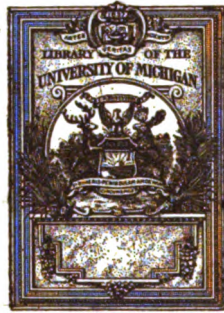
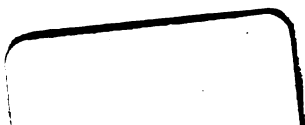


Message of the East

Cohasset (Mass.).
Vedanta Centre



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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES."—Rig-Veda

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THE MESSAGE OF THE EAST

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

Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East"

Tyndall.

VOL. V.

JANUARY, 1916.

No. 1

SELF-CONQUEST.

By Swami Paramananda.

Once a General approached Lord Buddha and addressed Him thus: "There is one doubt which still lingers in my mind, O Blessed One, and that is concerning duty. I am a soldier. I am appointed by the king to enforce his laws and wage his wars. The Blessed One who teaches kindness and compassion to all living beings, does He permit the punishment of the criminal? Does He declare that it is wrong to go to war for the protection of our homes, our wives, children and property? Does He teach the doctrine of complete self-surrender, so that I should suffer the evil-doer to do what he pleases and yield submissively to him who would take away violently what is my own? Does the Blessed One maintain that warfare waged for a righteous cause should be abandoned?" To this Buddha replied: "He who deserves punishment must be punished, and he who is worthy of reward must be rewarded; yet at the same time the Teaching is that non-injury, love and kindness to all living beings must be observed. These injunctions are not contradictory. One should be loving and kind; yet one should recognize that the criminal must be punished for the crimes he has committed. His suffering comes not through the ill-will of the judge, but on account of his evil

doing. His own acts have brought misfortune upon him. Therefore let him not harbor thoughts of hatred in his heart; let him consider that this is the fruit of his own action; as soon as he will understand that, the punishment will purify his soul and he will no longer lament his fate, but will rejoice in it."

The Blessed One then continued: "Warfare in which man tries to slay his brother is lamentable, but those who go to war in a righteous cause, after exhausting all means to preserve the peace, are not blameworthy. He should be blamed who is the cause of the war. Struggle there must be in this life, for all life is a struggle of some kind. He who struggles in the interest of self — that he may be great or powerful or rich or famous — will have no reward; but he who struggles for righteousness and for Truth will have great reward, for even his defeat will be a victory." Then Lord Buddha, addressing the General, said: "O General, he who goes to battle, even though it be in a righteous cause, must be prepared to be slain by his enemies, for that is the destiny of warriors; and should this fate overtake him, he has no reason for complaint. But he who is victorious should remember that all earthly things are fleeting and transitory. Whatever his success, however great it may be, the wheel of life may turn again and bring him down to the dust. If, however, he is moderate; if, extinguishing all hatred from his heart, he lifts his down-trodden enemy up and says: 'Come now, let us have peace and be brothers;' he will gain not mere transitory success, but a true victory, the fruit of which will remain forever. Great is success, O General; but he who has conquered self is a greater victor. The doctrine of the conquest of self is not taught to destroy the souls of men, but to preserve them. He who has conquered self is more fit to live and to gain

victories than he who is the slave of self. He whose mind is free from all delusion regarding the self, he will stand and not fall in the battle of life."

Christ says: "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his own soul?" The conquest which any human being seeks in the external world is insignificant in comparison with that which lies within his own self; and until he has conquered his inner kingdom, all outer conquests must be fleeting and uncertain, for his own unwise actions may at any moment cause his ruin. Even though the world may regard him as a conqueror, even though he may consider himself invincible, he is not a conqueror in the spiritual sense so long as he is willing to give his soul life in exchange for any material advantage. He may gain the whole world, but it will profit him nothing. In all the lofty spiritual messages of the great teachers one ideal stands out above all others, — that each one must rouse himself and bring out what is best in him. He must learn to stand up and hold himself above nature, for a man who constantly obeys nature like a bond slave gradually loses the power of independent action, and life sooner or later must prove joyless and burdensome to him.

The tendency of the average mind is out-going. All its ambitions and interests are directed towards external things; but however much it may gain materially, there is always something lacking to make its happiness complete. Take, for example, the life of Alexander the Great. The world has rarely seen such a conqueror, yet within him there remained something unconquered and this often tormented him when there was no outward cause for unhappiness. Such is the universal experience. Should we not try therefore to acquire something more satisfying? Should we be content

to lead a life of slavery, obeying the impulses of our physical nature? This question must eventually arise within every heart; no one can evade it. Each one must face and answer it. It is the starting-point of all religion.

As we are now, we have very little control over ourselves; even this body which we call ours refuses to obey us and we are constantly driven hither and thither by the undisciplined forces of our nature. But one who has perfect control over the body is not made restless by his physical energies; instead of distracting him, they serve to bring him serenity and freedom, for they become constructive, not destructive elements in his evolution. The Lord Krishna declares in the Gita: "He indeed is a truly happy man who can withstand the impulse of greed, lust or anger even before he is separated from this body." And this represents a greater manifestation of power than when we make another person obey us. The man who desires to rule must begin by ruling his own self. He must prove that he is the master in his own dwelling-house. Instead of allowing his physical organism to dictate his course of action, he must make every part of his body subordinate to his will.

We all have a certain amount of power within us; but when this power is dissipated or ungoverned, it brings an unhealthy condition of mind and body. Disease more often comes from misdirection of the life-force than from lack of it. We allow ourselves to fall into a negative state and gradually hypnotize ourselves into the belief that we are without power or will. But the Great Ones constantly remind us that if man is to attain his freedom, he must awaken and raise himself by his own self; for his own self is his true friend and his own self can be as much his enemy as an external foe. Therefore they tell us: Let no one lose hold of himself, but let each one lift himself, for who else

can save him? Even a Divine Incarnation cannot save one who is without the will to be saved and devoid of the energy necessary to follow His example and precepts. A certain degree of self-reliance or faith in our higher Self is essential for our spiritual regeneration. Each soul is inherently divine, for it has within it that which is part of the Infinite. Why should we not exert ourselves and seek to find That? Why should we let our mind remain in a negative state and believe only in the forces which are working on the surface? No one can ever attain the supreme goal until he has become conscious of his higher Self. Man seems like a double being. There is one man, — the eating, drinking, sleeping man, the man of physical limitations: this man has only a little power and little capacity. And there is another man dwelling within, who has greater capacity, greater power, who is all-wise, all-loving. It is this man whom we want to awaken. The surface being, who constantly identifies himself with physical conditions and makes himself believe that he has no power to conquer, to know, to overcome obstacles — that man must be dropped. Nor does this mean self-torture or self-annihilation, it means rising above limitations. It is not that the physical man must be destroyed; not so; but the causes of those lower impulses in us, which lead us to hate or strike in anger or do any unworthy act, must be rooted out. This is not achieved by destroying our eyes, ears or any organ by which we may perform evil deeds. We must go behind the sense organs to find the real cause of evil in us. The senses are merely instruments and when properly controlled, they become powerful aids towards our spiritual advancement. "Through the practice of austerity, man may deaden the feeling of the senses, but longing still lingers in the heart; all longings drop off, when one has attained the Highest."

The little man, the man who sorrows, who grieves, who feels constantly that he is a helpless mortal, that man must expand and gain another vision by which he can realize his freedom. The Upanishads give a very beautiful illustration showing the relation between the lower man and the Higher Self. They are like unto two birds sitting on the same tree of life. One hops from branch to branch trying to gratify his desire by tasting the different fruits of the tree; the other sits calm, majestic and free from desire. As the first bird moves about tasting the sweet and bitter fruits and experiencing pleasure or disappointment, joy or sorrow, he suddenly beholds that other bird of like plumage sitting serene and ever-conscious of his true nature. As he gazes at it, his delusions fall away from him and he realizes his oneness with that higher being. Until man becomes master of his lower nature, he can never gain that lofty vision which sets him free; therefore he must rise step by step until he attains it. He must deal first with what is nearest and most definite, his physical body. He must see how far he can make this body obey him, — his hands, feet and all his senses. Let him next try to make his mind obedient to him. Let him subdue both body and mind and make them instruments in his hand to work out his freedom.

This is how we must begin in our conquest of self. We must watch over our bodily activities and strive to avoid all unnecessary expenditure of energy. With every one there are certain automatic movements of the hands, feet, or other members of the physical organism which continue even when we think that we are lying or sitting still. These should be checked, as they represent a waste of life-force. The Yogis overcome this habit by the systematic practice of *Asanam* or posture, learning to relax every muscle and then training the body to remain motionless in some fixed position.

This enables them to conserve their energies and also prepares them for higher spiritual pursuits. Another cause of waste lies in the unwise use we make of our vital energies. Needless talking is one of the most usual forms of this waste and often results in nervous exhaustion. Uneven and impulsive use of our forces, leading to extremes of activity and inactivity, is another. This must be overcome by steadfast practice of moderation or balance in all our bodily habits, even the most insignificant ones. We must exercise conscious control in our eating, drinking, talking, walking, sleeping, in our work and recreation. This will enable us eventually to gather up our bodily forces which are now being dissipated through lack of proper control and direction and unite them into one strong whole.

Next our mental forces, which at present run hither and thither unrestrained, must be brought into subjection. As the first step in this task we must try to cultivate the faculty of discrimination. We must not follow blindly every impulse that rises in our mind, but we must learn to reflect and to distinguish between what is fleeting and what is lasting, what is essential and what is non-essential, between what is pleasing to our bodily appetites and what is wholesome for our soul. The next step is to keep our mind fixed on the path chosen by our discriminative faculty. Thus firmly holding our thought develops in us the power of concentration, without which we can never hope to gain victory over our lower nature. This may seem a difficult task, but it is possible to every human being who strives with determined will and perseverance. From the very outset of our spiritual life we must root out the negative thought that we cannot do anything. Once for all we must shake off this notion and learn to believe that we can do even what seems impossible — not in any spirit of arrogance,

however, thinking that we can do because we possess individual power, but because we are part of God, because God dwells within us and all things are possible unto Him. This should be our constant thought, until we gain a hold over our little self and put down our lower propensities which veil the true vision of our higher nature.

Christ, Buddha and other Illumined Souls are often called Masters. Why? Because they conquered in themselves that which must be overcome, that which is the source of all fear, jealousy, hatred and ignorance. It is because they thus conquered that they are Masters. And being masters of themselves they alone can be masters of men. If we wish to attain this state of mastery we must make our own self obedient to our will. It is not an arrogant man or a man with strong muscles who can expect to gain freedom, but a man who reflects, a man who governs his appetites, a man who lives in moderation, a man who has power to forgive, to love even his enemies, for he is the stronger man. The power of resistance is good, but the power of non-resistance is higher. As long as we have the feeling that someone is attacking us, that a man is our enemy, we must protect our interests. But there may come a time when, through the expansion of our nature, such feelings will disappear and we shall know that nothing can touch us. One may strike us or speak angry words, but our understanding will place us so far above the blow or the insult that no impulse to retaliate will rise in us. And this is called non-resistance. When our lower nature no longer asserts itself in us, whatever may be the provocation, then self-conquest is complete.

This is indeed the loftiest thing man can accomplish; for then his kingdom is not confined to a little plot of land, but he carries his kingdom wherever he goes. Always is

he the master. No external condition can disturb him, therefore he lives in eternal peace and happiness. So long as our own thoughts, ambitions and unsatisfied desires haunt us and make us restless, we know that we cannot find either freedom or peace, even by going into the jungle. Self-conquest alone will give us that for which all men are seeking. Let us then lay hold on the sword of wisdom and the shield of perseverance, that we may fight with undaunted courage and gain victory over our only enemy, the self.

SELECTION FROM THE MAHABHARATA.

Translated from the Sanskrit.

[NOTE.—The Mahabharata is one of the two great Sacred Epics of India and is supposed to have been composed about 1400 B. C. It contains two hundred and twenty thousand lines, the English translation of which fills twenty-six volumes. The title means "Great India," and it deals chiefly with the prolonged conflict between the royal families of the Kurus and the Panchalas. Pandu was the king of the Kurus and on his death a brother, Dhritarashtra, with his queen Gandhari, ascended the throne. Dissension at once arose between the five sons of Pandu and the hundred sons of Dhritarashtra. Yudishthira, the eldest of Pandu's sons, was noted for his righteousness and purity; the second son, Bhima, was so mighty of stature that he could uproot a tree and use it as a staff; Arjuna, the third brother, was the foremost archer of India. Among Dhritarashtra's sons, Duryodhana was the leader and because of his father's blindness had been made ruler. Jealous of his cousins' greater merit and glory, he made various malicious attempts to destroy them and at last succeeded in exiling them to the forest for thirteen years. When the term of banishment was

over, the five Pandava brothers returned and asked for a small portion of their kingdom. Duryodhana refused. Sri Krishna and all the wise men of the court did their utmost to dissuade him from his mad course; and the king, as we see in the following passage, at last appealed to his heroic wife, Gandhari, to try to save their son from ruin.]

Hearing the words of Krishna, King Dhritarashtra lost no time in addressing Vidura, who was conversant with all the dictates of virtue. And the king said: "Go, O child, unto Gandhari, possessed of great wisdom and foresight, and bring her hither! With her I will entreat our wicked-hearted son! If she can pacify his evil mind, we may yet be able to act according to the words of our friend Krishna! It may be that in speaking words of peace, she may still succeed in pointing out the right path to this foolish one, afflicted by avarice and having wicked allies. If she can avert this great and dreadful calamity about to be occasioned by Duryodhana, it will then conduce to the attainment and preservation of happiness and peace for ever and ever." Hearing these words of the king, Vidura, at Dhritarashtra's command, brought thither Gandhari possessed of great foresight. And Dhritarashtra then addressed Gandhari and said: "Behold, O Gandhari, this thy son of wicked soul, transgressing all my commands, is about to sacrifice both kingdom and life in consequence of his lust of sovereignty! Of wicked soul and little understanding, he hath like one of uncultivated mind left the court with his sinful counsellors, disregarding his superiors and setting at naught the words of his well-wishers."

Hearing these words of her husband, that princess of great fame, Gandhari, desirous of what was highly beneficial, spoke these words: "Bring hither, without loss of time, that kingdom-coveting and sick son of mine. He that

is of uncultivated heart and sacrificeth both virtue and profit, doth not deserve to govern a kingdom. . . Kshattri then, at Dhritarashtra's command, and his mother's also, once more caused the vindictive Duryodhana to enter the court. Expectant of his mother's words, the prince re-entered the court with eyes red as copper from wrath and glistening like those of a snake. Beholding her son, who was treading in a wrong path, Gandhari rebuked him severely and spoke these words to bring about peace:

“O Duryodhana, dear son, attend to these words of mine that are beneficial to thee as also to all thy followers, words that thou art competent to obey and that will conduce to thy happiness! Duryodhana, obey thou the words of thy well-wishers, those words which that best of the Bharatas — thy father — and Bhishma and Drona and Kripa and Kshattri have spoken! If thou makest peace, thou wilt by that render homage to Bhishma, to thy father, to me and to all thy well-wishers, with Drona at their head! Nobody, O best of the Bharatas, succeedeth by his own desire alone in acquiring and keeping or enjoying a kingdom! One that hath not his senses under control cannot enjoy sovereignty for any length of time! He that hath his soul under control and is endued with great intelligence, he only can rule a kingdom! Lust and wrath wean away a man from his possessions and enjoyments. Conquering these foes first, a king bringeth the earth under his subjection! Sovereignty over men is a great thing. Those that are of wicked souls may easily desire to win a kingdom, but they are not competent to retain a kingdom when won. . . . He that desireth to obtain extensive empire must bind his senses to both profit and virtue; for if the senses are restrained, the intelligence increaseth as fire increaseth when fed with fuel. If not controlled, these can even slay their possessor

like unbroken and furious horses capable of killing an unskillful driver.

“One that seeketh to conquer his counsellors without conquering his own self, and to conquer his foes without conquering his counsellors, is soon vanquished himself and ruined. He who conquereth his own self first, taking it for a foe, will not seek in vain to conquer his counsellors and enemies afterwards. Prosperity favoreth greatly that person who hath conquered his senses and his counsellors, who inflicteth punishment on transgressors, who acteth after deliberation and who is possessed of wisdom. Lust and wrath that dwell in the body are deprived of their strength by wisdom, like fishes ensnared in a net with close holes. That king who knoweth well how to conquer lust and wrath and avarice and boastfulness and pride, can possess the sovereignty of the whole earth. That king who is desirous of gaining wealth and virtue and vanquishing his enemies, should always be engaged in controlling his passions. Impelled by lust or by wrath, he that behaveth deceitfully toward his own kinsmen or others can never win many allies. Uniting thyself with those heroic sons of Pandu, who are well endued with great wisdom, thou canst, O son, enjoy the earth in happiness! . . . That man who is not obedient to the wishes of wise and learned friends, always seeking his prosperity, only gladdeneth his enemies.

“O son, there is no good in battle, no virtue, no profit! How can it bring happiness then? Even victory is not always certain. Do not set thy heart, therefore, on battle! . . . Give unto the sons of Pandu what is their due, O chaster of thy foes! If thou wishest to enjoy with thy counsellors even half the empire, let their share then be given unto them! Half the empire is sufficient to yield the means of support unto thee and thy counsellors! By acting ac-

ording to the words of thy well-wishers, O Bharata, thou wilt win great fame! A quarrel with the sons of Pandu, who are all endued with virtue, who have their souls under complete control, who are possessed of great intelligence and have conquered their passions, will only deprive thee of thy great prosperity! Dispelling the wrath of all thy well-wishers, rule thou thy kingdom as becometh thee. O mighty of Bharata's race, give unto the sons of Pandu the share that belongeth to them! Persecution of the sons of Pandu for full thirteen years hath been enough. Quench now that fire within thee which hath been fanned by lust and wrath. Thou that covetest the wealth of the Pandavas art not a match for them. It is never seen in this world that men acquire wealth by avarice, O son. Give up thy avarice then and desist."

AWAKE, ARISE!

Fragment of Poem by Swami Vivekananda.

Then speak, O Love!

Before thy gentle voice serene, behold how
 Visions melt, and fold on fold of dreams
 Departs to void, till Truth and Truth alone
 In all its glory shines.

And tell the world:

Awake, arise, and dream no more!
 This is the land of dreams, where Karma
 Weaves unthreaded garlands with our thoughts,
 Of flowers sweet or noxious, and none
 Has root or stem, being born in naught, which
 The softest breath of Truth drives back to
 Primal nothingness. Be bold and face
 The Truth! Be one with it! Let Visions cease.
 Or if you cannot, dream then truer dreams,
 Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

RAJA-YOGA.*By S. E. Waldo.*

Raja-Yoga is divided into eight principal steps and for that reason is often called the "Eight-fold" Yoga. It requires to be closely followed and regularly practised, and it promises those who are faithful and persevering that the goal will surely be reached. When the power of complete concentration has been gained, and when this is joined to the highest form of meditation, the result is what is called *Samadhi* or superconsciousness. This philosophy teaches that there are three stages, one above another, in what we ordinarily know as consciousness — the sub-conscious, usually called instinct; the conscious; and the super-conscious. The range of consciousness is very limited even on the physical plane. Mr. Edison once called attention to this fact in a published interview. Speaking of the small range of vibrations that the human being can perceive as sound and color, he said that between the highest number of vibrations that can be heard and the lowest number that can be seen, is an immense range of several hundred thousand about which we know absolutely nothing. In the same way, all those vibrations which number less per second than in the lowest sound audible to human ears, and all those greater in number per second than the highest number visible to human eyes as color, are entirely beyond our knowledge. Hence there is a whole undiscovered universe right in our very midst and possibly far more wonderful and beautiful than the one we know. This is no metaphysical dream, but a sober, scientific deduction from known facts.

The psychology upon which Raja-Yoga rests, claims that all that today is called instinct, as well as all sub-conscious action in our bodies, comes from what was originally the effect of conscious action. This action, having

been repeated and repeated until it ceased to require conscious direction, became as it were automatic. Indian psychology even goes farther and declares that by proper means and persistent effort all these sub-conscious actions may again be made conscious actions. Then this psychology posits a third stage beyond and above consciousness proper. These three stages, it says, differ from one another only in degree and grow naturally out of one another. They are like the three degrees in the vibrations we call light. When light waves are too slow, we cannot see them and we say it is darkness; when they are too swift, the light becomes too intense to be visible and again we say it is darkness; yet the one unseen stage of vibration is not like the other, save in its effect on us. These vibrations which are too rapid to affect our vision, cannot occupy the same place in the scale as those which are too slow for us to see; in like manner, the super-conscious state is not like the sub-conscious, it is not the state of the stone and the mineral, but something above the highest conceivable stage of what we call consciousness.

Naturally there can be in language no words to describe this state in any way; nor can we imagine it, because imagination, or the faculty of imagining, is itself confined to experience. We may combine the forms of our experience in the wildest and the most impossible ways, but the resulting images will still consist merely of variations of what we have seen and known. There have been, in all ages and in all lands, men who have claimed to have reached this super-conscious plane; and their testimony about it agrees in a remarkable manner, considering the wide differences of race and creed and intellectual development which separated them. On one point all agree, and that is that there is something to be reached by the human mind higher than

any material perception and higher than even mind itself. What that something shall be called is not a matter of perfect agreement, but that it is bliss and life supreme all admit. The Hindu Rishis and sages of the dimmest antiquity tell of this state. Buddha reached it and called it "Enlightenment," "Nirvana," "the sum of all delights." The Mohammedan Sufis attained it; the Christian mystics, ancient and modern, also reached it; and from one and all the testimony concerning it unanimously claims that it is a state of transcendent happiness.

If then we believe that there is such a state, the next question is, do we wish to gain it? If we do, are we sufficiently desirous of reaching it to pay the price of attainment? All things desirable have to be paid for and the most desirable of all has perhaps the highest price. No one can give that transcendent happiness to us. Each must win it for himself and must pay for it with the concentrated effort of earnest purpose and devoted endeavor. For some the task may be shorter than for others, but for none is it easy and by none is it lightly to be entered upon.

The practice of Raja-Yoga begins with certain physical trainings, from which it rises to mental control. A rigid system of morality of the highest order has to be strictly adhered to. All the Christian virtues in their loftiest form are requisite, while added to even these are some that are not usually inculcated by any system of Western ethics. There is no royal road to success. We are put, as it were, at the foot of a tremendous staircase and we must climb it step by step to reach the top. There are no elevators in Raja-Yoga. If it be objected that the task is too difficult, it can be said that there are other ways for divine realization less arduous and equally sure. Only those who find this method preferable need choose it. There are some

natures to whom difficulties are but added incentives, and to such Raja-Yoga offers a field worthy of their efforts. To strong, brave spirits who are willing to subject the body to the mind, to forego mere physical gratification for the pleasures of mental investigation and conquest, who are capable of perseverance in the face of any discouragement, and who see in the goal before them that which more than all else is to be desired: to such Raja-Yoga appeals in the most forcible manner, offering as it does an explicit method of procedure, a method which has been verified many times by its followers and which tells those who undertake it: "All that has been done can be done again; what any man ever accomplished, that another man can also do."

There is no miracle and no mystery. The road is clearly marked out, and even though perhaps steep and difficult, it leads surely to the mountain top, to that grand realization which is the goal of Raja-Yoga. It is a great mistake to suppose that Raja-Yoga is in any way a "Secret Doctrine." It most emphatically is not and was never intended to be such. In India, where it seems to have been known and taught for over 4000 years, it did in the process of time fall into the hands of those who, to serve their own selfish ends, strove to make a mystery of it. In doing this they injured the system itself, by incorporating into it many new ideas that lessened its dignity and simplicity, thus bringing discredit on the whole system. It is now being freed from these accretions and is being presented again in its original purity. The teachings of Patanjali are studied instead of the later commentaries, which in many instances confuse and mislead more than explain. The Aphorisms of Patanjali have been several times translated into English and are well known to all students of Oriental Philosophy. Though it might appear that some of the re-

sults claimed in these aphorisms are super-natural, it must be clearly understood from the outset that the Yogi denies all possibility of such a thing. He maintains that there is no super-natural. There are gross manifestations with which we are all familiar; then there are finer manifestations known only to special students; and beyond even these are still finer, subtler manifestations, to perceive which it is necessary to acquire suitably subtle powers of perception.

Raja-Yoga is designed to cultivate these subtle powers of perception, and to enable us to use them in the study of things beyond the reach of our senses as ordinarily developed. All this, however, is perfectly natural and in no way occult or mysterious. It has become a fashion to decry certain studies as being "occult"; as if, on that account, they were dangerous or wicked. Occult simply means hidden or concealed, so that really everything we do not know is occult for us; but if we never sought to penetrate into any of the hidden subjects and in that way to learn to understand them, all progress would soon be at a standstill. It is one of the curious sides of human nature that it resents new ideas as a positive insult and injury. History is full of instances of the sad fate that often awaits the man who dares to bring forward a new theory which contradicts generally-received opinions. Galileo suffered for presuming to assert that the earth moved, and it is only because the days of the Inquisition are over that the prophets of the evolution theory have escaped persecution. Even in this twentieth century of the Christian era it is still possible to find people who do not believe in evolution.

Raja-Yoga has especially to do with the meditative side of religion. It strengthens the will by continuous and persevering drill. It cultivates the imagination, which is really a very important faculty and one which ought to be made

useful to man. All prophets, poets, inventors and discoverers have been men of great imagination. It spurs men to put forth tremendous efforts to realize the pictures presented by the imagination. The thing that is necessary is to train this faculty, instead of letting it run wild, as is often the case with most people. Only the mind can serve as the instrument with which to analyze itself. The mental powers, when properly guided and directed inward upon the mind itself, will illumine its workings and enable us to comprehend them. The next step is to control these powers so that we can direct them as we will. The mind will then become like a mighty searchlight in our hands, the rays from which we may throw where we desire and so bring all things internal under minute observation. All the knowledge in the world has been gained by mental concentration. It is the only key which unlocks nature's secrets.

Raja-Yoga is designed to teach us how to attain the basis of belief, how to reach the only real religion. Every human being has the right and the ability to seek and to realize true religion; and if he perseveres in the search, he must succeed. The best help we can have here is strength. We must exercise our reason and judgment and have unbounded faith and hope. Then with energy and steady practice and calm composure we shall surely reach the goal; we shall surely realize our oneness with the Divine, which is our real Self. What is there in religion higher or truer than this Divine Realization?

The soiled mirror never reflects the rays of the sun, and the impure and unclean in heart who are subject to *Maya* (selfishness and ignorance) never perceive the glory of the Lord. But the pure in heart see the Lord as the clear mirror reflects the sun. Be holy, then. —*Sri Ramakrishna.*

THE STORY OF DHRUWA.

From the Sacred Writings of India.

Suniti was the wife of an ancient Indian king, but being childless she persuaded the king to take another queen, who bore him a son to whom the throne was promised; while Suniti, through the urgent insistence of the younger queen, was exiled to a hermitage in the forest. One day the king, hunting in this same forest, came unexpectedly upon her retreat; and beholding again her pure illumined face, full still of love for him, he took her once more into his heart and of this passionate reunion was born the child Dhruwa. Hot jealousy now burned in the mind of the younger queen and so menaced the safety of the new-born and lawful heir to the throne, that the king, grown anxious, sent both mother and child far away to live in a secluded cottage on the edge of a dense forest. Here the little boy grew, knowing naught of the outside world save the faint echo brought perchance by a wandering holy man on his way through the forest to some sacred shrine. Peace hung over the cottage like a cooling shadow and God seemed very near.

The folding and unfolding of the great white blossoms on the lotus pond at sunrise and at sunset, the rustling of the night wind through the overhanging palm trees, the singing of the thrush, or the roar of the lion in the far depths of the jungle: these were the sights and sounds of Dhruwa's little world. And so he lived for seven quiet years close to the heart of his mother, whose whole life had woven itself in and out around the life of her beloved son. Then one day, coming suddenly to her, he asked: "Where is my father, Mataji (revered Mother)?" And she told him of the distant court where the king lived and ruled.

"Could I not go to him, Mother?" he asked again.

"Yes, my child," the queen answered, but a tremor of

undefined apprehension shot through her. "Yes, dearest little one, you may go. But not today. Tomorrow."

And on the morrow Dhruwa set out with a solitary guard to make his way to the distant capital. Through villages and forest lands he went, along hot stretches of open road, past temples and lotus-covered temple tanks, but scarcely his eye rested on all these new pictures, for his thought was bounding ahead to join the unknown father at the journey's end. At last he arrived at the palace gates and, running past guards and courtiers, he flew to the audience chamber and threw himself into his father's arms. The king was overjoyed. During all the seven years he had never ceased to yearn for his exiled son and now the child had come of his own accord to lay his love and devotion at his feet. Fondly he caressed and questioned him. But as he did so, that younger queen, mother of the falsely chosen heir, entered the hall. With angry disdain she glanced at the little boy and then, reminding the king of his early promise, she spoke such bitter threats that the king, affrighted, put down the child as if he feared the curse might blight him. Dhruwa looked full at his father, then stooping he touched the king's feet, kissed the steps of the throne, beckoned to his guard and silently went out.

The journey home seemed long and weary. Often he asked the guard to carry him; a great sorrow weighted his little limbs and bore down upon his aching heart. At last he reached the cottage and lifting the lath-strung curtain, stood before his mother. Hour after hour she had watched, praying for the safety of her son. He was here and her heart leaped. Yet what had happened? A shadow had fallen on the happy laughing face. The child was gone and a grave thoughtful boy had come back to her. Joyfully she fed him the fruits and cakes made ready for him.

When he had eaten, she asked him of his journey and he told her all that had taken place. A moment of sad silence followed; then lifting sorrowful eyes to her face, he asked:

“Mother, is there anyone stronger than my father?”

“Yes, my son,” she answered tenderly, “the Lotus-eyed One.”

“Where does He dwell?” the child asked eagerly.

“Far, far away,” she answered vaguely, as the vision of the great Divine Shepherd, Krishna, rose before her. “There in the forest where the wild creatures live, there dwells the Lotus-Eyed One.”

Dhruwa heard in silence. A sense of awe welled up in his child heart. Then out of the depths of his being sounded a voice, calling “Come to Me!” “Come to Me!” Was it the voice of the Lotus-Eyed? In the stillness of the night the call grew louder, louder, until the boy could bear it no longer. Rising from his bed, he crept to the side of his sleeping mother. “Unto Thee, O Lotus-Eyed, I give her,” he murmured with clasped hands and prayerful lips. Then out into the darkness he passed and on into the denser darkness of the jungle.

Suddenly there stood before him a great creature with hungry eyes and panting breath. “Are you the Lotus-Eyed?” asked Dhruwa without fear and the lion slunk away ashamed. Then came a dark furry thing with heavy tread. “Are you the Lotus-Eyed One?” again asked the child, and the bear crept back into the bush. Still the voice sounded: “Come to Me! Come to Me!” And Dhruwa hurried on. Then out from the tangle of the jungle appeared a holy man, Narada himself, who, gently laying his hand on the eager little head, said: “Thou seekest the Lotus-Eyed, my child? I will show thee where and how to find Him. Come, little one, sit here beneath this tree, clasp thy hands thus

and close thine eyes. Repeat now the Lord's Name. If thou canst fix thy whole mind and call with thy whole heart on Him, surely wilt thou find the Lotus-Eyed!"

In humble obedience Dhruwa took his seat as he was told and began to repeat the sacred Name. No muscle moved, the senses were at rest, only the holy sound echoed through his being. Like rising waves it swept over his awakening consciousness, carrying him further and further inward, to that secret place where in every heart dwells the Lord, the pure Source of Bliss Eternal and Eternal Strength. There he found the Lotus-Eyed.

REPORTS.

The Christmastide was marked by various gatherings and services at the Vedanta Centre of Boston. On Christmas Eve the house was brightly illuminated, with rows of candles in all the lower windows and in the chief window on the corner of the Parkway an altar to the Christ Child and the Virgin, which was decorated with flowers and plants and many burning candles. The Chapel and Library were also hung in green garlands and filled with blooming plants. At eight o'clock a special service was held consisting of music, meditation and an address by Swami Paramananda on the true lesson of Christmas. At its close, all those present gathered in the Library, where each was given a flower and some sweetmeats. On the following afternoon there was a Christmas tree in the Vedanta Community House, to which a number of children and members of the Centre were invited. Presents were distributed and a spirit of true joy and cheer pervaded the atmosphere.

At the regular Service on Sunday morning the Swami delivered a lecture on "Christ the Redeemer," which closed his course on the Great Saviours. As in all previous lectures

he brought out in clear relief the fundamental unity in the teachings of all the Divine Incarnations.

* * *

At the invitation of the Rev. E. M. Cosgrove, Swami Paramananda delivered a lecture before the Second Unitarian Church of Somerville on Sunday evening, December 19th. His subject was "The Message of India to the West" and all present showed the keenest appreciation of what the Swami had to tell them regarding the great religious teaching of the Indo-Aryans. Many questions showing both interest and sympathy were asked at the close of the lecture. On the following Sunday evening Sister Devamata spoke in the same church on "Woman in India."

* * *

The Vedanta Centre of Boston will celebrate its seventh Anniversary on Wednesday evening, January 5th, at 8 o'clock. All friends of the work are cordially invited to be present.

* * *

Swami Prakashananda has taken charge of The Vedanta Society of San Francisco and has begun to hold regular Sunday meetings and the usual week-day classes. It is expected that the work will grow rapidly under his direction.

* * * *

A Relief Fund for the sufferers in India from flood and famine has been started by the Boston Vedanta Centre. Reports published in previous numbers of the Message have told of the noble and tireless work which the Ramakrishna Mission has been conducting for many months past in their effort to relieve the terrible distress prevailing in certain districts of Bengal. All those desiring to help in this work of love may send their offerings to the Centre. Even a small amount may save the life of a starving child or mother. We beg to thank those who have already contributed.

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“TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES.”—*Rig-Veda*

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

Ezekiel.

"Light shall come again from the East"

Tyndall.

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APRIL, 1916

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REINCARNATION.

By S. E. Waldo.

Before entering upon the subject of reincarnation itself, there are a few points which should be made clear. To begin with, reincarnation is a theory or a working hypothesis and is in no way essential to the study of the more important side of the Vedanta philosophy. It is not a dogma that must be believed in order to obtain salvation. The various Yogas or methods of reaching liberation can be pursued successfully by any earnest and sincere follower without his ever having even heard of reincarnation. The *Advaita* or purely philosophical side of Vedanta throws this doctrine entirely out of the question as being at best only an explanation of the apparent, and as having no place at all in the real, which is one and not many. But most people, seeing the variety, find it difficult to grasp completely the idea that all this apparent diversity is not real and that only ignorance makes it seem so. By ignorance is meant what the Vedantists call *avidya* or lack of knowledge. Therefore, while we recognize all this variety, we naturally seek an explanation of it. Before the world today are three main hypotheses by which men endeavor to explain this universe. I take these in the sequence in which they have been held in the West. The Hindus never had a "special

creation" theory, or if they had, it was so long ago that all memory of it has been lost in the mists of antiquity. The acute Hindu intellect could not be persuaded that something ever came out of nothing. But in the West the idea of "special creation" held undisputed sway for centuries and I doubt if even yet it has been wholly abandoned. When the theory of evolution first came before the Western world, it met with violent opposition, because it threatened to destroy all religion by overthrowing the Bible account of creation. It was fought energetically by the Church as blasphemous and had it made its first appearance in the days of the Inquisition, it is easy to guess the fate that would have befallen its upholders. This theory endeavors to account for human development by heredity, and more recently by heredity plus environment. To many this explanation has seemed sufficient and some of the greatest minds of the West have accepted it as satisfactory. To many others, and some of them equally great, the evolution theory as given in Occidental science has not appeared to solve all the problems. In all the hypotheses that one is retained which will explain the greatest number of facts, so a third hypothesis from the East is beginning to gain ground in the Western world, because, while explaining all the facts that the evolution theory does, it appears to cover some ground not accounted for by that theory.

In saying this I am not claiming that the idea of reincarnation is a demonstrable fact; all I wish to show is that it is a satisfactory hypothesis or at least as satisfactory as any other, if really not more so. As may be inferred, I consider that it explains known facts more fully and in a better way than either "special creation" or heredity plus environment. In the latter theory there is no persisting entity of any kind, the deed does not return to the doer.

We are reaping, not what we ourselves sowed, but what our ancestors sowed; and we shall leave the harvest of our actions to our posterity. Now it seems to me that this is the weak spot in the Western evolutionary system as a basis for morality. We have no proof that our predecessors cared in the least about us and why should we care for our successors whom we shall never know? The utilitarian basis for ethics can only make its appeal to altruism, and while this may and does affect some of the noblest natures, it is not very influential with the masses. They demand an ethical sanction which they can understand. Why should men do good that others may reap the benefit? If my existence began when I appeared upon this planet and will end when I disappear from it, manifestly I am chiefly concerned with what happens during the span of this particular existence. Out of it I must get all I can ever know of happiness. Therefore on my idea of what constitutes happiness will my conduct depend. To so act as to extract the greatest amount of pleasure out of my life will naturally become my aim, and how can it be shown to me that if I sacrifice myself for others I shall be made happy thereby?

The theory of evolution is very ancient in the Orient and is the idea universally accepted by the Hindus; only they include in it the theory of Karma and reincarnation. These two ideas are inseparable and really complete each other. For those who believe themselves eternal beings, not born today to die tomorrow, the idea of an eternal past and an eternal future separated by an ever-changing present is the only natural one. We cannot deny either past or future if we would maintain the present; for what is the present but a ceaselessly shifting imaginary line that we draw between the past and the future? With every beginning the human mind demands a "before," and with every ending it

enquires for an "after." Those who really believe that this brief span of life on this earth comprises the whole existence of the human being have no interest in a before or an after, and to them reincarnation is a matter of no moment. Yet those very minds must see that the world does not end when they end; and I should think they would at least wonder what could be that unknown ocean into which the river of life absolutely disappears, and what the source of this endless stream of lives is that we see all around us.

The Eastern mind felt the entire inadequacy of this brief earthly sojourn to make man perfect. The sages of the Vedas arrived ages ago at the conclusion that the whole object of manifestation was to enable man to attain perfection, and they also perceived that a brief span of seventy or eighty years would not suffice to bring man to full perfection. They had accepted as an indubitable fact that man was an eternal being. The very oldest of the Vedas teach that man is immortal and must therefore eternally exist. In this they saw many wonderful differences in the conditions of existence, and not being satisfied to lay the blame of human misery on God, or even on the devil, they felt convinced that man himself must be responsible for the inequalities of earthly life. To say the least, these old sages were brave and honest in assuming the responsibility instead of putting it off on some one else. The old testament Adam begins with putting the blame first on the woman (who in turn passed it on to the serpent), thus leaving himself at the mercy of a power outside of himself and so requiring the intervention of another power to save him from the results of obeying the voice of evil. It seems to me that the system of philosophy that boldly says, "Man himself made these mistakes and man himself can correct them and free himself from their effects" is a higher one and

one that teaches self-reliant strength rather than dependent weakness.

To begin with Karma. The idea of Karma is really the idea of cause and effect carried to its fullest extent. Karma is a word that includes a great deal. It is all we do and say and feel and think; and further, it stands for that invisible something which manifests itself in what we call character. Karma also means that resulting, balanced effect of all our action which determines future existence for us. As all action must produce an effect and as effects are often too far reaching to be immediately felt, the Hindu theory of Karma supposes an endless chain of cause and effect, which produces endless births and re-births to work out the effects. Escape from this eternal sequence is only possible through transcending it by such completely unselfish action as will leave no result to return to the particular actor, who thereby becomes free from all such results and is no more bound by the law of Karma. The idea of reincarnation supplements this idea of Karma by furnishing the necessary time or means for working out the Karmic effects. If we concede that we are immortal beings, we have also to admit that we do not begin when we are born upon this earth or end when we die out of it. Next, when we look around us and see all the varying phases of life, our minds naturally ask, "Why do all these differences exist"? We are forced, in any case, to admit that there must be some cause for existing facts, for no thinking mind can be satisfied to accept a theory of blind chance. In a universe so manifestly governed by law even the grossest materialist scouts any such explanation as blind chance. Law undoubtedly governs everything we know, and the human mind is so constituted that it cannot conceive of an effect without a cause. We may differ as widely as possible as to what

that cause is, but of the fact that behind every effect stands a cause of some kind we are unable to feel any real doubt. All metaphysics is the outcome of the effort made by man to find these causes. Even in the world of physics when we push investigation to its ultimate, the metaphysical is invariably reached. Atoms are as purely metaphysical as souls, possibly more so. The physical taken alone can never explain itself but must of necessity find itself confronted by the unknowable.

Having considered Karma in its aspects of work and the results of work, we come to the idea of reincarnation. It seems to me that this idea of reincarnation would naturally grow out of a recognition of man's eternal nature. The most obvious place to search for the reason of man's being what he is here and now, would seem to be in what he was before. He is, as it were, the harvest of a previous sowing, the growth from a previous seed. This applies not only to the physical body, but to that subtle something which makes each man differ from every other man, that which we call personal identity. The vast differences we find among men cannot be entirely accounted for on the theory of heredity plus environment, nor does that theory even attempt to give any explanation of the vast differences in the condition of men that would satisfy the sense of justice inherent in human nature.

It is no more satisfying to be told that I suffer because of what my parents were than to be assured that my misery is the decree of an all-wise Creator and must therefore be right. The question in the former case then changes to: "Why was I born of those particular parents, instead of any others"? Karma provides a reasonable answer. It tells me: "You were born of those particular parents because you deserved to be; what you made yourself in a former

period exactly fitted you to be the child of such parents; you yourself made your own heredity and now you reap the fruits of your own sowing." This answer satisfies my sense of justice and leads me naturally to resolve to deserve better things another time. At first many object even to entertaining the idea that they themselves are responsible for what they are. We see this in every day life. How much easier do most of us find it to throw the blame of any particular unpleasant experience on anybody or anything rather than on our own conduct? But in the reverse case we are quite willing to claim all the credit of producing agreeable conditions. We are ready to concede that we create our own happiness and rarely think of looking round to find some one to thank for it; but when misery comes, the first thing we do is to put the blame for it on circumstances or fate or anything except our own actions. The law of Karma is the law of perfect justice; and when one has really accepted it, he ceases to blame anyone but himself. But this is not a law of blind fate, because we can change our conduct and so modify conditions. Time is in us; so if we fail to perceive the change in a day or a week or even in a life-time, it by no means follows that the law does not work.

Christianity has recognized in a limited way the idea of present action conditioning future existence, but it takes no cognizance of any past action as the explanation for the present condition. In accepting the decrees of an all-wise Creator as the reason of all existing differences, it did not need to ask for another cause; and to objections that the existing state of things showed partiality on the part of the Creator the reply was that we only thought so because we could not understand His wisdom. In making our conduct here the gauge of our future state, Christianity cuts

off one link in the chain and seeks to make that all. It has posited an endless future but it leaves out of the question a past that must by analogy be equally endless. It has somewhat illogically, it seems to me, given us an eternal existence which has a beginning, or as one might say, a stick with only one end. The circle alone is endless. It may be said to begin for the individual where he begins to recognize it, but in and of itself it must be without beginning or it could not be without end. I do not attempt to cite any authorities in the matter of Karma and reincarnation, because it is not a question of authority but one of reason. That the greater portion of humanity accept this doctrine is not to the purpose. It can only be true for me, if I accept it. If it be true, this law will govern me whether I believe in it or not. If it be not true, no matter how entirely I accept it, I shall not be under its sway. The fact of its truth or falsehood is beyond our belief about it, as that will only influence our own action. If it seems, as it does to me, the most reasonable hypothesis to explain the working of the phenomenal world, we can accept it; but as I stated before, it is not of vital importance one way or the other. The highest philosophy of the Vedanta rises entirely beyond it. When man can realize his true nature, that he is that One Existence which can have no second, he has risen beyond all variety and sees only the unity. He knows that he neither is born nor dies, that he neither comes nor goes, that he is that Eternal, Perfect, Unchangeable Reality and that all beside was but a dream. In the dream certain methods appeared to obtain, but with the vanishing of the dream all the methods and laws that apparently governed it went too and with Knowledge-Absolute all need of question or explanation has vanished for ever.

The whole object of the Vedanta philosophy is to teach

us how to transcend law and be free, so it naturally attaches but little importance to the working of law. All that we can gain from understanding it is a knowledge of the way to pass through it and beyond it. If we are strong enough to rise to this without the preliminary explanation, well and good. Most of us are so constituted that we have to learn to stand before we can run, and in learning to stand we may find these various theories useful as working hypotheses. When we are ready and able to rise beyond them, they will all slip away from us with the rest of the dream. When we can realize that we are and have always been that Freedom Absolute which is our real nature, we have no more need of theories or of work; we have reached the goal. But it behooves us ever to keep in mind the wise words of the Greek sage: "The crown of perfection belongs not to the imperfect." While we can even think of claiming anything, we have not yet realized what we are, that we are the All. Until then, we can be helped by the wider outlook given us by reincarnation. In the words of one writer upon this subject: "The great, the all-important lesson reincarnation teaches is that our powers are infinite, our opportunities eternal, and our goal god-like. Our progress is illimitable, and death but a brief rest in a wayside inn, as we journey along."

Reincarnation and Karma are inseparably connected and these two great laws, rightly and completely understood, show man that he alone is the arbiter of his destiny, that he can no longer attribute his sorrows and sufferings to a mysterious Providence, that he can no longer trust to forms and creeds, but must arouse himself and set himself to correct past errors and learn to know his true nature. Thus by his own acts he can rise on "stepping stones of his dead self to higher things," he can set his face steadfastly in the

right direction and by patient determined effort can realize that he is more than divine, that he is Divinity itself.

THE DIVINE SELF IN MAN.

Selection from the Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad.

“Yagnavalkya,” the king said, “what is the light of man?”

Yagnavalkya replied: “The sun, O King, for having the sun alone for his light, man sits, moves about, does his work, and returns.”

Janaka Vaideha said: “So indeed is it, O Yagnavalkya. But when the sun has set, what is the light of man?”

Yagnavalkya replied: “The moon indeed is his light; for having the moon alone for his light, man sits, moves about, does his work and returns.”

Janaka Vaideha said: “So indeed is it, O Yagnavalkya. But when the sun has set and the moon has set, what is the light of man?”

Yagnavalkya replied: “Fire indeed is his light; for having fire alone for his light, man sits, moves about, does his work and returns.”

Janaka Vaideha said: “So indeed is it, O Yagnavalkya. But when the sun has set and the moon has set and the fire has gone out, what is then the light of man?”

Yagnavalkya replied: “Sound indeed is his light, for having sound alone for his light, man sits, moves about, does his work, and returns. Therefore, O King, when one cannot see even one’s own hand, yet when a sound is heard, one goes towards it.”

Janaka Vaideha said: “So indeed is it, O Yagnavalkya. But when the sun has set and the moon has set and the fire has gone out and the sound is hushed, what is the light of man?”

Yagnavalkya said: "The Divine Self indeed is his light ; for having the Self alone as his light, man sits, moves about, does his work and returns. . . .

"He who dwells within all beings, whom all beings do not know, whose body all beings are, and who rules all beings within, he is thy Self, the ruler within, the immortal.

"He who dwells within the eye, whom the eye does not know, whose body the eye is and who rules the eye within, he is thy Self, the ruler within, the immortal.

"He who dwells within the mind, whom the mind does not know, whose body the mind is, and who rules the mind within, he is thy Self, the ruler within, the immortal.

"He who dwells within the seed, whom the seed does not know, whose body the seed is, and who rules the seed within, he is thy Self, the ruler within, the immortal ; unseen but seeing, unheard but hearing, unperceived but perceiving, unknown but knowing. There is no other seer but he, there is no other hearer but he, there is no other perceiver but he. This is thy Divine Self, the ruler within, the immortal."

You see many stars at night in the sky but find them not when the sun rises ; can you say that there are no stars in the heaven of day ? So, O man ! because you behold not God in the days of your ignorance, say not that there is no God.

As the water and its bubble are one : the bubble has its birth in the water, floats on the water, and ultimately is resolved into water ; so the individual ego (Jivatman) and the Supreme Spirit (Paramatman) are one and the same. The difference is in degree, the one is finite and small, the other is infinite ; the one is dependent, the other independent.

—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

MORTALITY AND IMMORTALITY.

By Sister Devamata

By a strange distorted logic the world associates mortality with life and immortality with death. So long as man is living here he is called a mortal, when he dies then he becomes immortal. Can we prove that beyond the death of this body there is something which lives and speaks to us, we seize upon that as a proof of immortality. But if the departed speaks, if he thinks, if he makes known conditions and states, he must have a body, more subtle perhaps, but still a material garment. No man speaks without a tongue, no man thinks without a mind, no man can describe states that are not connected with matter, for only matter is subject to states. To demonstrate conclusively that there is something which exists beyond our sight and hearing, beyond the dissolution of this body, is to prove, not immortality, but an extension of mortality. That which is hidden to the senses is not necessarily off the sense plane. There are ultra-violet rays which we do not see. Does that prove the spectrum immortal? Why then should man be immortal when he drops his gross body and becomes invisible to us? What assurance have we that another death may not some day destroy that subtler form and make a final end of all things? If matter is perishable here, if its states are changeable, then matter there must be perishable and its states changeable. All the messages which come to us from the other side indicate conditions similar to those we know here; therefore we are forced to admit that on this side or the other side of the veil we call death the state is a mortal one.

Yet to know that mortality persists beyond the body is an important step towards further knowledge. It is also the only one that science can hope to take so long as it

confines itself to the investigation of phenomena. In the far Vedic past, however, there were great scientists who did not limit their researches to the sweep of a telescope across the heavens or to the revelations of a test tube in the laboratory. The truths they sought lay beyond the domain of the microscope, beyond the phenomenal realm; even the finer vision of the psychic senses did not suffice them. Deeper and deeper they delved until they pierced the last crust of matter and looked upon the soul of things. Beholding that Changeless Effulgent Essence, they realized that immortality was not a question of human life or human death. It was not dependent on time, place or condition. It was the inherent nature of man, the underlying rock of his being, while mortality was only a temporary state created by his subjection to material desires. Just as a man may be enslaved by his dress, believing it to make or unmake him although actually it is not in any way a real part of his life, so is mortality a garment to which man himself lends whatever reality it may seem to possess. Immortality, however, is not another garment, as sometimes supposed. The mortal cannot "put on immortality" any more than he puts on his body when he takes off his clothing. The moment he has divested himself of his mortal dress his immortality stands revealed.

Actually the whole universe in the final analysis is deathless. All that we see is not death but change—the breaking up of a form, the falling apart of a compound. The science of Physics long ago discovered that the sum-total of matter and force in the universe remains eternally the same. Should one atom die or drop out of existence, the equilibrium would be destroyed and the entire universe would crumble. Life and death in creation mean the melting of one form into another, the gross into a subtle, the

subtle into a grosser or more visible form; but "the existent can never become non-existent" as the Gita declares, for where would it go since all that is must be existent? So is it with the human being. The soul of man cannot die because it is an integral part of the Ultimate. At some point man must touch pure being, otherwise he would not exist at all; and that point of union constitutes his soul or real Self, while this rush and whirl of matter about him is what we call life and death. He is like an eddy in a river: the water flows on and on, but the force which creates the eddy remains fixed and unchanged. So long as he walks among us wrapped in a visible form we say that he is living, when he casts off the gross body we say that he is dead. In reality, however, the subtler the material form he wears, the more living he becomes, until he frees himself from the last thin covering of matter and enters into Life Itself.

Individual evolution falls apparently into two distinct stages: the first is an evolution out of unconscious immortality into self-conscious mortality, the second is out of conscious mortality into conscious immortality. The soul or life-germ through the first period seems wholly absorbed in developing a perfect instrument for mortal expression; having achieved that, it turns round and bends all its energies towards extricating itself from its own creation. It is like a dancer who starts with a long floating scarf and by skillful pirouetting gradually winds herself in it until she can scarcely move hand or foot; then reversing her revolutions she little by little frees herself from the entrammeling folds until they drop from her hand. But why should we thus entangle ourselves? This question is only asked where it cannot be answered and it can only be answered where it is never asked, because it is a matter not of words but of unfoldment. The answer which Vedanta gives us is: Man

never has entangled himself, he merely thinks he has. In reality he is immortal at this moment, but he imagines himself a mortal because he is identifying himself with that which is not a real part of him. He believes himself to be the perishable body which houses him, whereas he is actually the imperishable dweller within.

Picture a bubble on a wave in the ocean. If it holds obstinately to the thought "I am a bubble," "I am a bubble," then inevitably it will measure its life by the duration of the bubble. Let it, on the contrary, expand to the point of thinking itself one with the wave on which it rides and its life will stretch to the length of the wave's life. But let it suddenly realize "I am one with the ocean," and a thousand times it may rise and fall but never does it become less living; there is no ebb or flow in its consciousness of existence. The same is true of man. So long as he clings to the belief "I am the body," like the bubble his life must seem fleeting. When he grows to identify himself with his thought or soul life, the measure of his existence must lengthen; but when he awakens to the supreme fact that he is one with the Infinite Ocean of Being, then he knows that his life is eternal. Yet always was he one with the Eternal; the change has been in his consciousness, not in the condition of his existence.

But what becomes of this mortal self when we realize our immortality? Where does it go? The story is told of a king's son who was stolen from the court and brought up among shepherds. He tended the flocks with his comrades and regarded himself as one of them. Then one day the king died and the ministers by diligent searching found the lad and placed him on the throne. What became of the shepherd boy when he learned that he was a king? Or where did the sheep go when a certain lion, who was born

among sheep and had acquired all the habits of a sheep, discovered by his reflection in a clear lake that he was a lion? He simply never was the sheep, he always was a lion, only he did not know it.

It is this delusive character of our present state of consciousness that has led the Vedic sages to liken human existence to a dream. Man on this plane, they say, is neither wholly awake nor sound asleep. He wanders in a twilight world between, a dream world in which reality and unreality mingle. He seems perpetually at the meeting point between the pairs of opposites—pleasure and pain, knowledge and ignorance, life and death, mortality and immortality; and the swift-flowing current of human activity buffets him back and forth between the two, unfolding within him by the very prod of circumstance the higher faculties of discrimination and choice, and an ever-growing hunger for the Real. Those indeed whose vision has broken over the boundary lines between visible and invisible and who see far behind and far ahead in the soul's Godward course, declare that this human state is the best for Divine realization. In the brute state the consciousness is too deeply buried in matter; in the heaven state it is too engrossed in enjoyment; only in this intermediate human state has the living being the most favorable conditions for spiritual attainment,—enough of joy to give him courage to go on, enough of sorrow to remind him that the heaven he seeks is not here; enough of light to allow him to push forward on his journey, enough of darkness to grant him periods of rest.

Did we utilize to the utmost our present opportunity, this one incarnation would suffice to gain liberation. But we are not eager enough. We are not yet weary enough of our mortality. We are tired of the pain, but not of the pleasure; we shrink from the dishonor, but we covet the

honor; we flee from death, but we cling to the transitory life with which it alternates; so we go on through birth after birth learning slowly and arduously the lesson of immortality. As long as there lingers in our hearts the least desire for gratification in the world of matter, we are allowed to return to satisfy it. This is all that reincarnation means,—the freedom to be a mortal through as many lives as we choose and an equal freedom to attain immortality here and now. Nor does this apply merely to this plane. The law extends on through all those planes we call heavens, which are only subtler forms of physical life; for the Lord tells us in the Bhagavad-Gita: “All states of existence from the world of the creator (the highest heaven) to this world are subject to return, but those who attain to Me, the Supreme, they have no need to be reborn.” They have discovered their indestructible nature and the true Source of their happiness, hence their journey is ended.

So long as we live mortal lives, we shall continue to be mortal and we shall have to come again and again. Every new ambition or attachment for mortal things ties us more tightly to the earth plane. Every fear of punishment, every desire for reward creates for us a new heaven or a new hell. Every effort spent in mortal advancement at the cost of our soul's welfare makes us a little more human and prolongs our human state. But how can we change our course without putting ourselves at odds with our environment and relations? This is invariably the question asked. Yet past experience does not justify it. When we ceased to be a brute and became a human being did we prove less useful to society? Why then should we fear a cataclysm when we pass from the human to the Divine? Is the child of man wiser, sweeter, mightier than the child of God? Can the limited do more than the unlimited? Can the finite outstrip

the infinite, the mortal the immortal? On the contrary, do we not classify as "Immortals" those who do most in the world? Why? Because consciously or unconsciously an element of immortality enters into all they do; they work from the depths of their being instead of from the surface; they draw from their eternal undying nature, hence what they achieve has an enduring fundamental quality which makes it live. Also whatever we do that shines has a glint of the immortal upon it. At some point our mortal nature has given way and out of our real Self a Divine ray has shot forth and glorified our work. Let even the humblest task be done with the radiance of that Light upon it and it stands a model for mankind. Or let the smallest service be rendered with that God-warmth in it and some soul has been given a fresh start on the way.

We cannot hope, however, to transform our consciousness in a day. We must acquire the habits of immortality. We must readjust our scale of values, change our standard of measurement in life. We must extend our vision by keeping our gaze fixed on the bigger things; by reminding ourselves that to our soul a thousand years are as a day and that beyond that thousand lie other countless thousands on and on in an endless Eternity of life. How quickly will the passing joys and sorrows of this small earth-existence dwindle and fade away! And if still the mortal hems us in and will not let us go, then let us gather up this little life of ours and in one complete act of self-surrender plunge with it into the great Ocean of Immortal Being, crying out: "O Thou Supreme Lord, I lay myself at Thy Feet. Behold I come clothed in such close-bound garments of mortality that I cannot free myself. Thou alone canst cut them loose. Take my body, put it in what place or state Thou wilt, but make it an instrument in Thy hand. Take this mind all

sick with mortality, heal it, purify it, and pour through it a flood of Thy Divine Wisdom. Take this heart, tear or soothe it, gratify or bereave it, do with it what Thou wilt, but only cleanse it and make it a clear channel for Thy Love Divine. Empty my whole consciousness of mortality and fill it full of radiant immortality. Grant, O Thou Tender and most Merciful Lord, that henceforth each hour of living may be a death unto myself and a resurrection unto Life Eternal hid in Thee."

ADORATION.

By Zina Barton Partridge.

Eternal Witness, I can sense
Thine essence through each breeze;
Borne from Thy presence comes it hence,
The soul of me it frees.

Eternal Witness, I can hear
Thy sweet song all about,
Until away from me has fear
Forever flown with doubt.

Eternal Witness, I can see
Thee everywhere I gaze,
Transcendant joy! forever free
From life's bewildering maze.

Eternal Witness, now I feel
Thee, deep within my heart;
Whate'er I touch I long to kneel;
There nothing is from Thee apart.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

Extract of Address by Swami Paramananda

(Delivered at the Celebration of Sri Ramakrishna's Birthday.)

We have gathered here this evening to do honor to one of India's greatest Spiritual lights; but his eminence is not due to any great learning or intellectual attainment. Sri Ramakrishna was the child of very humble parents. He was born in a remote village of Bengal and his early education, far from our idea of education, did not extend even through the Grammar School. We often think that a man cannot have breadth or largeness of vision unless he is acquainted with other minds, unless he has read much; but we find quite the opposite with Sri Ramakrishna. He did not care for learning, he gave little time to study; his passion was to know God. How to realize Him, how to help others realize Him, this was the one all-absorbing thought of his mind. In this age such a passion seems almost an insanity. Even in India it made him a conspicuous figure. His parents, however, naturally believed that he should receive proper education and sent him to the village primary school. For a time he tried to apply himself to his studies and had some lessons in reading, writing and arithmetic. But this did not last very long, for the boy Gadadhar (the childhood name of Sri Ramakrishna) began to reflect in his mind: "Will this give me the knowledge of the Ultimate?" "Shall I reach God through study?"

One day he chanced to see a Brahmin boy returning from a religious ceremony in some house, carrying as his earnings some rice, vegetables and a little money. "Is this the aim of education," he asked, "to earn a little food and money like that?" Thus he concluded that the ordinary education was only for material advancement and did not lead to the realization of Truth. "If there is anything worth

while to learn, I will learn that; but I must learn it directly from the Spirit of the Universe," he declared. This was certainly an unusual idea for a boy; but as a small child he had already had a remarkable experience. To others it had seemed like a fainting fit, but in reality, so he explained to his disciples afterwards, he had gone into the superconscious state and had realized that all was God. Later Sri Ramakrishna came to Calcutta to live with one of his brothers who was a learned scholar as well as a priest in a temple near Calcutta. This temple was consecrated to the Divine Mother and after a time Sri Ramakrishna was called to carry on the daily service before the Mother's image. But as he worshipped day after day the thought rose in his heart, "Is it true that Mother is real? Does the Mother accept the offerings? Or is it all a matter of imagination?" He felt great yearning in his heart to know the living Mother and poured out his soul in supplication: "Come, O Mother. Another day is gone and I have not realized Thee."

It is said that sometimes in the agony of his heart he would rub his face against the ground and shed bitter tears saying: "O Mother, I can no longer live. My life will not remain in this body unless Thou manifest Thyself to me." This soul-stirring and whole-hearted devotion to God was the secret of Sri Ramakrishna's unique spiritual realization and his message of infinite tolerance. Sri Ramakrishna began with ordinary symbol worship, but very soon his vision transcended the symbol; for he saw his Deity everywhere in everything and realized that the worshipper and God the worshipped were one. Although he first realized God through his chosen Ideal,—as Divine Mother, he did not stop there. He tried many other forms of worship,—the Christian and Mohammedan as well as that of various Hindu

sects, and he found that all alike led to God. In a wonderfully short time he realized Godhood by each path. His concentration was so perfect and his fervor so intense that he went straight to the goal, and always he found it to be the same. Thus tolerance became the keynote of his teaching. We often talk of tolerance and try to show sympathy for others, but in our heart of hearts we feel that our faith is the best. Not so with Sri Ramakrishna. His attitude of toleration was not that of morbid forbearance. Through direct contact with God he had learned that all forms of faith come from the same source, and that gave him unbounded charity and sympathy towards all. His whole life was devoted to one thought,—to bring the consciousness of God to every soul.

His teaching is given in such simple parables that a child can understand and this shows how clear and direct his vision was. His message is full of hopefulness. Those who are broken and discouraged cannot fail to find new hope in him. He would say to the down-hearted who came to him: "Why fear? Why give up? You are a child of Divine Mother." He himself talked to his Divine Mother as a little child and he never spoke a word that was not given him by Her. Thus we find his life wholly imbued with the Spirit of God and he tried to make others fill their lives with Him; for to him the God-life was so clear and simple that not to realize God seemed unnatural. He illustrates with vividness the teaching given by Jesus the Christ: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven," for from his earliest childhood his supreme soul-passion was to see God and to help others see Him. His gift to the world was not something which he had earned with his hands and feet; he gave something of infinitely greater value,—the knowledge of Godhood; and the sincerity of his life was so impressive that no one, even

the most critical and unbelieving, could come into his presence without feeling his power.

Sri Ramakrishna's mission was not to preach in the ordinary sense of the word. He never preached, yet he never stopped giving spiritual blessings to others. His mission was to live with God; to bring His light to all. He struggled for that, he gave up all for that. His idea was not to disturb or transplant the flower of religion as it was growing in each heart, but to foster it and hasten its growth. His desire was to help all men to know God by their own natural path, to know God as One and as the Mother of all living beings, and not merely to say it but to feel it. His love for mankind is so extensive, so all-inclusive that it makes us feel like members of one family and to me that is the greatest message,—to make men realize that there is no difference, no barrier, but that all living beings are children of the same Divine Father and therefore brothers.

REPORTS

The public celebration of the Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna took place at the Vedanta Centre of Boston on the evening of March 7th. A number of students and friends came to do honor to the great Teacher. The chief feature of the commemorative exercises was the Address by Swami Paramananda, given in part above. Music and meditation preceded and followed it. At the close the guests gathered in the Library, where refreshments were served and a pleasant hour of informal social intercourse was spent.

* * * *

At the Vedanta Society of San Francisco, the Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated on March 12th. The services continued through the whole day and

besides readings from the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna and other Holy Scriptures, Swami Prakashananda delivered three special lectures on: "Sri Ramakrishna—His unique life and Mission," "Sri Ramakrishna—The Universality of His Message," and "Sri Ramakrishna as a Great World Teacher." Those who attended the services felt the impressiveness of the occasion and declared that the whole day had been a veritable feast.

* * * *

On the invitation of the College Women's Club, Swami Paramananda recently lectured in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. His subject was "India and Her Achievements," and so much interest in Eastern thought and teaching was aroused by his words that he was urgently requested to return for a longer period to hold classes as well as to deliver other lectures.

* * * *

Through the generous contributions of friends to the Indian Famine Relief Fund started by the Centre, the Swami has been able to send a second remittance to the Relief Work of the Ramakrishna Mission. This was further augmented by a special contribution from the Indo-American Association, which after deciding to disband in order to give their entire support to the Hindusthan Association, voted to turn all funds in the treasury over to the Mission for the Famine Sufferers.

* * * *

It is with deep sorrow that we announce the death of Mr. Nelson Smith, who passed away at his home in New York on February 28th. When Swami Vivekananda began his teaching in New York, he became one of his earliest and most faithful followers. He has ever since remained a devoted supporter of Vedanta and the work has lost a loyal friend in him.

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