapancha"* or the ego and *"yusmat prapancha"* or the non-ego. To make them simple; they are "I and thou." In the last analysis of the many, you will find these two, and then these two must merge into that one which is the absolute. That is the perfected state. The notion of "me and thee" is the cause of this universe or all things in it, good and bad.

If I can withdraw myself from all this universe, which is only the non-ego, then it will vanish. So long as we identify ourselves with these things, these things become real. Disease, distress, death and sorrow and

even their opposites become real through our consciousness or recognition of them. If we can return once more into the soul within, and merge into that supreme spirit, *Brahman,* then these things will all depart. If all of us can do that, then this universe will vanish at once. So, the universe is nothing but the projection of our inner self. Through our mortal mind we create these things, but if we can recognise and realise the Divine mind, or the soul, then all these things will depart.

In that consciousness, in that direct union of the soul and the over-soul, of *"Jiva"* and *"Brahman,"* there is real salvation. Then there is no longer sickness, distress, death, but only that reality, infinite and eternal.

Here we find the beauty of this transcendental metaphysics. These philosophers don't ignore this side of the phenomenal. They concede to it only a phenomenal reality. They do not make that error which many people do by wilfully denying this universe as it is, and at the same time unconsciously believing in it. By denial we affirm. If you say that there is no sickness, that very thought proves its existence. If sickness has no existence, you don't have to deny it.

This life is like a somnambulistic dream—a panorama of false scenes. The difference between the world dream and the one in our sleep is one of duration only and not of kind. Both are dreams.

We are moving here in a dream, and we have to awaken once more from this world dream. There you find a

rational explanation of this universe and man's relation to it.

Now, what are the proofs of the existence of the soul? So far, what we have said is only a statement. A statement does not remove the doubt. It does not bring conviction. Perhaps the most convincing proof of the existence of the soul is your own existence. You can't deny that you are existing. No one can think that he is *not*. If he can, then there will be nothing to doubt the existence. The doubter cannot doubt himself. So, the very fact that you can never think that you are not existing, is the proof of the existence of the soul. "The desire to seek for the proof of the existence of the soul is the strongest proof itself," says Emerson.

If you don't believe in the soul the question of its existence can never come to you. The very fact that you are seeking for the proof of the existence of the soul, is the best proof of its existence.

In the Bible we find a beautiful passage: "Verily, verily I say unto you, except a man is born anew he cannot see God." What is this birth? It is the spiritual birth. A man must be born anew in the spirit, and then he will be able to see God. This is the beginning of the spiritual life. In India we call it "*Diksha,*" initiation. There are different kinds of initiation. If you read the Taittiriya Upanishad you will find this passage: "After one has realized the truth about all these things, after he has enjoyed the fruits of his *Karma* in different incarnations,

he betakes himself to non-attachment." That is, when all his desires have been fulfilled, he seeks for something that he has not yet attained. After this desire has arisen in him he does not want to possess anything of this world any longer. He goes to a *Guru,* and asks him for initiation, and the *Guru,* when he finds him ready and fit for spiritual instruction, gives him that initiation by which he attains to further development, and finally to *Jnana*—knowledge and *Moksha*—liberation.

So, each of us must have this spiritual birth.

That idea occurs in Isaiah. But the preachers—most of them—don't understand the real spiritual significance of that verse: "Unto us a child is born. Unto us a son is born, etc. and his name shall be the Everlasting Father —Prince of Peace, etc."

They interpret that in a most literal way, but that passage has a deep spiritual significance. This "son" is not the physical "son" but it is the consciousness of the Divine principle within.

Only those who are exceptionally fortunate possess the sincere desire to know God and that marks the beginning of spiritual life.

This Son must be born unto us, and then he must grow, until he becomes the Prince of Peace, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father—and finally into the *Brahma* Consciousness—the Realization of Peace and Bliss which dwell eternally in the Soul.

So, peace and bliss and immortality, and all beautiful

things that have been declared by the Scriptures, must be realized here in life. In the Bible we find this, which, has a mystic significance: "True things are hidden from the wise and the prudent, but are revealed to babies."

So long as we have the false and arrogant notion that we know, we are not fit for this birth. "Ignorance is bliss, and it is folly to be wise."

Those people who are wise in a spiritual sense are really very lowly and most simple like the babies. Jesus once said pointing to some children: "Unless ye be like them you can't enter the Kingdom of Heaven." "The Kingdom of Heaven is within Man."

We have to withdraw our energies from these external things and direct them to the spirit, the soul, the son, the innocent baby within, and let him slowly develop into God. That is the real process of spiritual regeneration. Some of you are acquainted with spiritual alchemy. "Alchemy" originally was an Egyptian word. The alchemists of yore sought for a liquor which could confer upon man immortality, and the early followers of this system were all mystics. It was a method of transmutation.

In our *Yoga* philosophy, we have a similar process of transmutation from a lower to a higher state. We have a great power in us called *"Kundalini."* It lies in the space between the navel, the rectum and the genital. Most people live for two instincts. These are within us: nutrition or self-preservation and reproduction or preservation of race. In ordinary mortals, all energy is used

to feed these two instincts, nutrition and reproduction. We work to earn money, so that we can obtain food and other necessities of life. Now, those who have been born anew in the spirit, concentrate their energies upon this power. One Hindu used to say: "The key which unlocks that door works in the opposite way."

Those people to whom this awakenment has come, direct the *Kundalini* power toward the higher passage—*Susumna*. It passes from stage to stage along the radiant way and finally reaches the *Sahasrara*, the centre of Infinite Light in the brain.

So, we have to awaken this power in us, under the direction of a *Guru*. We have to proceed with infinite patience and perseverance, and finally we shall reach the goal. "Arise, awake, stop not till the goal is reached."

SPIRITUALITY TRUE AND FALSE

FREEDOM is the highest aim of life and we are all seeking for freedom consciously or unconsciously. The soul is not only immortal, but divine, eternally free, pure and perfect, and the natural impulse of the soul is to regain this consciousness, the consciousness of its original freedom. There is no power under the sun that can retard this progress of the soul to regain once more its birthright. Those people who know the right method to attain this realization, are called "spiritual."

Spirituality is a very simple thing if you understand it rightly. For true spiritual consciousness you don't have to go to any person or place, or to read any books; you don't have to depend upon anything for it; all that you have to do is to open the gate of your heart and the flow will rush in. Unfortunately, we keep this gate closed. The divine spirit is present everywhere abundantly. It is an eternal reality; through it come all our inspirations. We perceive through it; we act through it; it is the nearest thing in us, but through wrong education we think it is far away from us. At this moment open your heart and receive it, and retain it. Be filled and thrilled with it.

Once a Hindu sage said: "If one wants to kill one-

'self, one can do it very easily; one can do it with a pen knife, but if one wants to kill others, one will have to be equipped with a gun, and watch for an opportunity and do many other things." If we want to spiritualise ourselves we can do it very easily—if we want to fill the soul with that water of life, with that Love of *Brahman,* it is a very simple work. If it rains, and you want to collect some water in a pail, you will have to put it in the right way, but if you put it bottom up, not one drop of water will get into it, and remain there. If we can know the method of reception and assimilation, then it becomes very easy to be spiritual.

Spirituality means assimilation or incorporation in the soul of the Divine essence. There is no theory in it. There is no speculation in it; but it is a present reality. We can feel it; in that we live and move, and have our being.

In India, with the Hindus, religion is not a faith only. It is not even a philosophy, but it is a realization. It must be known and felt. The elephant has two sets of teeth. He has two tusks which are for show. He cannot eat with them, but the elephant has a set of smaller teeth within the jaws, and with them he can eat. So, the man of true spirituality eats and enjoys with his inner self. He is a man who is absolutely free from all ostentations. He practices quietly what he learns from his *Guru:* "One should conceal one's spiritual experiences as carefully and scrupulously as one conceals one's own mother's un-

chastity." That marks true spirituality. The more spiritual a person is, the less ostentatious he is.

Here is a story to illustrate this. There lived a man of true spirituality, he was a most quiet person; even his own wife did not know that he was a spiritual man, because he never went with her to the temple, and the natural idea of the wife was that he was a Godless man. One night this man, in his dream, uttered forth the name of his *Ishta,* "Rama," three times. The wife heard that, and was exceedingly delighted and thought within herself, "After all, he is not an unspiritual man. At least in his dream he uttered forth the name of Rama." On the next morning, she arranged a dinner, invited friends, and wanted to celebrate that occasion, and when this man learned that, he burst forth into tears saying, "Oh Rama! Thou art no longer concealed in my heart: they have known that I worship Thee."

That person was truly spiritual; he worshipped God by constant communion. He did not require any particular time or place for prayer and meditation. In fact, he transcended all notions of space and time. To him one moment was not different from another moment. Every moment to him was a moment of worship. He lived in the eternal now. Some people pray at certain times during the day, but to a man of true spirituality a particular time of prayer is not any different from any other time. We have to live in that consciousness and have to transcend the thought of time and place. We

have to spiritualise the self, and I, for one, believe that we can spiritualise even the body.

Here is another illustration in point. There lived a great sage not very long ago and he was very highly spiritual. If the spirit is right, then the others respond to all moral and spiritual proprieties. After all, man is a composite of three entities: the physical, the mental and the spiritual, and if the spirit is right, then the others are right also. This man renounced all possessions. He could not touch any coin. Sometimes, when he was asleep, to test the sincerity of his renunciation, a man would put a coin into his hand and his hand would contract; it could not retain it, although he was in sleep. When two people would talk together in a room, as it is wrong for a man to overhear another man's conversation, he could not move within the hearing distance. So, we can spiritualize even the body. His body was the condensed essence of the spirit. If one person can do it, we can all do it. We may not be as great as he, in the degree of realization. There lies the greatest art of life. We have to live in this world, yet we have to constantly retain that spiritual consciousness in us.

Many people think that we have to renounce everything in this world—to run away from all these things. Of course, in a certain stage of our spiritual progress that is necessary, but in the highest state we don't seek or reject anything. As Emerson says: "It is easy to live in the world according to its own opinion; it is also easy

to live in the solitude according to one's own opinion, but he is great who can maintain with sweetness, the freedom of the solitude, in the midst of the crowd of the world."

That is the highest freedom—spiritual freedom. As I said, all people, consciously or unconsciously, are seeking for freedom. When we are sick, we try to be freed of sickness. When we have no money, we try to get some money to be free from hunger. All these are temporary freedoms. But this freedom, the spiritual freedom, if once attained, remains forever. It never fails us; when this body passes away that still befriends us. This spiritual liberation is the highest friend, as it is the highest end of life.

The mind of the man of true spirituality flows constantly to God, even as the oil when poured from one vessel into another, flows in an unbroken stream.

In the Gita Krishna says: "Howsoever staying that man lives in me." Another teacher said: "He is like the flint stone. If you keep it immersed in water for centuries and then if you take it out of water and strike it with a piece of steel, it will emit sparks. The fire remains in it always. Water cannot destroy it. So, this man of true spirituality always retains his spiritual consciousness, no matter what the circumstances are."

That is the highest freedom. There are many people who are pessimistic, cynical; they seek suffering so that they may be kept pure and God-fearing. But that is not

the highest thing. Why should we seek poverty, disease and distress so that we may remain moral and spiritual? We should not seek their opposites either. If wealth comes, take it. If it departs, be calm and cheerful all the same. The man of true spirituality is most humble. "He is lowlier than the grass." You trample upon the grass, but the grass does not retaliate.

This story will illustrate the condition: There was a man who attained spiritual calmness and serenity. One day he was walking through a crowded street and happened to step upon the toe of a rowdy and he got enraged and beat him so severely that he fell unconscious. The news reached his disciples, who hurried to his aid and brought him back to his consciousness. When he opened his eyes, one of them asked: "Can you tell me, sir, who beat you?" And he answered: "He who is now nursing me." He saw the same in all. To him there was no foe or friend. His soul dwelt in the sameness of God.

This afternoon I read this passage in the book called "Imitation of Christ." "He who has but one aim and refers all things to one principle and views all things in one light, he is able to abide steadfast and rest in God."

He who has but one supreme aim; who refers all things to one principle not to many—whose resolution and devotion is firm, whose mind is not divided upon many things at a time—and who sees all things in one light—in the light of true knowledge, he rests in peace and tranquillity. If we are susceptible of praise, we can't but

be sensitive to blame. We must treat them alike. If we can develop that power of equanimity and serenity we are not disturbed by the pairs of opposites. "The glory of the good is not in the mouths of man, but in their own consciences." They refer all things back there; that is their safest and strongest refuge—the source of all satisfaction.

The world judges by appearances. But we know what we are. The world may take a greedy man for a great man, and the world might make the opposite mistake; but this man, who refers everything, good as well as bad, to his conscience, who obeys its dictates, he, naturally, is not in the least affected by unmerited praise or by unmerited blame of others.

We find this passage elsewhere: "Whether people praise him, or blame him, whether fortune comes to him, or misfortune, whether he dies to-day, or lives a century from now, he does not swerve an inch from the path of righteousness." So, that is the supreme aim, the only aim. He sees all things in the same light, in the light of *Brahman*. He sees the spirit everywhere. He sees the sameness in all, in the high as well as in the low.

In the Gita Krishna says: "A man of true spirituality sees the same *Brahman* dwelling in all beings—in the ignorant man as well as in the illumined Brahmin; in the cow, in the elephant, in the dog and also in the dog-eater."

Every one of us creates his own world. Although most of these things appear the same to the senses, each

one makes and sees his own universe around him. Our consciousness creates our universe. In fact, we see all these things in the light of our own consciousness.

Here is a story to illustrate this: If a man who is a thief sees a stump in the twilight, he thinks it is a policeman; if a man who believes in ghosts and spirits sees that stump, he thinks, naturally, that it is a ghost; so, all these things are manifestations of thought or consciousness. I believe that we can live eternally in that Heaven, which is here, within us. We can create our Heaven, and we can also create our Hell. If a person with an undeveloped mind goes to Heaven, he will find Hell there. So, all these things are states or modes of the mind. We have to reform the mind. We have to know and maintain that divine consciousness constantly. The man of true spirituality is free from all vanity, egoism and conceit. He reads the book of nature.

This morning, when I was walking through the park, I stood for a few moments under a tree, it was such a lovely day with blue sky, sunshine and breeze, and I was naturally reminded of the saying in Shakespeare: "Tongues in trees, Books in running brooks, Sermons in stones, and God in everything."

We worship best when we are alone; in the right attitude of mind, in the solitude among trees and birds and squirrels, we just commune with God. We don't have to depend upon books for our inspiration. We should read books to verify, not to copy and quote, to get in tune with

the author's idea. How I wish that we could all read the great book of Nature! What book is more ennobling than that. Only, we have not the eyes to read it. In the running brook, we can find the presence of God.

Once Ramakrishna came to a man who used to carry a little manuscript with him and read it for hours together. He asked him to show him that book. On each page of that book was written in big letters the word—"Rama." Ramakrishna said: "Why, only one word is written on each page." And he answered: "What more do I need." If we can understand the meaning of that one word, that is enough to allay our spiritual hunger.

You may have a great Guru for your guide and a great ideal set before you by the Guru. You may have good people for your companions, but if there is not that one thing, your own sincere devotion, then all these things will not help you at all. If you have that devotion then all these things will come. You will be like the unfolded lotus. If the lotus blossoms then the bees will come of their own accord. The lotus does not seek the bees, but the bees seek the lotus.

I was reading this passage this morning from Wordsworth, the great mystic poet.

"Sound needed none,
Nor any voice of joy, his spirit drank
The spectacle; Sensation, Soul and form,
All melted into him: they swallowed up
His animal being; in them did he live,

And by them did he live; they were his life.
In such access of mind, in such high
Hour of visitation from the living God
Thought was not, in enjoyment it expired.
No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request,
Rapt in still communion that transcends
The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
His mind was a thanks-giving to the power
That made him. It was blessedness and love."

In India we undergo a rather rigid spiritual discipline. There are three main stages in the religious life. The lowest stage is characterized by such practices as worship with external things, like flowers, incense, etc. Most people do that. But there is a higher stage than that. There we do not attach much importance to the observances of rites and ceremonies. In that stage we practice what we hear from the Guru. He gives us *Ishta,* a particular formula which is suited to our spiritual nature. Each one has his own character and individuality. An illumined Guru alone can prescribe to the disciple his own formula—the method of his own spiritual development.

Considering this psychological condition in our spiritual unfoldment, we can understand the meaning of the saying "that there are as many religions as there are human beings." A *Guru* may have ten disciples and to each he gives his own *Ishta;* his own formula which is suited to his spiritual tendencies. In India we don't endeavor to make all people go through the same channel; that is a

wrong method. Religion must be an evolution of the spirit. According to the Hindus, evolution is not an infoldment from without, but an unfoldment from within. We must know how to assimilate and incorporate these helps we get from the outside. If you do not know the method, and possess the power, of assimilation, then these others will not help you at all. That is real spiritual discipline. That is why we put ourselves under the guidance of a teacher. A teacher watches us and gives us his attention. In this second stage we devote ourselves to the practice of what we hear from the *Guru*. We do not pay much attention to minute details of observances.

In India I saw many people who regularly study some Scriptures every day; sometimes for three or four hours at a sitting. They take a book, the Gita, for instance, and read it in two or three hours; then they repeat for one hour a certain sacred word which the *Guru* gives them; and then cook for the members of the order and wait on them. Through this discipline the spiritual life is developed. That is the sort of spiritual discipline we have in India.

In the third and last stage, we don't observe anything, but live in that consciousness constantly. So, in true spirituality there is absence of all ostentation, all vanity and conceit. And that man who is truly spiritual, is always humble. "He who is the chiefest of you, let him be the servant of all." There is a man to-day in India, Mahatma Gandhi—whom the people literally worship.

But he knows that he is their servant; he has no conceit or vanity, but he is their leader. He knows that people worship him; but he can't stop them. Uncultivated people, people who have not ripened through spiritual experiences, become conceited and vain in those circumstances.

Sometimes people become conceited and vain, through false spirituality. Spiritual vanity is the worst thing. It is like a tree that strikes its roots so deep into the ground that even a tornado can't wrench it. Ordinary vanities can be easily removed, but not so the spiritual vanity. So we must be constantly on our guard against it. Many people unconsciously become spiritually vain.

There lived a man in a small cottage all alone and from there he used to see a fallen woman. She lived in that neighborhood and this man used to keep record of her sins, and the story says that he used to put one piece of stone each time he noticed this woman doing sin, and he made a big hill of stones that way. With all her imperfections and sins, this woman's heart longed for this man's holiness; so, after their death this man who was only outwardly spiritual, went to a lower stage of existence; and this woman, although she made some sins and repented of them, went to a higher stage of existence. That explains the true and false spirituality. If you can keep your mind humble, clean, sincere and unconceited then and then alone are you truly and really spiritual.

THE SPIRITUALLY ILLUMINED MAN

LIGHT is the symbol of knowledge from which proceed peace and bliss. Diogenes, the great Greek sage, always carried a lamp as the symbol of the divine light or the light of the spirit in man. He used to go from house to house and awaken all the people with that light. Of course, that also had a metaphysical significance.

In India there is an order of monks who live in the deep forests. From time to time they come out and visit villages and as they pass by they say: *"Alekh," "Alekh," "Alekh,"* which means, "Light," "Light," "Light," the infinite light of the spirit of *Brahman.*

In a Hindu temple a small oil lamp is constantly kept lit. On special occasions other lights are lighted, but that small lamp is never put out. That represents the eternal light in the soul. The light of the soul is its own property. Illumination does not come from outside, but it is always in the spirit.

In the *Upanishad* we read this passage: "There the sun does not shine, nor the moon, nor the stars, nor the lightning—much less the earthly fires. Everything becomes illumined by the light of spirit." Again, "This illumination can't be attained by argumentation or by study or by action, but it must come from within. It

comes in its own time." There is no royal road to it, but we must be prepared to receive it.

Patanjali says: "This light shines from within only then when all the impurities of the heart have been removed by practice of Yoga."

According to our philosophy, the soul is essentially divine. This light is not a borrowed light, but it is its own original light, and this darkness of ignorance that obscures it, is not essential to the soul. It is accidental. They give this illustration: Here is a piece of crystal, and if you surround it with flowers, the different colors of the flowers will reflect themselves in that crystal, but the moment you remove the flowers, the crystal resumes its own purity and transparency. These things must go. They are destined to go, because they don't belong to the soul.

What is the cause of this darkness? I must confess my ignorance: I don't know. But the darkness must be removed; if we can practice certain methods of *Yoga* then we can quicken the result. If it comes naturally, then it may take many centuries, but if we place ourselves under the guidance of a competent *Guru* and follow his instructions daily, we can save much time and trouble. There we find the necessity of a *Guru*.

This light is always within us. Those of you who studied Raja-yoga will remember how this light has been represented by the lotuses in the spinal structure. Each lotus represents a plexus or center in the spine. There are seven such centers. At the root of the spine is the

basic or sacral plexus, and this center is represented as a lotus with four luminous petals, the next above is represented by a lotus with six petals, and the one above that lotus has ten petals, and one above that has twelve petals, and the one above that has sixteen petals. The next one is represented as a lotus with two petals, and then comes the *Sahasrara,* the thousand petalled lotus in the brain. That represents full illumination. Altogether we have fifty petals which represent fifty letters in the Sanskrit alphabet. Each petal represents a letter in the alphabet, and that shows that word, or speech, is a great power. It is the second person of the Trinity, the Logos, the creative energy. If we can awaken that power, then our speech becomes fiery and forceful, and it can produce illumination. That is the metaphysical meaning of "Christ," the second person of the Trinity, the Logos—the word.

So, this light must be felt. All you have to do is to remove the obstacles from the way. By systematic practice of Yoga, we can accomplish it.

The Hindu *Yogi* is a mystic. All his joy is within himself. He attains to illumination here and now in this incarnation by direct perception of the truth. Eternal light is within us. It is unbounded; it is manifested through our own soul, which is the reflection of the infinite spirit.

The *Yogi* seeks for everlasting peace, the peace that passes all understanding. If we can find peace in the self

within, then can we find it in everybody and everywhere.

The whole universe is nothing but the projection of our own self; each one creates his own universe; although we may see the same things from this side of the phenomenal, from the standpoint of the spirit, each one dwells in and perceives his own universe. I will tell you a story to illustrate how through our ignorance we place these things in the wrong place and do not get the best results:

Once a burglar entered into a house. He carried a rug, and spread the rug on the floor and then stole some things, but in the dark he placed the stolen things not on the rug, but on another place and after a time he made a noise, the people woke up and he hurried to run away. He picked up the rug and found that he did not place the things on it, so he had to leave all the things there. All his labor was in vain.

When we get all the things from external sources, if we know the right place to put them in, then alone do we benefit by them; otherwise all our efforts are wasted.

The *Yogi* calls this body a Temple. We all know that. But the *Yogi* wants to see his God in this Temple. He is not satisfied with the theoretical knowledge only, but he wants to see God in it—to worship Him and to become one with Him.

The *Yogi* gives a sort of mystical interpretation of all these things. Sometimes he calls the body *"Kshetra"*—a field. If you have a piece of land, and you know how

to cultivate it, you can make it produce crops, but if you don't know the art of cultivation, the land will lie barren.

You don't have to go to external sources for this illumination. Of course, you have to get the instructions, but you have to practice yourself. In the "Upanishads" we find this: "The seeker, after realising the vanity of external search turns within himself and tries to find that in his own self." Very few are fortunate enough to make a right beginning. Here is another illustration: The deer grows musk in a certain part of his body in the region of the stomach. When it grows, and the deer smells it and tries to locate the source of that ordor, he runs from place to place, but never finds it, because it is within himself, and the result is his death—he dies of exhaustion.

The light that brings harmony, peace and bliss is here within us. We must withdraw all these energies from the external objects and concentrate them upon the spirit within.

Before this light that the mystic *Yogi* sees within himself, all the lights of the senses and mind become pale and dim. The former is like the sun, and the latter are like the glow-worms. When a moth sees from a distance a flame of light he flies right into that flame and perishes there. He loves that flame so much that he does not fear death, so when the sincere seeker sees this light, even from a great distance, he cuts himself loose from all worldly ties and runs right into it and merges himself

into it. The moth dies in the flame, but the seeker passes into life of eternal bliss and peace.

Once three great sages started out in search of this ocean of *Brahman,* the ocean of infinite light and bliss. They were Siva, Suka and Narada. Narada from a great distance heard the rustle of the waves, and he became mad with joy and could not proceed further. He became mute and intoxicated with it all his life.

Suka only had a glimpse of it and became intoxicated with joy like Narada; but Siva touched this ocean and drank one drop of water and he became the teacher of all teachers.

When one once sees this light and if one can return from there, one knows that one knows nothing, and all vanity is crushed before that vast expanse of light.

Newton said he was only gathering pebbles on the sands of the sea, and the infinite ocean still remain unexplored. If one can express his experience of it after returning from that state, it is that he knows very little or nothing of it.

In the Gita Krishna describes the characteristics of the spiritually illumined man. I intended to explain a few verses from that part of the Gita. What I have said so far is only an introduction to my subject. There we find a concrete example of this realization.

"A person is then said to be of steady wisdom when he gives up all the low desires which are in his mind, and becomes satisfied in the self, by the self."

The last part of this verse is beautiful: "becomes satisfied in the self by the self." Because this wisdom is the highest knowledge, it produces the deepest satisfaction in the self within.

The sincere seeker is not satisfied with theories. He is a most practical man. He wants to incorporate into his soul the sweetness of the spirit. He wants to charge himself, to saturate himself with it. He wants to realize while living in this body, the consciousness of bodylessness, living in the body, yet practically dead to it. Dead insofar as attachment is concerned.

A young devotee of Sri Ramakaishna attained this state and pointing to him he used to say, "This man is dead while he is in the body." I think Jesus said the same thing: "Dying to the body and living eternally to the spirit," or something like that.

That does not mean that one must find fault with the body. I shall come to this point later. In that realization one does not become cynical or pessimistic, but one takes things as they come. One is then spiritually detached from all things. They shall be left behind, so why not possess that knowledge here and why not conquer death while staying in this field of life? It is not that one should not perform one's duties. But I believe that we can do our duties most efficiently, if we can become dead to the body by spiritually detaching ourselves from all earthly things.

Krishna in the Gita has taught sacredness of duty. If

we don't possess that power to remain superior to all material things, if we can't fight all battles of life here heroically and triumphantly, how can we find peace and rest in the retreat of the forest? These worldly things will follow us there. While we are here we must courageously face them and triumph over them.

This state is compared to the flint stone. If a flint stone is kept immersed in water for centuries the moment you take it out and strike it with a piece of steel it will emit sparks. That fire always remains in it. No matter whether we are in the crowd or in the solitude we must always maintain that spiritual consciousness.

"He whose mind is not disturbed, and from whom all anger, fear and lust have passed away, he is said to be the seer." He really sees; others are blind; we may have eyes, but in spite of them we are blind.

Once a blind man came to see Buddha and the disciples recommended him to go to an oculist, but Buddha said: "Dear children, the oculist may restore his eyesight, but he will still remain blind."

Not for one moment misunderstand this. If the oculist had had the power he could have restored partial and temporary eye-sight to that man. The blindness of ignorance would have remained just the same. So, that is why he suggested the removal of the blindness of ignorance. We have to teach hand in hand these two methods; that is, while we are in this body it is right to keep it in an efficient state, but it will never remain for all eternity. It

must go; but if we must have a strong, efficient body, the object of it should be the attainment of spiritual knowledge. There is that opportunity in a strong, healthy body. It is a means to an end, not an end in itself.

Nothing can disturb this man. Misery can't disturb him. Neither can fortune disturb him. We are disturbed by all these pairs of opposites. When fortune or health comes we feel exceedingly delighted. When their opposites come we feel depressed and sorry. We do not possess the power to meet them with equal serenity. There is the danger. But this man knows the truth and never overestimates these things. He refers all these things to his conscience and finds strength and satisfaction there. If people praise him to please him, he can know that. If people censure or blame him spitefully, he can know that also. . So, these pairs of opposites can't in the least shake his calmness, his serenity, his peace and his poise.

"That which is night to all beings, there the self discerning sage is awake; that is night to the discerning seer where the other beings are awake."

What is night to us is his day and what is his day is our night.

He lives in a state of consciousness which practically does not exist for us. It is night to us—all darkness. But it is his day. He is awake there. We are awake to these little things that come through the senses, but he is asleep there. It is his night, because he lives entirely upon

a much higher plane, and these little things that we enjoy have no attraction, in fact no existence, for him.

Our little lights are only a small part of that infinite light of *Brahman* and that man constantly dwells under it in his Eternal Day. There is no more night for him.

"Into him all desires enter in the manner in which the waters enter into the ocean, but not into him who hankers after desires." Just as thousands upon thousands of rivers empty their contents into the ocean, but the ocean never overflows its banks, so also this man is always filled with that water. Nothing can shake or disturb his fullness and firmness.

"The man who, having abandoned all desires, lives without attachment or vanity or conceit, he attains peace."

"This is the *Brahmi* state, and after attaining this, one does not become deluded; by abiding in this state, even at the time of one's departure one obtains the everlasting bliss of *Brahman.*" There are three states, *Brahmi*, *Celestial* and *Terrestrial*. This is the Terrestrial state—the state we perceive by the five senses. The Celestial state is the state where we go to reap the fruits of our good *Karma*. That is, by performance of meritorious deeds we go to this *Loka* or sphere; but we have to come back from there.

"There is a return even from the highest world, but when one attains to this knowledge here and now, for him there is no more coming and going."

Then there is the third and last state, the *Brahmi* state.

It is that unshakable state, that state where dwell abundantly Joy and Light and Peace of *Brahman*. There is no ebb and flow, no coming and going, no change in that state, but Peace and Joy and Light are eternally present.

This is a very simple process, but unfortunately we have made it very complicated by our ignorance. If we know how to open ourselves, how to receive it, then all these vessels, our souls, will be filled up again.

There is an infinite supply of the light of *Brahman* and we must receive it now. That man whose soul remains immersed in this ocean of *Brahman*, this ocean of infinite Light, he indeed is a blessing to himself and a blessing to his community, to his family; nay, he is a blessing to the whole humanity.

So, let us have this great blessing. Give up all these detours and round-about methods. Cultivate self-confidence and realize it. It is here all around you, day and night. It is constantly haunting you, but you don't know how to receive it and retain it and fill yourself with it. Here is this great opportunity; make yourself a blessing to yourself, your family and your community, and the world at large.

THE HINDU WOMAN'S IDEA OF LOVE, SACRIFICE AND SPIRITUALITY

MANY people in this country have the erroneous notion that the Hindu woman has no freedom at all; neither religious, nor social. The sources of information upon which this notion is built are very evident. There are two main sources of information for people of the Western world upon our conditions in India. First of all, there is the report of the missionary, and then there is the British Government report. Neither of these two sources is perfect and reliable. The missionary, in the first place, goes to the foreign country to save the soul of the heathen. He naturally goes with the attitude of a superior, and his interest is to see among the people all the vices and shut wilfully his eyes to their virtues, if they have any. Then, the British Government in India, of course, has its own interest. It tells other peoples that the Hindus belong to an inferior civilization, and by many other stories justifies its existence in India. But we shall not discuss the details of these two sources of information in this afternoon's talk. I am going to read to you one or two extracts that I collected from some eminent authorities. They will give some light upon these stories that you hear from the representatives of those

two other authorities. We read this in a book by the great French writer Jaccoliot, called "The Bible in India." This is his opinion upon women in India:

"India of the Vedas entertained a respect for women amounting to worship, a fact which we seem little to suspect in Europe when we accuse the extreme East of having denied the dignity of women and of having only made of her an instrument of pleasure and passive obedience. What! here is a civilization which you cannot deny to be older than your own, which places the woman on a level with the man and gives her equal place in the family and in society."

Another writer says: "The Begum of Bhopal rules over an area of about 7000 square miles in the heart of India. She has her army, her own laws, courts, etc. The idea of a woman sovereign is familiar to the Indian mind. The Begum of Bhopal is Queen in her own right as much as Queen Victoria in England. There is absolutely no indignation or scorn against her. There is no man except the ruling Prince, with as much influence in Hyderabad as the Dowager Lady Salar Jung—the widow of the Ex-Prime Minister of the Deccan."

"The idea that women are despised in India is an Anglo-Indian myth. The name of the Hindu lady, Ahalya Bai is respected throughout India. In 1857, during the Indian Mutiny the Rani of Jhansi died on the battle field fighting sword in hand for what she considered was the cause of her country."

The Hindu ladies, in ancient as well as in modern India, have always ruled the life of the Hindu man. There have been eminent women in spirituality—women like Gargi and Maitreyi. These ladies discussed philosophical and spiritual subjects with men. Not only that, but most of the teachers of the Vedas were women. They were seers of truth, and today the whole world respects their teachings, because the Vedas are the most ancient of all religious books. In the Western world, where Christianity prevails, women have only recently received some freedom. In the Bible we find this passage: "It is a shame for a woman to speak in a Church. If she wants to know, let her ask her husband." But in India, even today, we find the very highest teachers among women. One of my own teachers was a woman, and I have not yet found another woman like her in morality, sobriety and spirituality. Those people who do not know the actual conditions of our social and religious life, make those remarks upon the Hindu woman. They say that the Hindu woman is not educated. But, what is education? It may be that the Hindu woman is not literate; she does not read books. But she is the best educated woman, because she knows the principle of education. True education is the expression of the divinity within. These women may not read books, but they express this divinity: So, they are the best educated persons.

If we judge education by its fruits, then we can know the value of education of these women. Education must

create harmony and happiness, must establish peace in the family, in society, and in the world at large.

The Hindu mother is the most graceful and most revered person in the home. The Hindu man worships her; she is the Goddess of the home and its ruler. The husband, the son, the daughter, the servant, not only obey her, but worship her. In India we are not taught "Therefore shall a man cleave to his wife and leave his father and mother"—not that. In India when a man is married, if his father and mother are living, he brings his wife to them, and lives with them. In all domestic matters he obeys the mother and not the wife.

You have also heard that the Hindu woman is not very kindly treated in the home, and many other stories that concern her life. But I will tell you: Because the woman is noble, her sacrifices are noble too. The nobler you are, the greater are your sacrifices. If the Hindu woman, for instance, eats last after the others have been fed, she considers it her privilege. She does not feel insulted or humiliated, but honored by it. She is the hostess, the leader. It is her duty to feed others first and then eat what is left last.

Then you have also heard that the Hindu widow does not marry again. There are two great reasons why she does not marry again. First of all, it is not highly moral for a woman to marry a second time. The woman is the teacher. She must teach man. She must teach by her own example. In India we never see women flirting

with men. I will tell you one more thing: It was in India that the idea of motherhood of God first arose, and it prevails today. In the West they worship God as "Father," but in India we worship God as "Mother" also. If He can be a father, why not a mother also? They both are symbolic. God is neither male nor female, but if we can worship Him as a man, why can't we worship Him as a woman? Then, there are great advantages in that idea of motherhood of God; in the first place, the mother is more lenient, sweeter, softer and kindlier than the father. Naturally, the son or the daughter takes more liberties with the mother than with the father. The child is closer to the mother, more familiar with her, than with the father. The father represents the sterner qualities, and the mother the softer qualities. The Hindu chants this hymn: "Oh mother, Thou art incarnate in all women; all arts and sciences are but imperfect manifestations of Thy infinite knowledge. Thee we salute, Thee we salute, Thee we salute, Oh mother!"

If the woman can cultivate that idea that she is the mother of man, she is his teacher; if she can maintain that superior attitude, then she can wield a great influence over man, she can lead him in the right path. The woman is really superior to the man. There is no sentiment in it, but the truth. The Hindu man, because he idealises the woman, idolises her. He is extremely sentimental in this respect. In India no Hindu man beats his wife, but in some states of your country even today, in the back

yard of every house there is a flogging post for the wife beaters. In India there have never been any wife beaters. It is the worst sin for a man to insult his wife. Of course, there are exceptions, as they say, every rule has its exceptions. There are black sheep in every fold, and there are traitors in every camp. But that is not the rule.

In India when a man speaks to a woman, he bends his head. It is an insult to the modesty of woman to speak to her, face to face. That is the attitude of the Hindu man toward the woman.

Now, as to this question of marriage: In India we have the "prudent" marriage. That is, the marriage is arranged by the parents, or the superiors, or the elders. I believe in that. I will tell you why this marriage by courtship is not always a success. These young people are guided not by true love, but by sentiment. It is a sort of emotion on their part, and they are not mature in their wisdom and judgment, and they very often make mistakes. But in India, these leaders of society are the ones who determine for the young people whom they should marry: because upon the marriage and its product depends the welfare of the society as well as theirs. Marriage is not for personal pleasure only. If all these immature young men and women are turned loose upon society, the result will be confusion and chaos and the offspring of that sort of marriage will be born criminals.

So, in India we have prudent marriage, because upon

the offspring of the marriage, depends the future welfare of the society. So, the leaders of the society have a right to dictate to these young people whom they should and whom they should not marry.

Then the question of widow marriage: Why the Hindu widows are not married again:—First is the moral reason, and the second is the economical reason. In India, whether for good or ill, we have the custom that every woman must marry. And there the women outnumber the men. Now, if every woman must marry, and if there are fewer men than women—then if a woman marries again as soon as she loses her husband, she deprives a sister of the chance of getting married. That is the reason from the standpoint of social economy. Why should there be this widow marriage? It is not moral for a woman to marry a second time and her happiness does not depend upon the number of times she is married. If these women in other countries, who remain spinsters, if they can remain clean and pure by non-marriage and do not feel lonesome and unhappy, why not these widows, who have had the chance of marriage and were married can be pure, clean and happy? I think here, because of the economic conditions, the average woman either must be married to have a husband to support her, or she must work. That is not the case with the Hindu woman. She has always a home, and is always cared for if she is a widow, by her mother or father, sister or brother even by distant relatives. In

India, because the Hindu woman is eminently spiritual, she knows how to protect herself under all circumstances. Here is a story to illustrate that. Once a dancing girl came to a palace, and a young man made indecent advances to her, and this woman not only resented that, but rebuked that man. She said to him: "If you dare to do that again, you will meet with my shoes first." That is the idea of the Hindu woman's moral courage and chastity.

Then a word about the Hindu woman's love. She does not waste her love. In India, the courtship begins after the marriage. Here in this country, much of the love is wasted, but there the love is conserved and it develops finally into a sort of spiritual unity. In India marriage is considered as a union not between two people physically, but between two minds. That is the reason why the wife is called *Sahadharmini*—spiritual co-partner.

You have also heard of the *Sati*. Of course, that custom prevailed in India for some time. It was in existence for two or three centuries, but it was abolished about a hundred years ago. You know marriage in India has always been considered as a union between two souls. There may be some superstition in it, but that is the idea. This custom of *Sati* was not a compulsory one. If a widow wanted to die with her husband, she could do that. It was entirely voluntary. My great-grandaunt was a *Sati*. She had four children. After her husband died, she wanted to die with him, and those children sat around her and implored her not to die. Then, she stretched

out her arms, and put her fingers on the flame of a lamp, the fingers burned, but she did not manifest any sign of pain or agony, and she said: "I care very little for my body." So, afterwards she became a *Sati.* Is that not a glorious instance of love? Here in the Western world love is a sort of commodity. If two people agree, there is love. A woman loves her husband today. She thinks that he is a god, a hero, and a few days later she changes her mind, and she calls him a beast. There is no fidelity and devotion and sacrifice in this commercial love.

In the Mahabharata we find this story. It illustrates the Hindu idea of love. Yudhisthira and his wife Draupadi were living in exile. One day Draupadi asked him: "How is it that you who are such a virtuous man, had to suffer all these insults and privations, and you are a great lover of God?—why does He not protect you?" Then he answered her: "My dear Draupadi, I love God not for anything I receive from Him. It is my nature to love Him. I am not a shop-keeper in love." The noblest expression of love is sacrifice—in true love there are no boundaries. It flows in all directions. If we can cultivate that love by spiritual understanding, then we love all beings, animals as well as men.

If we can realize the basic principle of life, which is love, then we can remain firm and immovable under all circumstances. Then we can be truly faithful and devoted to our friends, relatives, parents, sisters, brothers, children —and all humanity.

The Hindu woman is spiritually cultured. And because she is spiritual, she is naturally moral and dutiful. If you can find a firm seat in spirituality, let us call it God, then and then alone can you be a good citizen, a good husband, a good wife, a good child. So, that is the need of today. You have beautiful things in your country, but that element is lamentably lacking. So, to make life beautiful, blissful and peaceful we have to have real spiritual culture.

We are taught that we must not do unto others what we would not have others do to us. But we do not practice it. I once saw a play here: One man was making advances to a maid-servant in the house and there was another man who was making advances to the former's sister. He was indignant at that man and went to protect his sister. Then this maid-servant said: "Why are you doing to me the thing which you do not like another man to do to your own sister?" Ninety-nine per cent of men are like that. They have not the broader understanding of life. We must be respectful to others and honorable and truly and really moral and spiritual. If you protect your sister, if you know it is not right for your sister to be annoyed by a man, why do you annoy another woman? If you want the exclusive love of your wife, why do you not let other men have the same claim upon their wives' love? That is the most important thing, spirituality. A spiritual man in India, bows his head to a woman. He naturally protects her; a spiritual Hindu

always looks upon a woman as his mother. And the Hindu woman assumes the motherly attitude in her treatment of men. She feels it her duty to teach men right behavior and right conduct. There lies the greatness of the woman, and the woman can perform that great duty only by spiritual power and knowledge. That is my appeal to all women: Teach men good behavior by your spirituality and motherly love and dignity.

In closing, I will tell you another story from the Mahabharata as an illustration of the Hindu woman's ideal of love and sacrifice. There lived a king who, somehow or other, had lost his kingdom, and retired into the forest, and lived there with his wife and only son. There was another king who had a daughter, and this princess, when she attained the marriageable age, was asked by her parents, the king and queen, to choose her husband. We have eight kinds of marriages in the Scriptures and that is one kind. We call that *Swayamvara*—marriage by choice. Then this princess said, "All right, I will." She selects this young prince, who was living with his father and mother in exile in the forest. Then, after having made up her mind to marry him, she returns home and tells her father and mother that she has found a man and that she would marry him. Then presently a seer comes to the palace and when he learns that this princess was going to marry the son of the hermit king, he says to her: "That man whom you have chosen for your husband will die in one year from to-day." When the king and the queen

heard that they asked the daughter to change her mind and not to marry him, because in that case she would be a widow in a year. Then she said: "Since I have given him my word of honor and I am devoted to him, I will not give up this choice, even if he dies in one year from to-day."

So, the father and mother could not prevail upon her to give up this choice; she was married, and after one year, this man died. This happened unexpectedly when he was picking flowers in the forest and his wife was with him then. Then *Yama,* God of Death, sends his messengers to take away this dead man's body, but this woman sits near him. She was so brilliant in her genuine love and spirituality that these messengers could not approach her, they went away, then *Yama* comes himself and says: "That man, your husband, is dead. You leave his body and go home." She said: "No, if you take him you have to take me also." And then he answers: "Your time has not come yet. I can't take you. Your husband's time has come." But still she does not leave the body, and then *Yama* says to her again: "I am very much pleased with your devotion to your husband, and I offer you a boon—what will you accept?" Upon this *Savitri* —that was her name—says: "Give me this boon—that I may have children." *Yama* says: "Be it so. You will have children. Now go home," without realizing the seriousness of what he said. Then *Savitri* says: "You said I would have children, but if you take away my

husband, how can I have children?" Then *Yama* returned him his life and *Satyavan,* the prince, woke up from his sleep of death. This conversation between *Yama* and *Savitri* is a most interesting and instructive story in the Mahabharata. In India, every man and woman knows this story. There we find a splendid example of love and sacrifice through spiritual understanding.

In India the woman is considered as the epitome of the past, a reservoir of the future. There are some religious orders, the male members of which, worship women, even little girls. Says Manu: "Where the women are happy there the Gods are happy. Indeed where the woman is rightly educated and spiritual, there dwell harmony and prosperity, bliss and peace."

BUDDHA'S ETHICS AND METAPHYSICS

BUDDHA was one of the greatest men that the world has ever produced. I call him a "man," because he never claimed that he was a God or an incarnation of God, or an angel or a messenger from God. In fact, he was absolutely silent on the question of God. He was not even a theologian.

Buddha was the greatest democrat. He was not a democrat of the type of George Washington, with several dozens of slaves around him, nor was he a democrat of the type of William Bryan, who is, in a sectarian way, intolerant to progressive spiritual ideas. He was a democrat in the truest sense of the term.

He said: "I live and die for the welfare of all." He was a Prince. He renounced his Kingdom, his friends, his family, in order to devote himself to the greatest problem of life, the problem of disease, age and death.

He was the greatest lover of truth. He was a great teacher of peace; several centuries before Jesus he preached the doctrine of love and good-will not only to all men, but to all living beings. He never taught that animals were created for the pleasure of man, to be shot and

killed and eaten by him. He recognized the sacredness of life in all, from the lowest to the highest. He recognized the same life dwelling in all beings.

You, who have studied his life, will remember how on several occasions he offered his own life in order to save animals. Once he saw a hungry tigress with her young ones around her; he wanted to give his flesh to them so that they might remain alive. And on another occasion, he picked up a wounded lamb and put it on his shoulders and carried it to the house of the King, and gave him that little lamb, entreating him to take care of it and not to kill it.

So, he loved all beings, and his idea of peace was again very different from the modern ideas of peace. He insisted upon self-control. He taught that mind is its own enemy as well as its own friend.

Before I close I will read to you one or two verses from the Dhammapada, in which you will find how he taught his idea of peace: That man who does not possess self-control, that man who does not meditate—a man who is not his own master, can never attain peace.

Once a young student came to him and asked him to tell him about religion, and Buddha said: "Be good and do good." This young man said: "I did not come to you for this simple instruction, a child of five years could give me this instruction." And Buddha said: "Yes, my dear friend, a child of five years could give you that instruction, but a man of eighty years cannot practice it.

Be good and do good." In those few words he formulated his system of ethics, morality and love.

This name Buddha is not a proper name. It is a title. Buddha means the "enlightened one," just as the word Christ means the "anointed one." It was a designation. His family name was Goutama, and he was born of the race of Shakyas, and because he was so great, he was called Shakya-sinha, and Shakya-muni, meaning the Lion of the race of Shakyas, the Sage of the race of Shakyas. He had other names, such as *Arhata,* which means the "worthy one," and *Bhagavata,* which means the "blessed one," and he was also known as *Siddhartha,* which means the "all prosperous one," and *Sugata,* which means the "happy one." These names were given him after he had attained *Nirvana,* the highest liberation.

Let us discuss for a moment Buddha's idea of God. By the way, this period in which Buddha lived was a most important period in the world's history. He lived in the sixth century B. C. In that century Laotze and Confucius preached their spiritual and ethical doctrines in China. He was a contemporary of Pythagoras, and in that century the Jews were released from their Babylonian captivity by the Persian King, Cyrus, and in that century a Republic was established in Rome; so, it was a very important epoch in the history of the world.

As I said, Buddha was reticent upon the question of God. He did not commit himself either positively or negatively about God. He was rather agnostic in his

attitude. His answer to the question, "Is there a God?" was "I don't know." I don't think he was an atheist in the sense that term is ordinarily used. He certainly did not believe in an anthropomorphic God, the God of the theologian. He believed in an eternal and infinite spirit.

Buddha was a product of the older form of religion, I mean the religion of the Vedas. He was a reformer and a very bold one at that. He was an arch atheist or a nihilist. That is, he denied everything. According to his metaphysics, the highest end of life is the cessation of all life activities. Mind you, not by suicide, but by self-sacrifice can you attain to that state. Because, if you commit suicide, the will to live will still cling to you, and that will bring you back again to a body; but if you can kill the will to live, that is, if you can actually become free from all desires, longing, and clinging to this terrestrial existence, then and then alone can you attain *Nirvana* —cessation of all desires. To this point I shall return later.

He was a great realist and at the same time a great idealist. He was a wonderful combination of these two great factors of philosophy—realism and idealism.

Now, how could a man who is a realist be a metaphysician and believe in transcendental things? He did that. There lies the beauty of his philosophy.

Buddha was imbued with the teachings of some of the then prevailing systems of philosophy and particularly with those of Samkhya Philosophy. The author of this

system of philosophy was an atheist. But he was not a materialist. He demanded proofs for the existence of God, and the existence of God cannot be proved by any of the accepted channels of evidential knowledge; but he had an open mind.

"If any one can ever furnish me with competent proofs as to the existence of a personal God, I will accept Him, but not till then." This was Kapila's contention.

Then he said: "If you say God is our Creator, then He becomes a bound Being; creation is impossible without desire and a Being who has desires is not an entirely free Being, so, why should we worship a God who is not a free Being Himself. Conversely; if He is a free Being, He cannot create."

So, he did not believe in a God as creator of the universe.

Buddha's contention was this: "If there is a God who is our Creator, He cannot be both benevolent and omnipotent. He can be either benevolent or omnipotent." His heart was so compassionate that he constantly felt for the sorrows of his fellow-beings. Can any merciful person ignore all these facts of life?

If there is anything that means most, it is pain and misery. All things are in a state of constant flux. He also recognized the fluxional nature of this life. Everything is constantly changing here.

I might say that Buddha was a great optimist. But some people are so ignorantly optimistic that they are

afraid to examine into these great factors of life, factors that stare them in the face, and they try to shut their eyes to them and feel safe. This safety is like that of the rabbit, which after being chased by the hunter, hides behind a bush, shuts his eyes and imagines that he is safe. The hunter finds him out, and shoots and kills him.

So, it is part of wisdom to face these great factors of life, and to solve them manfully, and not to hide behind false faith or hope; nor to wilfully ignore them.

Why did Buddha say that God cannot be both benevolent and omnipotent? If this God is an omnipotent God, and at the same time benevolent, then in His infinite power, and infinite compassion He could create us all equally happy and rich and prosperous, all free from disease, distress, age and death. Nothing is impossible to do in infinite wisdom, infinite power and infinite love.

If you maintain that God is a Being, who has infinite power, and is infinitely wise, just and loving, and at the same time believe that He has created misery, distress, disease, age and death, so that through these means we be made pure, that is all nonsense. Why should we be made pure and clean through that process? In His infinite wisdom and power, why did He not so create us that we would remain eternally pure and righteous here without having the necessity of going through that cleansing and chastening process? If God is both omnipotent and benevolent, He would and could create us all equally blissful and peaceful. That is the logical conclusion. There

would be no disease, distress, age and death or suffering. It does not satisfy our sense of justice if we say that God is just, impartial and loving, while we find in His creation so much partiality and inequality.

Then he said: If this God is a benevolent or merciful God, He is not omnipotent; He has love, but He has not the power to remove our sufferings and sorrows. Or He has infinite power to use it in a despotic way, but no love for us. This establishes only a divine caprice.

If God is powerless to make us happy here, how can He give us eternal happiness in the life hereafter? There lies the beauty of his philosophy, its rationality. The people in the West are afraid to discuss this question so candidly and clearly as Buddha did. They try to swallow the old traditional teaching, and never courageously meet these facts and master them. That is the reason why Buddha renounced everything to devote himself to meditation and contemplation, and thereby find a solution of these greatest problems.

If you have read his life, you will remember how on four different occasions he saw four sights, and these sights determined him to devote his life to the solution of these problems.

On one occasion he saw an old man. His hair was all gray, his teeth gone, and he was walking with a cane. Buddha asked his driver who that man was. Never before in his life had he seen such a sight, because he lived in a palace surrounded by all luxuries. It was a new

sight to him and when the driver told him that that was an old man, he said: "Shall I become old like him? Will Yashodara, my wife, become old like that? Will my father become old like that?" He answered: "Yes, sir." And then Buddha said: "I will go no farther. Take me back to my palace."

On another occasion he saw a diseased man, a leper, and he asked the same question again, and the answer was: "We are all liable to become diseased." And Buddha said: "Take me back to my palace, I will go no farther."

On a third occasion he saw a funeral procession, and he asked about the dead body. "What is death?" and the answer was: "It is the common lot of all human beings." And he said: "I must meditate upon this question." On a fourth occasion he saw a *Bhikshu,* a mendicant who renounced the world and was calm and peaceful. He wanted to be one like him.

Then one night he left home; his palace, wife, baby, father and servants, and became a recluse; for six years he devoted himself to severe ascetic exercises. Then, the story says: One night, before he attained *Nirvana* he was tempted by Mara, the arch demon, but he proved himself a master. After vanquishing Mara he was still practicing the exercises sitting under a Boe tree, and about midnight he said to his disciples who were entreating him to give up that practice of asceticism, because his body was reduced to a skeleton, "Oh, friends, if my body

dies here, if the different parts become decomposed, separated, if this body is eaten by vultures and jackals, I will not move an inch from here until I have attained enlightenment." And the result was that that night he attained *Nirvana*. But he renounced *Nirvana* also. He did not want to remain in it. After having tasted the sweetness, the joy, the peace, the freedom of *Nirvana,* he refused it, and he came down to the ordinary plane of his fellow men to teach them how to attain *Nirvana*. There we find another glorious instance of renunciation.

They talk of the renunciation of other teachers. Take the renunciation of Jesus. Let us consider him as a man. Jesus was a man, a poor man; he was the son of a carpenter. He had nothing to renounce, but Buddha renounced his throne. If you have power, if you have position, if you have estate, and having those things, if you can renounce them, then your renunciation is great. Buddha had power, wealth, health and everything, had even *Nirvana*—the highest freedom, and he renounced them all.

He never believed in miracles or supernatural powers. He disclaimed all powers. He was not a healer or a miracle-maker. You know the story:

Once a young woman lost her only son, and when she heard that Buddha was a great *Yogin*, a holy man, she came to him, and placed the dead child at his feet and begged him to restore him to life, and Buddha replied: "Go to that village, and bring me a few mustard seeds,

please do not take them from a house where there has been any death." So, that woman went from house to house, and she did not find any house where there was no death; then she came to Buddha and told this to him. Buddha said: "Woman, do not grieve. Nothing unusual has happened. This is the common lot of all human beings. Be the master of all these things. Overcome them. Why should you have that desire to retain anyone in this body? That is a bondage."

Buddha taught us to become free of all bondage. If you constantly think of this body and want to remain in the body, you are not a free person.

He never performed any miracles. He was not a magician, or a raiser to life from death. Just a sensible, rational man, and in fact he considered facts as they are. He did not overestimate them, nor did he underestimate them. That was the beauty of his teachings.

He did not believe in a permanent soul—persistent soul.

Among the followers, there are four great schools. The first is the Idealist, *Yogachara.* The followers believe in what may be called the theory of momentary existence. Just think of the fluxional nature of life. According to Buddha there is only a succession of ideas or consciousnesses, but there is no continuity of a permanently conscious entity. The order of things of this moment is different from that of the things in the past moment, or in the next succeeding moment. Every minute a new life is

being created and a new death is happening. That is, we are being born, and we are dying also every moment, and these successions make life like a continued reality, but the reality is the moment or the existence at the moment. This is his familiar illustration: Take a torch and swing it in the air. That one flame will produce a continuous line, like a circle or a semi-circle, but that circle or semi-circle is not a reality. The reality is the flame.

The second school is called *Madhyamika,* the nihilist. The *Madhyamikas* deny both the knower and the known. That is, in one word, the substance of this belief is, that we are only a bundle of ideas. They believe in the idea or knowledge or consciousness, and deny the knower—the subject. There is neither the knower nor the known, but there is only the knowledge. Consciousness is the only existence. That is why they are called nihilists—*shunyavadis.*

Here he took a bold step, and in this respect he differed from all other great metaphysicians. But though he denied the soul as a permanent entity, he believed in character or *Karma.* In fact, on that theory he built his doctrine of ethics: "As you sow, so shall you reap." To him *Karma* is the law of reaction. Whatever we do rebounds to us and there is no escape from the reaction. So, man is nothing but an aggregate of the impressions of his deeds—not the soul, but the succession of impressions of actions:

"Our deeds still travel with us from afar,

And what we have been makes us what we are." Every man is his own ancestor; *i. e.,* the product of his past deeds.

The other two schools are called *Sautrantika* and *Vaibhashika.* The followers of the former believed in the perceptibility of external objects and those of the latter inferribility of external objects.

Buddha taught four truths. The first truth was, misery or pain. The second truth was, the cause of misery. The third truth was, the cessation of misery; and the fourth truth was, the way to cessation of misery.

What is the cause of misery? *"Trishna"* or the clinging to life. The way to the cessation of misery is the noble *Paramita*: the observance of eight great virtues, such as right thought, right action, right work, etc., and the five following commandments:—

Thou shalt not steal.

Thou shalt not kill.

Thou shalt not lie.

Thou shalt not commit lewdness.

Thou shalt not drink.

By following them we can attain to *Nirvana.*

Just a word about *Nirvana.* This is a very much misunderstood word. Many people think that *Nirvana* means annihilation. It is not annihilation, but it is the cessation of all desires, of the clinging to life and worldly things. *Nirvana* is a neutral state, the symbol of *Nirvana* is zero. Zero is a neutral number. It is not a positive nor a nega-

tive number. Zero is the infinitesimally small number, but it has value, so is *Nirvana*. It is a neutral state. This is the same as *"Moksha"* according to the older faith. It is a state which has never been defiled by being described, because by describing a thing you circumscribe it. By defining a thing you confine it, you make it small and limited.

He was a God-intoxicated atheist, not a lover of God like us. We take the name of God in vain, because we do not know God. It is just a commonplace word with us. The name is not sacred to us, but to Buddha it was a sacred thing and he did not want to hackney it from place to place and make a living out of the use of that word. He was a true lover of God.

"He who says he knows God, knows not, but he who knows that he cannot know God, he knows God."

"God is known to the ignorant, and unknown to the wise."

Buddha was a wise man, he knew God. But he appeared as if he did not know. His soul remained absorbed in *Brahman*. He may well be called a God-intoxicated atheist. He found no words to express his knowledge.

Buddhism arose in India, as I said before in the sixth century B.C. and lasted until the eighth or ninth century A.D., and then naturally a reaction came. It became degenerated and died out in India. But Buddhism to-day has the largest following. There are nearly five hundred

million Buddhists in the world to-day. King Asoka accepted this religion in the third century B.C. and made it the state religion. He established hospitals and schools. By the way, there were great Buddhist Universities in India in the early centuries. Scholars used to come from China. Hiountsang lived in India from 629 A.D. to 640 A.D. He was a student of the Nalanda University. I saw its ruins twenty years ago. Buddhism was spread in Ceylon in the time of Asoka himself. He sent his son and daughter as missionaries there. It flourished in China in the fourth century A.D., and in Japan, Siam and Tibet in the sixth and seventh centuries.

When I was in Burma last Spring, I went to see a statue of Buddha in Pegu, about fifty miles from Ragoon. We got there about one o'clock, and directly walked to the statue. It is in a lying position about 200 feet long, and all around it were three or four hundred devotees with burning incense and bouquets of flowers in their hands, muttering this sacred sentence: "I meditate upon the light of the jewel in the lotus of the heart."

While they said this, they were whirling a wheel. If they can whirl this wheel ten times and say the verse once, or whirl it twenty times and say the verse once, then it means that it is repeated ten or twenty times. Towards the close of this service they say: "I take refuge in the Buddha: I take refuge in the Law: I take refuge in the Order." These three sentences are called *triratna*—three jewels.

I want to read one or two verses from Dhammapada. To the Buddhist this book is as sacred and authoritative as the New Testament to the Christian; the Koran to the Mohammedan; the Zendavesta to the Zoroastrian. Buddha's teachings were preserved in three baskets: —*Petakas.* One basket is called *Sutrapetaka;* another basket is called *Vinayapetaka,* and the third, *Dhammapetaka.* The first contains the actual sayings and doings of the Buddha. The second contains the rules for monastic life, and in the third basket is preserved the Buddhist metaphysics.

From Dhammapada: "Mind is the cause of both virtue and vice. If anyone is impure and unkindly, pain and sorrow come to him."

"If anyone is kindly and loving to others, bliss comes to him. He who says that such and such a man is my enemy, he has beaten me, insulted me, he who has such thoughts is never peaceful. He who never has such thoughts is ever peaceful and happy."

"He who does not hate is never hated."

"He who never injures others is never injured."

"He who loves others is loved only."

"Hatred, oh friends, is never cured by hatred, but hatred is cured by love."

"He who knows what is right from what is wrong, knows the truth."

"He who meditates rightly can remain master of all desires and finally attains *Nirvana.*"

"Garb does not make a man holy, but self-denial and

self-control and love of truth make a man holy and spiritual."

Buddha died at the age of eighty years, and these were his last words to his disciples. Addressing Ananda, his most favorite disciple, he said: "Be ye lamps unto yourselves, be ye guides unto yourselves. Betake yourselves to no external aids, but work out your salvation by devotion and diligence."

When the disciples realized that Buddha was going to depart, the thought occurred to them: Who would be his successor. They naturally requested him to appoint Ananda,—but the Blessed One advised each one to be his own teacher, to attain *Nirvana* by personal efforts.

RESURRECTION AND REINCARNATION

THE day is not far off when all superstitions will be replaced by reason. When religion once more will be established upon a scientific basis and instead of being a source of fanaticism and fight, it will be a real source of harmony and fellowship and peace. There is no fundamental difference between science and religion, inasmuch as the end and aim of both are the same.

Science is endeavoring to establish unity on a physical or material basis, but modern science has not as yet been able to discover and demonstrate that one principle out of which all has come. But religion has already established this unity: There is only one infinite and eternal principle. From that one, which is without a second, nameless, formless, free from all conditions and qualities, all this has come. And that one has been expressed variously by various teachers and masters.

Each one must rediscover for himself this basic unity, and according to religion this unity is both fundamental and final; there is variety only in the middle, but in the end as well as in the beginning, there is only one—the absolute truth or *Brahman.*

In India there has never been any separation between

religion and science. On the contrary, we believe that science, instead of being contradictory is complementary to religion. Science completes religion and true science becomes religion when pushed to its farthest limits. If realization of truth be the end of life, then there can be no fundamental difference between science and religion. Their methods may be different, but the object or aim is the same.

This afternoon I propose to discuss this most important doctrine of Christianity, the doctrine of resurrection, from four different standpoints; theological, natural, scientific and spiritual. This doctrine is so important that in fact it is one of the great pillars upon which this grand edifice of faith rests. It is not my intention to destroy or injure even a part of this great pillar, but I shall endeavor to present to you a rational view of this famous doctrine.

In the first place, this doctrine was not originally a Christian doctrine; its origin can be traced back to man's natural belief in and hope for an everlasting life. This hope is an eternal hope, and it shall never be realized at the same time by the whole human race, but individually, there were people who realized it, and there are people who have realized it, and there will be people who will realize it.

The Hindus cannot understand how, by mere belief upon any personality, we can attain our salvation. In fact, salvation is not a matter of faith or belief, but a

matter of realization. There are two ways of explaining all the facts that happen around us. There is the objective method and the subjective method. According to the objective method, all these things happen by an external agent, and according to the subjective method, the cause of a fact or a phenomenon is in itself; in other words, the effect is already in the cause. What is not already in a thing can never come out of it. I shall return to this point later.

Those people who follow the first method attribute the cause of an effect rather to the effect than to the cause itself. But those who follow the subjective method know that the effect is not separate or distinct from the cause. For instance, if a part of the ceiling breaks and falls upon the ground, those people who believe in the first method of explanation will tell you that a ghost, to make mischief, did that; but the cause of that fall is in the thing itself. It is due to its own weight, its gravitation. If a person gets sick, for instance, with influenza, he will think that it came to him from an external source, but the real cause of that disease is in the person himself—his own weakness or predisposition to it.

Salvation is not a special gift, but it is our natural gift, our birthright. The soul is eternally free and divine. But it appears as bound and sinful through our ignorance. This ignorance must be removed before we can see the soul in its own purity and bliss.

I want you to bear this in mind: salvation can't be ob-

tained by proxy or substitution. No person, prophet or saviour or God Himself, can save us until and unless we know how to save ourselves. Unless we can bring our lives into conformity with the higher laws, we can never be saved. Salvation, being a matter of personal realization, must be your own consciousness; you must feel that you have been saved. It is not a mere hope. It is a matter of direct perception and possession. When you have attained freedom or salvation you will know that you have been saved. It will become incorporated in your soul.

According to the Christian theologians, Jesus Christ sacrificed his life for the salvation of sinners. If sin is an original property of the soul we can never become freed of it. The very fact that we can attain salvation proves that we are already free from sin. This freedom can't come to us from outside, it must be found and expressed from within. The doctrine that our salvation can be secured by another person, by his death or any sacrifice, is absurd and superstitious. We believe that we are entitled to that only which we have earned, which we have paid for individually.

That is, we believe in the doctrine of *Karma,* which means the law of justice; the law of compensation or reaction—the deed returns to the doer, and there is no escape from its consequence. Upon this doctrine, is based our morality. Because we know that the deeds return to us—we naturally want to do good deeds so that

good will be the result, and our good nature will be deepened and strengthened, and if we do evil things, evil will come to us and our evil nature will be made worse. So, we must be very careful about what we do. If I am not responsible myself for my own acts, then I may do anything and everything if I know that there is a mighty Saviour above me who can give me salvation the moment I come to him. My natural tendencies will be to do all sorts of evil deeds. Again this theory of vicarious atonement does not satisfy our sense of justice.

The Christian missionaries say that this doctrine that Vedanta teaches, that we are all divine, tends to destroy morality. These people want to be good and moral under the cord of the whip, so to say, of an extracosmic God. Without the fear of punishment from a wrathful God they can never become and remain good and clean and law-abiding. But the law of *Karma* teaches man how to stand firm upon his moral legs and keep erect his spiritual backbone. If I commit a sin, I must manfully take the full responsibility of it. I must not shirk it upon someone else. Is not that the just and fair attitude? If you think that you have a great saviour who can forgive your sins then you will be apt to do all sorts of sins. That thought will act as an incentive to sin rather than a deterrent. So, naturally, we don't commit sin to avoid its consequence. On that principle is based our ethics. According to this theory there is no substitution. We must not make the futile efforts to escape from the conse-

quences of our errors, but we must be on our guard against committing errors. That is, we must not commit evil deeds. If we do, the responsibility or consequence is ours. There we find a splendid basis of morality and justice.

This theory of substitutionary atonement even to-day holds an undisputed sway in the Christian world. It is an arrant superstition. How can anybody attain salvation by the death of another, be he an angel or God Himself? And not only that, they believe that Jesus Christ, after he was crucified and buried, rose from the grave, and those who believe on him shall also rise from the grave and pass to Heaven. This doctrine, besides being superstitious, provides a basis of waste and infection. Those people who bury their dead in the hope that the dead bodies shall be risen from the graves in an indefinite future can very easily realize what becomes of them in a few months. When these dead bodies are decomposed, the earth is polluted, the water is polluted and the air is polluted, so that is a great sin to the community. The custom of burial is most unsanitary and it is uneconomical because vast areas of land are used for burying the dead. The land can be cultivated to raise crops of wheat, corn and potatoes. So, this custom which is the direct offspring of the doctrine of Resurrection is highly uneconomical besides being unsanitary and superstitious.

The Zoroastrians have a better method of disposing of the dead. They put the dead bodies on the roofs of

high buildings and birds eat them. They don't pollute the air or water or earth. The idea is hygienic.

The origin of the doctrine of Resurrection can be traced back to man's belief in and hope for an ever lasting life. This belief in immortality is the corner stone of all religions and of all systems of philosophy. I will discuss briefly the origin and nature of this belief.

The ancient Egyptians believe in immortality, but they had a very queer notion of it; they could not separate the soul from the body—the soul to them was a double of the body, which meant if the body was injured or destroyed the soul also would be injured or destroyed. That explains why the Egyptians took so much care to preserve their dead. Herodotus said the Egyptians were the first race that had an idea of the incorporeality of the soul, but modern researches into Egyptology do not advance any proof in support of that contention. Then the Chaldeans, although they did not speculate as much as the Egyptians did, as to the nature of the soul, yet they could not dissociate the soul from the body, and they believed in a sort of resurrection of the body. They first introduced the system of burial. Then the Jews of the time of Philo and the Alexandrian Jews believed in reincarnation of the soul. They believed that Jesus was an incarnation of an older prophet and Jesus himself said that John the Baptist was an incarnation of the prophet Elias. The ancient Greeks also believed in the immortality of the soul and some of the Greek philosophers believed even

in transmigration of the soul. According to some scholars Pythagoras came to India to study with the Hindus and after his return to Greece, he introduced this idea of transmigration. According to this idea, *Karma* or the law of cause and effect has very little part to play in the shaping of our destiny. The soul, by mere choice, could go to a higher or a lower body. If you studied the life of Pythagoras, you will recall how he was once ridiculed by a friend when he remarked on hearing the dying yell of a dog, that in that dog he recognized the soul of an old friend. He believed that his old friend after his death became incarnated in that dog body. But according to the theory of reincarnation, there is constant progress, even physical. But we shall not discuss that particular point to-day.

In Christianity, of course, there is this belief in the immortality of the soul. But according to it the soul has a beginning, but not an end. The soul is created. It begins with the birth of the body, but does not die with the death of the body. Schopenhauer likened this idea of immortality of the soul to an infinite stick with one end only: a stick can't be infinite with one end, as a stick is infinite only then when it has no ends—neither the one end nor the other.

The Christians believe in an endless future, but deny a past which must logically be equally endless.

Here we find a more rational theory that existed in India in the most ancient times, 2000 years before Christ;

the theory of evolution. Monier Williams once said: "If I may be allowed an anachronism, the Hindus were Spinozites centuries before Spinoza, Darwinians centuries before Darwin and evolutionists centuries before the word "evolution" was ever known to the vocabulary of any western language."

Darwin first introduced the theory of evolution into the western world in 1859 or thereabout, but the Church has not yet accepted it. Even some educated men like William Bryan do not believe in it. His fear was that this theory, if taught in our schools and colleges, would destroy morality and religion of our children. If religion can't stand the scrutiny of reason, then it deserves death. If the Church can't accommodate itself to the conclusions of science, then it not only deserves death, but it is already dead. We are living in an age of science. The days of superstition are gone. Everything to-day demands explanation and reason:—Why should we accept this, why should we reject that? If this theory of evolution had made its appearance in the days of the Inquisition, it is easy to guess the fate that would have befallen its adherents—they would have been burned at the stake. Religion must once more be established on a scientific basis. More harm has been done to the world by bigots and fanatics than by atheists or agnostics.

Think of the Crusades and Inquisitions and all the wars that these so-called "Christian Nations" have caused to the world. This last Great War was fought principally

among the Christian nations; yet they all believed in the same God and the same Saviour. Christianity is a great religion, as all religions are great and good, but it has not been understood and practised. A man once asked: "Is Christianity a failure?" And the answer was: "No, it has not been tried yet."

Oscar Wilde once said: "There had been many Christians before Christ, but only one since him."

We don't want to make Christians Hindus, but we want to make Christians better Christians: we shall stand upon the principle of reason, of philosophy, of science. You people have heard from missionaries that in India the people are most superstitious; they bow before idols and images, bathe in the Ganges and worship in the temples; certainly they do. I have already explained to you why they do so, but let me explain it again.

With us religion is not a settled opinion; nor is it a partisan or a sectarian movement; but the record of spiritual experiences of man from the lowest to the highest rung of the ladder of evolution. In the beginning the primitive man worshipped images and forms and the forces of nature—then some Gods behind these manifestations of nature, and then he learned to worship one God, and lastly he learned to worship the principle which is nameless and formless, eternal, infinite and universal.

Religion must be a record of all these stages of evolution. If I want to write my own biography, do you think it would be correct and complete if I let certain incidents

of my life be omitted? The biography to be accurate must contain all incidents good and bad, because those are the facts of my life. With us religion is the process of infinite progress and it must contain all the facts that have happened in its course.

When Christianity in its efforts to explain some of its doctrines resorts to dogmatism and wants us to accept them without evidence, no sensible person should do that. We demand a rational explanation.

This grand religion is based upon two miracles—the virgin birth, and the resurrection, of Christ. These are arrant superstitions. No man with an iota of common sense can believe to-day that the law, which must operate equally for all, can be suspended even for one minute for any person. The law of birth is the same in all times and all climes and it applies unalterably to all people. How can that law be suspended for one instant? It would not remain a law any more, if it could be so suspended.

In this age, in this civilization, while people boast of their culture and progress they still cling to these superstitious notions. People who are naturally superstitious let them cling to these doctrines, but why should they foist them on others? There lies the mistake. And there is the other miracle, the rising of the dead from the grave. That is another instance of superstition. Life can never come out of death. What is not in a thing can not come out of it. If a man dies, he can never be made

alive again. When the body dies it never comes back to life.

Krishna, when speaking of the difference between the body and the soul, says: "The body is subject to changes and it can be affected by the elements. It can be cut by the sword, burned by the fire, dried by the wind and drowned in the water, but the soul can never be burned or cut or dried or drowned."

"Just as we cast off an old coat and wear a new one, even so the soul casts off an old body and takes up a new one." The body is thus no better representative of the soul than a coat is of the body.

This idea of incorporeality of the soul can be found in the Upanishads and upon this is based the more rational doctrine of reincarnation. The doctrine of reincarnation supplements the theory of evolution by furnishing the soul with the necessary time and opportunity to work out the effects of *Karma*. Evolution is an eternal process of development, and reincarnation is the purpose, and we believe that the soul is the same in all beings and that this process is an infinite chain of which incarnations are links. These bodies or forms of life are like the different links in this infinite chain of evolution. The soul in the lowest form of life, in the protoplasm or amœba, develops into the Christ or the Buddha. The Christ and the Buddha are consciousnesses, not personalities. Jesus Christ, when he rose from the grave ascended into Heaven. Superstitious people believe in the objective

method of explanation and take these incidents as actual facts and interpret the Bible teachings in a literal way. But Heaven and Hell are within us. Ascension means the rise of the soul from ignorance to knowledge and resurrection means the rise of the soul, not from the dead to life, but from sleep to awakeness.

Nobody knows for certain that Jesus Christ was crucified and buried on a Friday about this time and rose from the grave on the following Sunday. There are no historical records in regard to these incidents. The account that we have to-day of Jesus does not occur in contemporaneous books; the events of his life were not recorded in his life time. The first three gospels were written at least 300 years after Jesus was dead, and the fourth gospel was written 600 years after his death. No records were kept of those incidents because the orthodox people did not care for them as they believed in the immediate second coming of the Christ and that the world would be destroyed in a short time, and again, they were illiterate people. They did not know how to read and write.

Christianity is not an original religion. It is a mixture of many faiths—one-half is Jewish and the other half composed of many other religions—Egyptian, Greek, Buddhist, etc. St. Paul was the first organizer of this religion. He was not the originator of the doctrine of the Trinity—he got it from the Greeks. God—the true, the good, the beautiful—was the Greek conception of the Trinity. Then this doctrine of the Trinity was finally

incorporated in Christianity in the 5th century by Athanasius.

Christianity from the earliest times has been a most aggressive religion and it has endeavored to give a Christian significance to all the Jewish and pagan festivals. No one knows exactly when Jesus was born, nor when he died. In India we have a great festival corresponding to the Easter. I can challenge any minister to show me that Christ was born on December 25th. Where are his proofs?

This doctrine of resurrection is an equally unauthentic and absurd doctrine. It is still a matter of doubt if Jesus was actually crucified and buried on a Friday in early spring and rose from the grave on the following Sunday.

This festival is nothing but a Christianized Passover. It is a Spring festival. In Spring nature recovers from the effects of winter months. It means the awakening of nature after the sleep of winter, and this very word Easter is an Anglo-Saxon word. It means the Goddess of Light, and in pre-christian times a real feast used to be held in honor of this Goddess of Light. Originally, this festival lasted for eight days, and in the 11th century it was observed for three days, later for two days, and now for one day. There was a great dispute as to the proper time for the observance of this festival in the 4th century. The eastern Church observed this festival on the 14th day of the first Jewish month, which corresponded to the Passover festival; and the western Church used to

observe it as a festival in honor of the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Sunday following the full moon. The council of Nicea decided in favour of the western usage.

This festival used to be observed among all nations, but Christianity now has monopolized it. It was originally a Spring festival and not a commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus from the grave. It is a reawakening of Mother Nature in the early spring from her sleep in the winter months.

The doctrine of reincarnation is more rational, because it explains all the laws of life. According to Christianity we have only one term of life. How can all the accumulated effects of deeds be worked out in one term of life? That is not long enough. If this life has been predestined by a loving and wise God, then why do we not all have the same equal opportunities? Some are rich and some are poor, some healthy, some sick. All these conditions can be satisfactorily explained only on the ground of evolution and reincarnation.

According to the theory of reincarnation, man must not depend upon any external agent, even upon God, for his salvation. He must work out his salvation. He must earn it and deserve it.

It clearly and conclusively establishes that man is the maker of his destiny. He is his own saviour—his own ancestor.

SANKARA'S CONCEPTION OF THE ABSOLUTE SPIRIT

SANKARA was born in the eighth century A. D. in the state of Travancore, in southern India. Many stories are told of the miracles that attended his birth and life. He was born at a time when Hindu spirituality was undergoing a decay. At that time both Buddhism and Hinduism were declining and many spurious religious cults arose. Sankara wanted to remove them and establish once more the true religion, the religion of the Vedas. He was therefore a fulfilment of the promise that we find in the fourth chapter of the Gita, "Whenever there is decay of true religion, and prevalence of irreligion, the Lord projects himself." "He is born in every age to remove false religions and to establish true religion, for the protection of the righteous and for the correction of the wicked."

Sankara was an intellectual prodigy. He studied all the systems of philosophy when he was twelve years old. He wrote commentaries on the Vedanta philosophy, the Gita and the Upanishads, when he was sixteen years old, and he travelled throughout the length and breadth of India on foot when he was twenty-one years old. Dur-

ing these travels, Sankara established four great schools or monasteries at four corners of India, one in the North, one in the East, one in the South and one in the West.

He conquered all the great intellectual luminaries of his time. Just as Buddha was famous for his heart qualities, for his compassion, even so was Sankara for his intellectual qualities. He met all the great scholars of his own time and challenged them to intellectual discussions on various philosophical subjects, and the general condition of those discussions was that whoever of the two disputants would be able to defeat the other, the latter should become a disciple of the former.

Sankara defeated one by one all his adversaries, his intellectual opponents. When he was in Benares he challenged a great scholar by the name of Mandan Misra to engage in a philosophical discussion with him. He was a householder and believed that the duties that are ordained for the householder are great. He was not an advocate of monasticism. But Sankara was a great monk, and in this discussion, this man's wife, Ubhay-Bharati, took the place of the umpire. She was very efficient as a scholar and most impartial as a judge. Her husband, Mandan, was defeated, and Sankara immediately asked him to become his disciple. But Ubhay-Bharati said, "Sankara, you have defeated only a half of my husband, and the other half you have yet to defeat. You must defeat me."

That is the idea of married life in India. The hus-

band and wife, the two together, make the whole. Then, Sankara accepted her challenge and the discussion lasted several weeks and Sankara was defeated. This lady asked Sankara some questions which he had never had the opportunity in his life to study, questions that are more important to a woman than a man. He requested time to study the subject of argument, which was granted. Sankara was absent for nearly a year, and in that time he studied the subject, then he came back to take up the discussion again. This time Sankara won and both Mandan and Ubhay-Bharati became his disciples.

Another story is told of his life when he was in Benares. Sankara taught monism or absolute oneness of God, man and universe. One day, after taking his ablution in the Ganges, he was walking in the street, and there he touched a butcher, and after having touched him, he went back to the Ganges to wash himself again, because he thought that that touch polluted him. When he came back to the bank, this butcher asked him: "Why did you go back to the Ganges and bathe a second time?" Sankara answered, "Because I touched you." So, the butcher said, "What was the harm?" to which he replied, "Because you are a butcher, an unclean person, and I wanted to make myself clean again."

They say that the butcher was Siva himself, the Lord of the sacred city of Benares and, to teach Sankara the practice of his philosophy he appeared to him in that form. Then this butcher quoted from Sankara's own

philosophy that there is only one Brahman, without a second, and that Brahman is eternally clean and pure. "How then, in your own philosophy, could there be room for uncleanliness? Why did you think that I was an unclean person?" He caught him in his own philosophy, and then Sankara acknowledged his own mistake. "Yes, in the absolute spirit, in Brahman there is no separation; there is no uncleanliness, sickness, disease or death," and he begged his pardon. Then this butcher assumed the form of Siva and gave him further instructions.

The orthodox Hindus believe that Sankara was an incarnation of Siva himself. Sankara is another name of Siva—it means literally, "the giver of good."

Just as Spinoza was the founder of modern philosophy in Europe, so also Sankara was the founder of modern philosophy in India. And what was his philosophy? It was pure monism, or unity or oneness of all life, all existence.

Sankara based his philosophy of monism upon the teachings of the Upanishads. One, for instance, means "the supreme spirit is one without a second." Mark that: "one without a second." It is not the oneness of monotheism, nor pantheism, but absolute oneness itself. According to pantheism, this is all God. Spinoza was a pantheist, he believed in one substance, he called it "Substantia." This whole universe of matter and force is the all of God. The monism as preached by Sankara was very different from that. That is, this all that we can

comprehend with our mind, is only an infinitesimally small part of infinite Brahman. Whatever we can conceive with the mind is a limited thing, so, how can that thing which is limited be the whole? A part can never be the whole. So, this all is only a part of the infinite whole. Brahman is this and infinitely beyond this. We can't comprehend it. That is Sankara's conception of monism, in brief.

Why is it not monotheism? Some of the special religions are monotheistic; Christians believe in one God, a personal God. God is one, and this universe is different from Him. We are separate from that God, but monism does not mean that. It says we are eternally one with God. The monotheistic God is one God, a class by Himself, and man and universe are separate from Him. You have heard from missionaries and other people who, after remaining in India a few months or years, talk about our conditions—religious, social, etc. Most of these foreigners can never get the opportunity to know the real Hindu life. In the first place, the Hindu is an exclusive man. He is very conservative. You might be shocked with what I am going to say now, but I don't care: if my own mother were living when I visited India last time, after being here eighteen years, she would not have dined with me. She would not take a glass of water touched by me, although she would respect me, because I am a religious preacher, but she would have nothing to do with me socially, because she had the notion that I became

physically unclean, being so many years among unclean people. That might be a wrong notion, but that is the fact. These Western people are never admitted into the inner circle of the Hindu society. So, how can they know the actual conditions, especially social conditions in India.

These missionaries work among the degraded class of people and they judge India by them.

Then they say that we are idolatrous—symbol worshippers or image worshippers. This is a phase of our religion; because with us religion is a field of eternal and infinite progress of human thought, and in it must be included the experiences of the lower as well as higher stages. Take for instance the primitive man. He worships in his own way. He worships the natural objects, the forces of nature. Should we exclude that experience from religion? No. That is an essential part of the eternal progress of religion. Just as we should not say that our childhood was an error, so, we have no right to say that that phase of religion is an error. In India we have included all these different stages in this process of progress—religion—and even today there are people who worship emblems and symbols—*Pratikas* and *Pratimas*.

The Christian prays to a God who has eyes, mouth, ears, feet, feelings, etc.; He can forgive, punish and reward. Just a big man. That is an image; an idol; so, if these Hindu people worship a substitute for that God, there is nothing harmful in it. With us, religion is not

an "ism" or "ity," but an infinite field of progress and in it must be included all these different experiences that man feels, on his way of evolution.

Sankara's philosophy reaches the very climax of the spiritual thought. That is, all this is one. This conception of monism is very different from some of the modern conceptions of monism. According to these latter, there is no sin, no matter, no disease, no death, but there are their opposites. That is, there are good, health, prosperity, success, etc. But in this conception of pure *Advaita*—monism—there is room neither for the one nor for the other, because these opposites are relative things and they always go together. So long as we are in this world of relativities, we must have them. In fact, if you recognize good, you have to recognize evil. There is no absolute standard of good or evil. Certain things may be good under certain conditions, and they might be bad under different conditions.

Here is an illustration: a steamer carries passengers and that steamer hits a rock, and the passengers are drowned. Will you call that steamer good or bad? It is good and bad both; this goodness or badness depends upon the circumstances.

Fire gives us heat and warmth and sometimes it burns our houses. We are drowned in the water and we take a bath in the water and feel refreshed. They are neither absolutely good, nor absolutely bad.

Sankara, when he reasoned about the phenomenal life,

did not altogether ignore it. He never denied it. By denying a thing you affirm it. If you deny disease you affirm it. You believe in it; in your subconscious mind there is the notion of disease, otherwise why should you bother about it? Once a Christian Scientist asked me, "Is sickness a reality?" I answered: "Why do you raise that question? That very question shows that you believe in it." If one does not believe in sickness, disease, death, one can never dwell upon those things. Those questions can never enter his mind. The fact that one denies those things proves one's belief in those things. There lies the rationalism of Sankara's philosophy.

So, this conception of pure monism is very different from all other forms of monism, according to different beliefs that prevail in the world to-day.

Sankara commented upon the Vedic phrase, *"Ekam eva advitiyam":* "That is one without a second." He has drawn a sharp line of demarcation between things that *are* and things that *appear*. These things that appear have only a phenomenal existence; so long as we perceive them, or take cognizance of them, they exist. They exist through our own mind, and if we can withdraw the mind from them they will cease to exist. There is a state in our spiritual development where these things naturally drop out. Then we become immersed in that beautiful spirit which is truth itself, bliss itself and peace itself, indivisible, eternal and infinite. In that state there are no matter, sin, sickness and death.

In his philosophy he has discussed one important theory which I will present to you as briefly as possible, and that is the theory of *"Maya"*.

Maya means that by which things are measured. The faculty of perception or measurement is *Maya*. Sankara established his philosophy of monism upon the assumption of one infinite, indivisible reality which is called *Brahman*. He had to postulate the theory of *Maya* in order not to stultify himself. If there is only one infinite reality, how can there be room for these other thoughts and things which are not *Brahman?* The action and reaction of two entities are the cause of this phenomenal world. They are the ego or the subject and the non-ego or the object. In one word, "I and thou." And these two, by some mysterious power, have been conjoined and their attributes mutually transferred. From the combination of these two primal entities has sprung the manifoldness of the universe.

What am I? Am I this body, the senses, the mind, the intellect, or something deeper and different than these? Sankara says: "This ego, or the real self, has identified itself with the body or the non-self. It has superimposed upon itself the thoughts of body, mind, etc., and their attributes, and that false identification is the cause of this *avidya*, ignorance, and its offspring. If we can free ourselves from it by the knowledge of *Brahman*, then there shall be no more disease, distress, death for us. We shall enjoy everlasting life, peace and bliss.

Never make the mistake of totally denying this world. While I am conscious of it; while I fear disease, distress, death, should I say that these things do not exist? No. This existence needs an explanation and in order to do that, Sankara advanced the theory of *Maya*. So long as we are here and perceive these things, we have no right to say that the world does not exist. It is like a dream. Just as in our dream in sleep we perceive many things, and those things actually exist in that state. But when we wake up they vanish. So, in this dream these things exist, I, thou, etc., but when the awakening comes they all depart. There is no substantial difference in the world dream and the dream in our sleep—there is only a difference in duration. We are here walking like somnambulists. But so long as we are in this dream, these things are a reality. But we must awaken once more from the world dream, and as soon as we awaken we shall know what that reality is. This dream world is *maya*. It has an existence, yet it has none.

In one of his writings Sankara says: "*Karma,* or work, however great, can never lead us to supreme liberation. Knowledge and action are like light and darkness; just as darkness can't dispel darkness—even so, *Karma,* however, meritorious, can never dispel *avidya,* ignorance." So, to remove ignorance, we have to bring in this light, the light of knowledge.

Maya is compared to a serpent swallowing his own tail. The symbol of *Maya* is a circle. When a serpent

endeavors to swallow his tail he makes a circle; he can never swallow himself by swallowing his tail.

This is a mysterious power. Sankara confesses his ignorance about this power, but he assumes it as a fact. Just as we assume electricity as a power, but we don't know what electricity is. He accepted *Maya* as a power, as a fact. Centrifugally it is the becoming of the one, this absolute spirit, into the many, and centripetally the rebecoming of the many into that one. So, in this way *Maya* is an eternal power. By this power *Brahman* projects Himself in the forms of God, man and universe. These are inseparable from *Maya,* as well as from *Brahman.*

The first aphorism in the Vedanta philosophy is this: "From what all this has come?" And the answer is: From that absolute spirit—nameless, formless, sexless, secondless—free from all conditions and qualities. It has never been desecrated by being defined. To describe it would be to circumscribe it. So, out of that infinite one, we have all come. And we remain in that. And at the conclusion of the cycle we return into that.

Just like actors, we perform different roles and as soon as the play is over, we go out of the stage. We must regain the knowledge of *Brahman* and be free from *Maya.*

Brahman projects this universe and withdraws it into Himself, we come from Him and go back into Him. This

is done as easily as we breathe in and out. When this *Brahman* breathes out, this universe comes into being, and when He breathes in, it all goes back into Him.

Sankara believed only in that one supreme spirit, and that we are eternally at one with that. He believed in the fundamental identity of man and *Brahman*. He said: "He who perceives only that, the absolute spirit, he is the seer of the truth."

I will read to you his short poem of six stanzas on *Nirvana* and give its substance. In it we find the quintessence of his philosophy.

"I am not the mind, nor the intellect, not the ego, nor the different senses of perception; I am neither ether nor air, neither water nor earth, nor fire—I am Siva. I am Siva—the essence of all good."

"I am neither the five subtle substances, nor the five vital airs; I am neither speech, nor arms, nor feet; I am neither the five sheaths, nor the three bodies. I am Siva! I am Siva!"

"I am free from vanity, jealousy, greed and pride; I am free from religion and irreligion; because they are only relative things; but I am the essence of good. I am Siva! I am Siva!"

"I am that changeless, infinite, eternal self. I am all pervading. I am neither freedom nor bondage; but I am the essence of existence and knowledge and bliss. I am Siva! I am Siva!"

Sankara lived on this earth world for thirty-two years. During that short period he actually accomplished a work of thirty-two hundred years.

> "We live in deeds, not in years;
> In thoughts, not in breaths. In feelings,
> Not in figures on a dial.
> We should count life by heart throbs.
> He most lives, who thinks most,
> Feels the noblest and acts the best."

Sankara in that short span of earthly life thought the highest, acted the best and felt the noblest. He is immortalized in his work.

THE SECRET OF DEATH

THE most mysterious of all mysteries is the mystery of death. Once Yudhisthira, the hero of the *Mahabharata,* was asked: "What thing is the most common, yet most strange?" To that Yudhisthira answered: "It is Death." "Every day thousands upon thousands die, yet those who remain never think that they shall have to die."

Once a Persian King came to the Court of a Roman King. This latter showed his royal guest all his wonderful institutions, and after he had shown him all those things, he expected from him a word of appreciation. But the Persian King said: "I see in your Kingdom people die just as they do in my Kingdom. Have you been able to solve that great problem?"

A story is told of a woman who, with a dead child in her arms came to Buddha. She had heard of the arrival of Buddha in her village and had the notion that if she could bring her dead child to him and place him at his holy feet, he might be made alive again.

So, this woman comes to Buddha and tells him what she came there for, and Buddha says: "I will do what you ask me to do if you first of all do me a favor." The woman said: "What is it?" Then Buddha answered:

"Will you bring me a handful of mustard seeds from such houses where there have not been any deaths?"

This woman did not think of the seriousness of it, and she goes to a house in the neighborhood, and the lady comes out and she asks her to give her some mustard seeds, but before she brings the seeds she enquires: "Has anybody died here, lady?" Then the lady says: "Yes. A servant died the other day." The woman says: "Then I won't take the mustard seeds from you."

Then she goes to the next house, and she asks the lady there for some mustard seeds, and she inquires if there was any death in that house, and she receives the same answer.

This way she goes from house to house, and she does not find one house where there was no death. So, she could not get any mustard seeds.

She returns to Buddha and tells him what had happened. Then Buddha says: "My dear lady, nothing unusual has happened to your son. This is the common lot of all human beings. No one shall be able to escape death."

Death is happening every day, before our eyes, yet that phenomenon does not set us thinking seriously about it.

My dear friends, the more we fear death, the more fearful it becomes. So, it is worth our while to know what it is. By mere argumentation this problem cannot be solved, but it can be solved only by knowing life. If we

can know what life is, then the problem of death will solve itself.

What I am going to do this afternoon is to read a few verses from the *Katha-upanishad,* which has been translated by Edwin Arnold under the title of "The secret of Death." In this book the way to conquer death has been most philosophically discussed. It is presented to us in the form of a dialogue between *Yama,* the God of Death, and a young student, by name *Nachiketa.*

The *Upanishads* form a part of the *Vedas.* The *Vedas* are so voluminous that the different parts have not yet been discovered and put together, and that portion of them which has been discovered and committed to writing cannot be read and understood in one life-time.

The *Vedas* in the earliest times were not written. The *Vedic* Teachers believed that it would detract from their sacredness if they were committed to writing. They were taught orally, and in that way came down from generation to generation until the fifteenth century before Christ, when a small part was reduced to writing.

There are three parts in the *Vedas*: *Samhita, Brahmana,* and *Aranyakas.* The *Samhita* portion contains the original hymns, the *Brahmanas* are the comments, and the *Aranyakas* are the books intended for the forest dwellers—for those who live in retreats and solitudes.

In India, after a man has performed all his duties as a householder and attained the age of fifty, he retires, and in that period of retirement he studies the *Aranyakas,*

and they are studied under a personal teacher. This particular *Aranyaka* or *Upanishad,* which is our subject this afternoon, is called *Katha.* It is composed by a teacher, whose name was *Katha.* It bears his name. It is most poetic and at the same time most philosophical.

This young boy went to that great teacher and asked him to tell him about death or, in other words, to tell him about the soul. It happened that the father of this young man, performed a great sacrifice, which required him to give away the most precious things he had, but instead of doing that, he was giving away the most worthless things.

This son, approached him and asked him, rather in a precocious way: "Father, this sacrifice requires you to give away your most precious possessions, and I am your only son. To whom are you going to give me away?"

When he asked this, his father did not answer. He asked him this question a second time, and again for the third time, and then this man got angry and in that mood of anger he said: "I will give you away to Death." And the son says: "Father you must keep your word. You must give me to Death." Then he goes to death.

This old man, his father, did not have sincere faith. He was performing that sacrifice in a most perfunctory way; he was not fulfilling all the conditions of it, but this young man was possessed of faith—*Shraddha.*

Although he was young in years, he was old in wisdom. After he arrives at the house of *Yama,* he inquires for

him, but *Yama* was absent. Then his wife meets him, and asks him to come in, wash his hands and feet and eat his meals. But this young boy says:

"I have come here to see *Yama* and I won't enter into the house until I have seen him."

He waits three days and three nights at the door and when *Yama* returns home, he finds his guest waiting out for him. He learned from him his intention. Then he said: "I am very much pleased to meet you, and because you have waited for me three days and three nights at my door, I offer you three boons. Now, what will you have for them?"

For the first boon he asks this: "When I left my father he was very wrathful and disturbed. Oh *Yama!* grant me this, that my father may regain his calmness. May he be at peace! This I wish for the first boon."

In India we are not taught "that a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife." On the contrary, in the *Vedas* we read this: "Worship your father and mother as Gods; worship your spiritual teacher as a God; worship your guest as a God."

So, this young man did not forget his father, although his father was very harsh and severe to him. He felt it his first duty to make his father peaceful and happy.

Then for the second boon he asked about Heaven. "What is Heaven and how can one go there?"

This dialogue was held perhaps three thousand years before Christ. Even in those ancient times the Hindus

did not believe that Heaven is a locality, except allegorically. When they described Heaven as a place it was only an allegorical description, and should not be taken literally: But even to-day a Christian believes that Heaven is a place.

When I was in Berne last summer, I saw a picture at the entrance of a church—a most graphic description of Hell. It shows a constantly burning fire in a bottomless lake into which sinners are falling headlong from all sides; and there was a picture of Heaven also on the other side.

You might say that this also may be taken as an allegory. To ascertain that I have talked the matter over with many people. According to the orthodox Christians these things are literally true. They believe that Heaven is a place of enjoyment and that Hell is a place of suffering. Those who keep the word of God, shall be rewarded with an everlasting life in Heaven, and those who do not shall be punished in everlasting Hell.

Heaven and Hell, metaphysically, are not localities, but they are states of the mind. "The mind can make a Heaven out of Hell and Hell out of Heaven." Although these words are put into the mouth of Satan by Milton, there is a great truth in them.

Heaven is right here, and Hell also is here. Mind is Heaven and mind is Hell. That mind which is pure and spiritual is Heaven, and that mind which is impure and unspiritual is Hell. That man, who can live in this

Heaven, the Heaven of his mind, enjoys everlasting peace and bliss in it.

This was the description *Yama* gave of Heaven, and the other part of the question was "how to go there?"

We cannot go to that Heaven by supporting the priest or the church. The almighty dollar is powerless to buy us a ticket for Heaven. With money we can have all other things. But to go to Heaven we have to pay a different price. And it is sincere devotion, faith and knowledge.

By these means alone can we enjoy Heavenly Peace. The Hindus do not believe in a post mortem Heaven. It is right here—with us and within us.

In the Bible we read that Heaven is above, and Hell is below. Now, if Heaven is above us, in twelve hours from now it will be beneath and Hell above us, because the world is constantly moving. So where is Heaven, and where is Hell? Certainly they do not change their positions with the rotatory motion of the Earth.

After describing the nature of this everlasting Heaven within man, and the means of reaching that Heaven, he was very much pleased with him. Nothing gives greater delight to a teacher than a worthy student. A worthy disciple to a Guru is more than his son, because the Guru's spiritual life is perpetuated through the disciple.

Then he asked him: "What will you have for your third boon?" *Nachiketa* says: "For the third boon I want you to tell me about the soul."

"There is this famous doubt as to the existence of the soul. Some believe that the soul eternally exists, and some believe that there is no such thing as soul."

"Please tell me the truth about this question. Tell me about the hereafter; whether death is the end or an incident."

In order to test his sincerity and readiness, *Yama* says: "Why do you ask me this question? Why do you want to know about the hereafter? Why do you not wish for the joys of this life? You will have them all—palaces, servants, damsels, cars, horses, elephants by my grace and live a life of one thousand years. Go home and be happy with these gifts."

The young man answered: "All these things that you have been so pleased to offer me, are all transient. They are short-lived. This earthly life of one thousand years that you have promised me compared to eternity is just like a drop in the bucket, and then, these things come and go. They exist only until to-morrow, nay, they wear out the senses and don't bring any real satisfaction to the soul."

In India we have a saying:

Don't get drunk with the wine of sense enjoyment, for this intoxication does not last long. But get drunk with the wine of love of God. This latter intoxication will last forever.

That is a figurative expression. That man is wise who can discern the real values of these things and does not

remain under a delusion as to them. These things, after all, must go, so, why should we desire them? Why should we not seek for things that are eternal—things that can make us truly happy?

The young man then said: "Tell me about the soul. What you offer me I do not care to have. To a teacher like you I have come not for those things; I can have enough of them from others. Please give me the knowledge of the Soul."

This answer pleased the Master still more, because then he felt certain of the sincerity of this young student, and he said: "It is my one great wish, Oh *Nachiketa!* that I had another disciple like you."

Then he continued: "This knowledge cannot be attained by argumentation; it must come from within your self. Yet let me tell you about it, because in this sort of argumentation there is a great joy." *Yania* went on:

"The soul is eternally wise, eternally immortal, eternally luminous, eternally pure and eternally divine."

We are not taught that the soul of man is one of impurity; that it was ever created. It is an eternal entity; it is eternally divine. It is only through our ignorance that we do not know this nature of the soul.

The soul is never born, and it shall never die. Both birth and death are denied of the soul. If you say that the soul is born, then you must admit that it dies. What has a birth must have a death.

It is not that the soul came into being by the accident of

birth, and it shall not die in future. It never dies, it is eternally present, it was never born. It is not like an infinite stick with one end only, as Schopenhauer puts it. Not only that, it does not come from anything. It is its own cause or creator. It is not the effect of anything, nor is it the cause of anything.

"It is birthless, eternal and ancient. It does not die when the body dies."

The soul lives in the body without being affected by its qualities, like the mercury in the thermometer. The mercury always remains separate from the glass, yet it is in it. So, while the soul dwells in the body, it is not contaminated by the qualities and conditions of the body.

The body has six changes: birth, growth, maturity, age, decay and death. We may live in the body for one million years, but it shall die.

The soul has no changes; while the soul lives in the body, it witnesses all its conditions. Later on we shall find a passage that describes very clearly the relation between the soul and the body.

We find the word *"Vipaschit"* which means the self-luminous one, the knowing one. "The soul is the rider in this vehicle of the body. The intellect is the driver, the senses are the horses, the objects of the senses are the roads, and mind is the reins. All these combined make man the *Bhokta*—Enjoyer."

The *Atman* or the soul is the rider. He is the owner of this body. But the body does not own him. We

never say in India, when a man dies, that he has given up the ghost. On the contrary, the ghost is the eternal spirit that gives up the body. This simile explains the relation between the soul and the body.

"It is the minutest of all things, minuter than an atom, and larger than the largest thing. This soul dwells in the cave of the heart. Knowing it alone we become freed of all grief and delusion."

"Those people who are well controlled see this light of the soul within themselves."

"Who can know the soul, except the soul itself? The soul is bodyless, yet it dwells in the body. This all-pervading soul can be known only through the knowledge of the soul. There is no other way to it."

We find this description of the soul in the Gita:

"Just as we cast off old suits of clothing and wear new ones, even so this body-owning soul casts off one body and takes up another."

Once Alexander the Great met a great *Yogin* in India, and he asked the latter to come with him to Greece. He refused. He asked again, and he refused; and he asked once more, and again he refused, at which Alexander drew his sword and threatened him, saying: "If you will not come with me, I will kill you."

Then the *Yogin* looked at him and said: "Alexander, never in your life did you utter such a falsehood. Kill me! You can kill this body—you cannot scratch my soul. Fire cannot burn it; wind cannot dry it and water

cannot drown it. All these elements are powerless to hurt the soul."

"This soul cannot be known by argumentation, nor by work, nor by study. That man knows the soul to whom the soul reveals itself from within. The soul must be known through the soul." Elsewhere in this dialogue we find, "That which is Infinite can never be attained by finite means. There is no royal road to the knowledge of the soul."

So, rightly has it been said: "Neither by argumentation, nor by study, nor by devotion can one reach the knowledge of the soul." These are conditions and not a cause to self-knowledge. These must be fulfilled before the knowledge is revealed.

Here is an illustration: Suppose a man asked you to go to an apple tree, and get some fruits that are already lying on the ground. And then you go to the tree; it may be that when you get there the fruits might fall right then, or you might find some already on the ground. But, if there are no fruits on the ground and none fall when you get there, you will have to wait until the fruits fall on the ground.

You must get there; that condition must be fulfilled.

The various religious practices are only conditions of self-knowledge. They are not its direct cause.

If you only listen to lectures, or only work, or only meditate—by these means you cannot reach the knowledge of the soul.

After we have tried all these means, the consciousness of their limitation comes to us. When we realize that these means by themselves cannot lead to the goal, we seek a different way—and that marks the beginning of real spiritual life. That is, after we have realized the inefficiency of these methods through our practices, we seek the truth along the other way. Then we resign ourselves completely to the ideal and rest.

We make efforts no more, but become completely abandoned to the will of the great *Will,* so to say. So, we must be completely resigned to it, knowing ourselves as a blade of grass before this mighty *Will,* and with that faith and self-resignation, true knowledge comes: Knowledge that removes all our sorrows, sufferings and death.

Only by knowing the self can we conquer death and attain to everlasting life and peace.

THE INWARD MAN AND THE INWARD LIFE

"THREE things," says Sankara, "are most rare and most dear in this world of ours." And what are they? "Human incarnation is the first thing, the second is desire for spiritual liberation, and the third the companionship of one who is great, that is, a great *Guru*." The man who possesses knowledge, truly belongs to the category of man. This idea has been amplified in another verse.

"There are four instincts common to all beings. Eating, sleeping, fearing and begetting. But there is one faculty in man which differentiates him from other animals. That is his power of discrimination. If a man does not possess it, he is no better than an animal."

So, to truly belong to that category we have to possess knowledge—we have to be illumined by the knowledge of the truth.

There are two sides to everything. There is an inside, and there is an outside.

The outside is known to all beings, but the inside is known only to a few.

Most people are conscious of things that possess three dimensions, length, breadth and height. They have only the knowledge of planes and solids, but they do not know

of the other plane, the fourth dimensional plane. This plane has been explained by Patanjali in his Yoga Aphorisms. There are three spaces. First of all, there is the *Mahakasha*—the great space. *Akasha* is the name of space in Sanskrit. It is the outer universe; then there is the mental space, *Chittakasha,* and then there is another space—the knowledge space—*Chidakasha.*

In the great space you will find only the first three dimensions. This universe is nothing but the expression of the infinite in terms of the finite. The expression of the one in terms of the many, or of the spirit in terms of matter.

We do not find anything here which does not belong to these three dimensions. But in the *Chidakasha,* the knowledge space, there is only one dimension—the fourth dimension, as some people call it.

Take for instance a child; he can conceive only this side of the wall. But we know that this is not its only side—there is another side to it. So, those people who are spiritually advanced, know that there is a deeper side than that which appears on the surface.

This idea has been further explained by Krishna in the Gita. You will remember that beautiful passage in the second Chapter: "That which is night to ordinary beings is day to the self-controlling sage, and that which is day to others is his night."

How? We, ordinary mortals, cannot penetrate the veil of *Maya;* our mind and intellect cannot go beyond

these three dimensions, or this great space. The self-illumined seer dwells on the other space—the knowledge space, with such a deep absorption in it that he becomes practically oblivious of the conditions of this other space. So, this state, in which we all live, becomes practically dark to him. He is not conscious of it all. At least he is not conscious the way we are conscious of it. And what is his day is our night. That is, where he is awake, there we are asleep—our mind cannot reach there.

So, virtually, what is our day is his night; and what is his day is our night.

That is, that illumined man finds infinite peace and bliss in his transcendental knowledge, and naturally, this side of life drops from him.

Here is another illustration:—When the pea is ripe and dry, the outer shell bursts and drops off. In the case of this man this side of life falls off, because his inside is full grown.

We live in and for this outer side of life. But that man lives in the other side of life, the truer side, the deeper side; it is not that he does not know of this side—if he wants to he could—but he becomes so deeply immersed in the light and bliss of that side that this side practically ceases to exist for him.

From time immemorial, mankind have travelled two roads: The road of action or aggressive achievement, and the road of renunciation or inaction. In Sanskrit they are called *Pravritti-marga* and *Nivritti-marga.*

To the Western world, our people in India seem like being too prone to inaction or renunciation. They think that we are more for *being* than for *doing*.

That is true in a sense. We believe that unless by introspection and meditation we can discover and know the secrets that belong to the real life, we have lived in vain.

So, in India our people attach greater importance to the realization of the deeper and truer life than only to the knowledge of things that belong to this life.

People who do not know what the inner life is, are naturally conscious of this life only. Their mind is never well concentrated. All their energy has been scattered. It has been, so to say, divided over the various objects of the senses. But this other man, who has the power of concentration, has withdrawn into himself all energies from external objects.

His mind is like a lens which has been focussed upon the self. But the mind of the other people has been focussed upon the objects of the senses—naturally, then, it is "outgoing." Very few can control all the forces of the mind, and withdraw them from all external objects into their selves.

So, those who follow the way of *Pravritti* are naturally active and aggressive.

This is our ideal in India: we must be spiritual in the street as well as in the retreat. The end of life is not to live in solitude only, but to live among people, yet at the same time to be well-poised and peaceful.

I, for one, believe that those people who possess the power of concentration, and are introspective and meditative, are far better workers than those who work here only in an aggressive way—who do only ethical work without knowing the Peace and Bliss of the inner Self.

Two minds have pondered most deeply over the greatest problems of life. The Greek mind and the Hindu mind. The search began in the objective. The Greek mind was satisfied with and remained in the objective, but the Hindu mind did not remain there. It went further.

After realizing all the truths and verities that belong to the objective world, it turned inwards—that is, after following the way of action and realizing all the good that can come from it, it was not satisfied, and endeavored to realize the truths of the subjective world—the world of the spirit.

This external world is, of course, a most wonderful thing, but the beauty of the internal world is still more wonderful. The external world may be called the "x" side, and the internal world may be called the "y" side of life. Life becomes perfect and knowledge becomes complete when we possess all the experiences of the external as well as the internal world.

Both "x" and "y" are the expressions of something that underlies them, and what that is no one knows.

The Greek mind, being satisfied with the objects of the

external world naturally conceived the idea that the body is the best Temple of God.

The Hindu mind realized that, but it wanted to know the God in this Temple. The Greek mind knew only the Temple. It did not attempt to go inside the Temple and know the God. The Hindu mind wanted to know the God. The Temple becomes sacred then when the individual becomes conscious of the God in it.

So, by practice of concentration and meditation or by being an "inward" man, we can realize the beauty of the inner, the spiritual life. So, we have to return from the outer space—*Mahakasha*—and enter into the knowledge space—*Chidakasha.*

We have to be illumined. Illumination must be our intuitive perception—it can't come from without. That is why in India the *Yogins* seek for light, peace and bliss in the soul. To them religion is not a word or a theory or a faith or a philosophy, but a realization. In truth there is only one knowledge—the direct cognition of the Truth.

It cannot be attained by study or action, or by hearing, but it must come from within. We must be sincere seekers after the truth.

The great teachers of the Vedas are called *Rishis*—Seers of Truth. They were not teachers of one particular faith or religion, but of truth eternal and universal. The words of the Vedas are not conventional. After the

illumination comes, the word or language becomes spontaneous. It is the natural, unconventional expression of the vision of the truth within.

This expression of thought is different from an ordinary language where we have to study grammar, etymology, etc. The *Rishis* never claimed that they were the only ones who could experience and express that thought; on the contrary, they taught that everyone can be and must be a *Rishi*—Seer of Truth.

When the truth is directly revealed then one attains *Mukti*—spiritual liberation.

So, revelation is not the exclusive privilege of any particular person or persons. It is everybody's birthright. We must be seers, and whatever we will say in that inspired mood will be a *Veda,* a gospel. Thus the word *Veda* means knowledge revealed to the individual.

The inner man, who, by meditation and inspiration has been able to see the Truth is a great master. It is not that it is not in us, but we have to lift the veil that hides it and see it and be inspired with it. We cannot attain it by mere study or by hearing sermons or by performing meritorious deeds. These are conditions.

We must live the right life, and practice meditation, and the revelation will come in its own time.

Once a student came to a teacher, and asked him: "Sir, what is that thing which has never been desecrated by being expressed in words?" and the answer was, "The

knowledge of Brahman—the knowledge of your own inner self."

If there is gold in a box then it is worthwhile keeping it and taking care of it, but if it is only a box without treasures, what is the use of taking care of it?

If we neglect the God and take care of the Temple only, that will be wrong. The right thing is to keep both the inside and the outside clean. The body really becomes a most sacred Temple when one perceives the glory of the God in it. I would rather see God first and then take care of the body, than be satisfied with the outer Temple, neglecting the God within.

This man of concentration, this inward man, sees the oneness everywhere, and that idea has been clearly expressed in the Gita. "He sees the sameness in the illumined Brahmin, in the cow, the dog, the elephant and the dog-eater." He sees the same God in all, because he perceives the underlying principle, the spirit,—eternal and infinite. He never gets lost in the glamour of the outer many, but constantly perceives the real side within—the golden thread of unity in the many.

This introspective or inward man lives in this world, but he does not belong to this world. Here is an illustration of the way he lives. You may have seen the mother cow watch her new born calf. In India we never separate the calf from the cow. The cow is the most sacred animal to us, because she takes the place of the mother. If

we kill the cow we commit a crime like killing our own mother. We love to see the calves live with the cows. When the cow eats the grass, all the time she keeps her mind upon the calf. If you approach the calf, she will rush at you. She thinks you will hurt the calf. So, while she eats, her whole soul remains with the calf. That is the way the *Yogin* lives.

"The eyes are the index of the mind." They are very significant. One can tell of a person whether he is an inward or an ordinary person from the expression of his eyes. The inward man hears, and hears not. He sees, and sees not. He devotes most of his energy to God and with a very small fraction of it performs outer duties.

Once a *Yogin* was passing through a crowded street. He happened to step upon the toe of a rowdy, and he got enraged and beat the *Yogin* so severely that he fell unconscious on the sidewalk. When this news reached his disciples they came to him and by careful nursing brought him back to consciousness. When he opened his eyes one of them asked, "Sir, are you hurt?" He answered, "Yes." And then he asked again: "Who beat you?" and he answered: "He who is now nursing me." He saw the sameness in all; he had no hatred, no malice toward that man who beat him. That was real forgiveness, the most natural forgiveness. Forgiveness must be natural and spontaneous. All the beautiful virtues that we hear of so much; like fellowship, good-will, love,

peace, etc., all these become natural to the self-discerning sage, to this inward man.

You don't have to make him do right by laws. In fact, he transcends them all—dwelling in the spirit of God. He needs no aid of man-made laws for right conduct.

We talk so much about peace, universal Brotherhood and so on. They are only words. It is not that I do not believe in them, but they can be realized only when we become true inward men. I don't think that any real good could be done by law. Never endeavor to make any person good by force of law or by fear of God. Never do that. But if we can teach people how to develop from within—how to unfold the inner powers—how to realize the God dwelling within them, then these will become natural and spontaneously express themselves.

This man pays no attention to the opinion of men, because he is firmly seated in his self. He acts according to the dictates of his conscience, and he knows that he is not any holier when he is praised, nor any viler when he is dispraised. The glory of the great is in their consciences and not in the mouths of men.

We are influenced by the opinions of people, but this man does not care for them. He is fearless. He fears only truth. His guide is the light of the truth.

Of this man Krishna says: "His light is within, his bliss is within." Our joy is in outside things, but his is within, his peace is in the self.

Again of his peace He says: "Whosoever has been able to eliminate all greed and lust, and is freed of selfishness and egoism, he enters into peace."

"That is the reality of the real, the life of the living—the unity in variety. Those who can realize that within themselves by introspection and meditation—to them belongs eternal peace." Of such an inward man is said in one of the Scriptures: "A blessing indeed is that man to his family. He is a blessing to his country. He is a blessing to the whole humanity, because his soul remains immersed in the infinite bliss and peace of Brahman."

THAT THOU ART

THE Sanskrit phrase for "That Thou Art" is *"Tat Twam Asi."* Once a *Deva,* a god and an *Asura,* a demon went to a great sage and asked him to tell them about *Brahman,* God. This sage said: "That Thou Art." This *Deva,* after receiving that instruction, went home and pondered whether by that word "Thou" the sage meant the body, then this would be eternal, but the body changes the body, then this would be eternal, but the body changes —the body is born, it grows, decays and dies; so, how can the body be *Brahman?*

Then he again thought, within himself, "perhaps he meant the mind. But the mind cannot be *Brahman* either, because it also changes."

Then he goes to this *Guru* once more and asks him: "Sir, by 'Thou' did you mean this body or did you mean the mind? Both the body and the mind are subject to changes, so, they could not be *Brahman,* because *Brahman* is unchangeable, eternal, infinite." The sage replies: "That Thou Art." Then he comes home and meditates, and meditates, and meditates, and after several years of meditation, the light came to him, and then he realized that by "Thou" the sage meant the *Atman*—the soul, which is the same as *Brahman.*

The other person, the demon, went home and thought "Now I have found the truth. This physical self is *Brahman.* Surely that is the meaning of the *Guru's* teaching." Then he began to preach the doctrine of "Eat, drink and be merry." So, although the same instruction was given to these two pupils, their interpretations and realizations were different.

Everything in this universe has two aspects. It has an outer or physical aspect, and an inner or metaphysical aspect. In Sanskrit we call them *"Vakyartha"* and *"Lakshyartha."* If you read that small treatise by Sankara, called *"Tattwa Bodha,"* the "Knowledge of Truth," you will find the finest distinction between the literal meaning and the metaphysical meaning of the terms *Tat* (That) and *Twam* (Thou).

The demon was satisfied with the literal meaning, but the god was not.

We interpret the universe in the light of our own understanding. In other words, this universe does not appear the same to two people. Each one gives his own interpretation—each one makes his own universe according to the nature of his enlightenment and culture. Once I heard a man say: "The best index of the status of the culture of a nation is its conception of God."

According to some, God is a personal being; according to others, God is not a person, but the spirit, immanent and transcendant.

Let us discuss for a moment the literal as well as the

metaphysical meanings of these two words, *"Tat"* and *"Twam."* The word *"Asi"* is a verb, derived from *"as,"* "to be." *"Tat"* literally means "that."

This "that" is not transcendental. Kant was a great philosopher, and he conceived a "that." But he failed to recognize the identity of "that" and "this"—in other words, he did not fathom both "that" and "this" and realize their basic unity.

So, this word "that" does not mean something transcendental—something that we can never reach and realize. But it is something limited by no condition of time, space and causation. It is here, there and everywhere and now and forever.

Just think of this space—all these things exist in space, and if you can think away all these things, the space consciousness will vanish, but there will still remain something—and that is what is meant by *"Tat"*—That.

What is space but co-existence? If all these things that surround you cease to exist, then space consciousness will cease to exist. Co-existence is the cause of space consciousness. In other words, if you can mentally think away all these things, space will not remain. Time exists through the notion of succession. Time is measured by moments, seconds, hours, days, months, years, eons and so forth.

Causation is that which unites the notions of time and space. You will remember one passage in the Gita, I

think it is in the 8th or 9th Chapter, in which Krishna says: "All these things exist in me, but I do not exist in them. If I did exist in them, I would become a limited thing. These things cannot hold me—I am infinitely beyond all these."

So, that is what Sankara and other philosophers meant by "that." It is the heart, it is the soul of all things, the spirit living and throbbing in them and at all times.

And what is *Twam,* "thou"?

"Thou" does not mean only the outer man—"thou" means the inner man—the spirit in man—that is, that entity in man which is never born and never dies. That is "thou"—the real man.

The many does not exist. We create the many and perceive the many, but the real truth is one. And what is this "one"?

This one is not one God—this one is not one matter, but this one is that which underlies the many, and if we can realize that fundamental one, then the many will cease to exist. That "one" is the alpha as well as the omega of the whole universe of thought and being. That is the principle of the philosophy of monism.

In order to explain the universe of time and space and causation, the monist advances the theory of *Maya.* You are all acquainted with this term. In order to understand the identity between "that" and "thou" we have to know the mystery of *Maya.* Sankara as well as other monists admitted that *Maya* is a most mysterious Power.

It is that inscrutable force which is the real cause of the phenomenal universe. Everything happens through it. The process of reasoning is *Maya*—the conception of God is *Maya*. The idea of liberation is *Maya*. All is *Maya*.

This *Maya* has two phases, *Vidya* and *Avidya*. You might call them "good" and "bad." That is, in this universe these two forces are evenly balanced. So, from the bad we have to go to the good, and then, we have to transcend them both.

We have to realize the basic principle beyond both good and evil. *Maya* consist of two terms, "*ma*" and "*ya*" —literally, it means "which not." *Ma* means "not"—*ya* means "which."

All the Hindu philosophies have been taught in aphorisms. The object of the philosopher in teaching in aphorisms was not to expound the philosophy, but to enable the student to memorize the teachings in the briefest possible sentences.

The first aphorism of the Vedanta philosophy literally means "All this has come from what?" That is, the origin, existence, etc. of the universe have come from what source? —From *Brahman*, which is One without a second. One can neither affirm nor deny *Maya*. It is neither existent nor non-existent. It is neither a reality nor an unreality, nor a blending of reality and unreality. Why is it not a reality? Because it is unreal. Then why not an unreality? Because it is real. Why is it not the blending of

both reality and unreality? Because that is an impossibility.

In fact, we exist through *Maya.* Can anybody deny *Maya* while he is still in it? This act of denial will be in *Maya.*

These Hindu philosophers were so logical and consistent in their argumentation, that they never made the mistake which some religious organizations in this country make: Christian Science for instance. Christian Science says that matter is not—sin is not—disease is not —death is not, but their opposites are realities: As if one could have a coin with only one side. There lies the fallacy, but these philosophers did not deny this universe, while they were still conscious of it. Because they wanted to be honest, sincere and truthful thinkers.

How can I say "matter is not," while I live in matter? How can I preach against money while I love money? While you are still clinging to matter it would be wrong to say that matter is not. If you say with this qualification—that there is a certain stage in our evolution where matter is not, but I believe in it, because it is real to me in my present stage of evolution —that is a fair way of expressing it. When the Christian Scientist says *Maya* or matter is not, by that denial he cannot dispel *Maya*—it still remains. This denial is made through *Maya.*

Even our conception of God is in *Maya.* That is the higher phase of *Maya,* and the other thoughts arise in the lower phase of *Maya.*

From the lowest to the highest, all these thoughts and things, fall under the general category of *Maya.* In the highest spiritual state one becomes so deeply immersed in *Brahman* that this phenomenal existence ceases to exist for him.

Says Patanjali: "Although *Maya* may cease for one who has become perfect, it exists for those who are still in it." Many people imagine they have attained the highest state before reaching it. A seeker of truth should be absolutely honest and sincere. We should not hide anything. We must express our honest opinions. We must not contradict our experiences.

This *Maya* is really the cause of the universe. Sankara, in his philosophy has gone so far as to say that God is only an expression of *Brahman* through *Maya* behind the universe; and when that same *Brahman* expresses itself in a body like ours, it is called man. And thus he establishes identity between *Jiva* and *Brahman*—man and God. That is the main theme of Sankara's philosophy. That is—"Thou and God are eternally one"—*Tat Twam Asi.*

Now, this question arises; if I am that, a free being, why am I not conscious of it? It is because of your ignorance. If you can remove this ignorance then the light will come.

This light, again, is not caused by the removal of ignorance. It is an eternal reality.

Here is an illustration: There is the sun in the sky.

The clouds come and obscure it. Then the clouds pass away, and we see the sun again. This passing away of the clouds is not the cause of the existence of the sun. The sun is always there.

Even so is this light of *Brahman*. It is always within you and this passing phenomenon of darkness obscures it temporarily. The moment it passes away light flashes again.

There are three great Schools among the Hindu philosophers. There are the Dualists, first of all. Then there are the qualified Monists, and then there are the Monists.

According to the Dualists, God and nature and soul are three distinct entities. These three, after having emanated from *Brahman,* remain as separate entities. That is the basic belief among the Dualists, and according to them, salvation means going to God, seeing and serving Him, or enjoying the bliss of His presence.

They do not want to merge into the essence of God. They do not relish that idea. They want to remain separate from God and to enjoy His beauty—to remain devoted to Him.

According to the qualified Monists, although these three are separate entities, yet there is a unity behind them, what Krishna calls in the Gita, the *Sutra*—the golden thread of unity.

One of the latest exponents of this philosophy was Ramanuja. He was very rational when he expounded

this conception of qualified Monism. He wanted to be honestly rational. How can you truthfully say that there is only one reality while still you see the many? There is an individual difference between these three, God, nature and soul—there is not a specific difference, nor a generic difference between them.

Here is an illustration: there is a tree, and there are on it flowers, leaves and branches, but there is one common sap that nourishes them all. The sap is one. The flowers, the leaves, the branches, are all different individually, yet there is that common unity through the sap. They are all parts of the same tree. There is no specific or generic difference between them.

Salvation can be attained only when we realize that basic principle of unity. That is the gist of the philosophy of the qualified Monist.

Then, to crown all these ideas comes *Advaitavada*—Absolute Monism. The Monist says: Why do you bother about such things as body and mind and sex, and such thoughts as that you are old or young, sick or well, dark or white, rich or poor?

Know that you are That. These are only *upadhis,* attributes or limiting conditions. These things have been superimposed upon you. They are accidental things. The essential thing is your own self. Just as when you see a rope in the twilight sometimes you think that it is a snake; and while you think so it is real—it frightens you—so, while you perceive the *uphadhis* they are real

in effect. When these false conceptions depart we see the truth. We know what we really are.

Sankara says: In this knowledge there is no chance of relapse of illusion or false knowledge. That light, when it comes, remains forever.

In such false notions as that of mistaking a rope for a snake there is a chance of recurrence even after they have been removed once. If you see another phenomenon like that a month later you are scared again.

That is not the case with supreme knowledge; when that knowledge comes, there is no more relapse or recurrence of *avidya*—ignorance. So, we have to see that these false things and thoughts do not reflect upon the self. They have been superimposed upon the real self, which is *Brahman*. They do not belong to the self.

One of the greatest causes of our misery here is the false identification of the self with the non-self, or this superimposition. "I am this, I am that, I am so many years old, possess so many qualities; such and such things I eat, so many people I know." All these notions are the result of ignorance. These things do not belong to me. These things have been superimposed upon the self. If we can free ourselves of this false identification, then we return once more to the glory of *Brahman*, and do not psychologize or make strenuous efforts of affirmation or denial.

So, that is the real cause of all our misery and there is a cure of it. What is it?

If you study the Samkhya philosophy you will find that the cure of all misery is the general subject of that system. Man from time immemorial has sought for everlasting happiness, for absolute freedom, for complete cessation of all misery. That is an inherent desire in man.

Kapila was a most practical philosopher, and he discussed this question of *Duhkha* or misery from the standpoint of reason and realism. He endeavored to raise man from "the slough of despond." In reality, this world is full of misery, but again, in this world there is happiness. Let us have the courage to face these things, to solve these problems that we meet every day, and let us not wilfully shut our eyes to them.

I want to explain by this illustration that if we do, these things will still remain and follow us. When the rabbit is chased by a hunter, he runs away and when he finds a little bush he hides behind it and closes his eyes. The rabbit pretends not to see the hunter and thinks that he is safe where he is. But presently the hunter finds him out and kills him.

And here is another illustration which will show how illusions still cling to us, even if we outwardly do not show that we are under them. Once a polar bear was floating down a stream. A man from the bank of the river saw the bear, and he thought that it was a blanket, and went into the water to get it. And when he caught the fur of the bear, the bear caught hold of his leg.

But his friends on the shore, when they saw that he was delaying, said: "Why are you struggling so hard to bring the blanket to the shore? If you can't manage to bring it let it go, and come back." And the man said: "I am letting it go, but it does not let me go."

You will remain in this misery even while you think you are not.

Kapila advances his plan of cure of all misery this way: We must be free from all distress and disease. But how to accomplish it? He does not say "Ignore it." The cures that humankind has so far been able to discover can not completely and permanently remove all misery. They may temporarily relieve the pain, but it comes back. Just as, when you are hungry and eat something, your hunger is gone for a short time, but it comes back to you again, so the pains even after they have been temporarily relieved or cured, come back again. The cause is not removed, only the symptoms have been suspended. Then he concludes this argument by saying that by knowledge alone can we attain to complete and permanent freedom from all misery.

When you will have become freed from all illusion and have attained to supreme God consciousness, then and then alone all misery ceases for you.

Sankara says: All these things that you fancy around you—all these thoughts that have temporarily obscured the glory of the Soul—these are all like foxes and jackals howling around you, but if the *advaita kesari*—

the Lion of spiritual Oneness roars within you, they shall run away, never to return again.

There are four *mahavakyas*—great words into which the teachings of the *Vedas* have been condensed. In them you will find the whole gist of them. One of them is *Tat Twam Asi*—That Thou art.

To dispel this *adhyasa*—ignorance or super-imposition, we have to first of all repeat these words. By constant repetition and meditations upon their meanings illumination comes.

There is a great truth in the saying "As you think, so you are." If you constantly think that you are incapable, and that you are weak and sinful, you will become incapable, weak and sinful.

This story you will find in Samkhya Aphorisms: Once the son of a King was kidnapped by the chief of a wild tribe, and after he had been kidnapped he was kept under strict surveillance. But this King sent away his messengers in all directions to find the boy. And after years of diligent search an old minister discovered him, but he could not approach him. The chief was away one day, and that gave him the opportunity to go to him and speak to him. He said: "You are a Prince. You must come with me." But this boy could not believe that. He said: "No, I am the son of this man." But the old minister said again: "No; you are a Prince, you are a Prince, you are a Prince," and by constant repetition of that word, he made him believe that he was a prince. Then he consented to

come away with him; then the old minister brought him back to his father and reunited them.

So, never utter those negative words, never think those negative thoughts. Always think in a constructive, positive way.

There was a great Queen in India, and she had a baby. Whenever she would rock him in his cradle, she would sing to him this lullaby: "Thou art that changeless one. Thou art the spirit immortal. Thou art the ever pure and ever free and ever perfect soul."

The result was that that baby grew up to be a great sage. So, always give those suggestions to yourselves, and to others, and never think that you are a sinner, and never call anybody by any unkind words like that.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF FAITH AND DEVOTION

FAITH is the most indispensable element in religion. In fact, faith is the beginning of the spiritual life. What is this faith? Faith is not credulity, nor is it the ability to believe in the impossible. Nor is it the assertion without reason. But faith is a realization; reason is the highest faith.

We express our inner potentialities through two main channels: the head and the heart, and these two factors must be balanced one against the other. If one is developed at the expense of the other, then the results or consequences are disastrous. We find many people who are highly emotional or devotional, in whom the heart qualities are developed, but they are most unreasonable. The head qualities—reason, discrimination, etc.—have not been so well developed; and we also find people in whom the head qualities have been highly developed, but the heart qualities are very much undeveloped. The normal state is the balance between these two most important faculties in our nature, and psychologically they may be called reason and emotion.

I said: If one faculty is allowed to grow at the ex-

pense of the other, for instance the devotional faculty grows and the rational faculty decays, then the result is disastrous. I will tell you a story to illustrate this:

Once Arjuna saw a man who was a great devotee, in whom the heart qualities were highly developed, but the head qualities, such as reason, were not at all developed. This man was so soft-hearted, so loving to all living beings, that he abstained from eating even green leaves and green grass lest he should kill the life in them. Arjuna approached him and asked him: "Sir, you must be a great lover of life. You are not eating green grass and green leaves." But this man carried a big sword with him, and it was dangling by his side. Pointing to that he further enquired: "Why are you carrying this dreadful instrument?" Then he replied: "You know, I want to kill Arjuna with it." And Arjuna said: "How can you kill a man, when you are not killing the life of green grass?"

And he answered: "Because Arjuna allowed my Lord Krishna to become the driver of his chariot, and for that insult to my Lord, I will kill him." But Krishna himself did that service out of great love for his friend and disciple, Arjuna. Krishna himself did not feel insulted, but this devotee imagined that he had been insulted, and wanted to kill the insulter.

So, we find these inconsistencies sometimes in people who have developed these faculties in an unbalanced way.

Here is another story to illustrate the other side:

In some people, as I said, the head qualities are developed more than the heart qualities, and that is not good either. Once there lived a *Brahmin* who had a nice garden, and one day a calf entered there and destroyed some of the plants. This *Brahmin* was very much enraged, and when he was chasing out the calf, he beat him with a stick and the calf died. That was a great sin for a *Brahmin*. Then he reasoned: Why, my arms have done this act—the responsibility belongs to Indra, the God of the arms—so, this sin must go to him. It is not my sin. Reasoning that way, he shifted the responsibility to Indra. Indra finds that out, and comes as a wayfarer to him. He looks at his house and asks him: "Whose house is this, sir?" He answered: "It is mine." Then he calls his attention to his orchard. "Whose orchard is this?" And he answered: "It is mine." This way he claimed everything to himself. Then Indra says: "Who killed the calf the other day?" He showed most selfish attachment to all those things—the thought of ownership—but when he did the wrong thing, he used a false reason and disclaimed all responsibility for it.

Sometimes people in whom the head faculty is developed, and not the heart, reason that way. Some people who are highly developed emotionally, sometimes become narrow and bigoted, and do many cruel deeds; while the others who are only intellectual sometimes use a false logic and try to justify their vicious acts.

We have to be on our guard against these mistakes.

We must develop the reason and devotion simultaneously and harmoniously.

We have in India a most perfect system of *Yoga* called *Bhakti Yoga*. *Bhakti* means devotion. It is not a matter of blind faith, unreasoned adherence to one's own creed—but it is a process of spiritual development. Those people who follow the *Bhakti Yoga* are trained systematically by the *Guru*. They are gradually led from a lower to a higher stage.

Both devotion or *Bhakti*, and reason or *Jnana* in their final realizations give the same comfort, the same power, and the same peace and bliss to the followers, but they have to follow them out.

Says Krishna in the Gita: "These two ways or *Yogas* lead to one and the same goal, and the sweetness of the realization is the same for the followers." It is like eating candies from the inside or from the outside. The taste of sweetness is the same, so the *Bhakta* or the devotee enjoys that sweetness by following his own method, his own *Yoga*, which the *Jnani* enjoys by following his own *Yoga*.

When we reach that goal, then we see the harmony or the unity between them all. Then we take our stand, as it were, at the center of the circle. From the center, all the lines extending to the circumference, or radii, are equal, and when we have reached that realization, by following one *Yoga* or the other, we find perfect harmony and unity between them all. We endeavor to ex-

press all our inner potentialities through these two instruments or channels, the head and the heart.

The *Bhakta* or devotee is a dualist and he does not want to absorb himself into the essence of God. He wants to retain his individuality intact, to remain separate from his God to serve Him and enjoy with his senses His beauty and grace. He is like the bee. He wants to eat the honey by sitting on the edge of the jar, but does not want to become absorbed in the honey and get killed. This man wants to retain his individuality until he reaches that final goal. In the final realization, of course, he becomes absorbed in the bliss of God, but until that stage, he wants to remain separate from Him.

One writer on *Bhakti Yoga* expressed the difference between the followers of *Bhakti* and the followers of *Jnana* by these illustrations:

The *Bhakta* is like the kitten. The kitten is entirely dependent upon the mother, and he never uses his own judgment. He surrenders himself completely to the mother; but the *Jnani* is like the monkey cub; as soon as he is born he becomes self-reliant and independent. He hangs on the breast of the mother, and as soon as he is born he swings on the twig of a tree. So, the *Jnani* practices self-reliance, and the *Bhakta* self-surrender.

There are among the *Bhaktas* also two types. That is, one class of *Bhaktas* use both self-help and self-surrender. They want to be independent, and to help themselves; as we say: "God helps those who help themselves." And then

there is the other class of *Bhaktas* who want to be completely abandoned to the will of the Great Will, the will of the Lord.

Once two *Bhaktas* belonging to these two classes came to a place where the road separated. They were tramping, and when they came to that junction, they asked a man that they wanted to go to such and such a place, and which way they should follow. Now, there was a short road running through the forest, and there were wild animals there. The other road was much longer, but safer, and it could also bring them to their destination. One of them said: "Let us follow the shorter way and take the name of God, and we will have no danger." And the other man said: "Brother, why should we trouble God for this simple thing. If we take the other way, we will safely reach our destination."

So, you see, both these *Bhaktas* were great, but one was more rational than the other, and the other more devotional.

In India in this philosophy we find two grades. The *Para,* the higher or supreme, and the *Apara,* the lower or preparatory. That is, the lower must lead to the higher, and we always place ourselves under the guidance of a *Guru,* a teacher, because the *Guru* is the man who knows how to lead us and gives us the training necessary to our individual development.

The first thing that is necessary in this training is faith, not, of course, blind faith, but reasoned faith.

Faith is a most wonderful faculty, and we all have faith more or less. For instance, the loving mother leaves her dearest child to the care of the nurse. She has faith in her. When we go to the barber shop, we allow the barber to shave us with his sharp razor. We have faith in him. We know that he will not cut our throats.

So, we have faith in every act and condition of life, but we have to cultivate the other faith systematically. A man of genuine faith—a man who has faith in himself—in his own practise—can work miracles. Faith can make the sun and the moon stand and the mountains move.

So, we must be charged with sound and reasoned faith. If we can do that, we can remain calm and undisturbed under all circumstances.

Once a *Brahmin* boy, in the absence of his father, advised a man who had committed a sin, like killing a cow, to practice a severe penance. He asked him to fast for twenty-four hours and count on his beads all that time a sacred name. When the father came home, this boy told him that in his absence a man who had committed a sin came to him for advice, and that he had told him to fast and repeat the name of God for twenty-four hours by way of expiation. On hearing this, the father scolded him, saying: "You faithless boy, the name of God for twenty-four hours! Why not only once! If we can take the name of God only once in faith, that can cleanse us of all our sins."

I will tell you one more story to illustrate this point.

In India, people take baths in the Ganges, the sacred river. Of course, most people do it from habit, acquired through long practice. If you watch in the morning, you will find thousands upon thousands of people bathing. One day, in the sacred city of Benares, *Siva* and *Parvati* were watching these bathers. They bathed in the notion that all their sins were washed away in the river. *Paravati* asked *Siva*: "Of all these multitudes, how many really have faith that their sins have been washed away?" Then he said: "I will show you, but before I do so, you will have to do this. I feign death and I will lie in your arms and you tell these people as they come from the Ganges, that he who thinks that all his sins have been washed away—if that sinless person touches me, then I can be made alive again."

Then *Siva* feigned death, and *Parvati* wept and begged these bathers to touch her dead husband so that he might come back to life again, but none of them thought that his sins were washed away and that he was pure. So, none came to touch *Siva*. Then a man comes from the street, and asks *Parvati*: "Why are you weeping?" "Oh, my husband is dead and I heard a Divine voice saying that if a sinless person would touch him, then he would come back to life. Here are all the people coming from the bath, but none thinks he is pure enough to touch him so that he might be made alive again." Then this man says: "Just wait a minute; I will take a bath in the Mother Ganges, and then I will touch your husband, and

he will be made alive." So, when this man runs into the water, *Siva* raises his head and says: "This man has faith."

One Hindu said this: If you constantly think that you are a sinner, you will become a sinner, but if you can think that you are sinless, and have faith, and can exercise it rightly, then you will become pure, clean and invincible—nay, divine.

So, truly has it been said that faith is the most indispensable element in religion, and it can work miracles.

In the chapter on *Bhakti Yoga* in the Gita, Krishna thus describes the characteristics of the *Bhakta,* the man of devotion: "He does not hate anybody; he is compassionate to all beings. He is free from all attachment, greed, egoism and vanity, and to him pleasure and pain, honor and insult, and praise and censure are alike. The *Bhakta* is a perfect person. He remains superior to all pairs of opposites, and he is not hated by anybody."

Devotion not tempered by reason leads to bigotry and fanaticism. In this system of *Bhakti Yoga* we are told many stories in illustration of it. The man who allows the faculty of emotion to develop and neglects the other faculty, he becomes narrow and short-sighted, bigoted and fanatical.

Once there was a devotee of this type—that is, he was highly developed devotionally, but not in the least rationally. Naturally he was limited to one aspect of God. Most of the followers of a special religion are more or

less narrow and bigoted. They think that their own religion is the only true religion, and that the other religions are false. They do not take a broad view of life or of human nature. They ignore psychology, which is a most important factor in religion.

In India we recognize the necessity of psychology to religion. In fact, we are all different from one another, and each one requires his own particular method. We call that *Ishta,* that which is adapted to one's own spiritual nature. Without variety there can be no life. It is essential to evolution. We do not want uniformity, although we want unity. We do not seek to make all people alike in their mental capacities and spiritual aptitudes. On the contrary, we must give them infinite freedom to develop along their own lines of growth. So, this mistake is too often made by followers of a special religion.

For the Christians, there is no other religion but their own. They want to make Christianity the religion of the world—but why should they expect all people to become Christians? Our highest object in life is not to become bound or limited to any creed or cult or faith or religion, but to grow, and finally realize the supreme Oneness of all existence: "To be perfect, even as Father in Heaven is perfect." This is the goal of religions.

Here is another story: this story you will find in Omarkhyam. A young man was interested in a young lady. One evening he came to see her, and he knocked at the door, and this lady enquired from within the house:

"Who is that?" and he gave his name, but she did not open the door. He knocked a second time, and she enquired again: "Who is there?" and he gave his name again. He knocked again and again, but she did not open the door, and the last time he replied: "Is it thee" —and then she opened the door.

So long as you have the idea of separation you cannot enjoy the beauty of oneness or unity. True love breaks down all walls of separation, and flows in all directions. So, when we reach the consciousness of Oneness, then can we see that all religions, like different precious stones, make a most beautiful mosaic of spirituality. In the orchestra different instruments play different tunes, but there is the underlying symphonic unity. We must realize the underlying principle, whether we are Christians or Jews or Hindus or what not.

So, in India we always recognize this variety. We believe that there are as many religions as there are human beings, because religion is the conception and realization of one's own ideal. Let each follow his own method; follow that out and realize individually this fundamental principle of unity.

Most people stop short of that goal, and the result is that they become limited to a part. If one can see that fundamental unity which is most universal, then can he find only divinity in all beings and all things.

Once a Hindu teacher, describing the narrowness of some of these followers, particularly the Christians, said:

"These people are worse than the dog, because a dog never mistakes his master, no matter in what costumes he appears, but these followers do not recognize that the same principle underlying all religions can express itself in different times and climes." In India we always take cognizance of it. We say that the highest end of life is not to remain in any religion, but to outgrow it and realize the fundamental, eternal truth.

Once there was a bigoted devotee of Rama; being a bigot he did not care to recognize the other forms and aspects of God. One day Rama appeared before him in a transfigured body, one half His own, and the other half of Siva. This bigot looked only at the Rama side of the body, he waved lights and offered flowers to that side, but he did not look at the other side. Then Rama said: "In order to remove from you this ignorance, I appear in this twain form to show you that in principle Siva and I are one. But you do not recognize it." Not only that, but this man was so devoted to one personality that he did not want to listen to other names than Rama, and whenever the children in the neighborhood saw him, they would shout other names to him, like Siva and Kali; and this man finally became so disgusted that he wore large rings in his ears, and when the children would shout these other names at him, he would shake his head to ring the bells so that those words could not enter into his ears. This man did not care to see with his own spiritual eyes the eternal truth—the unity of all incarnations and re-

ligions. We must always be on our guard not to fall into this error. We must always try to cultivate these two faculties, viz., devotion and reason and maintain harmony between them.

There was another great devotee of Rama, whose name was Hanuman. He said: "In the principle Rama and Krishna are one, but because Rama is my master, I am devoted to Him as His servant. He is my all in all."

While we must follow one particular method, and be devoted to that, at the same time we must not be exclusive. We must be broad and tolerant like Hanuman. We cannot make any progress unless we are intensely devoted to one particular method, but we must respect and appreciate all other methods and allow the followers the same liberty we like to have in our own way. That is the idea of the *Bhakti Yoga.*

Once Hanuman said, illustrating the harmony between the three great systems of Vedanta philosophy: "When I am more conscious of my body than of my spirit or soul, I am Thy servant, oh Rama. When I am more conscious of the soul than I am of the body, I am Thy part; but when I am only conscious of the self, I and Thou are One." That is the perfected state of *Bhakti*—Oneness of the devotee and the object of devotion.

So, one must finally reach the consciousness of unity or oneness with the Supreme.

In another work we read this passage: "The wise

man loves all beings, because he sees the same God in them all. The *Bhakta* devotes himself to God and men —the children of God. These two are his great duties: to love God and to love and serve His children. So, if we want to be a true *Bhakta* or a true *Jnani,* we must develop the rational as well as the devotional faculty, we must love with reason. One-sided development is dangerous. It leads to bigotry, fanaticism and insincerity.

Krishna declared this about his great devotee: "He is most dear to me who is free from all wants and needs, who is pure, clean and energetic, well-balanced, impartial, untroubled by the pairs of opposites and unselfishly devoted to his duties. He who neither rejoices nor sorrows, renounces good and evil, who is full of devotion, he is dear to me. He who is the same to foe and friend and also to honor and insult; he who is the same in cold and heat, pleasure and pain, who is free from all attachment and greed and fear, he is my best devotee."

COSMIC AND INDIVIDUAL EVOLUTION

THE Hindus never believed in the theory of special creation. The Hindu mind could not conceive that the whole universe which is so vigorously real to the senses could have come from nothing, or from the fiat of an extracosmic God. The Hindu would rather take that two and two is anything other than four, that the shortest distance between two points is anything but a straight line—than believe that the whole universe came from nothing.

The theory of evolution was propounded in the most ancient times in India. The great sage Kapila was its author, and according to some scholars he lived at least one thousand years before Christ. He not only discovered this theory, but also substantiated it.

The theory of evolution is very modern in the Western World. Darwin first propounded it in the year 1859 —a little over sixty years ago, but according to Darwin, there is no soul. He was a biologist. He said that one species evolves into another species by the struggle for existence and natural selection, but Kapila discovered an eternal and permanent entity which he called *Atman* or soul. And it is the soul that evolves: Mind you—not from a lower to a higher state—the soul is eternally per-

fect, pure and free—but it evolves or manifests through different veils of nature. The nature, in fact, evolves, but the soul, the permanent and persistent entity manifests its nature as described above through the gradual lifting of the veils that nature puts around it, or better still, through various forms of life, which he called "incarnations." He recognized the existence of the soul in all beings—from the lowest to the highest. For instance, the soul that dwells in the Christ or the Buddha is the same soul that dwells in the amœba or protoplasm; the difference is only in the degree of manifestation and not in kind. The soul is the same in all beings and through all ages.

The evolution of one species into another is effectuated by the force of the soul. That is, the soul constantly endeavors to unfold itself and that urge on the part of the soul is the real cause of evolution.

So, we see that in those ancient times this great philosopher recognized the existence of an incorporeal, eternal and immortal soul in all beings. The soul has neither beginning nor ending. It is infinite and eternal both ways.

To-day, according to some special religions, the soul is eternal in the sense that it has a beginning, but no end. But Kapila by his logic and reason discredited that conception of the soul. He said: If the soul can have a beginning it must have an ending. An eternal thing must have no end—it can have neither birth nor death.

The body has birth and death, but the soul is not born with the birth of the body nor does it die with the death of the body. So, there is the continuity of the soul from the lowest to the highest. The same soul evolves through these various channels. So, reincarnation is an essential doctrine to the theory of evolution, but we shall not discuss that to-day.

Kapila was a realist and an atheist. He did not believe in God. He said: Why should we postulate a God while we can explain creation on the ground of two entities, *Prakriti* and *Purusha*—matter and spirit? In this sense he was a dualist, as he believed that these two entities are eternally real. That is, he said: These two are like two eternal, parallel lines. One can't exist without the other. The spirit can't live without the body and the body can't live without the spirit. Matter is the permanent possibility of sensation, so, there must be the spirit to perceive matter.

These two are eternal entities, but *Prakriti*—matter—is inert and insentient, *Purusha* (soul) is the rational entity. One can't create without the other. Creation takes place by the conjunction of these two. One without the other cannot create. The moment these two are conjoined, the first thing evolved is called *Mahat* or the great mind, the universal mind. And then come the other evolutes.

He believed in twenty-four categories—twenty-three on the side of matter and *Purusha*, the twenty-fourth,

According to him, the right knowledge of these lead to the *summum bonum* of life—*Purushartha.* That is, that knowledge alone can free us from all pain and suffering. If you read his philosophy, which consists of six chapters, in the very first aphorism you will find mentioned its general theme: "The highest goal of life is freedom from three kinds of pain—intrinsic, extrinsic and accidental." And we can become freed of these three kinds of pain not by any methods that we have known so far, but by knowledge. Knowledge, according to him, is the panacea of all evils.

Knowledge of what? Knowledge of these twenty-four categories or principles. This leads to the highest object of life—complete and eternal freedom from misery and sorrow.

Let us discuss for a moment the process of cosmic evolution: *Prakriti,* the primordial matter, is the equilibrium of three elements, *Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas.* Kapila was the first philosopher who discovered the law of conservation of matter and energy. As I said, according to his theory, what *is* has come from what *was;* but matter, although a constant reality, exists in two forms or states—the statical and dynamic states, or the potential and kinetic states. One is the state of rest or sleep, and the other the state of action or waking. There is no substantial difference between these two states, just as there is no difference between the sea with waves and the sea without waves; the man awake and the man asleep.

That is, the potential state contains all the germs or causes of the kinetic or the dynamic state. These three elements, rhythm, action and inertia in the potential state of *Prakriti* remain evenly balanced, but somehow or other this equilibrium is disturbed and then creation or evolution sets in. *Prakriti* is the subtlest state of matter. If you analyze matter, the last state of it is *Prakriti,* unindividualized and undifferentiated; from it comes the great mind and from that again come the individual mind and five subtle elements, *tanmatras,* and from these come five senses of perception, five senses of action and five gross elements. So, we have twenty-three evolutes on this side, the side of *Prakriti. Prakriti* is the cause, not the effect, but the next seven are effects as well as causes and the last fifteen are effects only.

Prakriti is the material cause and *Purusha,* the intelligent cause. This loss of balance is the cause of creation or evolution of the universe.

So, the universe is the result of lost balance. There is no balance here. If you will take one single thing you will not find balance or rest in it. But it has a certain order. This orderly state of the universe is called *Kalpa* or "cycle." The *Atman,* the individual soul, dwells in the body yet is separate from all its conditions and qualities. Let us discuss this point now: How the soul, while it dwells in the body, yet at the same time is separate from it and its conditions and qualities. We have five sheaths, three bodies and three states of consciousness.

What are these three bodies? We have the gross physical body, and this body is composed of five gross elements, earth, water, fire, air and ether. The five subtle elements are simple substances. When these five elements are compounded in different proportions, then come these five gross elements. In Sanskrit philosophy this process is called *Panchikarana* or quintuplication. The earth element, for instance, consists of one-half subtle earth and one-eighth of each of the other four subtle elements. And in each of these gross as well as in the five subtle elements there is the presence of the three cardinal elements—*Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas.* In the process of quintuplication or combination, the proportions are as instanced above; *i.e.,* half of the principal element and one-eighth of each of the other four.

The basic principle of this system of evolution is the identity of cause and effect. That is, the effect is the cause evolved and the cause is the effect involved.

On that theory, Kapila has established an eternal existence of the universe in these two states—*Karanavastha* and *Karyavastha,* the state of rest and the state of action, or the *Vyakta* and the *Avyakta.* Wherever there is a state of action, there is a state of rest before and after it. If you put your hand on your pulse, you will feel its rise and fall. In the heart you will feel the process of diastole (expansion) and systole (contraction). Whenever there is a storm it is preceded and succeeded by a calm. In this state of evolution, there is action and motion. It is called

the dynamic state, and after remaining, say for a period of one million years, in this state of evolution or action, this cycle or world order, goes back to the causal state, the state of rest. And in that state, it remains for another million years, and at the end of that period it is evolved again. So, there is no actual beginning or end, but there are nominal beginnings and endings of these periods, the period of evolution, and the period of involution. The one is the period of action and the other, the period of rest. And this process is repeated again and again—*i.e.*, in this way *Prakriti* operates for all eternity.

We find many things in this period of evolution, the sun, the moon, the stars, etc. But all these things are only a reproduction or recurrence of a previous order, and these things will be repeated an infinite number of times in the future. So, there is only an apparent beginning of the cycle, or the world period, or the universe, and an apparent end or conclusion of it.

If you will remember the proposition of identity of cause and effect, you will find no difficulty in understanding Kapila's description of this world order or cosmos. To understand one series of evolutes, we will have to understand the others. Just as this world order has its period of existence, its individuality, so to say, so also man has his period of existence and his individuality, and these two series of evolutes take place in the same process and in the same time. The final conclusion of this philosophy is the identity of man and God.

Vaishwanara is the name of the universal man. The meaning of this word is the same as "Christ," or "Logos." You have studied Greek philosophy and you are acquainted with those terms. Christianity does not understand the spiritual meaning of its doctrines. I mean Christianity as it is practised in the Western World. Christianity is originally an Eastern religion. Christ was an Eastern man. It is difficult for a western minister to expound the religion of Christ on the purely literal interpretation of the Bible. You have to read between the lines to understand the metaphysical meaning of the scripture.

You are familiar with the doctrine of the Trinity; God, the Father; God, the Son; God, the Holy Ghost. The Son is the Logos or *Brahma,* the second person. Logos is the creative word. *Brahma* is not necessarily a person, but is represented as the creator or the projector of the universe, and there is an identity between *Brahma* or Christ and us. There we find the climax of this thought; the identity of man and this universal man, the creator, and the ruler of the world period. Let us call Him God for the sake of convenience. Each individual is a universe by himself. He is the microcosm. Whatever exists in the great universe also exists in him. Just think of that beautiful idea!

In this philosophy we never find a single passage where he is thought as born in sin and condemned as a sinner. On the contrary, it lays stress upon the identity of man

and God. Through his mistake, through his ignorance man forgets that he and Christ or *Brahma* or God are one.

Not only that, the author believed that it is the worst sin to think that we are sinners. It is a blasphemy to call a brother or a sister "sinner." It is the most unkind and unholy word in our dictionary, but according to popular Christianity if a man thinks that he is the worst sinner, then he has the best chance for salvation. Just think of it! If you think that you are the worst sinner, you are one. If you are a sinner, how can you become a saint? By knowing our own selves we can know everything in the universe. This knowledge is the key to the other knowledge.

What is that thing by knowing which everything in this universe is known? By knowing yourself you can know everything in this universe.

Then comes the question of introspection and concentration. You have to know what you really are. Not only the physical side, but the real side of your self, which is eternally free from all these sheaths and bodies and states. By that can you realize your identity with that universal man, God.

As I said, this process of evolution takes place in two sets; one is on the side of *Prakriti,* matter, and the other on the side of the *Purusha,* the spirit, but these two are like two eternal parallel lines. I have written them out here, but I don't know if you will be able to read it.

Brahman is the absolute spirit. From *Brahman* spring two sets of evolutes, one may be called the spiritual and the other the material. You might perhaps ask this question: If *Brahman* has no action, is infinite, one without a second, beyond time, space and causation, how can anything come from *Brahman?* But that is a mystery. While we are here in this side of the phenomenal, we naturally want to account for our existence here, we have our mind, our reason, and by these means we try to explain these conditions, and sometimes we advance certain theories. That is the best we can do here, but no one can give any answer to that question.

If *Brahman* is the absolute existence—one without a second, how could there be the many? To that question, we confess our ignorance—we do not know. From *Brahman* come first *Ishwara* on the spiritual side, and on the other side, *Prakriti,* the undifferentiated matter which is composed of three elements, *Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas.* From *Prakriti* come *Mahat* and *Ahamkara.* From *Ishwara* on the spiritual side comes *Hiranyagarbha,* which means literally the "golden womb." From *Hiranyagarbha* comes *Brahma* or *Vaishwanara;* the great universal man. This is the Logos or the Christ. Here we have the Perfect man or Divine man, if you please. He has no definite personality.

Then, on the other side from *Prakriti* evolve first *Karanadeha,* the causal body, then the *Sukshmadeha,* the subtle body which contains the five *tanmatras,* subtle

essences; five senses of perception, the five senses of action and the five Pranas, vital "air"; then the *Sthuladeha*—the gross physical body, the body which consists of the five gross compound elements. We see from this chart how from the subtle or the indefinite and incoherent, the gross or the definite and coherent comes. This is Spencer's definition of evolution: "Change from the indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to the coherent and definite heterogeneity." Thus we find once more how from the one cause the many effects have evolved.

What are these three states of consciousness? *Susupti,* the deep sleep state; *Swapna,* the dreaming state; and *Jagrata,* the waking state. Let us call the deep sleep state, the subconscious. The dream state, the semi-conscious state, and the waking state, the world conscious state. So, our waking state is the grossest state. The sound sleep is a finer and deeper state than this, and these correspond respectively to the *Karanadeha* or the causal body, the *Sukshmadeha* or the subtle body and the *Sthuladeha* or the gross body. The causal body is the receptacle of all the impressions of the other two bodies, the subtle and the gross bodies. Whatever we do leaves an impression upon the causal body which like a most sensitive plate quickly receives them and retains them. The aggregate of these impressions determines and shapes the future incarnation of the soul.

When the soul departs from one body it carries with it this aggregate of impressions of the waking and the

dreaming states. In the Gita we find this passage: "At the last moment of departure, death, a sort of balance is struck between these various impressions of deeds and thoughts of the gross and the subtle bodies and that forms the credit of the departing man for or against him, as the case may be, and that determines the future of his existence in another incarnation."

Everyone, therefore, is born with some credit and dies with some credit, the character of which depends upon his deeds.

This *Karanadeha* is the subtlest body. When we are in the sound sleep state, we go back to this body. This state of existence, deep sleep state, is the subconscious state and corresponds to the *Karanadeha.* And the dreaming state corresponds to the *Sukshmadeha.* This body consists of five *Pranas,* five senses of action, five senses of perception, five subtle elements, and *Manas* and *Buddhi.*

The gross body corresponds to the *Jagrata,* the waking state. In this waking state on the other side there is *Brahma,* the universal man, and, correspondingly, on this side, there is *Jiva,* the individual man.

This universal man and the individual man are identical. *Brahma* rules over one cycle or period of evolution, and in the next cycle this process is repeated and another *Brahma* rules. And this process goes on for all eternity. It has neither beginning nor ending. So, we have all evolved slowly and steadily from a lower form

of life to a higher and when we shall realize our identity with this *Iswara* or Christ, then we shall be saved; then there shall be no more bondage, no more incarnation.

"When that which is great, eternal and infinite is seen, then all ties are broken, all doubts depart and all *Karma* becomes extinct." We become freed from this law of *Karma,* from this round of births and deaths. This is not a theory, but a realization. We call it *Anubhuti.* This is real salvation.

So, we have not come from Adam and inherited his sin, but we have come from God and inherited his holiness. This is not our only term of life here. Our life is eternal. We lived in the past, and we shall live in the future, until we realize this identity, the selfsameness of man and God.

Brahma rules over the cosmos presiding over *Maya,* the great power. That is, he is not bound to *Maya,* but free from it. Just as a magician uses a wand or a stick, but is separate from it, even so *Brahma* uses *Maya,* but is separate from it. By the power of *Maya,* he creates and rules the universe. The individual aspect of *Maya* is called *Avidya.* So long as the soul remains bound to *Avidya,* ignorance, he is called *Jiva* and when he is freed of it he becomes *Brahma* or Christ.

That is the final conclusion of this system of philosophy, the attainment of the knowledge of the identity of man and God.

THE SEAT OF SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY

THE self, or the soul of man, is the seat of highest authority. It is the citadel of all power—heaven, salvation and peace are there. But through ignorance we seek for them in external things. A Hindu poet, a mystic, once said: "Oh, my mind, you often cry out God, God, God, but how and where you can find God, you do not know. The God of the universe is within yourself. See, with your own spiritual eyes, His beauty and glory in the soul."

Again, "Vain, indeed, is your search for God in these other things. This great God is constantly seated in your own self, the holy of holies. He is eternally there and to know Him is your birthright." For that reason the mystics have laid so much emphasis upon meditation. To the mystic, God is not in heaven and salvation not attainable through so-called faith. Peace is not a thing that can come to us only after we have passed out of this existence; but if we can withdraw all these scattered forces of the mind and concentrate them upon this living God within, then can we be truly and really peaceful and blissful. Make your body a living, moving Temple. The synagogues, mosques, churches and temples do not possess Him, but those alone can see Him in those places of worship who

know that the Lord of the universe, that infinite spirit is here, there and everywhere. The holy people go to visit places of worship, not necessarily to see God in those places, but to impart their own sacredness to those places God is not confined within the four walls of the church, nor is all about God compressed within the covers of the Bible. Nay, that God whom words cannot express, whom mind cannot comprehend, dwells everywhere. He cannot be limited anywhere. If we cannot see God in these men and women, in all these beings, how can we see Him elsewhere? So, if that God is unfolded from within, if we can be filled with the spirit of this eternal God, if we can make this body a veritable Temple, no matter where we are, or how we live, we are constantly at one with Him.

So, that is the end of all religions—to realize in the soul the sweetness, love, bliss and peace of God here and now. Through our own ignorance we take cognizance of all other things, except our own self. We try to see the whole world corrected and perfected without correcting and perfecting ourselves. We are apt to see the motes in other peoples' eyes and not the beams in our own eyes. If we can reform ourselves, then and then alone can we see the whole world reformed.

Here is a story to illustrate this point: Once there was a demon who acquired the power of burning a man to ashes by placing his hand on his head. He wanted to test that power. One day he saw the sage, Narada, pass-

ing by and addressed him saying: "Oh, Narada, please wait one moment." But Narada was a sage, and he knew what that demon meant. The demon told him of his power and wanted to make an experiment of it on his head. But Narada fooled him by saying: "Why don't you try it on your own head, and then you will know if you possess the power." So, this man then placed his hand on his own head and was immediately burned to ashes.

So, if we make the experiment of reformation upon ourselves then we can realize how impossible it is to see the whole world reformed. Those who try to reform themselves know how difficult a task it is and how much more so is the work of reforming others. I want to give you another illustration:

We think that this person can give us health or wealth, and that church or temple or synagogue salvation or God. We don't make the proper efforts ourselves, but try to get things for nothing. You know the musk deer. When he grows the musk, he becomes restless and runs from place to place to locate the source of the odor of the musk, but he does not know that it is coming from himself, and he runs and runs, and finally dies of exhaustion.

We expect to get salvation from this book or that church or that saviour, without exerting ourselves, without knowing how and where to find it.

Once ten men crossed a river by swimming and when they got on the other bank of the river, each one counted,

leaving himself out of the count, and found only nine. And they naturally felt that one of them had been drowned while swimming across the river. Then a wayfarer came and these men sorrowingly told him: "We were ten and we crossed this river, and now we are nine —one of us has been drowned." This man counted them and found that they were ten. They made the mistake, because each one of them left himself out of the reckoning. That explains the reason of our sorrow and distress. We do not care to know ourselves, but we are eager to know about other people's affairs. "What does it avail a man if he gains the whole world, but loses his own self?" We try to gain the whole world even at the cost of the self. I would rather know and possess my own self and lose the whole world than to lose my self and gain the whole world. For all power, perfection and freedom is within my self.

The highest authority, therefore, is the authority that comes from the direct knowledge of truth. This is the highest aim of life. And the authority of truth is the greatest authority. Authority is not the test of truth, but truth is the test of authority. Truth precedes the authority.

A man who sees the truth becomes a *Rishi* and what he says then carries weight. We try to be content with the knowledge of theology and doctrines of religion. But that cannot give us enduring satisfaction and peace. All knowledge that comes from outside is second-hand know-

ledge. It is not better than ignorance. The knowledge of truth gives eternal joy and peace.

Once six blind men wanted to know an elephant. One day they heard that an elephant was passing by the road, and they all came to him. Each one of them put his hand on the elephant, and thought that he knew all about him. One man who caught hold of the tail said: "Oh, I know what an elephant is like. He is like a snake." And one who caught the leg of the elephant said: "The elephant is like a pillar." And another who touched the elephant's ear, said: "Oh, the elephant is like a fan."

Each of these six blind men touched the elephant; but because they had an imperfect or partial knowledge, they practically knew nothing of him. That partial knowledge was worse than ignorance. We must try to know the whole. Truth, being an infinite reality, can be known only then when we become at one with it. When we incorporate the truth consciousness into our self, or when we evolve ourselves into the supreme truth consciousness, we become at one with the whole.

He who can rest in that consciousness, he knows all things. That is the supreme knowledge.

In India we have a spiritual practice, which most of you have read in the Gita, called *Swadharma,* which literally means one's own religion. One's own religion does not mean the religion that your parents belong to or your ancestors belonged to or the religion which is your nation's or race's religion. But it means that par-

ticular method which is adapted to your own spiritual nature, by following which you can attain to infinite truth. To practise this we have to go to a *Guru,* spiritual teacher.

I often tell you that in India we believe that every person must have his own religion. You have heard the Christian missionary ridicule us saying: In India there are 330 millions of Gods and Goddesses. Yes. Because we have a populaton of 330 millions and we believe that each one must have his own God or his own method of realization of God. God is not a Person. God has no form nor name. Through our ignorance we ascribe a name to God, and we think that God has a form. How can that which is infinite have a form, and how can that which is incomprehensible have a name or designation? But, by following this particular method that the *Guru* outlines to us, we can reach God. In India religion is not a dogmatic faith. No one can take out a patent for religion. Realization of truth by first hand knowledge is the highest religion. I want you to remember this thing: We must make religion a reality in life, taste its sweetness, enjoy its beauty, while we are here. So, these various methods are essential, and each one must have his own religion, *Swadharma.*

That man is most spiritual who has been developed from within by practice of *Swadharma,* who always obeys the eternal voice of truth, the voice of conscience. By being spiritual we help ourselves. We do more good to ourselves than to anybody else.

If you can be established in that consciousness, you do not fear the opinions of men. That man who listens to and follows the dictates of his conscience, that man is not afraid of the opinions of the world. He knows that he has not been made holier if he is praised, nor viler if he is censured.

.The glory of a great person is not in what men say about him, but what he actually feels and what he actually is. He refers all things back to the God within himself, and if he finds rectitude there then he feels happy. What does it avail a man if he gains the whole world, but loses his own self. In the holy of holies of one's conscience alone one can find real spiritual power, poise and peace.

Let us discuss for a moment some other sources of authority. We think that the Scripture is the highest authority in regard to our moral and our spiritual conduct of life. The Scripture came after the thought. Those people who wrote the Scriptures or translated them had the thought first; they saw the truth first, and then what they expressed in words was the Scripture. So, why should we go to the Scripture for authority and not to the very first source of it—truth? The former is an indirect and the latter a direct method. Why don't you go directly to that eternal source of authority? If you can find knowledge by attaining the truth, then whatever you say will become the Scripture. We do not believe that any particular book which was written in any particular time contains the whole truth. No. Truth is always

here within us and each one of us must know the truth and become a seer, a prophet, himself. So, the knowledge that comes after the direct vision of the truth, after you have become a seer, includes all truths. In the Gita you will find this passage in the second chapter: "The knowledge of that *Brahmin* who has attained the truth is like a flood which contains within itself all other finite knowledges. The knowledges that come from the books are like small wells and pools."

To become a spiritual person by reading books only is as impossible as to become rich by borrowing money. Do not read books only to quote. Read, if you can, through the mind of the author and if you can read a book by attuning yourself to the mind of the author, if you can read that way, then and then alone can you understand the meaning of the book—otherwise you can't.

When I studied Gita first, the teacher who taught me said: "My dear boy, if you want to know the real, the spiritual, meaning of the teachings of the Gita, you have to follow a different procedure. That you can't get only by a literal reading of the text and the commentaries. To understand that you must have real spiritual practice."

So, I am not against reading books, but certainly I am not very much in favor of reading books to depend on them only, for inspiration and illumination.

There lived a man in India many years ago who every day used to read a manuscript, and on each page of that book was written one word "Rama." Just that simple

word of two syllables, and he was asked why he read that book on each page of which was written only that word, for so many hours at a time.

"Why not? What else do you want me to read? I get everything in that one word," he said.

We make the simplest things most complex. Religion is a very simple thing. If you want to kill others you will have to be prepared with guns or swords, but if you want to kill yourself, you can do it in a very simple way—with a penknife you can do it.

If you want to kill yourself, I mean spiritually, you can do it very easily. If you want to be spiritual yourself, all you have to do is to grow from within, to understand and assimilate the meaning of what you hear and read. Sometimes by reading too many books we become confused, because we don't know how to assimilate properly what we read. That person who only reads without understanding the text is likened to a horse who drags a wagon of sugar, but never eats a lump of it. There are many people who always carry a big library in their heads, but they never enjoy the sweetness of the books. It becomes a burden to them and gives them no comfort and satisfaction. But the other is a simpler and better method.

Another teacher once said: In the almanac there are sometimes forecasts of showers. For instance, in the daily papers there are predictions of showers, but if you squeeze them you cannot get a drop of water out of them.

In the book there might be written beautiful things, but if you squeeze the book you can't get any spirituality from it. To get the spirituality you have to follow a different method. In fact, you don't have to read books at all.

When I was in Benares in 1902 with Swami Vivekananda, he planned to open a center there and asked me to take charge of it. Benares is a great city of learning and there are great scholars there who are deeply learned in philosophy and literature, and I being conscious of my own shortcomings told Swami Vivekananda most frankly: "I can't take charge of the work, here. There are so many learned men here—What can I do?" And he said to me: "You don't have to imitate them. You just tell what you know. Be simple and plain. Don't try to copy or quote from books or from authorities. This method will be more attractive and impressive than the other."

And I remember one day a college-bred young man came to him and he wanted to be "smart," and he quoted from many books, and Swami Vivekananda listened to him and before he left Swami Vivekananda said: "My young friend, you have told me many things and quoted many authorities, but you have not said one word which is your own."

Thought precedes the book. So, be your own authority in respect to reading. I am not opposed to reading, but don't read in that slavish way and don't depend on

books for your spiritual development. Spirituality is not compressed within the covers of the book.

Then, we have the authority of man. We say this man said this and that man said that. That is proof enough of their reliability. I don't deny that sort of authority, but that does not satisfy me. I want to be my own authority. That is not arrogance or vanity. I want to be convinced myself.

When a big tree bears fruits you can find thousands of them on one single branch. Try to secure a permit to sit under it. When the fruits fall they will be yours. Don't seek for the fruits, but seek for the tree, the mother of the fruits.

So, try to go to the very source of all fruits, all powers and perfections:—The Eternal Tree of *Brahman* on which personalities are hanging in bunches.

Then, we have the authority of law. I don't believe that we can make a person good or religious by force of law. Nobody should be compelled to become good that way. You can't legislate virtues, but if you can remove the obstacles from the way of expression of virtues, you can help others become virtuous. The law wants to impose upon us, against our will, certain conditions or canons, without explaining the reason for such enforcement. But the law is necessary only for those who do not know how to use and exercise rightly their God-given freedom, and who do not respect others' freedom.

When Confucius was teaching in China, all courts

were abolished, because there were no crimes committed. All our present day courts can be abolished, if people can be made really free. What we ordinarily call freedom is not freedom. It is license. I think that that man is really and truly free who can sacrifice his own freedom, so that others can be made free. That is the test of freedom; renunciation of freedom. He who can sacrifice and suffer, so that others may be made free and happy is a truly free man.

We have a wrong conception of freedom. Everybody tries to throw obstacles in the way of others' freedom so that he may be free himself. In the midst of this keen commercial competition there is no real freedom. The sort of freedom that many people have idealized, is working like a poison eating into the very vitals of the national existence. If they must have it let it be there, but along with it the other freedom should be cultivated and realized.

Men and women should know what real spiritual freedom is and learn to eliminate their selfishness and love their brothers and sisters and respect their rights and privileges. One must learn to put himself last, and let others go before him—that is real freedom. But this freedom which makes you think only of yourself, and makes you put yourself first and others last, that is worse than license. That man is truly and really free who is free from all selfishness and is ever ready to refuse his own freedom so that others may be free.

Freedom and bondage are all matters of consciousness. A man may be outwardly free but in his inner consciousness he may be a veritable slave. If any nation makes an unspiritual man its President, with all his powers he will still be a slave. A man who follows the dictates of his conscience and not the dictates of selfishness, even if he suffers proscription and persecution, is truly and really free.

Buddha's last words were: "Therefore, be ye guides unto yourselves! Be ye lamps unto yourselves! Betake yourselves to no external aids and depend upon none! Self-reliance is strength and dependence, even upon God, is weakness. Be your own masters and saviors." These were Buddha's last instructions.

So, we have to be illumined from within. If we have that inner spiritual freedom, and if we can develop that inner authority, then we can find freedom everywhere. If there is a unit and you add zero to it, you will get values: that will make 10, 100, 1,000, etc. The more zeroes you add to that unit at the beginning the greater value you will get; but if you delete that unit, then all these will be zeroes and there will be no value. So, if you have that unit here, the knowledge of the One without a second, then that knowledge will increase the values of your spiritual practice.

The highest authority, therefore, is the authority of your own illumined soul.

ETHICS AND SPIRITUALITY OF RELIGION

THERE are two elements in religion, one is ethical and the other spiritual. The ethical element relates to our duties to our fellow-beings and the spiritual element relates to our duties to our God. The highest ethical teaching perhaps is "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," or "Do unto others what you would be done by." What is the relation between you and your neighbor? If we do not understand this relationship we cannot love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Our neighbors are not separate from us. We have to recognize the golden thread of unity, the spirit which pervades us all, the basic principle which endures from everlasting to everlasting. If we can recognize and realize that eternal principle, then, and then alone, can we love our neighbors as ourselves. Our neighbors are only better or poorer manifestations of our inner self.

We have to know what this inner self is and then we have to recognize the relation of this inner self to our neighbors. Ordinarily, this great rule of love is inculcated by words and commandments, but the teachers do not show us the reason for this love.

If I can be happy by robbing my neighbor, or by killing my neighbor, and if my deeds do not return to me and I have no other responsibility than the social, then why should I love my neighbor and work for his well-being. So, ethics should be based upon the law of reaction or responsibility. Each one of us is an integral part of the infinite whole. Just as I can't hurt my foot without expecting my hand to feel the pain, even so I can't injure my neighbor without feeling the consequence of that injury myself. We, all together, make up the whole. We are all inseparable parts of it. We have to understand that not by mere intellectual comprehension or by the force of law or the fear of God, but by our own spiritual realization. All these great problems can be solved only then when we are awakened from within. We must evolve into that broader and larger consciousness that we are all one in the spirit. When we can realize that golden thread of unity, then shall we see the beauty and harmony of the whole and enjoy its bliss. A child without some parts, say a hand or a foot, does not look beautiful, but a whole child is beautiful. In the realization of the infinite spirit, the principle of love is understood.

We cannot see the whole with our physical eyes, but we can see the whole with our spiritual eyes. That which is infinite is impartible and formless—you cannot divide it. We are not detached portions, but parts of the whole. Take for instance the sky. It is infinite. We can see only a part of it with our eyes, but the sky spreads beyond

that. It is not a limited portion separated from the rest.

Upon this conception of the fundamental unity of all existence must be based our ideas of morality. The fact that some of these moral dicta or injunctions have failed to produce results does not prove that they have no moral value; but because they are taught as rules and enforced rather than explained, they are unfruitful. They do not convince the mind. The method of unfoldment is not taught. The reason for their acceptance is not shown. The teacher himself sometimes does not understand them; how can the students benefit by them? We read this in the Upanishad: "When one perceives that unity in all, one does not hate, one does not hide." "While one is conscious and cognizant of the many, one has fear; but when one perceives the golden thread of unity, the basic principle, one does not grieve, nor hate, nor hurt anybody."

While we give these moral instructions, at the same time, we must show to the students the principle of morality. Why should we be good and do good and why should we love our neighbors as ourselves? That is an important point. Very few people know what the self is. They understand only the physical self, the self with feet, eyes, arms, ears, etc. But the real self is not that.

In the Upanishad we find this story: Yagnyavalkya, before he retired from active life, gave his wife this instruction. Her name was Maitreyi. "Oh, Maitreyi, the husband is dear to the wife not because he is a man,

but because the wife sees her own self in him; the son is dear to the mother not because he is a boy, but because his mother sees her self in him. Everything in this world becomes dear to us through the existence of the *atma*—the self. Therefore, you must see the self, hear of the self, meditate upon the self and know the self. And if you can do that, then shall you be delivered from all ignorance."

So, we have to teach about the real self, and, most of all, we have to realize the self first. If we wish to make these people truly and really good—and mark my words—we cannot compel anybody to become good, under coercion, or fear of punishment, or force of law—we must show them the right way of unfoldment.

In the fifth century B. C. the great Greek Teacher, Socrates, said: "You can't legislate virtue." By legislation you can't make any person good or great. That is a futile method. If a person can be unfolded to the sense of dignity and honor then naturally he will become moral, good and great. Then he will need no laws. Laws are necessary only for the moral imbeciles. A lame person needs a stick or a cane or a crutch, but a strong person can stand firm and erect upon his own feet. He does not need these props, these external aids.

This sort of moral instructions that are given in the churches and also in the schools, by themselves cannot make a person thoroughly and truly moral. It is an external method—a wrong method, but the right method

is internal awakening. It must be a growth from the inside out. One must be thoroughly and understandingly developed and reformed, and true evolution is unfoldment from within and not infoldment from without. The student must be fully conscious of his innate powers and innate divinity.

In the Christian Bible it is taught that men are born sinners. How can holiness or righteousness come from sin? If a person constantly thinks that he is a sinner, he will become and remain a sinner. Salvation must be a matter of consciousness. The great sages of the Upanishad never taught sin, but preached holiness, divinity of man.

According to some special religions, man is separate from God and he is a born sinner:—on account of the sin of Adam. So, how can there be a broad communistic feeling or fellowship, because in this teaching the fundamental principle of unity is denied. There must be the realization of oneness, so that there may rise a true and wholesome sense of fellowship among men. We are like different waves on the surface of the same sea. Let there be differences on the surface of social life, but the underlying unity must be realized.

Take the orchestra playing different instruments and different notes, but underlying them all is the symphonic unity. This basic unity of all existence is God. If we can become once more attuned to that basic principle of unity then we don't have to love our neighbors under the

pressure of law, human or divine. But it will be natural and spontaneous.

I think I told you this once before, but let me repeat it: Once there lived a great man and, because he was highly spiritual, his body even responded to moral and spiritual vibrations. We are taught that when two people talk together it is not right to overhear them. This man could not come within the hearing distance if two people would be talking, because it is not right to do so. His feet would not move. So, this question of the right becomes settled once and for all time when we develop from within, when we see once more, with our spiritual eyes this fundamental principle of unity.

Many people endeavor to establish harmony and fellowship among men on the principle of utility. According to the utilitarian theory, the greatest good to the largest number is the end and aim of all social and political institutions. Utility is its standard of morality. These people do not recognize the principle of spiritual unity. They say we must have a "social order"—if people rob or cheat each other, there can't be social harmony and progress. It is a good idea, but if the idea of responsibility is taken away we can see no ultimate necessity of utility or harmony or fellowship among people. If a person is told that he must do the greatest good to the largest number, but at the same time if the reason for this work and the consequence of it and its nonperformance is not explained to him, why should he do so? Most of these

institutions that are endeavoring to establish harmony among men, like the utilitarian and the communistic institutions, are more or less materialistic and atheistic. They do not consider the question of the existence of God or of a higher and subtler responsibility than that which pertains to this life only—because the former cannot be demonstrated by scientific methods. But if I am not responsible for my own work except in a social way, if the deeds do not return to me, if I have only this one term of life here, if all accountability of deeds ceases as soon as I pass out of this body, why should I be good and do good? If I feel that I can be happy here by possessing all the things I want, why should I not have them by all means? My natural impulse would be to get as much as I can out of this short span of life, even if I have to steal or deceive or kill. And I am not accountable for my deeds. The subtle moral consequences are not mine.

Here lies the weak point of the doctrine of utilitarianism. I must give credit to the utilitarians and others for what they have done for the good of humanity. But if we can discover a principle which is more rational and which covers a larger ground, then we must accept that and try to build our moral ideas and institutions upon it. There we find the necessity of the other element of religion, the spiritual element. Before I take up that part of the subject, I want to say one or two more words about the first element, the ethical element.

Ethics, more or less, concerns itself with the amount

of work, with doing rather than with being. There must be a perfect balance between being and doing. There are many people who concern themselves with work only —particularly with the amount of work. There are others who do not do any practical or active work, but try to help their neighbors by living the teachings of the masters. I think that the most sensible process would be the balance between the two; we should know how to balance one against the other. Some people are carried away by either the one or the other; the truth lies evenly between the extremes. Says Krishna: "That man is great, Oh Arjuna! whose mind is rightly balanced, who can always maintain the disposition of equanimity in regard to all pairs of opposites." This is the essence of *Karmayoga*.

The intention must be right, the purpose or the motive must be noble. Krishna attaches greater importance to psychology than to the mere amount of action. He said: "If you can do a little, but if that little is done with sincere love, that can produce much greater results than doing a large thing, but without right thought, faith and love." So, we have to develop that attitude in the self. We must always keep the mind calm, serene and equanimous. If we can work in that disposition, even a small amount of work will outweigh in its real value a greater amount of work done without that disposition.

The spiritual element relates to our duties to our God. There are many conceptions of God. Some people think that God is a person, and that He rules us from a certain

sphere. They are not highly spiritual. God must be a super-spatial, super-temporal and super-causative spirit. And in God there should be no room for all such thoughts as space or time or cause. He must be beyond all those concepts, because God is an infinite spirit and in the infinite there can't be space or time or causation. Those people to whom God is only a person see differences. But those who can transcend that thought of personality and can realize this impersonal aspect of God, can find harmony and peace everywhere. That should be the end of religion. Let there be many religions, but the goal of all is the attainment of unity. The religion proper is one, but religions are many. Our highest aim of life is not to remain in a religion, but outgrow it. "It is good to be born in a church, but not to die in it." We should try to follow out our religions and reach that which is Religion, the center, the essence of all religions. Just as in the center of the circle all the lines that start from the points in the circumference meet, even so all these religions meet finally in Religion. So, our great object in life should not be to be a Methodist or a Baptist or a Hindu or a Jew or a Buddhist, but to see with our own spiritual eyes the beauty of unity of religions. In the whole there is beauty; in the part there is no beauty. We must realize this eternal principle which is the mother of all religions. Our inability to recognize this basic principle of unity, this impersonal spirit, is the cause of all our differences, our quarrels, our hatreds and all those things that have sepa-

rated man from man. If we can realize that impersonal and universal spirit, then we can be in harmony with all. Then we shall not hide anything or hate anybody. Because then our soul will dwell in the spirit which is eternally one and inseparable, the absolute existence, knowledge and bliss.

This idea of the harmony of religions has been taught in the fourth chapter of the Gita by Krishna. You will remember that passage where he sums up all his teachings of harmony of religions. "All these religions that men follow through different spiritual leanings, all these lead finally to one and the same goal; call it God or good or love or law." Those names do not make any difference in the substance.

You must transcend all conditions of name and form and even these different ways that lead to that goal. "Arise! Awake! Struggle on! And stop not, till the goal is reached!"

We must struggle on and on and on and if we can proceed without stopping, then our experiences will be higher and deeper, more sublime, more beautiful.

Here is a story: Once a man who used to make a living by chopping wood met a great sage, and he asked this holy man to tell him an easier way of making a living. He had to cut wood and bring it to the market and sell it there. This holy man said to him: "Proceed on." Then he thought that perhaps this meant "proceed still farther into the forest." Next day he proceeded a little

farther into the forest and there he found a coal mine and he remembered that instruction, and he proceeded still farther the day after and he found a copper mine, then as he kept proceeding he found a gold mine, and became very rich. So, you see, we must constantly proceed and not stop till we reach the goal.

In another book we find this passage as to the harmony of religions: "Oh, Lord! just as the different rivers rising from different sources, passing through different channels, straight or crooked, all ultimately flow into the ocean and become one there; even so all these religions that men adopt and follow through different tastes and tendencies finally lead to Thee and Thee alone."

There we find the very perfection of spirituality. When we can rest in the supreme one, in the eternal one, in the infinite one, then we don't need any moral commandments or rules for our conduct of life. We become spontaneously good and we cannot do anything then which is not right for us to do.

"Each person must follow his own spiritual ideal and realize it." But while every person must be devoted to his own spiritual ideal, he must be sympathetic, kind and tolerant to others. He must associate with all, appreciate the good in them and benefit by it: Be firm in the self and be always sweet and loving to everybody. While we are on the road we must entertain that attitude of tolerance and sympathy to others. Let us all have differences, but let us all agree to differ. That is the noblest agree-

ment. Let us not try to make the many into one homogeneous whole. Let there be variety, which is essential to evolution, but we must try to realize the basic principle of unity.

"The whole universe with its varieties is strung upon that eternal spirit into a perfect whole, even as the different beads are strung into a beautiful string upon the same common thread."

God is the golden thread of unity. He is not a person, but the spirit immanent and transcendent, and let us find our rest in that Spirit Infinite.

Let us march under different banners and flags with different colors, whether they be red or green or blue or yellow or orange, but let all these colors be united and combined, and out of that blending let there be that glow of white, the color of love, harmony, peace and bliss.

LIFE BEFORE BIRTH AND AFTER DEATH

MAN is not the mere person with a three score and ten years of earthly existence. Life is not the short span of existence between birth and death. Birth and death are only two incidents or changes. By death we do not lose anything. Death is like a door between two rooms. Just as when we pass from one room into another we do not lose anything, even so when we pass out of one earthly life into another, we do not lose anything.

One great English poet said: "Our birth is but a sleep, a forgetting, etc." And Longfellow said this:

"Life is real and life is earnest;
And the grave is not its goal.
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul."

The soul is an eternal entity. Body has its six principal changes; but the soul is changeless. Modern science has established the imperishability of matter—matter can't be destroyed. That is, the whole mass of matter and energy is a constant quantity. You can't subtract anything from it, you can't add anything to it. But the soul is imperishable not in that sense only. The soul has

no changes at all. Matter has many changes, and exists in many states—solid, liquid, gaseous, etc. But the soul is entirely unchangeable and imperishable. It has neither birth nor death. It is entirely free from all these occurrences and changes that the body has.

Among the evolutionists in India, there are two opinions about the soul. One is of the *Samkhyas* and the other of the *Buddhists*. Both these schools of evolutionists believe in the gradual development of matter and the spirit. The *Samkhyas* believe in the plurality of the souls, but that they are all of the same kind. There is no difference between the souls except in the degree of their manifestations. There is no substantial difference between the soul in one form of life and in another. The soul in the lowest form of life, in the protoplasm or in the amœba, for instance, possesses the same powers and possibilities as the soul in the Christ or the Buddha. The soul in the lowest form evolves into a higher form through the process of reincarnation.

According to the *Samkhya* belief there is an identity between what is *before* and what is *after*. If you have read Patanjali, you will remember where he says: "The evolution of one species into another is effectuated through the infilling of nature." The soul is constantly seeking to unfold itself and under that urge on the part of the soul it passes through various forms of life or incarnations. The soul is its own cause of evolution. By this process the soul lifts up one after another the veils

that have been thrown around it by *Prakriti,* or matter. In fact, it is the evolution of matter, of the form or the body.

The soul passes from a lower to a higher body in the course of its career of reincarnation. I shall refer to this later. The author of the *Samkhya* system believed in the identity or self-sameness of cause and effect. Cause is the effect involved and the effect the cause evolved. Just as there is no difference between a man when he sleeps and when he is awake—the possibilities are the same—even so the soul is the same in all species, only these possibilities are not developed to the same degree. So, Kapila, the author of this system, based his theory of evolution on the principle of identity. He says that evolution can't come from zero. What *is* can come only from what *was.*

He did not believe in the theory of special creation. He did not believe that this universe, which is so vigorously real to the senses, could have come from nothing. Nor did he believe in a God as creator of the universe. I can say that no Hindu believes in a Geo-centric, Homo-centric and Ego-centric God. According to this theory, God concerns Himself only with this world. Compared to the universe, this earth world is like a drop in the bucket—and this God is especially concerned with the affairs of this world only.

If you are acquainted with the Bible account of creation, you will remember that God created this earth world in six days, and one afternoon, in an hour or two He cre-

ated the other planets. According to modern astronomy, there are planets—some suns like Canopus—which are three hundred million times larger and hotter than this sun of ours, and if it took six days of His own time for God to create this earth world how much longer do you think it would naturally have taken to create these other planets which are so much larger than this earth world of ours?

These Hindu philosophers were great seers and reasoners. They did not take anything for granted, but always demanded proof and, naturally, they did not believe in this sort of Geo-centric God. There are other beings higher and lower than man, but God loved man only, and was solicitous about his salvation. He created the lower animals for man's pleasure to be hunted by him, to be killed and eaten by him. These Hindu philosophers never believed in that sort of God:—A God who is pleased with you if you praise Him, and keep His commandments and who punishes you if you don't keep them and do not praise Him.

That sort of God these Hindu philosophers did not believe in and Kapila saw no necessity of postulating a God to account for creation. He said: "Matter and soul are enough to explain creation." I have no time to discuss this point this afternoon. Let us consider his conception of the soul.

If the soul is a reality, if we really exist, it naturally follows that we existed before. Existence can come only

from a previous existence. I want you to remember this: The fundamental principle of Kapila's theory of evolution—"Nothing can come from nothing." That something, —which is eternal, unchangeable and imperishable in its essence,—that something constantly evolves.

Kapila was the first discoverer of the theory of the conservation of matter. To the Western World it is a new theory, it has come, so to say, just the other day, but Kapila, who lived a thousand years before Christ, discovered the theory of the conservation of matter;—that is, the whole mass of matter and the whole quantity of energy is a constant reality. You can't destroy it or add anything to it. But these things exist only in different states and conditions.

There are two great states—the static and the dynamic. There is no substantial difference between these two states. There is no difference between the seed and the tree, or the egg and the bird, except in manifestations. You can't determine which came first, the egg or the bird, the seed or the tree. You will have to argue in a circle. But the egg or the seed contains all the possibilities of the future bird or the tree. What is not involved in the egg or in the seed can never manifest itself in the bird or the tree.

Buddha was the greatest metaphysician that the world has ever produced. He was supremely idealistic; but where lies the beauty of his metaphysics is this: He did not entirely ignore this world. He was a teacher of

ethics and he had the balance of heart and head or compassion and reason. He had a colossal head and a colossal heart and in him we find the perfect balance between these two great faculties in man. Buddha never claimed that he was a saviour of man, an angel or an incarnation or a messenger of God. He said: "I am a man."

Buddha, unlike Kapila, based his philosophy of evolution upon non-identity. Buddha, although he drew upon Kapila's philosophy, promulgated his own theory of non-identity. I want you to know the difference between causation or identity of cause and effect as taught by Kapila and succession or non-identity, as propounded by Buddha.

By causation there is the continuity of the same soul, but according to succession, there is no such continuity. Here is the beauty of Buddha's philosophy: He believed in reincarnation; but let me tell you here, that at the same time he did not believe in the soul as a permanent and persistent entity. He said: "There is no such thing as permanent entity." People who call him an atheist should know that he was not an atheist like them. He was a God-intoxicated atheist. We find this passage in the *Upanishads:* "He who says that he knows God does not know Him, but he who is humble enough to confess that he can't know God, because God is such an infinite reality that He can't be comprehended by the mind;—he who possesses that deep reverence for God and does not talk of Him on account of that reverence, he knows God."

We know many who talk much of God on Sundays, but I can truthfully say that they know nothing of God. That is my challenge to them. If they knew God, if they had the slightest reverence for God, they would not talk of Him. They would be intoxicated, like Buddha, with love of God and could find no words to express Him. Buddha denied the sort of God that the theologians preach, as he denied a permanent soul incarnating in various bodies. He did not believe in the doctrine of identity, but he was a believer in evolution and reincarnation.

What is this reincarnating entity, then? According to Buddha, man is nothing but a bundle of ideas. His life is only an aggregate of notions. He denied both the knower and the known—that is, the existence of the external or objective world as well as of the internal or subjective world. He believed in the law of *Karma*. It is the aggregate of the impressions of our thoughts, deeds and words. *Karma* is a self reproducing entity. Soul is the aggregate of notions or consciousnesses at various moments—if you will call it by that name. This is the favorite illustration of the Buddhists: If you take a torch and swing it in the air, the circle you make is not a reality. It is the result of the aggregate of the existence of that one flame of light at a series of points at various moments. That is the cause of that circle. This whole universe is a circle of illusion like that. Buddha denied both the past and the future. The past is gone and no one can see the future. When it comes it is not the future

any more; it is the present. He said: Every moment we have a fresh existence or a new birth and a new death. Every moment we are being born and every moment we are dying. There is no causal continuity of the existence of the moment before and of the moment after. Let me give you this illustration: Here is an entity by the name of X; it dies and the next moment another entity succeeds it by the name of Y. The next moment it dies again. Another entity succeeds by the name of Z and so on. There is this succession between X, Y and Z, but there is no identity between them. Every moment is different from a past and a future moment. The soul is the series of these momentary existences.

If the present life or existence is real, it must have come from another life or existence which was equally real. Then the natural conclusion is that we existed before. Life has not come from zero or non-existence. If you say God created life, then I will ask where did He get it? Anything that *is* cannot come from nothing. God can only give form or shape, but God can't bring something into existence from nothing. So, life must have existed before. "God created man out of the dust of the ground and then put into him the breath of life and he became a living spirit." If you explain it literally, you cannot understand its spiritual meaning. Life certainly has come from God—because God is Life itself. But the Church explains it literally *i.e.*, life was created by an

anthropomorphic God. Here is a story which will serve as an illustration.

Once a revivalist like Billy Sunday gave a sermon on the creation of man. He quoted this passage: "God created man out of the dust of the ground," etc., and in his sermon he depicted a God with two pails in His hands —in one, there was dust and in the other, water. He makes a clay from them and creates a doll out of it and then with a pipe He blows the breath of life into its nostrils. He places it on a porch to dry. That was how the first man was created. After the sermon was over, one man from the congregation asked: "Sir, if that was the first creation of man, if man did not exist before that, who created that house upon the porch of which God put that clay doll to dry?" And the evangelist answered angrily: "If you argue that way all religions will be destroyed." In religion you are not allowed to reason—you have to swallow everything.

I, as your friend, and one who believes in the power and authority of reason, I advise you that no self-respecting person should accept anything dogmatic, anything that cannot be established by evidence, as final and authoritative. Always reserve your right to think for yourself. Because to think for yourself, even wrongly, is far better than never to think at all. Be a man. Express the powers that are latent in you. Assert your birthright. Don't accept what these men say—they are blind

leaders of the blind. Have your own eyes opened. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make ye free." There is only one kind of knowledge and that is the first-hand knowledge. There is no second-hand knowledge in the truth. Your concern should be to know the truth and not to adhere blindly to creeds and doctrines. These are all man-made. Some men made them to serve their own interests. But you, who are children of God, why should you accept those things from ignorant people? Always try to see truths with your own spiritual eyes. Think with your own mind and realize within your own soul.

These are the two opinions current even today among the evolutionists: one opinion is based on the identity of what precedes and what succeeds; what is before and what is after, or causation. Buddha did not believe in this, but in non-identity or succession. This is the other opinion.

If life existed before, how is it that we are not conscious of it, why do we not remember our past incarnations? Why does not the soul remember the form or body in which it existed before? That is a very intelligent question.

The soul, as I said, is very distinct from the body. We have three bodies and five sheaths and then we have three states of consciousness. The soul is distinct from all these:— *Sthula Sharira, Sukshma Sharira* and *Karana Sharira;* the gross body, the thought body and the causal body. It is also distinct from the five sheaths—the ali-

mental, the vital, the mental, the intellectual and the spiritual or joyful. It is distinct from them all, and also from the three states of consciousness—the waking, the dreaming and the sleeping.

What is memory? Memory is a function of the brain, and if memory would be the criterion of existence, then in this incarnation we have done many things that we are not remembering now. Some things that I did yesterday I don't remember today. Does it follow from it that I did not exist yesterday? Many people lose their memory in a diseased condition, yet they exist. Therefore, the absence of memory is no proof that we did not exist before.

You have read the eighteenth aphorism of the third Book of *Rajayoga:* "If we can arrange all the past impressions in a chronological order, then we can have a clear and complete reminiscence of the past incarnations." So, through this arrangement we can have a complete knowledge of the past, but we have to arrange them properly.

Then, what is the use of knowing the past? It may satisfy your curiosity, but I never desire to have my curiosity satisfied. I am satisfied to know that I existed before. No one can think for one moment that he did not exist before. I am existing and that is proof positive that I existed before. Can anyone doubt or deny his own existence? Who will do it? The doubter cannot doubt himself.

The man who holds that there will exist nothing after death as there was nothing before birth, can he say he does not exist now? A French philosopher said: "I think, therefore I exist." But the Hindu philosopher says: "I exist, therefore I think." Existence is deeper and more permanent than thinking.

Then the birth of prodigies. If we remember the basic principle of the Hindu theory of evolution, that what *is* has come from what *was,* we find no reason for miracles in the world. Everything is natural and scientific. The prodigy expresses wonderful powers, because they were already in him. There are some mathematical prodigies. In Harvard University there was a boy who could work out problems which the professors themselves could not solve. Was this an accident or chance? There is always a cause. What was the cause in this case? Because in this incarnation that boy got in touch with what he had acquired in the past. The present is an effect only.

> "Our deeds still travel with us from afar,
> And what we have been makes us what we are."

The present is a link in this infinite chain of evolution. That boy was a mathematician in his past incarnation and in this incarnation he began again where he left in the past. And then we have other proofs.

Krishna said: "Oh, Arjuna, both you and I had many births and deaths before this incarnation. I can remember them all—you don't."

Krishna had the power of introspection and could produce the proper adjustment of impressions at will and see through them all, but Arjuna, being not a *Yogi,* did not possess that power. If you are curious to know about the past you can do so, but it will be a waste of time and energy. It is best that we don't know it. Who knows what we were; we might have been murderers or thieves; but there is not the slightest doubt that we existed before. The present is nothing but the consequence of the past. Buddha could remember five hundred previous incarnations. He was a believer in reincarnation and he never believed or claimed that he came from God to save man. On the contrary, he taught that he came from a lower to a higher level, like all others.

There is not the slightest doubt as to the existence, or the continuity, of the individuality in the future.

Evolution is a modern theory in the Western World. Charles Darwin discovered it and, to some extent, substantiated it, but he did not spiritually demonstrate it. He explained only the evolution of species, or the physical change from a lower to a higher level. But the real explanation of evolution you will find in Kapila's and Patanjali's philosophy.

"When a farmer waters his farm he removes the obstacles from the channels of the water and the water flows by its own force. He can't create the force in the water. Even so the soul that exists in all beings, by its natural impulse to be more powerful, more happy and

more free, takes these bodies—it passes from a less to a more efficient and perfect body." This is the process of the evolution of the spirit.

Evolution, thus, is the process, and reincarnation the purpose. The soul fulfills all its purposes of life through reincarnation.

Then, existence after death: If we can establish that life existed before birth, it is easy to establish that it exists also after death. If we can scientifically demonstrate that this present life has not come from nothing, but from a past existence, then the natural conclusion is that it will continue to exist in the future as a natural sequence of the present. There is again the spiritualistic opinion about future existence. I myself do not share the opinion of the so-called spiritualists in regard to the future existence. The spiritualists believe only in one term of life or one incarnation. But one term of life is not long enough for the soul to work out all the effects of *Karma*, and then our sense of justice is not satisfied with this theory. Those people believe that God is our creator and that He is a just and impartial and compassionate God. Why does He not give us all the same equal opportunities if we are created only for one term of life and by a loving, just and wise God? Neither the theological nor the spiritualistic belief as to the existence of the soul here, heretofore and hereafter is logical and rational. It satisfies neither reason nor compassion.

There is no death. Only ignorant people are afraid of

death. Shakespeare once said: "The coward dies a hundred times before his death, but the wise man dies only once." In this incarnation death can come only once. I can never meet death, so, why should I be afraid of death? While death is, I am not; and while I am, death is not. So, if we can never meet death why should we be afraid of it? The more we fear death, the more fearful it becomes.

When we attain to a realization of *Brahman,* then and then alone can we say as Paul did: "Oh death! where is thy sting, oh grave! where is thy victory?"