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# Vedanta monthly bulletin

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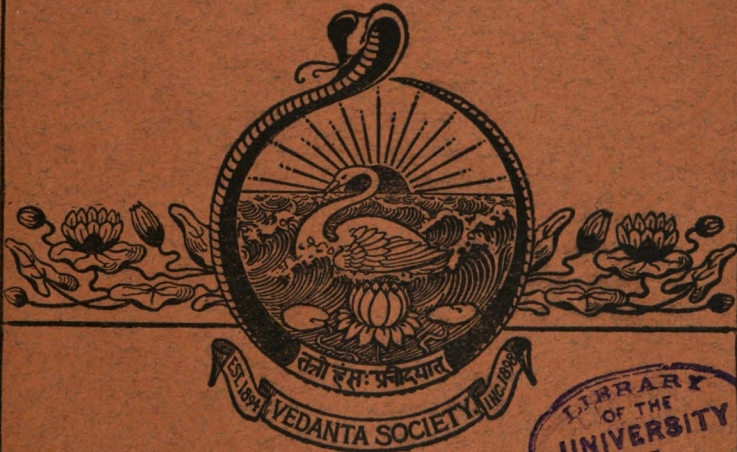






Monthly Bulletin

# Vedanta



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April 1905

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**Vedanta** is the name of the most ancient system of philosophy in India. The word itself means literally "end of all wisdom," and the philosophy to which it is applied explains what the end of wisdom is and how it can be attained. Having survived through the ages, it has not only given an unshakable foundation to the religion of the Hindus, but has also permeated western thought, furnishing the chief source from which men such as Ralph Waldo Emerson have drawn their inspiration.

The **Object of Vedanta** is not to form a new sect or creed, or to make proselytes, but to explain through logic and reason the spiritual laws that govern our lives; to show that the true Religion of the Soul is not antagonistic to, but in harmony with, philosophy and science; to establish that Universal Religion which underlies all the various sects and creeds of special religions; to propagate the principles taught by the great seers of Truth and religious leaders of different countries and illustrated by their lives; and to help mankind in the practical application of those principles in their spiritual, moral, intellectual and physical needs.

# Vedanta

Monthly Bulletin

Volume I

(April 1905—March 1906)



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# Vedanta

## Monthly Bulletin



That which exists is one; men call it by various names.—Rig Veda

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VOL. I

APRIL 1905

No. 1

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WITH the rapid growth of the Vedanta movement in this country there has been an increasing demand for some medium, through which the general public, as well as all those actively interested in Vedanta, could be kept more closely informed of the progress of the work in the different parts of the world. The present MONTHLY BULLETIN has been established to meet this need. It will be, as its name indicates, a simple and concise report of all matters of importance pertaining to Vedanta. Each number will contain abstracts of lectures by Swami Abhedananda and other Swamis, reports from the many branches of the Vedanta work in India and America, and notices of all new books on the Vedanta Philosophy and Religion. Some space will also be reserved for the answering of serious questions on the practical application of the Vedanta teaching to the problems of the daily life.

The BULLETIN sets out on its mission with a double purpose: To make known the universal message of Vedanta to those who have not yet heard it; and to draw the individual and scattered units of the work into closer union and co-operation. This must result in a greater solidarity and fellowship, and add power and strength to the entire movement. We, therefore, earnestly appeal to all to further this new effort to spread the lofty truths of Vedanta.

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## LAW OF COMPENSATION

*Abstract of lecture by SWAMI ABHEDANANDA*

During our earthly career we often see sudden changes of fortune and of circumstances, the ups and downs of life; a poor man becoming suddenly rich, a wealthy man losing all possessions, an honest and virtuous man miserable, while the dishonest and the wicked are prosperous and happy. Many a time we have noticed that success in business does not crown the heads of those who follow the path of righteousness and obey the moral and spiritual laws of nature. The religious history of the world shows that those who were the greatest benefactors of humanity had to go through unbearable torture and persecution, which often led to ignominious death.

When we see or hear of such injustice, our minds are shocked, our intellects are confused and we do not discover the hidden purpose of nature and the inscrutable ways in which her laws operate in the world. But if we go a little deeper below the surface, we find that these events are not accidental. They are governed by laws of nature which are eternal and uniform throughout the different planes of existence. Nothing happens in this world without having a definite cause and nothing ends without producing some kind of effect. As the law of cause and effect governs all phenomena, so the other laws, such as the law of action and reaction, the law of compensation and the law of retribution, are fundamental verities of nature. As every effect must have a cause, as every consequence must have an antecedent, so also there must be perfect balance between a cause and its effect. A cause must always produce an effect of a similar nature, and a reaction must be similar to the action. The forces of nature operate neither for profit

nor for loss, but for perfect balance and harmony. If there be the surging of a high wave in the ocean there must be a deep hollow by its side; if there be a flow of water, there must be an ebb somewhere; if there be tremendous heat in one part of the world, there must be extreme cold in another part; when it is day here, it is night in India. In this manner we can show that polarity exists in every department of nature and brings, in the end, perfect balance, equilibrium, harmony and justice. In short it produces what we understand by the word "compensation."

The law of compensation is as irresistible as the law of causation, and as relentless as the law of action and reaction. In fact, these three, the law of compensation, law of causation, and law of action and reaction, as well as the law of retribution, work together. They represent merely the different phases of nature's purpose in producing diverse phenomena, each opposing the other. For instance, heat is not only the effect and reaction, but a perfect compensation for the fuel that produces it; nothing more nor less. Heat pays for the fuel and fuel pays for the heat; there is neither debt nor profit anywhere, but perfect balance.

As on the physical plane the forces of nature work for compensation, so on the mental, intellectual, moral and spiritual planes the same law of compensation is manifesting itself with equal regularity. There is no bargaining in the realm of nature. What you wish to get you will have to pay for first; something can never be obtained for nothing. In our daily life, when we go out seeking for a bargain, we do not think of this law, and, therefore, we make many mistakes and repent afterwards, because the results which we get are not worth the money spent.



The law of compensation does not work for insentient matter and force alone, but it governs sentient beings and intelligent souls. Whatever we suffer physically or mentally may appear to be unjust, may make us feel that we do not deserve it; but when we trace its cause and compare it with the result, we find that it is perfectly right and a just compensation. The causes determine the nature of the effect, the antecedents their consequences. We cannot judge correctly unless we connect the consequence with its antecedent, the effect with its cause; if we separate them, then we find injustice, wrong and dissatisfaction; but when we connect them we find that they are perfectly right.

No man can defy this law of compensation; but the processes of this law in connection with the affairs of our lives are very complex, and they generally involve a cycle of beginning, growth and end. This cycle may take a short or long period of time. A man may reap the result of compensation for his works either in this life or after death in another incarnation, just as now we are reaping the results of the works of our previous lives. If we deny the previous existence of our life and admit that death will end everything, then the chain of cause and sequence will be abruptly broken and compensation will be unexpectedly interfered with by death. Then there will be no compensation for the wicked who apparently enjoy all the blessings of life, or for the virtuous who perform good, unselfish works and receive no return whatever for their acts in this life. As long as we look upon our individual lives as isolated events, beginning with the birth of the body and ending with death, we shall not find a correct explanation of anything, but shall see injustice and wrong at every step. But when we connect our present life with our past and future, then, standing on the broad

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platform of eternal life, if we look at our present, we shall see justice and compensation at every step.

Suppose our earthly existence began every morning and lasted only twenty-four hours. If we did not connect our life of to-day with the past of yesterday and the future of to-morrow, we should find very poor compensation for our labor, and life would not be worth living. Furthermore, it would seem absolutely unjust to have one life falling on a wet and gloomy day with many accidents, and another on a day bright with sunshine and many happy experiences. Do you think if we disconnected our life of each day from the rest of our life, that we should be able to explain everything that we do or the effects that we receive during our life-time? No; yet our whole earthly career is but a series of these daily lives; and as our earthly life includes many daily lives, so our soul-life, which is eternal, includes many periods of individual lives. This earthly life is just as much a fragment of our soul-life as our daily life would be of our earthly life, if it began every morning and lasted only twenty-four hours. If we wish to see harmony and balance we must think of our soul-life and then we shall find compensation.

The law of compensation governs this whole series of individual lives. The broader the basis of reckoning the more perfect is the knowledge of compensation. Therefore, if we wish to know the perfect balance of causes and effects, of action and reaction, we must take the widest view—that of the soul-life—and reckoning from that standpoint, we shall find a satisfactory solution of all the difficult and complicated affairs of human life.

This universal law of compensation is called in Vedanta the law of Karma. The word "Karma" means literally "action," therefore it includes reaction, and

secondarily, cause and effect, antecedent and consequence; so the law of Karma includes not only the law of compensation, but also the law of action and reaction, of cause and sequence, and the law of retribution. Under the sway of this universal law of Karma there is no room for chance or accident. Every act must produce its result, and these results must come back to the actor by the law of action and reaction. If I strike a blow on the table, I receive the blow back again. Apply this law on the mental plane. All our mental functions, which we call thoughts, are activities, are like the blows and we receive the results. All these mental functions make up the character of an individual. It is the result of all the thoughts and mental functions which we perform during every minute of our life-time. The law of Karma, therefore, will make us feel that we are our own masters; we create our own character and build up our future, and the results that we get are merely the reactions of our own actions. According to this law of Karma, God neither rewards the doer of good, nor punishes the doer of evil. We punish and reward ourselves by our own thoughts and deeds. He who understands this law is never disturbed in his mind; he knows that all suffering is the reaction of his own action. He reaps the result of what he has sown himself, and blames neither God, Satan nor any human being. If this noble truth be preached among the poorer classes in Christendom, they will be able to bear the burden of their life more cheerfully, like the people of India, who, although poor, are still contented and happy. They will not curse life when they do not receive the rewards of their honest labor, because they will understand that reward and punishment are the reactions of their own works.

The results of the various actions of our body and mind may be physical, mental, moral or spiritual. When we

work too much for physical results we sacrifice our moral and spiritual nature. Material prosperity and spiritual poverty will counterbalance each other and bring perfect compensation by the law of Karma. England has robbed India of her material prosperity and wealth, and she is the richest country to-day while India is the poorest; but morally and spiritually England is the poorest and India is the richest. She holds the jewel of spirituality on her forehead and still produces Christ-like characters that are worshipped as Saviours of mankind. Such is the power of the law of compensation. If you seek physical results and ignore spiritual development you will be a gainer of physical prosperity, but at the same time a loser of spiritual growth. You will never be able to serve God and Mammon at the same time. Such is the law of Karma or compensation!

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### **SWAMI ABHEDANANDA ADDRESSES CLERGYMEN**

Swami Abhedananda was the guest of honor at a meeting of the New York Churchman's Association at the Hotel Vendome on March 6th. About forty of the prominent clergymen of New York and vicinity were present and listened with close attention to the Swami's address on "The Relation of Soul to God." After luncheon, the President of the Association, Rev. D. Parker Morgan, rector of the Church of the Heavenly Rest, introduced the Swami, who began as follows:

"Brethren, I come from a country which has been from time immemorial the motherland of spirituality. The history of India has been the history of her religions. There is no other country in the world where people eat religion, drink religion, sleep religion; where religion is closer than food or clothes. The people of

India do not care so much for politics as for religion. They take little interest in the political situation; but if you go to the simplest Hindu peasant and ask him a question on any spiritual subject, in reply he will deliver a better sermon than those usually heard in the best pulpits of New York."

The Swami then presented the theories of the relation of the individual soul to the Universal Spirit as set forth by Vedanta, and in closing quoted the beautiful prayer of a great ancient Vedanta Sage: "O, Lord, when I think of my body, I am Thy servant and Thou art my Master; when I look at my soul, I am Thy part and Thou art the one stupendous Whole; but when I realize my true nature, I am Divine and one with Thee, The Absolute Spirit. Such is my conception of my relation to Thee."

Opportunity was then given for remarks and questions, and one clergyman, rising, declared: "We have heard a profound exposition of the highest form of natural religion, but our religion of course is supernatural or revealed religion." To this the Swami replied in substance: "India is the home of all revealed religion. The idea of revelation first came from there. As to the distinction between natural and supernatural religion, that is purely arbitrary, depending entirely upon one's conception of nature. If that conception be narrow, then everything beyond the limit of that circle is accounted supernatural. Extend the circumference of the circle, however, and what was supernatural now becomes natural. If, therefore, the conception of nature, as in Vedanta, is extended until it includes infinite space, then nothing remains outside and the natural has brought within its field the whole realm of the supernatural. Thus the natural religion of Vedanta includes not only the supernatural religion of Christianity but all sects and creeds."

## VEDANTA IN AMERICA

## New York

The birthday of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was celebrated in New York at the Vedanta Society House on Wednesday, March 8th. The attendance was unusually large despite the heavy storm and the difficulties of transportation caused by the prevailing strike. The offerings of fruits and flowers were also more generous than in any previous year, completely covering the platform and steps as well as the altar. The services began at eleven o'clock with a series of beautiful meditations given by the Swami Abhedananda on the divine life and character of the Great Teacher. At half-past twelve there was a short intermission, after which Swami Abhedananda chanted the hymns to the Divine Mother, for which Sri Ramakrishna especially cared. At half-past three Swami Nirmalananda held a second meditation, followed by a talk on Sri Ramakrishna's childhood and early village life, which touched the hearts of all who heard it. Then after another meditation and an hour of silent prayer, the evening service opened at half-past seven, the chief feature of this, besides various devotional exercises, being the reading of extracts from the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, some portions of which were:

"No greater mistake can be committed than to look upon work as the be-all and end-all of human life. Work is the first chapter of human life, God is the conclusion. On one occasion a Karma Yogi said to me: 'I should deem myself fortunate if I could build hospitals and dispensaries, make roads where there were none, sink wells for the good of the people in seasons of drought, set up schools and colleges.' Thereupon I (Sri Ramakrishna) said to him: 'It is all very well that thou shouldst do these works. But canst thou do them unattached? If thou canst, it will lead to God. Otherwise not. But to work unattached is exceedingly difficult. In any case, take care and do not confound the means with the end. Work is a means. No, do not regard work as the ideal of human existence. Pray for

devotion to God. Suppose thou art fortunate to realize God? Then what wilt thou pray for? Wilt thou pray for dispensaries and hospitals, tanks and wells, road and serais? No, no; these are realities to us so long as we do not see God. But once face to face with the Vision Divine, we see them as transitory things, no better than dreams; and then we pray for more light, more wisdom, more Divine Love, the love which lifts a man to God, the love which makes us realize that we are really sons of the Supreme Being, of whom all that can be said is that He exists, that He is Knowledge itself in the highest sense, and that He is the Eternal Fountain of Love and Bliss.'

"So go on my children, and never lose sight of your ideal! Go onward and never stop until you have reached the goal. Reaching a particular stage do not get the idea that you have reached your journey's end. Work is only the first stage of the journey. Bear in mind that doing works unattached is exceedingly difficult; that, therefore, Bhakti Yoga, the path of love, is better suited to this age, and that work, even if unattached, is not the end of your life, but only a means to an end. So march on and never halt till you have come up to the great Ideal of your life—the realization of God.

"Do not hate anyone. Do not recognize caste or creed. Do not say that this man believes in a Personal God, that man believes in an Impersonal God; this man worships God with form, that man worships God without form; this man is a Hindu, that one is a Christian or a Mahometan. Saying this, do not condemn one another. These distinctions exist because God has made different people understand him in different ways. The difference lies in the nature of the individuals. Knowing this, you will mix with all as closely as possible and love them as dearly as you can. Then when you go home, you will enjoy blissful happiness in your soul. Light the candle of wisdom in the secret chamber of your heart. By that light see the face of my Absolute Mother, and by that light you will also see the true nature of your real Self."

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It is customary at the time of the birthday celebration of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna to send an offering to the Math at Belur for the relief of the poor of India. This year through the generosity of different students and friends the offering amounted to \$71.50. \$10.00 were also sent to the Poor Men's Relief Association and \$30.00 to the Vivekananda Memorial Fund.

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Brooklyn now has its own Vedanta Center under the direction of Swami Nirmalananda. The members form a part of the Vedanta Society in New York and are actively identified with the work there, but they have their own Yoga Class and weekly reception, and it is hoped that in the autumn they will be able to establish regular headquarters and arrange courses of lectures for the benefit of the Brooklyn public. It will be remembered that a year ago Swami Abhedananda delivered two lectures in Brooklyn, which were so largely attended that at the second lecture it was impossible to provide even standing room for all who came. The new Center is the result of the interest aroused at that time. This fact should encourage others, who are anxious to have the Vedanta teaching nearer home, to arrange similar meetings and invite some one of the Swamis to address them. In no way will the work grow more rapidly.

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Swami Abhedananda was invited in February to deliver an address before the Historical Club of the University of Toronto, and also to give a public lecture in one of the largest halls of the city. Several hundred of the most prominent people of Toronto, including many leading ministers and University professors, attended the last, and the greatest enthusiasm was aroused by the Swami's profound exposition of "The Religion of the Hindus," as also by his extemporaneous answers to the questions asked at the close of the lecture. During his visit the Swami attended a reception given by the Lieutenant-Governor and was entertained by



a number of well-known people. He was also strongly urged to remain in Toronto and at once organize a local center, but his engagements in New York rendered this impossible. It is probable, however, that a more definite effort in this direction will be made later, as one friend has since written: "I have spoken with many but have not heard one discordant note. I feel that your visit with us is merely a promise of much that is to come."

### California

From the Vedanta Society of San Francisco comes a report of such rapid growth that Swami Trigunatita is already in need of an assistant, and it is probable that one of the younger Swamis, Swami Virajananda, will soon be sent from the Math at Belur to help him. At present, besides the usual weekly classes, the Swami Trigunatita is giving a series of Sunday evening lectures at the Society House, 40 Steiner Street, on subjects especially dealing with Vedanta and its relation to existing social and religious problems. "Vedanta and Socialism," "The Future of the American Woman," "The Future of the United States as seen by a Vedantist," are some of them.

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Swami Sachchidananda, for some time the manager of the "Awakened India," has come to this country to take charge of the Vedanta Society of Los Angeles. Although this Society was founded in 1900 during Swami Vivekananda's second visit to the Pacific coast, it has heretofore been under the direction of the Swami in charge in San Francisco. For the past two years Swami Trigunatita has spent two or three months there each spring, holding classes and delivering lectures, and through the rest of the year the members have carried on the work alone. Since Swami Sachchidananda's arrival the Society has rented a house and established the work on the same basis as in the other Centers.

It will be interesting to those who are not aware of it to learn that there is already a Vedanta Ashrama or Peace Retreat in this country. It is situated in Santa Clara County, San Antone Valley, California, about fifteen miles from the Lick Observatory, on a large tract of land donated by one of Swami Abhedananda's students. The Retreat was opened in 1901 by Swami Turiyananda, who passed much of his time there during his stay in America. Swami Trigunatita takes a few weeks' rest there each autumn, and through the summer it is full of students eager to profit by a season of retirement from the world. It is now probable that another Swami will be brought over to assume direction of this special branch of the work. For the last three years Mr. Heyblom, originally a member of the Vedanta Society of New York, has remained at the Retreat summer and winter to care for it, but recently he was replaced by one of Swami Trigunatita's disciples.

### VEDANTA IN INDIA

As the majority of those interested in the Vedanta movement in America know little of its extent and scope in India, it has seemed wise in this opening number of the BULLETIN to give a brief descriptive list of the chief centers of work carried on by the Ramakrishna Mission, reserving for later numbers a fuller account of each.

The Headquarters of the entire Vedanta movement as represented by the Swamis of the Order of Ramakrishna, known to us through Swami Vivekananda, Swami Saradananda, Swami Abhedananda, and their brothers, is at the Math or Monastery at Belur, a village on the banks of the Ganges just across from Calcutta. This monastery was established by Swami Vivekananda, who organized it and laid out the lines on which its members should work. Its present head is Swami Brahmananda, one of the original group of disciples who gathered round the Great Teacher, Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna and formed the Order bearing His name. It is at this monastery that the majority of novices are trained and it is also from this main Center that the

Swamis go forth to every part of the world to carry their message of universal tolerance.

In Calcutta proper there are two branches of the work: One, the Sisters' House where two of Swami Vivekananda's disciples, Sister Nivedita (Miss Margaret Noble) and Sister Christina (Miss Grœnstidl) are doing excellent work among the Hindu women and children; the other, a Vivekananda Society under the guidance of Swami Saradananda, the object of which is to provide a home for boys studying at the colleges and the University of Calcutta, where they will be guarded from temptation and taught the principles of practical Vedanta, not only through religious instruction, but by serving the poor and teaching those who cannot afford to go to school.

The Bengali magazine, the "Udbodhana," managed by the Swamis, is also published in Calcutta.

At Benares, under the charge of Swami Shivananda, there is the Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, a monastery for religious training, and a Home of Service, where aged Sadhus, left without resource or aid, are cared for.

At Kankal near Haridwar Swami Kalyananda conducts both a school and another hospital for the relief of needy Sadhus. Other similar institutions exist in various parts of Bengal and the Punjab.

During the plague and throughout the terrible famine, the Swamis rendered heroic service, and the children left in their hands at that time formed the nucleus of a large orphanage established at Murshidabad, with Swami Akhandananda at its head.

One of the largest Centers of Vedanta work is the Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati in the Himalayas, given to the Order through Swami Vivekananda by one of his English disciples, Captain Sevier, an officer in the English army, who followed the Swami back to India and lived in the Ashrama until his death. There are many branches to the work here, among others, one department devoted to the study of agriculture under the direction of a practical American farmer from one of our western states. The periodical "Awakened India," is also issued from this Ashrama.

Madras is a Center of remarkable activity. It was the young men of Madras who collected the money which enabled Swami Vivekananda to attend the Congress of Religions at Chicago, and nowhere at present is the enthusiasm for the Vedanta teaching or devotion to its teachers greater than among them. Swami Ramakrishnananda is the head of this entire district and has accomplished wonders in establishing, not only a monastery, but many societies, lecture halls and other institutions. Among the most important of these is the Vedanta Society of Bangalore, but throughout the Southern Presidency, as also in Ceylon, there are numerous organizations bearing either the name of Vedanta or of Sri Ramakrishna or of Swami Vivekananda. It is also in Madras that the monthly magazine, "The Brahmavadin," founded, like the other two already mentioned, by Swami Vivekananda, is published.

From these various larger Centers the Swamis travel over the whole country, lecturing, teaching and establishing new branches, so that to-day it may truthfully be said that there is scarcely a corner of India where they are not known and revered. And in every place where they have sojourned, on the 8th of March there was some kind of religious service, followed by the feeding of the poor, to commemorate the birthday anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. At the Belur Math the services continued without interruption for twenty-four hours, and on the following Sunday nearly twenty thousand people were entertained, among the number being over five thousand poor.

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One of the Swamis writes from the Belur Math: "The last birthday anniversary of Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) was celebrated here with more than its usual significance and grandeur. About a thousand gentlemen and three thousand poor men and women were sumptuously entertained. The new feature in connection with it this year was that the Vivekananda Society celebrated their anniversary on the next Sunday on the Math lawn by convening a meeting in the interests of

the students with the Swami Saradananda in the chair. The speakers were Mr. G. C. Ghosh, Suddhanandaji and Sister Nivedita. There were songs, and recitations also from Swamiji's writings. Light refreshments were served to all, etc. We have got reports from various places of Swamiji's anniversary, where many thousands of the poor got good meals. This year Guru Maharaj's (Sri Ramakrishna's) birthday anniversary will also be succeeded by convening a meeting on the next Sunday following on the Math grounds. We are all doing well. Swami Brahmananda is busy making preparations for the coming anniversary. Swamiji's temple building work is to be begun shortly."

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During the month of April the Swami Abhedananda will lecture at the Vedanta Society House every Sunday morning at 11 o'clock. The subjects will be:

- April 2d. HEALING POWER OF BREATH.
- " 9th. ECSTASY.
- " 16th. VEDANTA IN DAILY LIFE.
- " 23d. PSYCHIC PHENOMENA.
- " 30th. DIVINE INSPIRATION.

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Each soul is potentially divine.

The goal is to manifest this divinity within, by controlling nature, external and internal.

Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy, by one or more, or all of these—and be free.

This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

# Vedanta

## Monthly Bulletin

That which exists is one; men call it by various names.—Rig Veda

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VOL. I

MAY 1905

No. 2

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THE strong resemblance between the philosophy of Vedanta and the philosophy of Plato must have impressed all those who listened to Professor Edward Howard Griggs' recent lecture before the Society. Professor Griggs himself admitted that Plato's belief in the conquest of the senses as the only means of attaining true knowledge, was preëminently Oriental and non-Greek; but he did not call attention to the many other points in which the two philosophies meet. Plato's figure of the men chained in the cave is merely an allegorical presentation of the Vedanta doctrine of Maya, while his other figure of the chariot is a favorite one with Vedic writers. How far this resemblance is coincident and how far derivative is a question of dispute among scholars, but one instance, at least, of direct communication between Greece and India at that time is generally accepted as authentic. A Hindu philosopher, we are told, came to Athens and had a discussion with Socrates, during which, in reply to Socrates' statement that his philosophy consisted in inquiries about the life of man, the Indian philosopher asked the famous question: "How can one understand things human without first understanding things divine?" It is this search for the divine essence behind all phenomena which relates Plato so closely to the Indian teaching and which makes a student of the Platonic philosophy a natural follower of the more ancient system of Vedanta.

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## VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE OF BREATH

*Abstract of lecture by SWAMI ABHEDANANDA*

The Vedanta philosophy is as old as the first civilization of the world. It is one of the oldest systems and has given the highest ideals of life as well as the best explanations of the phenomenal world. The phenomenal universe is described in Vedanta as the expression of one Supreme Being, the eternal existence. That existence is called by various names and is worshipped under various forms. The most ancient writing of this philosophy, the Rig Veda, tells us that the ancient sages realized this unity of existence and 5,000 years before Christ declared to the world in a trumpet voice: "That which exists is one; men call it by various names." This Vedanta philosophy is not like any other purely speculative philosophy, it is not like German philosophy or any of the Western systems which deal merely with speculations, but it has given the most solid foundation to a system of religion which is nameless, creedless, and without dogma. It is the universal religion, that religion which underlies all the special religions of the world. The special religions are but so many expressions of this nameless and formless universal religion.

So the Vedanta philosophy is not only a system of philosophy, but it is the foundation of the universal religion. It is not speculative, but at the same time it gives an explanation of the universe which perfectly harmonizes with the latest conclusions of modern scientists. Some people may wonder how those ancient seers could have realized certain truths of the universe which are in perfect harmony with the latest facts of modern science. But when we remember that truth is one and that truth is truth all through eternity, then

we do not wonder. The same truths that were realized and discovered by the ancient seers of India centuries before Christ was born, are the truths of to-day and will remain truths throughout eternity. Whether Herbert Spencer discovers these truths, or Plato or Buddha or Krishna or any sage of the Vedic period, it matters not. The truth is one and the truth, that eternal truth, is the foundation upon which the structure of the Vedanta philosophy and religion has been founded. Furthermore, Vedanta is the most practical system. It teaches where philosophy ends and where religion begins. The practical side of philosophy is religion and the theoretical side of religion is philosophy. In India, as we all know, philosophy, science, and religion have never been separated from each other. That which is unscientific and unphilosophical cannot be called religious; it must appeal to our reason, and that which appeals to our reason must be based upon practical truth. So Vedanta embraces also the various branches of science. These are described under different names, and each name, as given in Sanskrit, is meant to describe a system by knowing which we can benefit ourselves. The Sanskrit name for each of these systems is Yoga; and if we study the method by which this science of Yoga was discovered, we will find that even in those ancient days observation and experiment were considered to be the best means of discovering the secret truths of nature. By the process of observation and experiment, the ancient seers of truth discovered the laws which govern our lives. The finer forces of nature and the description of these laws and these forces are embodied in the various branches of the science of Yoga.

Among these the science of breath is the most important. It is more closely related to our earthly



existence than any other science; and a knowledge of this science is more beneficial to our earthly life than the knowledge of any other science of the world. Why? Because breath is a part of our life. We cannot live without breathing. We may go without food for days; we may live without drinking for hours; but we cannot stop our respiration even for a few minutes. Our physical health, growth, development, evolution of the organism, and the activities of the internal organs depend entirely upon breath, and a study of the science of breath, together with the practice of the breathing exercises, will help us in gaining marvelous results. Correct breathing cures all diseases and kills all the germs that enter into our system.

First of all, let us learn the physiological conditions of breathing. The breathing apparatus, as we all know, consists of the lungs and the air-passages, such as the nose, windpipe, and so on. We also know that the external air is pumped in by the mechanical action of the diaphragm, which is a strong, flat muscle separating the abdomen from the chest; and the oxygen of the atmosphere enters through the open door of the lungs, filters through the pulmonary capillaries and comes into direct contact with the venous blood which is laden with the waste matter of the system, producing a kind of combustion which destroys the imperfect or impure matter and purifies the blood. As the result of this combustion carbonic-acid gas is produced, which comes out in the form of breath. Air when inhaled contains about 21 per cent of oxygen and when exhaled 12 per cent, having lost 9 per cent, and the blood which has been once used will be of no further service if it is not purified by the lungs. In every adult man the average pulsation is 75 in a minute and 2 ounces of blood are driven from the heart to the lungs at each

pulsation, or 9 pounds 6 ounces in a minute. If we examine the weight of the whole quantity of blood in the human body, we know that the weight of the blood is about one-fifth of the weight of the entire body, or 28 pounds, in a man weighing 140 pounds; and this whole quantity of blood will take 3 minutes to go to the lungs and become purified, or 13,500 pounds in 24 hours. At present it is a familiar fact that ordinarily we use only one-sixth of our lung power; but the science of breath tells us that if the remaining five-sixths of the lung power be brought into play, no one can say what marvelous results may not follow. The science of breath claims that a person who uses the full capacity of the lung power and breathes correctly will never be diseased, will kill all disease germs, and will acquire perfect health. All the lung troubles and other organic troubles will then be a thing of the past. One single generation of correct breathers will destroy all the germs of disease that prevail in a civilized community.

Physiology tells us that blood is nothing but a vehicle for carrying oxygen in the form of air from one part of the body to another, that this oxygen filters through the different cells, and that organic activities are produced by this filtering through of the oxygen. The organic combustion does not take place in the lungs only, but also in the tissues and cells themselves. When the oxygen enters a cell, that portion of the oxygen produces a kind of combustion, however minute it may be, removes impurities, and helps its growth and normal activity. Oxygen invigorates and strengthens our bodies, and it also helps in the digestion of the food. In order to have perfect digestion we must have a sufficient quantity of oxygen in the system. If we do not forget that, before we get any nourishment, every particle of food and drink must be properly oxygenated, then we

shall pay proper attention to breathing exercises; and the science of breath will help us to learn the secret by which we can draw a greater quantity of oxygen into the system and voluntarily let it pass through all the internal organs, thereby gaining wonderful results. Deep breathing will help us to do this, and it will be especially beneficial to those women who wear tight dresses. But deep breathing must not be practised through the mouth. Mouth-breathing is extremely dangerous. It is injurious to our health, and parents should never allow their children to breathe through the mouth or to sleep with open mouth.

Those who do not practice deep breathing generally breathe from the chest, and chest-breathing can be divided into two classes. First, collar-bone breathing, in which the upper parts of the lungs only are filled with air; and second, rib-breathing, in which the abdomen is drawn in, the diaphragm is pushed upward, and the chest is extended on the sides. Music-teachers generally give this kind of breathing for voice culture, and by this breathing we can fill nearly half of our lungs with the atmospheric air, the upper half, but the lower half cannot be filled by this process. Deep breathing is entirely different from these two classes of breathing. By this method the lower part of the lungs also can be filled with air. In some of the physical-culture and Delsarte schools we get lessons in deep breathing; but in India the teachers of the science of breath, who are called Yogis, say that there is another kind of breathing, by which all the parts of the lungs can be filled without producing any injury to the system; and the science of breath tells us that this peculiar method of breathing will help us in gaining control over our nervous system, over the internal organs, over our minds, and that by this method we shall be able to possess perfect health

as long as we shall live on this earth. Besides these physical results, mental, moral, and spiritual results can also be obtained through the practice of the breathing exercises. These Yoga breathing exercises are described as the means by which self-control can be obtained. One who has mastered his breath has mastered his mind. He has conquered his passions and he has gained absolute self-mastery; in fact, he has mastered his physical nature. Self-control, calmness of mind, tranquillity, peace, spiritual enlightenment, and moral upliftment will come through the breathing exercises if one is properly directed by a Yogi.

From very ancient times the Yogis of India observed the effects of the different systems of breathing exercises upon their own bodies, and those results, gathered through centuries of investigation, have been handed down to us. By studying these results and methods we find that there is nothing in the world which cannot be achieved by one who has mastered his breath. But breath does not mean merely drawing in or pumping in air, nor does it mean a large quantity of oxygen. It has a different meaning, and the Yogis described how by the higher exercises of breath one can attain spiritual perfection. They called these higher breathing exercises in Sanskrit Pranayama, which means moral control of the Prana. Prana is commonly translated into English as breath, but it is not breath. It means that power, that force, which draws the air in, which gives life and vitality to an organism. What power is that? That power by which we are able to say that we are living beings. The science of breath tells us that if we can gain control over this Prana and store a great quantity of it in the nerve centers, we shall possess a superabundance of vital strength, health, power, and that vital and healing power which can be transmitted

to others if we choose to use the force in that way. Not only this, the science of breath claims that the will-power and the mental activities are also the manifestation of this Prana.

I have already said that the breath has close relation to the mind. If you notice the condition of your mind and the condition of your breath at the same moment, you will find the relation between them. They are so closely related that if the breath of a person who is extremely angry be examined, you will see that his whole system is poisoned for the time being. If a mother is angry and feeds her child at that time, the child will drink poison. If, on the contrary, you examine your breath when your mind is peaceful and spiritually inclined, you will see that your breath will be deep, rhythmic, gentle, and slow. Gradually, when your mind becomes absolutely centered upon the highest truth, upon the Supreme Being, you will find that your breath will stop. And what will happen then? The sixth sense or the spiritual eye of the soul will be opened and a great, most wonderful illumination will come. In that state the soul will realize its true nature and gain absolute mastery over the mind, intellect, and passions. Thus we see what wonderful results may be attained through a study of the science of breath.

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### NOTES ON LIFE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

*By a DISCIPLE*

In the year 1891 or '92, about the month of September, Swami Vivekananda was living in Hrishikesh with Swamis Saradananda and Turiyananda. This is a very picturesque and secluded place, situated on the banks of the river Ganges at the foot of the Himalayas. Thousands of Yogins and Sannyasins of divers sects assemble

there every year to spend the winter in reading scriptural texts and in practising Yoga and meditation. It is not a big town or a city, but a jungle covered with groves of wild bamboos, wild plum trees and bushes of wild flowers and evergreens, and dotted here and there with thatched cottages raised by the hands of the Sadhus. The Ganges, that girdles almost around the waist of it with its pure, transparent, cool current, breathes incessantly into the ears of the devotees the gentle murmur of the sacred mantram "Hara, Hara, Hara" (God alone is real and everything else unreal). Wild animals of various kinds wander fearlessly about, birds come into the cottages and pick crumbs of bread from the hands of the inmates, while the fishes snatch morsels from fingers held in the waters of the river.

A few days after his arrival here, while occupying one of the little huts, Swami Vivekananda was taken ill with a very high fever attended with diphtheria. He grew worse day by day until no ray of hope was left. His pulse sank lower and lower and the life blood melted into perspiration. He was lying unconscious on his rude bed. Swamis Saradananda and Turiyananda, overwhelmed with grief and anxiety, were at a loss what to do, for no help could be found within thirty miles. The only thing that they could do was to resign themselves to the will of God. While they were thus merged in sorrow and sunk in prayer that his life might be spared and theirs taken in its stead, they came to hear a faint rustling sound caused by a movement on his bed of straw. This attracted their attention to him and they found that he had opened his eyes and was trying to speak to them. One of them put his ear near his mouth and heard these words uttered feebly, almost inaudibly: "Cheer up, my boys, I will not die." After this the spark of life that was yet left in him

began to revive and in the course of a few months he was himself again.

In the beginning of 1893, when he had grown sufficiently strong to travel alone, he left Hrishikesh, first telling his companions that during his unconscious state of illness and later he had seen that he had a particular mission in the world to fulfill and that unless he accomplished it he would find no rest. The spiritual energy was then so strong within him that he could hardly contain it. He was restless, seeking a proper field for its display. He went to the southern part of India. When he reached Madras, some young men there proposed to him that he should go to America and represent Vedanta in the Religious Congress that was to be held in connection with the World's Fair at Chicago. They told him that therein would be represented all the great religions of the world and that it was a pity and a misfortune that the oldest and grandest of them all should be left unrepresented for want of a proper exponent. When he agreed to their proposal, they raised by subscription a small sum of money which was hardly adequate to cover the expense of his passage and of a month's stay at Chicago. He undertook the long journey, however, and came to America. How he achieved success in the Religious Congress and how he traveled from one place to another throughout the country, sowing the seeds of Vedanta broadcast, I need not describe, for you know it practically better than I do. One strange thing, however, you will find,—that since Swami Vivekananda's appearance at the Chicago Congress of Religions, Vedanta has spread imperceptibly and permeated every grade of society, every New Thought movement, and nearly every branch of knowledge. Surely this is a palpable sign that Vedanta is taking root in this land.

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**VEDANTA IN AMERICA****New York**

Professor Edward Howard Griggs lectured on "The Philosophy of Plato," before the Vedanta Society, on Saturday evening, March 25. The lecture-room of the Society House was well filled, and the audience manifested their interest in the lecturer's able presentation of his subject by listening with the closest attention. Professor Griggs began with a few words about the nature of philosophy, saying that it springs from man's longing for unity and is an attempt to formulate man's relation to the whole of things. He then briefly outlined the development of Greek thought to the time of Socrates, after which he said in substance:

The basis of Plato's philosophy is the problem of knowledge. Imagine, says Plato, men sitting in a cave, chained with their backs to the opening; objects are passing behind them which cast shadows on the wall of the cave. These shadows they mistake for realities. But let these men turn so they may see the real objects and they will then understand that what they had seen before were mere images of reality. So in life, only those who turn their backs upon the world of sense, and look with the eye of pure reason, can see the realities of which concrete objects are mere images. The highest virtue is reached by climbing beyond the senses, by perceiving pure beauty which is above all sensuous forms, and abstract virtue of which human virtues are mere echoes. It is interesting to note this element of asceticism in Plato's philosophy. In this respect he was Oriental rather than Greek; for of all nations the Greeks were least ascetic. Plato believed firmly in the immortality of the soul, though his arguments for it were rather puerile. According to his teaching there are three principles in the soul: appetite, passion, and pure reason, whose corresponding virtues are temperance, courage, and knowledge. Justice consists in the proper balance and harmony of these three principles, pure reason being likened to the charioteer who guides the horses of appetite and passion. Plato did not



give us a finished system of thought; but the poetic vitality of his work and its insight into the heart of life are as fresh to-day as ever.

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A public lecture was given on March 31, by Swami Abhedananda, at the Art Building in Montague Street, Brooklyn, on "Vedanta Philosophy and the Science of Breath." The hall was well filled with an attentive audience, the attendance being even larger than at the lectures of the previous year. The Swami's lecture, an abstract of which appears elsewhere in this number, awakened a new interest in Vedanta in Brooklyn, with encouraging results to the local branch.

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On March 27, Swami Abhedananda delivered a public lecture in Washington. There was a large audience and the interest shown was very great. A Branch has since been formed and the members are all enthusiastic in their work. This was not the Swami's first visit to Washington, as a few years ago he gave several addresses there upon the wonderful philosophy of Vedanta and many had ever since longed for his return. As is always the case when the seeds of this beautiful Vedanta are planted, the growth is natural. Washington had a second visit from Swami Abhedananda on April 18, when he returned to give them another lecture and help them further in their work, by regularly organizing the Branch under the name of the Vedanta Society of Washington. The great earnestness of this Branch will probably make it possible for them soon to have a Swami of their own. The good work that is being accomplished in Washington should be an encouragement to all others over the United States desiring to bring the Vedanta teaching closer to them. By thus gathering together a few who are interested and asking a Swami to come and speak to them, they may likewise establish a branch.

The Secretary of the Washington Branch will be glad to give any information to those desiring to inquire

further if they will address Miss L. W. BROWNE, Room 610, Corcoran Building, Washington, D. C.

### California

The Vedanta Society of San Francisco is publishing a series of lectures by Swami Trigunatita. The first in the series, entitled "Is There any Difference between a Christian and a Hindu?" appeared some time ago; and now a second, on "Mental Healing," has just come from press. In this the Swami says: "Mental treatment is not made by fixing the mind on the body; we deal simply with the mind,—heal the mind by controlling it. If you can separate the mind from the body, you will no more feel the agony of the disease. Vedanta teaches that if you cure one physical disease to-day, to-morrow another will come; but if you cure your mind once, that will last forever. If we love humanity, we can be useful to all people, not by simply healing their physical disturbances but by healing their spiritual diseases. We all have mental and spiritual wounds; we should first cure them and therefore have no need to cure our physical disturbances because we shall then rise above the physical plane."

### VEDANTA IN INDIA

According to accounts just received, the birthday of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated in many places in India. There were exercises at the Belur Math, Calcutta; at the Jagan-Nath College, Dacca; at the Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, Luxa, Benares; at Amritsur; at the Madras Math; at Bangalore, and at Manipay in Ceylon. At each place an interesting program was carried out. Perhaps the most interesting was that at the Belur Math, Calcutta. Here the whole day was given to the celebration. In the morning there were readings from the Vedas and the Upanishads, followed by music and Kathakata (dramatic exposition) from Ramayana. In the audience were persons from all parts of India, from South Africa and America, and representatives of nearly every nation-

ality and religion. A feature of the celebration, and one which was characteristic of nearly all the others, was the feeding of a large number of the poor. Four thousand were fed on the lawn of the Math.

In Madras the feeding began at 10 in the morning and lasted till 5 P.M. Here there were two Sankirtan parties (choruses) who sang Bhajan (sacred music) alternately from 9 A.M. till 4 P.M. In Bangalore about sixty Bhajan parties of all castes and creeds, carrying flags and singing hymns and prayers, paraded through the important streets from morning till evening. At the South Manipay Vernacular School, Ceylon, one of the exercises consisted in the singing of a Sanskrit prayer from the Ramayana by the gramophone. Everywhere there were readings from the Swamiji's works and addresses and songs in honor of his memory.

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The Vivekananda Society of Calcutta has just sent us their annual report. This Society was organized to give practical shape to a resolution adopted at the Vivekananda Memorial Meeting, held in August, 1902, under the auspices of the student community of Calcutta. The object of the Society is to study the life and teachings of the great Swami and to try to realize the ideals of Vedanta as interpreted by him. Any one who believes with him that religion forms the backbone of the Indian people, that religion as expounded in Vedanta is the great national inheritance with which India is going to enrich the world at large, is eligible to membership in the Society. Among the practical benevolent works carried on is the raising of funds to help famine-stricken or plague-infected districts, house-to-house collection of rice to feed helpless widows and orphans, and the obtaining of subscriptions to send students to foreign countries to learn the technical arts. The Society's report is a record of much admirable work accomplished. Perhaps the most interesting is in what is called the Service Department. A branch of this at Bosepara, Calcutta, has been instrumental in aiding many poor families with rice collected

by its enthusiastic members from door to door, and has proved a training ground where young men have learned the wholesome lesson of living and working for others. In March, 1903, when the plague was raging in Calcutta, the Society proved itself a tower of strength. The members visited infected spots personally and supervised the cleansing of the bad places. Again in March, 1904, when Bhagalpore was plague-stricken, and the city authorities were unequal to coping with the disease for want of disinterested workers to visit the infected areas, application was made to the Ramakrishna Mission at Belur and a Sannyasin and two Brahmacharins (novices) promptly responded. These were joined by a member of the Vivekananda Society, and, aided by this heroic little band, the city successfully overcame the plague.

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One of the most valuable works carried on under the auspices of the Ramakrishna Mission is the Home of Service at Benares. It happens that in Benares, which is the great center of Hinduism, the Mecca, so to speak, of many a Hindu pilgrimage, there was great need for some means of assisting the indigent other than that provided by the municipal authorities and the orthodox hospitals and almshouses. The charitable dispensaries are also quite insufficient to relieve the diseased poor and those who may be turned out by cruel landlords and left ill and uncared for on the streets. To provide for this large class of needy ones is the work of the Ramakrishna Home of Service. It was begun by a few earnest young men under the holy guidance of the Ramakrishna Mission. For three months they worked silently, but their work soon came to the attention of benevolent citizens and a managing committee was formed to conduct the affairs of the institution. There are eight persons devoting their entire service to this noble work. Their duty is to pick up from the streets and lanes the poor and destitute sick and send them to proper medical institutions or to the Home of Relief. They also carry medicines and diet to out-

door patients, collect subscriptions of money and grain and distribute food grains to the needy in their houses. The Fourth Annual Report, just received, shows that in all 665 persons were relieved by them during the year.

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The regular quarterly meeting of the Vedanta Society in New York was held on April 27. The reports of the different officers showed an unusually prosperous condition in every department. The Secretary announced the accession of new members to have been larger than in any previous year; while the Treasurer stated that, despite the Society's greatly increased financial burden in its present Headquarters, the balance in bank was unusually large. The chief point presented for discussion was that of Associate Members, and it was unanimously voted to add this class to the various kinds of members already included in the Constitution, the conditions and privileges of such membership to be finally acted upon at a special meeting to be called in June. A fuller account of this important question will then be given in the Bulletin.

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“Different creeds are but different paths to reach the Almighty. Various and different are the ways that lead to the temple of Kali at Kalighat (near Calcutta). Similarly, various are the ways that lead to the house of the Lord. Every religion is nothing but one of such paths that lead to God.”

“As a lamp does not burn without oil, so man cannot live without God.

“He finds God quickest whose yearning and concentration are greatest.”

“A boat may stay in the water, but the water should not stay in the boat. An aspirant may live in the world, but the world should not live in him.”—*Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna.*

# Vedanta

## Monthly Bulletin

That which exists is one; men call it by various names.—Rig Veda

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VOL. I

JUNE 1905

No. 8

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### DIVINE INSPIRATION

*Lecture by SWAMI ABHEDANANDA*

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

The God of Vedanta is like a circle whose circumference is nowhere, but whose centre is everywhere. Each of these centres is an individual soul, or ego; and that circle is the Universal Spirit. The centre lies in each one of us, but the circle is overhead, all around us. This unlimited circle is the source of infinite wisdom and infinite love. All the blessed qualities proceed from it; it forms the background of all individual egos or souls. At present we do not know how wise and good we are in reality. We are living like fools, searching here and there for a ray of the light of wisdom, but paying no attention to that Self-effulgent Sun of infinite wisdom that is shining in His own glory

behind our minds, intellects and hearts. It takes a long time to discover that light of wisdom behind the veil of the clouds of egotism and selfishness. These clouds hide the face of the sun, therefore we cannot see. In the majority of people the clouds of egotism and selfishness are thick and dark; they therefore grope in the darkness of ignorance without perceiving a ray of light. They mistake the transitory objects of the senses for the reality; they live on the sense-plane and mistake the body for the soul and matter for spirit. Blessed are those whose clouds of egotism and selfishness have become thin and transparent. They can see and bathe in the sunshine of infinite wisdom; they are the great teachers of the world; but their number is few and far between. God, the Divine Being, the Divine Spirit, shines through their souls and speaks through their mouths the message of absolute Truth. They are the Christs and Buddhas, they are the Krishnas and Ramakrishnas; they are the inspired prophets of this world. They do not fill their minds with second-hand and third-hand knowledge, which comes filtered through the imperfect brains of ordinary mortals; they go to the fountain-head of all wisdom and bring from there new light into the world. They teach from within. Their teachings are full of inspiration, full of revelation, and not like the teachings of ordinary thinkers. They do not pass their opinions like surface scientists and ignorant philosophers, who do not really teach but who give their opinions, making their imperfect intellect the standard of truth, and thus deluding the minds of the masses. The opinions of ordinary teachers are nothing but the expressions of partial knowledge, of imperfect understanding; but the teachings of the inspired ones last throughout eternity; they are always the same, because truth is eternal.

Much of the wisdom which we find in this world is not real wisdom. The knowledge of to-day will become the ignorance of to-morrow; we shall have to throw it aside. But real wisdom does not change; it is unchangeable and immutable, as unchangeable as the Eternal and Infinite Being. Those who follow the teachings of the Supreme Mind, receive the true wisdom that lies in Him. No one except the Supreme Mind can teach the lower mind; no one besides the Universal Spirit can teach the individual soul. Ordinary mortals may pass their opinions; these opinions may appeal to us for the time being, but they never go deep into our soul-being; they touch the surface of our souls, and there they end. But the real truth, when it begins to shine, penetrates to the bottom of our souls.

There is an old proverb, "God comes to see us without bell," that is, in silence; He inspires us when our minds are not disturbed by cares and anxieties. If you want to hear the voice of the Great God who speaketh within, you will have to go into your closet and shut the doors, as Jesus the Christ told you to do. Here the closet does not mean an external closet, but the closet of our hearts; and the door does not mean the outside door of a room, but the door of the senses. When the senses are silent, when the mind and intellect are still, the Lord comes and pays us a visit. There is another saying, "Let us be silent, for so are the gods." The silence of the mind and senses is the only condition in which we receive Divine inspiration; but this silence does not come until we have gone through many intermediate stages of evolution. These stages are indicated by the struggles of our minds and intellects. First of all, we must search after the Truth by exercising our mental and intellectual powers. We cannot realize God until we have exhausted the resources which we possess. We



first try to know God by exercising our intellect. At this stage intellectual perception appeals to us; but later on we find that intellect cannot reveal the Truth. Until then we must search, we must go here and there, ask questions, seek the help of external teachers; through these struggles we arrive at a point where we find that our intellect fails to reveal the Eternal Being; but all the time we are making progress. These struggles are only the outward signs of the progress of the soul. The progress of the soul comes from within; it is the gradual unfoldment of the latent powers and wisdom. As the bud of a lotus gradually unfolds its petals by a power which is not outside but within it, so the bud of the individual soul gradually unfolds the powers and wisdom which are already there by going through the different stages of mental and intellectual evolution. These are necessary. Mental and intellectual evolution bring out the powers and wisdom of the soul.

We cannot know what powers we possess unless they are brought out on the plane of our consciousness. So long as they are latent on the subconscious plane, we do not feel that we possess them; but, when we are conscious of them, then they are ours, and become our property. And this consciousness comes through the process of evolution and unfoldment. No one can teach us, but we teach ourselves. External teachers only give suggestions, out of which whatever appeals to our souls we receive, but the rest we reject. And such suggestions from outside teachers are necessary so long as we have not been able to discover the suggestions of the Higher Spirit. The Divine Self is constantly giving us suggestions, but we do not hear them, we cannot catch them. When, however, we have begun to hear the inner voice, we do not need any external teacher; we get lessons direct from the Divine Being,

and that is inspiration. In Divine inspiration we receive lessons direct from God, we come face to face with the Supreme Being, and enter into close communion with the Omniscient Spirit. Whosoever has received such inspiration, does not need any outside teacher; but we must not forget that, in order to hear that inner voice, we must make our minds and senses silent. As when we wish to learn something from an external teacher, we make our minds receptive, and listen intently, so if we wish to hear the voice of the Divine Teacher within us, we must make our minds receptive and turn our full attention towards the soul. We must not let our minds be distracted by external objects of sense, but must watch intently how the voice comes, and then catch it quickly. How is it possible for us to hear the voice of the Lord when our minds are filled with cares and anxieties and all the temporal thoughts and things with which we are absorbed at present? The moment that we try to hear the voice of the Lord within us, our minds are distracted by the sounds and thoughts of transitory things. Therefore we cannot hear; our power of hearing is not developed because we are constantly fixing our attention on the objects of the senses; we think that these senses are the only gates of knowledge and inspiration, but in reality they are not. Apparently they bring partial knowledge, but if we observe closely, we find that we do not receive any knowledge from outside. All knowledge proceeds from within. The objects of sense will never give you an iota of knowledge if the knowledge is not there within your soul. Sense objects will never reveal anything to you, but you are the one who perceives the objects of the senses. When we seek knowledge from the external world, we "put the cart before the horse" through ignorance.

The river of knowledge is constantly flowing in our souls. We do not know from whence that river is flowing. The source is beyond our sight, beyond our intellectual perception. In the darkness of ignorance, we think that the source is outside of us on the sense-plane, we analyze material particles in order to get some revelation; but we forget that material particles do not possess wisdom, that it is the soul which possesses true wisdom. And on account of this ignorance we waste a great deal of our time and energy. But if we try to hear the voice from within, we must make our minds and senses silent. Now, I am talking and you are listening. If your mind be distracted by noise or by any thought in your mind, you will not be able to follow me; but if your mind is concentrated and in a receptive attitude, then you will receive the truth and understand the meaning. In the same manner, if you wish to be taught by the Great Spirit that is dwelling within you, you must go into the closet of your heart, and shut the door of the senses. Then you will get the true wisdom, the real knowledge, unchangeable knowledge, the knowledge which is your property by birthright. No one can deprive you of that knowledge. We must not forget, however, that we ourselves are our own friends when we look within, when we search within; and we ourselves become our own enemies when, neglecting our true self, we go outside in search after knowledge. Book-learning will never teach us, will never bring the truth; but true knowledge will come from the soul. We may read all the books that exist in the world, but our thirst for knowledge will not be quenched by book-learning. We need the inspiration of the Higher Spirit within us in order to quench that thirst. When we leave aside all books and sit in silence, searching after that knowledge of the Supreme

Spirit, then we are more learned than all the books can make us. If we sit for half an hour in silence, we shall learn more than by reading thousands and thousands of volumes. It is in silence that God speaks within us. In that state, the higher soul reveals its true nature and the veil that has covered its face is then lifted up. That is the meaning of revelation.

Revelation does not come from outside of us, but it means the disclosure of the Divine Self within us. When the Divine Self begins to show His own being, that is revelation; that is inspiration. Through that revelation all the questions of our minds are answered. Answers to our questions in words are not the real answers; they do not satisfy the longing for Truth. But the answers which we get in silence not only satisfy the longing for truth, but destroy the roots of all doubts and bring with them a light of wisdom which dispels the darkness of ignorance and illumines the whole inner being. That answer is worth having. Questions will not stop until we have received that answer. God does not answer our questions in words, but he answers by revealing the thing which we want to know. His answers are realities and not mere words. Ordinary answers to our questions in words may satisfy our intellects, but they do not satisfy our souls, and the divine answers which come to our souls in silence are true inspiration. Blessed is he who has received such answers through revelation; him we call an inspired prophet. His utterances when codified and written out become the revealed Scriptures to the masses. We know that Christ did not write any book. He said what he had experienced in his own soul, and His words have become revealed Scriptures for us. Buddha did not write any book; his words were gathered and collected afterwards, and have become the revealed

Scriptures for the Buddhists. So with Mohammed. Mohammed was illiterate, he did not know how to read or write, he was inspired by the Divine Self within him, and his utterings are the Scriptures of the Mohammedans. These great seers and prophets do not care for academic education. Books appear as worthless when we receive higher inspiration. The inspired souls have never been produced by ordinary methods of education. They are the discoverers of the spiritual laws, who can go into silence and, coming in direct communion with the Supreme Being, can receive inspiration and infinite wisdom. You have heard of the great saint or inspired prophet of the nineteenth century, Ramakrishna. He never went to a university, and in his early life he refused to be taught by human teachers, because he said that human teachers were imperfect. Like a child he prayed to his Divine Mother: "O Mother, I am Thy child. Open my eyes that I may see the Eternal Truth. O Mother, come unto me and teach me." He prayed in this way and he sat in silence for many a year, and through prayer and silence he received the inspiration of the Divine Mother. Afterwards, when he came out before the public, the world recognized in him a divinely inspired Teacher, and they came by hundreds and thousands to see him. Where did he get his knowledge and wisdom? Not by reading books, not by taking lessons of external teachers, not by going to a priest or by hearing a sermon, but from within. And where will you get the Truth? In your own soul; go and sit in silence; watch the Divine Being; concentrate your mind toward Him; enter into the innermost corner of your own being; there you will receive the Truth.

When we have become simple like a child, then we are ready to receive inspiration. Therefore Jesus the

Christ said: "And verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein, for of him is the Kingdom of God." We have lost our simplicity; we have lost our innocence by coming in contact with the world. The world has degraded us and made us what we are not in reality. We do not know it; but if we wish to receive inspiration, if we wish to be taught by the Great Teacher of all teachers, the Divine Teacher, we must be simple like a child, innocent like a child, then the Kingdom of God will be ours. We must not seek for knowledge from external objects or external teachers; we must search within and try to hear that voice, that Eternal Voice, which is constantly speaking within our souls. That voice once realized, we have become perfect. Academic education will only put obstacles in the path of real knowledge. It will distract our minds and give us certain opinions. We must not become like phonographs of other people's thoughts. We must learn to think. It has become very hard for us to keep our minds fixed on one particular object even for a few minutes. We have lost the power of concentration, lost the power of vision, we have become fickle, listless, and therefore we do not hear the voice of the Lord. We must not think that inspiration comes to a particular soul who is elected by God. We are all worthy of inspiration; we are all worthy of revelation; but at present we do not follow the right path; therefore, we are living like fools. Being children of immortal bliss and possessing the treasure of infinite knowledge, we are to-day hungry beggars; but Vedanta comes to tell us: "Your beggary is only self-delusion; do not remain self-deluded. Wake up and learn the truth; come in touch with the infinite Being and there you will find everything to satisfy your hunger and thirst."

**PEACE**

*By* SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Behold, it comes in might,  
The power that is not power,  
The light that is in darkness,  
The shade in dazzling light.

It is joy that never spoke,  
And grief unfelt, profound,  
Immortal life un-lived,  
Eternal death unmourned.

It is not joy nor sorrow,  
But that which is between,  
It is not night nor morrow,  
But that which joins them in.

It is sweet rest in music,  
And pause in sacred art;  
The silence between speaking,  
Between two fits of passion.  
It is the calm of heart.

It is beauty never loved,  
And love that stands alone,  
It is song that lives unsung,  
And knowledge never known.

It is death between two lives,  
And lull between two storms,  
The void whence rose creation,  
And that where it returns.

To it the tear-drop goes,  
To spread the smiling form.  
It is the Goal of Life,  
And Peace—its only home!

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**VEDANTA IN AMERICA****New York**

The exceptionally interesting and instructive course of class lectures on the Bhagavad Gita which Swami Abhedananda has been giving during the past three years, was brought to a close on the last Tuesday in April; and in its place, during the month of May, a series of Question Classes was held. At these every one was allowed to ask questions, and the large attendance, as also the great practical helpfulness of the Swami's answers, makes it probable that this special course will be resumed next season at the request of the students.

The Sunday morning Service with lecture, which continued through May, has now been closed until the autumn; but the Thursday Yoga class will meet regularly during the summer, under the charge of Swami Nirmalananda.

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Dr. Frederick A. Cook, a member of the scientific staff of the Belgian Antarctic expedition, delivered a very entertaining lecture on "Explorations in the Antarctic" before the Vedanta Society in April. In the course of his lecture, Dr. Cook described the ice-covered country, the large and numerous icebergs and the abundant marine life in the Far South. He pictured vividly the utter dreariness of the long winter night while the ship lay imprisoned in the ice and the serious changes, both mental and physical, that this experience wrought in the men. And finally he told how the approach of the second winter found the ship still held fast, and how it was released only through the hard labor and perseverance of all on board.

The lecture was beautifully illustrated with colored lantern slides.

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The interest in the Washington work increases. A great number of inquiries and letters from different people there regarding the Vedanta Philosophy and its



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teachings have been received at the New York Headquarters since the faithful members of the Washington Branch started their work. As this develops, the always natural growth of Vedanta will show itself, and in the fall it is likely that this Branch will become a fully organized Center.

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Continual calls for Centers in Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, and other large cities, as well as in London, England, come to the Vedanta Society in New York. All who may feel interested and able to help in any way in establishing such Centers should write to the Secretary, at the Society's Headquarters.

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The following is an extract from a letter recently addressed to the Bulletin: "In New York City a few nights ago there met about two hundred and fifty people to discuss whether the Occident had anything to teach India. The many opinions given and suggestions offered for and against the question brought one important fact before the minds of those who were interested in the now powerful wave of Oriental thought which is sweeping over America from the Pacific to the Atlantic, and that was the conscious realization that India has a spiritual comprehension and a spiritual way of looking at the great laws of life, which we of the Occident do not understand. Another remarkable point made clear by the evening's speeches was that so many Americans are alive and awake in heart to the true position of India and to what she has to give us to-day. The many 'isms,' and cults, and New Thought movements over this vast country of ours are rapidly showing the wide growth of the seeds of the great spiritual truths which have come to us direct from India and from her own teachers. The conclusion of the discussion was that if Americans really wished to aid India, they should send men of executive power, broad intellects, and scientific training, who would not seek to Christianize India, but who would teach the practical methods of America. Let the two great nations, one

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so old and one so young, stand like the grand Himalayas and the Rockies, strong and firm, stretching out their hands for mutual help, glad to give and to take."

### California

In January of last year we received a letter from Portland, Oregon, announcing that a small group of Swami Vivekananda's former students, still full of the enthusiasm and devotion which he infused into all who came in contact with him, were starting a Vedanta Society in that city, "prepared," as one of their number stated, "to devote their lives to the work." Since that time they have held faithfully together, learning what they could from books and striving to realize the great teaching of their master. Now word comes to us that Swami Trigunatita, head of the Vedanta Society in San Francisco, is to pay them a visit and give them the help and inspiration of his personal direction for a season. This will no doubt lead to a rapid development of the Vedanta work in that district.

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Mr. Heyblom has resumed charge of the Ashrama in California, and it is expected that a number of students from the San Francisco and Los Angeles Societies will join him later.

### VEDANTA IN INDIA

An Association has been formed in India for the "Scientific and Industrial Education of Indians." Its purpose is to establish a number of travelling scholarships with which to send properly qualified students to Europe, America, and Japan for training in the special arts and industries of each of these countries; to establish a fund for advances to Indian experts returning home from foreign countries to enable them to start industries or to impart instruction in their special departments; to raise money to equip a Central Laboratory for the use of students attending the colleges of Calcutta, particularly the private colleges which cannot offer

such facilities for experimental study to their pupils; and also to equip and maintain a Technological Library and workshops for practical training in the arts and industries. This is distinctively a movement conceived and set on foot by the Indians themselves, and many Rajas have contributed liberally; but the minimum annual subscription is placed at 4 Annas or 8 cents in order that all those interested in the welfare of India may be able to enroll themselves as members. Indeed one of the most significant features of the undertaking is that it has been organized without regard to caste or creed. Almost for the first time Hindu and Mohammedan are coöperating and great care is exercised when choosing students to have every cult represented. Among those already sent out are to be found a Christian convert, a Mohammedan, a Brahmo, and followers of several Hindu sects. It has also been especially decreed that orthodox students on their return will not be outcast, because they have gone forth in the service of humanity. No student, however, is eligible unless a letter of consent from parents or guardian be attached to his application, and he must have passed at least an F. A. examination. On the completion of his course of study in a foreign country he may be granted a travelling allowance to visit the technical institutes, factories, farms or markets of other countries. Every student must bind himself to return to India and to work for the development of the country. On his return he must devote at least five years to the service of the Association in disseminating the knowledge acquired during his absence, receiving a salary of not less than \$50.00 a month and a share of the profit of any industry which the Association may help to start.

The Association has already been able to send out seventeen students, of which two have just reached New York. One is to make a thorough study of our agricultural methods and the other to learn tanning. Almost immediately on their arrival these young students sought out the Vedanta Society Headquarters, and it was a source of gratification to many of the members to be able to be of service to them and to make them feel, as they declared, that they had found a second home.

One of Swami Vivekananda's ideas in establishing Vedanta Societies in America was to create centers of communication between the Occident and the Orient, open doors, as it were, through which East and West could pass freely back and forth without a feeling of strangeness, as from one home to another. This dream of unity is now beginning to be realized, and both India and America will surely be the richer for it.

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The last annual report of the Ramkrishna Sevashram at Kankhal, has just been received. This is a hospital to aid sick and helpless Sadhus, pilgrims and others who up to that time (1901) had been without a place of refuge. More than a thousand were cared for in the first eighteen months. In 1902 a branch at Rishikesh was opened for a few months. In 1903 the total number cared for was 2702, while in 1904 there were altogether 2500, of whom 56 were indoor cases, 2444 outdoor, and 22 plague cases. Starting in a rented house, the Ashram now owns its own site, as well as some buildings which have been constructed at a considerable expense with funds provided by friends who have appeared since the work was started.

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Swami Ramakrishnananda, when returning from a recent visit to Allepy, was invited to deliver a lecture before the Theosophical Society of Cochin. The following is the address of welcome which the Society presented to him on his arrival: "We humbly trust that you will bear with us for venturing to trouble you with this address. But you stand for such a mighty movement of good, for so much that has made for the regeneration and the reinvigoration of the failing spirit of this country, that we who wish to love this land with all its traditions and memories thrice holy, we who wish that this country should once again take its place among the nations as the standard-bearer of light, wisdom and righteousness, we felt we could not pass by this occasion when you have appeared in our midst, without marking, in however poor and inferior

a degree, the sense of gratitude we feel towards the mighty school of ascetics you represent. Time was when the great institution of Sannyasa was understood only in its true and highest sense, the highest possible life of sacrifice and renunciation that can be conceived by the human mind. But the memories of the hundreds of dark years, during which this holiest and grandest of our Dharmas had been degraded and desecrated into a form of nameless self-seeking and unlimited idleness, lie heavy on the chest of this dear motherland of ours and had well-nigh choked the life out of it. But now that the Holy Order of the Blessed Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda has come into existence and has been doing its glorious work, not in India alone, but in all parts of the world, this spot on our life and this stain upon our national character has been removed and the greatness and the meaning and the significance of the ancient Royal Dharma of Sannyasa has once again been vindicated with memorable and unparalleled splendor. As belonging to such a group of benefactors of this country, we lay at your feet our profoundest salutations and beg you to accept this tribute which we are bound to pay and feel honored and blessed in paying at all times and in all places to those who are the representatives of nothing less than the undying sages, Bhaktas and Rishis of this land of the Bharatas."

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First deluge the land with spiritual ideas, then socialistic or political ideas will follow. The gift of spirituality and spiritual knowledge is the highest, for it saves from many and many a birth; the next gift is secular knowledge, as it opens the eyes of human beings towards that spiritual knowledge; the next is the saving of life, and the fourth is the gift of food.

Spiritual knowledge is given in silence, like the dew that falls unseen and unheard, yet bringing into bloom masses of roses. This has been the gift of India to the world again and again. India's gift to the world is light spiritual.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

# Vedanta

## Monthly Bulletin

That which exists is one; men call it by various names.—Rig Veda

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### THEORY AND PRACTICE

*Lecture by* SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

The universal religion of Vedanta, like all other great religions of the world, includes both theory and practice. The theoretical part of Vedanta is known as philosophy, but when this philosophy is put into practice, it becomes the religion of Vedanta, because religion is the most practical of all things. A set of impracticable theories cannot be called religion. Where theory ends, there is the beginning of true religion. Of the tree of knowledge, philosophy is the flower and religion is the fruit. In studying Vedanta one finds philosophy and religion or theory and practice going hand in hand. They are inseparable. We cannot separate philosophy from religion or religion from philosophy.

At the same time, Vedanta does not give any irrational or unscientific theory, but every one of its theories is based upon the scientific truths and spiritual laws discovered by the seers in all ages. Its theories are not like absurd dogmas founded upon tradition and superstition, which fade away under the shining light of science, but on the contrary, they are in perfect harmony with the well-established theories of ancient and modern science. And those truths, which are accepted by all, find their place in the philosophy and religion of Vedanta. Take, for instance, the theory of evolution. It is now an accepted truth. By this theory of evolution Vedanta explains the process and

modes in which the forces of nature operate and the origin of the diverse phenomena of the cosmos. The rational explanation of the universe must rest upon this theory of cosmic evolution and involution, and not upon the theory of special creation. There is no other religion in the world besides Vedanta which stands upon this firm rock of evolution and involution. All special religions, like Christianity and Mohammedanism, are founded upon the theory of special creation. But, although Vedanta, like modern science, asserts that special creation is not the proper explanation of the universe, still it has not taken the idea of evolution from modern science; on the contrary, it has always upheld and taught this theory from very ancient times. In fact, the earliest writings on Vedanta describe cosmic evolution, and in the Upanishads and in the Sankhya system of philosophy we find the explanation of the gradual evolution of the universe from one eternal Energy.

Another scientific truth, which Vedanta upholds, is that the variety of phenomena has evolved from one infinite Substance. This infinite Substance is the eternal source of intelligence and consciousness, of phenomenal existence and all the forces and powers of nature. This one Substance appears as mind and matter, as subject and object. Nor is this a mere theory, but it is the absolute truth accepted by the best scientific thinkers of the present age. The monistic scientists declare that the source of the phenomenal universe is one, and that one Substance is eternal and infinite. To realize this eternal and infinite Substance is the highest ideal of Vedanta.

Vedanta teaches that there is one substance, one existence, one life, one truth, one Spirit or God. You may call that Absolute One by any name you like.

It is not many. All the arbitrary distinctions, the ideas of separation or differentiation, although relatively true on the surface, will appear to be fictitious and unreal from the standpoint of that one absolute Substance. The higher we rise towards the realization of the Absolute Oneness, the less we become conscious of the distinctions and differentiations which exist on the material plane and on the plane of the senses. Vedanta tells us that we must realize that One Absolute Being even in this life. Here it may be asked: What shall we obtain by realizing that Absolute Being? Why should we try to realize it? What good will it bring us? This question has been answered by Vedanta thus: "By knowing this One Absolute Being, nothing will remain unknown; by attaining it, all the craving for knowledge will cease, and we shall be able to know the exact nature of everything; by dwelling in it we shall not be affected by misery, sorrow or suffering of any kind, but we shall enjoy unbounded peace and happiness in our souls under all circumstances." Furthermore, when we have realized this Infinite One, all doubts will be removed, all the questions which trouble our minds will be answered, and all the difficulties in understanding the Reality of the universe will be scattered. Then we shall see what this universe is made of, why we have come to this world, what is the purpose of our life, and where we shall go after death. All these problems are vital problems. No other science or philosophy, not even the Scriptures, can explain them. The true explanation comes in the state of realization of the Absolute. Therefore, we must make every effort to realize it, to know it and become conscious of it in this life. In this Absolute Oneness is the solution of all problems. All sciences, all philosophies and all religions meet



here, and herein we find the harmony that exists between science, philosophy and religion. All ethical questions, all questions concerning our spiritual life, as well as all social and political problems will be solved by this universal and eternal standard of Oneness. So long as we are on the plane of relativity, our minds are limited, our intellects are imperfect, our understanding is deluded. We may understand a certain portion of Truth, but the other portions we overlook, and consequently our solution is not perfect. But when that Absolute One, the Infinite Substance, is known, all these problems become clear. It is the goal of all human beings.

A disciple once went to his spiritual master and asked: "Sir, please tell me in a few words the ideal of Vedanta." The master replied: "I shall tell thee in a few words the whole truth of Vedanta, which has been explained by millions and millions of volumes; it is this: Brahman, the One Absolute Source of existence and intelligence is the Reality of the universe, the phenomenal world is unreal and the individual soul is one with Brahman."

This same Absolute Substance or Brahman is the Soul of our souls, the Life of our life; in and through it we live, move and have our existence. Whether we are conscious of it or not, that does not make any difference; it is there, we cannot deny it. But when we have become conscious of it, we become masters of all wonderful powers. Therefore, Vedanta holds this ideal of Oneness before the minds of all.

Gigantic brains, subtle logicians, great philosophers, the best metaphysicians, have written volumes upon volumes to describe this Universal Oneness. Starting from different standpoints and crossing the ocean of doubt, they have arrived at the conclusion of this

Absolute Oneness in the end. All questions that can possibly arise in human minds, all the arguments both for and against this unity that can possibly be given by intellectual giants, have been brought forward and discussed in Vedanta in order to prove the truth of this absolute unity, the oneness of existence.

The theoretical side of Vedanta explains this absolute oneness through logic, reason and science; while the practical side of Vedanta shows us the various methods by which the realization of this Absolute can be obtained. The practical side of Vedanta also claims to solve the problem concerning life and death. One who has understood the theories of Vedanta intellectually and has practiced the various methods which lead to the realization of that One, knows what the soul is, where it is, what becomes of it after the death of the body, how it comes to this world, and where it was before we were born. He also understands the value and purpose of human existence. What is the highest purpose of human life? Not making money, not merely acquiring wealth and luxuries. They do not enrich the soul. The possession of external objects cannot enrich the soul. You must learn this. A millionaire's soul is not richer than the soul of a man who is outwardly the poorest, but who is the most spiritual, who has attained to spiritual communion with the Supreme.

Practical Vedanta also tells us that the individual will is a part and parcel of the Universal Will, nay, it is one with it. That Universal Will, which is working through nature and producing the diversity of phenomena, is also manifesting itself through every individual. After describing the unity of the individual will with the Universal Will, it tells us how we can harmonize our Will with the Universal Will, so that we can accomplish greater results in our daily life. The individual

will, when separated from the Universal Will, cannot produce wonderful results, because it is limited, it is imperfect; but when connected with the Universal Will, which is perfect and unlimited, then we can accomplish everything. We become masters of nature. The body and sense-pleasures, according to Vedanta, are not the *summum bonum* of our earthly life. At present, we have become slaves to nature, and to our senses; we have forgotten the Divine glory of our true Self, and we have become enchained, bound hand and foot, and tied down by the fetters of worldliness. By studying Vedanta we understand our bondage and then we can seek the emancipation of our soul.

The ideal of practical Vedanta is to open our eyes to the Truth and Reality of the universe, and then to make us follow the methods by which we can live in this world as perfected souls, having overcome all the sorrow, sufferings, misery, disease and death which are sure to fall upon every individual. A student of Vedanta will embrace death with a cheerful heart, knowing that death cannot touch the soul. The body will drop off, but the soul will continue to remain; and if it is necessary to take another birth to fulfil certain desires, the soul will do it. Death cannot destroy that power, and, therefore, a student of Vedanta is fearless, he has no fear of death. He embraces death by saying, "Come, sister, come," and he is cheerful and happy even at the last moment.

Above all, practical Vedanta tells us how to live in this world an absolutely unselfish and pure life, doing good to humanity, and at the same time realizing that all individual souls are children of immortal Bliss. They are not children of human mortals. Of course this realization is bound to come to every individual sooner or later, through the natural process of

the evolution of the soul. We may not accomplish that realization in one life; but if hundreds or thousands of individual lives are necessary to attain it, we shall never regret, because that is the universal goal of human existence. We are marching onward towards that infinite goal, the realization of the Absolute, and we cannot stop. Although by the natural process of evolution each individual soul will become perfect after going through all the stages of that chain of evolution and gaining experience after experience at each step, still it is a long and tiresome journey, not to be desired by such as understand that process; therefore, the religion of Vedanta tells us that there is a way by which we can escape that chain of evolution and reach the result in one life, and that is by intensifying the desire to know the Truth and by struggling hard to attain it before our body is separated from our soul. If we earnestly struggle in this life to know the Truth, then we shall gain it in one incarnation; otherwise, we may have to go through many births and rebirths on this plane of imperfection. But he who sincerely tries to realize that Absolute One and who struggles hard to attain it in one life, easily transcends those laws which constantly enchain the soul and bring it back again on the mortal plane.

The ideal of practical Vedanta is to make us realize the grandeur and majesty of the individual soul and what powers it already possesses. Its aim is to establish true universal brotherhood. I do not mean that kind of brotherhood which we so often hear about, and which, when properly examined, appears to be like a garb, under which are hidden selfishness, animosity, hatred, jealousy, ambition for petty earthly objects, quarrelling and fighting for fame and powers, but I mean that real brotherly feeling which proceeds from

disinterested love without seeking any return whatever. As true love means the expression of Oneness, it is, we may say, that feeling which is the outcome of the realization of Oneness on the highest spiritual plane. Divine love begins to flow in that soul which has realized this Oneness. He then loves all human beings, nay, all living creatures, equally, irrespective of their class, caste, color, race or nationality. He becomes a living God on earth. God loves all human beings equally. He is impartial; His love is not directed to one particular soul or to a particular class of people, but His love is universal, and when we possess that Divine love, we cannot help loving all human beings and all living creatures. We do not ill-treat the lower animals then; we are kind to them, we help them, and try to relieve them in time of distress as we would relieve our own brother. That is real brotherly feeling, it is more than the so-called brotherhood, it is the spiritual Oneness which is the ideal of all.

The mission of Vedanta is to establish that oneness and to bring peace, toleration and perfect harmony among the different religions, sects, creeds and denominations that exist in this world. Its object is to teach us how we can recognize the rights of every man and woman from the standpoint of spiritual oneness, and thus to give a firm and eternal foundation to all social, political and religious movements of all countries and among all nations of the earth.

You will notice how broad and universal are these ideals of Vedanta. They are not confined to any particular time or place or nationality. They can be applied in any country, at any time, under any circumstances; for these ideas are many-sided and all embracing. They are universal in their aspects and as wide as the heavens over our head. Having given the

theoretical and practical sides, the religion of Vedanta describes the means by which these ideals can be realized and the methods by which we can live up to them in our practical everyday life. These methods are called *Yogas*, the different paths by which the Absolute Oneness can be reached. But, in order to live up to those ideals, the first thing that is necessary is to grasp the central truth of Oneness,—that we are all spiritually one. Do not forget it. As individual souls we are also one with the Supreme Spirit. The constant hearing of this central truth will enable us to understand the meaning, and this is the first step of practice. Then we should concentrate our mind and meditate upon that Oneness,—the absolute one existence, all-pervading, dwelling everywhere, manifesting itself in various forms, the source of all intelligence, consciousness, powers and forces. We should read such books as will describe that Eternal One; we should associate with such people as are struggling to rise from the perception of multiplicity to the realization of the internal unity; and we should perform such acts as will remind us of that Absolute Oneness in our daily lives, as will make us feel that we are one with all, and that all souls are children of one immortal and eternal Being. In our everyday life we should watch whether our acts tend to diversify or to unify; if they are going to diversify, then we should abandon such works for the sake of that Absolute Oneness. We should sacrifice all works that lead to diversity of feeling for the sake of oneness. All those feelings which we call wicked lead us away from that central truth of oneness,—hatred, jealousy, malice, quarrel; but love, fellow-feeling, sympathy, all these tend towards that oneness. We should follow those acts which unite us with the one Infinite Being, and we should renounce the rest.

Practice means constant effort with whole heart and soul to realize that we are parts of the Infinite until the goal is reached. Material prosperity and striving for material gain are not the highest aim of practice. To cure a disease of the body is not the highest ideal of practice. But to know that we are parts of the Infinite, that we are immortal, and to practice in our daily lives all the methods by which that knowledge can be gained, that realization will come, is the highest of all practices. The various methods, Raja Yoga, Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, and others, are described in Vedanta. The practice of Raja Yoga will lead us to that realization. Then all disease, suffering, and sorrow will vanish. If you cure one disease of the body, another disease will come,—you may go on curing forever. But if you have known that you are a part of the Infinite, you can have no disease at all, since you are a soul. Why, you are free from disease forever! That would be higher than merely curing a particular ailment. The practice of Raja Yoga, the practice of breathing exercises, will help us in gaining God-consciousness, that consciousness of the universal unity. Through this constant practice will come realization. Breathing exercises will purify our body and our nervous system. They are imperfect and impure at present. Our system is full of impurities which we have gathered through our imperfect mode of living. We must regulate our food and drink, and then, through the breathing exercises, we should first remove all physical obstacles and purify the body. Then concentration and the practice of self-control will help us in removing the mental and intellectual obstacles, and ultimately, when these are removed, our hearts will be purified, and “blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

God-vision, God-consciousness, should be our ideal and not success in business. Success in business, whether it comes or goes, is only temporary. This is necessary so long as we are living on this plane, but it does not enrich the soul. We must not forget this. If we seek success in business and material prosperity, we must never forget that they are all secondary; the highest end is the purification of the heart and the realization of the Absolute One.

You must know that, and the practice of Raja Yoga, the breathing exercises, will help you in knowing the grandeur of the soul, its immortal nature, which will continue to exist even when everything is dead and gone. What have you done for your soul? Mere intellectual apprehension will not make you perfect. Practice is necessary. It is practice that makes one perfect. God-consciousness, absolute freedom and perfection will come simultaneously. And at that time, when you have gained God-consciousness, you will live in this world as a perfected soul, and after the death of the body, you will be free from all birth and death, all imperfection, you will transcend all laws that govern the phenomenal plane of existence. Then you cannot injure anyone, cannot hurt anybody; and, therefore, it is said in Vedanta: "He who sees the same Divinity as dwelling in all living creatures, cannot hurt or injure anyone, mentally or physically, and, therefore, he has attained to the highest goal, the Supreme Being of all religions."

### THOREAU ON VEDANTA

The great Concord philosopher says in his Journal:  
"The Hindus are more serenely and thoughtfully religious than the Hebrews. They have perhaps a purer, more independent, and impersonal knowledge



of God. Their religious books describe the first inquisitive and contemplative access to God; the Hebrew Bible a conscientious return, a grosser and more personal repentance. Repentance is not a free and fair highway to God. A wise man will dispense with repentance. It is shocking and passionate. God prefers that you approach him thoughtfully, not penitent, though you are the chief of sinners. It is only by forgetting yourself that you draw near to Him.

“The calmness and gentleness with which the Hindu philosophers approach and discourse on forbidden themes is admirable.

“What extracts from the Vedas I have read fall on me like the light of a higher and purer luminary, which describes a loftier course through a purer stratum—free from particulars, simple, universal. It rises on me like the full moon after the stars have come out, wading through some far summer stratum of the sky.

“The Vedant teaches how, ‘by forsaking religious rites,’ the votary may ‘obtain purification of mind.’

“One wise sentence is worth the State of Massachusetts many times over.

“The Vedas contain a sensible account of God.

“The religion and philosophy of the Hebrews are those of a wilder and ruder tribe, wanting the civility and intellectual refinement and subtlety of the Hindus.

“I do not prefer one religion or philosophy to another. I have no sympathy with the bigotry and ignorance which make transient and partial and puerile distinctions between one man’s faith or form of faith and another’s—as Christian and heathen. I pray to be delivered from narrowness, partiality, exaggeration, bigotry. To the philosopher all sects, all nations, are alike. I like Brahma, Hari, or Buddha, the Great Spirit, as well as God.”

*(Published in Atlantic Monthly.)*

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## VEDANTA IN AMERICA

### New York

A special meeting of the Vedanta Society in New York was held on June 1st, for the purpose of confirming the decision, reached at the April meeting, to add to the classes of members already named in the Constitution a fifth class to be known as Associate Members. Any person residing at a distance may now become an associate member of the Society by paying a yearly due of \$5.00. He will then have the privilege of seeking help and counsel from the Swamis and of enjoying many of the advantages of the parent Society when visiting New York, besides which he will also receive the Monthly Bulletin free of charge. When there is a sufficient number of Associate Members in any one community it is hoped that they will form themselves into a Branch under the guidance of one of the Swamis, who will go at intervals to lecture before them and give them personal help and direction in their work. When, again, the Branch grows strong enough to maintain a Swami in residence, it will then become an independent Center with its own organization.

Another subject of unusual interest brought up before the meeting for consideration was that of a Vedanta summer home. As the Societies on the Pacific coast have for some time past had their Ashrama, or Peace Retreat, so there is a strong feeling among the members that the Society in New York should establish a similar Retreat for earnest students who may be anxious to spend their vacation in retirement in order to practice Yoga and live up to the ideals of Vedanta. If nothing can be done immediately in this direction, it is still an end for which all those interested in the Vedanta work should strive.

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The attendance at the Yoga classes was so large during the month of June that both weekly meetings were continued. Hereafter, however, only the Thursday class will be held.

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### VEDANTA IN INDIA

The Secretary of the Vivekananda Society of Colombo, Ceylon, writes: "The Vivekananda Society here is getting on well. It has more than one hundred members and now there is a proposal to get down a Swami from the Math (at Belur)." The increasing number of these groups of young men, which are being formed all over India and in the neighboring states for the purpose of studying and living the ideals of Vedanta as taught by Swami Vivekananda and the other Swamis of the Ramakrishna Mission, shows what a mighty regenerating and reanimating movement these spiritual teachers have begun, and how well-founded were the statements made by the *Theosophical Society of Cochin* in its recent address to Swami Ramakrishnananda (published in the June Bulletin) that the members of the "Holy Order of the Blessed Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna had once again vindicated with unparalleled splendor the ancient Royal Dharma of Sannyasa," and in the wonderful work they were doing were proving true "benefactors of their country" and "representatives of nothing less than the undying sages, Bhaktas and Rishis of this land of the Bharatas."

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The following letter from the Inspector of Schools at Murshidabad testifies to the excellent work that is being done there by Swami Akhandananda: "I visited the Ramakrishna Orphanage and Lower Primary School at Sargachhi near Bhabda. I was much pleased with what I saw there. The Swami, a disciple of Ramakrishna (Paramahansa) seems to have the sympathy of the local public both European and Indian in the useful work that is being done by him. The boarders are taught carpentry, weaving, and tailor work. I have suggested to the Swami that regular teachers in these subjects may be reappointed; this suggestion, if adopted, would improve the chances of the school getting special encouragement from the government."

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A letter has also been received recently from Swami Akhandananda himself in which he makes special

reference to the terrible earthquake in India. "You have heard by this time that our poor country has suffered much of late from a tremendous shock of earthquake," he writes. "It was on the morning of the 4th of April last, and its violence was much felt by the Punjab and its surroundings. This sort of calamity was never witnessed by our country before, except in 1897, which was not so violent as the present one. Many thousands of people have died and hundreds of villages and towns of the Punjab have totally disappeared. I am very sorry to let you know that owing to my inability to leave the Orphanage, I could not immediately start for the Punjab to help the poor sufferers in my humble way. I have heard that two of our brothers have gone to Punjab from Mayavati Advaita-Ashrama. I am so unfortunate that I could do nothing for the poor suffering multitude of the Punjab, so I have only proposed to convene a meeting here to-morrow in the Orphanage with the school boys and their guardians and with some of our local friends. I have written a paper on the subject, which will be read before the meeting to raise an amount of subscriptions from them for the help of the poor sufferers. The boys of the Orphanage have had to stop their *tiffin* once a day for some time, sympathizing with the poor people of the Punjab, who are now in such great distress."

It is especially touching to think of the little boys of the Orphanage voluntarily depriving themselves of a portion of their limited daily ration in order to aid their suffering brothers of the Punjab; and if their example should inspire anyone in this country to join with them in their unselfish work, we shall be glad to receive the contributions and see that they are sent to the Relief Fund of the Ramakrishna Mission.

In this connection it is interesting to read in the English weekly "India," that "The Tokio newspaper, 'Oiji Shimpō,' has forwarded a donation of 1,000 pounds to Lord Curzon for the Earthquake Fund, with a message expressing the hope that the donation 'will serve to convey the sentiment of true sympathy felt by Japan with the Indian Empire of our well-beloved

ally.' The Viceroy has sent a reply in which he says that both peoples have felt warmly for each other in recent events, and that the British and Indians admire the chivalry and heroism of the Japanese, facts which cannot fail to draw the two great nations closer to each other."

There has always been a feeling of natural sympathy between the Hindus and Japanese, independent of England, and of late years this has grown especially strong between the Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order and a certain group of earnest thinkers in Japan. The seeds of this close friendship were planted by Swami Vivekananda during a visit there on his way to the Religious Congress at Chicago in 1893. So profound was the impression created at that time by his teaching and personality that, on his return from the West, a number of prominent Japanese joined together and sent him an urgent invitation to come once more to their country as their honored guest and continue the great work he had already begun. Later the eminent writer Okakura journeyed in person to Calcutta to try to persuade the Swami to return to Japan with him. Although he was unsuccessful, his visit resulted in a still warmer feeling of good will. It was Swami Vivekananda's gifted English disciple, Sister Nivedita, who wrote the preface to his book, "The Ideals of the East," and he was the guest of another devoted disciple during his sojourn in New York, while supervising the publication of his "Awakening of Japan." All the friends and members of the Order of Ramakrishna who have visited Japan, have likewise met with the most hospitable welcome; and everywhere, both in the Occident and the Orient, is there evidence to-day of a growing spirit of unity between the followers of Vedanta and Japanese scholars and thinkers.

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No greater mistake can be committed than to look upon work as the be-all and end-all of human life. Work is the first chapter of human life; God is the conclusion.—*Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna.*

# Vedanta

## Monthly Bulletin

That which exists is one; men call it by various names.—Rig Veda

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### PSYCHIC PHENOMENA

*(Abstract of lecture by SWAMI ABHEDANANDA)*

JESUS, the Christ, manifested a great many wonderful powers, like walking on the sea, opening the eyes of the blind, curing diseases, and so on. All these powers have also been manifested by other great Saviours of the world. These powers are universal; no one can claim that they belong to one particular manifestation alone and not to others; in fact, in our present day, we find that many enlightened minds possess similar powers, the difference being only in degree and not in kind.

Man is the epitome of the universe, says Vedanta. Whatever power exists in the macrocosm exists also in the microcosm. The same forces which operate in the physical nature also manifest themselves through the body of a human being. The gigantic forces of nature which move the world, such as the power of attraction, gravitation, heat, light, motion, electricity, are also operating through the microcosmic body of a human being; the difference is in degree. As on the physical plane, so on the mental or psychic plane. The mental powers, which have been from time immemorial exhibited on the human plane of existence, demonstrate the fact that these powers also exist in the cosmic or universal mind, only in an infinitely larger proportion. All mental powers which human beings manifest proceed from the cosmic mind, which is the storehouse of infinite powers and infinite phenomena, and which forms the background of individual minds. Individual minds may be called eddies in that eternal current of the cosmic mind or the universal mind. The current of the universal mind has been constantly flowing from eternity to eternity, producing an in-

finite number of eddies or individual minds, generating waves of different size and dimension which are known as mental functions or psychic phenomena. These waves rising from the subconscious plane, reach the plane of consciousness, then go down again below the threshold and remain merged in that realm of subconscious mind, the subliminal self. The subliminal or subconscious mind is much larger than the portions of which we are conscious. The life of an ordinary man or woman represents only the commonest powers of the mind substance, such as thinking, willing, or volition, reasoning, discriminating, feeling, motion; but these powers we do not consider as wonderful, although they are equally marvellous, because we find them almost everywhere.

If we trace the origin and process of reasoning or thinking, we shall find that it is the most wonderful power that exists in the universe—still we do not pay any attention to it; we do not call it marvellous or supernatural, because we consider it as a natural property of human mortals. But whenever we find any extraordinary manifestation of any of these powers we look at it with great admiration, awe and reverence. Those who manifest such extraordinary powers are known as geniuses and prodigies. We recognize them and adore them on account of their powers, because they are uncommon, and we do not find them in our ordinary daily lives. The tendency of the human mind is to recognize and value that which is rare and uncommon, and for this reason we admire geniuses and prodigies. They possess a certain power, something which makes them shine over the heads of the multitude, and therefore we look at them with admiration and wonder. They are like gems in the midst of ordinary stones. But these great geniuses display their powers in different planes,—in art, in science, in morality, in spirituality, and so on. What a musical prodigy or genius can do may be impossible for a prodigy in mathematical calculation; what Mozart did could not have been done by Pascal, and what Pascal did could not have been possible for Mangiamelo, the son of the Sicilian peasant,

who was never taught any mathematics, but who was just like a mathematical machine. There are many other instances of such prodigies and geniuses. As geniuses and prodigies display unusual powers of the subconscious mind on intellectual and artistic planes, so there are many wonderful prodigies in various departments of the psychic field. There are hypnotists who possess wonderful powers, and they may be considered as geniuses, but we do not recognize them as such. We limit the terms "genius" and "prodigy" to a certain class of individuals, but hypnotism is a wonderful power.

Like hypnotism, telepathy, or thought-transference, mind-reading, clairvoyance, clairaudience, are marvellous psychic phenomena. Telepathy we can now understand better by studying the process of wireless telegraphy. If you have a transmitter and a receiver, then the message can be sent, but they must be on the same plane of vibration. I have already described that human minds are like eddies in that one eternal current of cosmic mind; therefore they are connected, and that connection is made apparent when telepathy or thought-transference is practised. You can sit in one room and your friend in another; then if you have a certain thought and your friend be *en rapport* with your self or your mind, he will receive the message. The mental space is behind the physical space. We must not forget that there are three spaces. Physical space is not the only space. There is mental space and there is a spiritual space, still higher. So messages can be sent on the mental space and can be received.

Telepathy is possible at a great distance. Your friend may be in Europe or on the other side of the earth, in India, and yet you can send a message and receive one. Thought-vibrations travel more quickly than any other known power or known vibration. They are quicker than electricity; therefore it is said that mind can go anywhere, to the sun or to the moon and all through infinite space in no time. And these powers show that mind can see and hear and smell at a great distance. Ordinarily our minds are engaged



within the limits of the sense organs and sense powers. We depend for our perceptions upon these organs or senses, but with the psychic it is different. A psychic does not depend upon sense powers and sense organs. His mind is freed, emancipated, liberated from this slavery to the senses; his mind is released from the organs. But those who are living on the sense plane, depending upon the sense powers, do not realize that mind is the seer, mind is the hearer. They think that the body is absolutely necessary for the perception of objects, just as an ordinary person, who does not know anything about wireless telegraphy, will consider that a dynamo, electric wires and other apparatus are absolutely necessary for sending a message; but those who understand the atmospheric electricity will not be limited by those conditions. Similarly, those who possess psychic powers,—like clairvoyance and clairaudience,—will understand how the mind can see, hear, and smell at a distance. Here let me give an authentic, historical record of the wonderful power of clairvoyance.

The great German philosopher Kant writes in his "Dreams of a Spirit Seer" regarding the supernormal powers of Emanuel Swedenborg. After describing his power of mind-reading and of spirit-communication, he writes of his power of clairvoyance: "In September, 1759, at four o'clock on a Saturday afternoon, Emanuel Swedenborg arrived at Gottenburg from England, and was invited by a friend to his house. Two hours after he went out, then came back and informed the company that a dangerous fire had just broken out in Stockholm (which is about fifty German miles from Gottenburg), and that it was spreading fast. He was restless and went out often; he said that the house of one of his friends, whom he named, was already in ashes and that his own house was in danger. At eight o'clock, after he had been out again, he declared that the fire was extinguished at the third door from his house. This news occasioned great commotion throughout the whole city, and was announced to the governor the same evening. On Sunday morning Swedenborg was summoned to the



governor, who questioned him about the disaster. He described the fire precisely,—how it had begun, in what manner it had ceased, and how long it had continued. On Monday evening a messenger arrived at Gottenburg who had been despatched by the Board of Trade during the time of the fire. In the letters brought by him the fire was described precisely as stated by Swedenborg.”—Human Personality, pp. 569-570.

The power of clairaudience is also wonderful. We all know the remarkable psychic power of Joan of Arc. She heard a voice saying that there was a sword behind the altar; it was true, and she got that sword. Socrates used to hear voices; and there are many living instances where this power of clairaudience has been manifested.

Psychometry is another psychic power. By psychometry a person can read a sealed letter and describe the physical condition and the character of the writer. I know of an instance in this city of a psychometrist, on whose forehead I held a sealed letter, and that person described exactly the physical body, the dress and everything concerning the writer. These things come in the form of visions. When a seer holds a letter on the forehead, he first sees the writer and afterwards the writing. A psychometrist at one time held a piece of stone in her hand, and in a vision saw the villa of Cicero, the nature of which was entirely unknown to her. She did not even know that that piece of stone was brought from the villa of Cicero, and she described exactly from what spot or corner it was taken, and so on.

There are other powers which are manifested by persons of abnormal disposition. Sometimes amongst insane persons you will find the development of some psychic power. One of the most remarkable psychic phenomena is the disintegration of personality as found in a trance condition. The personality disintegrates and divides itself, and then the personality vanishes. Sometimes you find in certain persons plurality of personality. Thus, at one time, the person behaves like one person, and at another time like

an entirely distinct individual. The other day I was reading about a girl who had ten personalities and who has created a great sensation in England. But these different personalities are only the different manifestations or expressions of the latent impressions that are dormant in the subconscious mind or subliminal self. When they rise above the threshold and appear on the conscious plane, they manifest themselves as different individuals, but we must not think that ten souls take possession of that girl. No, it is the same person, the same individual soul, who possesses these powers and different personalities, because personality is nothing but a kind of garment, a clothing, a thinner, finer psychic garment of the soul. Personality is not eternal, but the individual self is eternal. People in this country make a great mistake as regards the personality and individuality of the soul. The word "personality" comes from the Latin word "persona," mask, that is, the covering; and the first covering of the soul is the thought body which we call subtle body. That may change. You may throw away one subtle body and take another, as in a dream you can take an entirely different personality. A man may become a woman in a dream, or a woman a man, but all these are the uprising or uprush of the latent impressions of the subconscious mind, and they are visualized, so our present personality will not last forever. We need not fret about it. The soul is sexless. Some people think because we are male or female we shall remain like this forever. No, that is not so. The soul can take a male form or a female form, and of course there is a law which governs it, the law of desire, the predominance of certain powers and desires that determines our sexes; but the soul itself, or the mind itself, is sexless.

Then *Telekenosis* is another remarkable psychic power. It means the power of moving heavy bodies. At one time I was the guest of a friend, a doctor in Boston, who possesses this unusual power. There was a heavy, old-fashioned dining-table; three or four persons could not lift it. After dinner he called me to sit with him at the table, so I sat down, while he put

his hands on the table and asked me to do the same. There was no one else present, except his wife. She stood at a distance, and we two sat at the head of the table and put our hands on the table; after a short time the table began to crack, and I looked at him. He was perfectly self-possessed and was talking with me. He said, "Do you see this?" I said, "Yes. What is it?" He said, "The table is coming apart." And when that noise stopped the table began to move all around the floor and came so fast towards us that we were finally pushed against the wall, there we stopped. My friend is a well-known physician and does not believe in spiritualism or the possession by spirits, still he has this power. He asked me how I could explain it. I said that it was the power of Prâna, and that power of Prâna can move the world, it is moving the world, it is everywhere, and when it is manifested by any particular instrument of the human body it can do wonders.

The power of mental healing is another great psychic power, and we know that this power is demonstrated scientifically by men and women of different countries; in fact, the faith-healers, mental-healers, Christian Scientists, divine-healers and all other kinds of healers manipulate the same kind of power and cure diseases. The mind can create diseases, and all those diseases that can be created by the mind can also be cured by the mind. It is a fact that you can get a blister on your skin if you can concentrate upon any particular spot. You know of the stigmata that Francis d'Assisi and many others had. That was not by the grace of Jesus, the Christ; anybody can get them by concentration. In old times we did not understand the mental powers; we thought that these powers came directly from Heaven, but now we know that they are the powers of the subliminal self, or subconscious mind. These psychic powers have been exhibited in India from very ancient times. They have been studied carefully and have been made into a science. They are called in Sanscrit "Siddhis." Siddhis means accomplishment on the psychic plane, and a person who possesses these powers is called Siddhai—it may be a man or a woman.

Those who have read Swami Vivekananda's "Raja Yoga" will remember that in the third chapter of the aphorisms various powers and psychic phenomena are described, and these powers can be attained by psychic Yogis. There are some, of course, who are born with certain psychic powers fully developed, while with others these powers are latent, and the science of Raja Yoga claims that these powers are latent in all human beings. Everyone possesses them because these powers belong to the cosmic or the subconscious mind, or whatever you may call it. Our minds and our bodies are merely the channels through which these powers manifest.

By ordinary individuals these powers are not manifested because the door is closed; but anyone who wishes to develop these powers can do so by going through certain exercises, by following the instructions of a psychic Yogi and by practising those instructions faithfully. A psychic Yogi says that the power of concentration is the key of the realm of psychic phenomena. We know very little of this power of concentration, the concentrated force of the mind substance. It will create wonders, and any person who possesses this power of concentration wholly developed can easily become absolute master of the psychic realm, can bring all other forces of nature under control and make them obey him as their lord and master. A psychic Yogi can know his past and future. He can read the past events of one's life and prognosticate the future. Of course, it is a very unusual thing, and when this power is manifested we call him a prophet. There have been many such prophets; no particular religion can claim that it alone has produced prophets and that no other religion has. You go to the Mohammedans and ask them how many prophets they had, you go amongst the Buddhists, amongst the Hindus, the Chinese, and Thibetans,—you will find that they have produced a great many prophets. We do not know of them because we have not read their history; we do not care to read, we are busy with our own affairs; but a comparative study of religions will show that every religion has produced

a great many prophets. There are living prophets, and in every age we find such great psychic Yogis.

A psychic Yogi can understand the meaning of the sounds of wild animals who have a language of their own. Those who have read Rudyard Kipling's "Second Jungle Book" will remember the most remarkable instance of the psychic Yogi named Puran Bhagat. He was a great official at one time, and then renounced everything and went to live in a cave in the Himalayas. At one time he met a wild deer, heard the sound of that deer, understood its meaning, and in consequence saved the lives of the sleeping population of a whole village in the Himalayas from an immediate, terrible and most destructive landslide, which wiped out the whole village in a few minutes. In the middle of the night he went to the village on hearing the sound of the deer and wakened the sleeping population, and thus saved their lives, and the deer was the cause of it. You see, what we cannot understand on account of our limitations can be noticed by wild animals instinctively, and that instinct is nothing but the power of the subconscious mind. The lower animals have minds, they have feelings, and they have subconscious mind, and sometimes, knowing beforehand what is going to happen, they get frightened when we do not; and there are many other instances of such psychic phenomena in India.

A psychic Yogi can make himself disappear in the midst of a crowd in broad daylight. This is one of the powers which you do not ordinarily find. There have been several instances of such psychic Yogis who have disappeared from close confinement, under constant watch, and appeared elsewhere outside of the room. They can make their bodies, as they claim, like cotton-wool and pass through space. It seems absurd, but they claim that they can do it. A psychic Yogi can state exactly the hour and minute when he will pass out of his body and can prove it by experiment. When I was in India I heard of several instances of psychic Yogis who announced that they would pass out of the body on such a day at such an

hour. They were in perfect health; but they invited their friends, gave away all the things that they wished to distribute, fed their guests, prepared their own coffins, told where they wanted to be buried, and exactly at the hour named passed out of the body. In fact, these psychic Yogis can die at any time they want; they know the process of death, and how a Yogi can get out of the body with full consciousness. Then, the psychic Yogi can communicate with disincarnate spirits and bring them under control. A spiritualist is under the control of certain spirits, but in India you will find that these psychic Yogis bring spirits under their control and can make them do whatever they wish, without being controlled by them. That power has not been developed by any spiritualist here that I know of.

A psychic Yogi, by gaining mastery over his nerve-centers, can make his body light in weight, can walk on thorns barefooted, or on burning fire, and will not sink in water. You have read of remarkable instances of Yogis going through burning fire in some pagan initiations which are described in certain books, and they can do it. How do they do it? They do not walk on fire,—they walk over the water, over the fire, by making their bodies light and raising themselves above the surface. It is a power which counteracts the tremendous force of gravitation.

You have heard of levitation, and that power is generated by certain practices. For instance, if you practice Raja Yoga for a certain length of time and go through certain processes, you will be lifted right up from the chair on which you are sitting and thrown perhaps on your face, perhaps on your side. That is the reason why students are advised to sit on the floor and thus avoid that danger, and many of the students here have proved this fact. What power throws you off the chair? The power is only the partial manifestation of that tremendous force which counteracts gravity, and so the psychic Yogis can lift themselves into the air and walk. The same power makes them walk on the surface of the water. It makes them light. You hear of the wonderful power which Jesus

Christ showed when he walked on the surface of the water, but this is one of the common powers of the psychic Yogi. A psychic Yogi can also remember, by the power of his concentration, many of his incarnations or births, and it is said that Buddha remembered five hundred of his births.

A psychic Yogi is one who is advanced far enough in the psychic realm to possess these eight wonderful powers of phenomena. He can make his body as small as a minute particle; he can make himself light as cotton-wool, and walk on the surface of the water, on thorns, on burning fire, as Jesus did, and as some disciples of Buddha and of Sankaracharya, the great commentator of the Vedanta philosophy, did. Then there is another power by which they can make themselves huge and extremely heavy. Five or ten persons cannot lift them. By still another power a psychic Yogi gets whatever he wishes, controls whatever he wants, makes the laws of nature obey his commands, and fulfills his desires by his will-power. We often hear of the allegorical story of a man, sitting under the tree of the fulfillment of desires, which they say is in Heaven. He wished for certain things;—that he might have the delicious dishes of an emperor, and many attendants to serve him, and all these delicious dishes appeared and he ate of them. Then he wished for girls to come and play music and entertain him, and the damsels appeared; but as he was enjoying this, it flashed through his mind, what if at that time a tiger came, and immediately a tiger came and swallowed him up. This shows what is possible. Whatever we desire, we get; and in a certain state, a Yogi can fulfill his desires by his will.

In describing these psychic powers, however, Raja Yoga says that they are not desirable. Although the psychic Yogi is free from all diseases and pains, can live as long as he wishes, and is not subject to death; still Raja Yoga says that these powers are obstacles in the path of spirituality. Psychic phenomena are not the signs of spiritual progress or God-vision; it is progress on the psychic plane; and there are a great many instances given in India of those who possess psychic



powers. One of them is this. A young man who was very anxious to possess certain psychic powers left his home and parents and brothers and went out in the forest in search of a psychic Yogi. After a long time he discovered one. In India, of course, we have large forests, and people who develop these powers seek a secluded place where they can go and stay undisturbed and practice. So this young man went to the Yogi, became his disciple and lived with him for fourteen years, following his instructions very closely and practicing exactly as he was told. One day he went to bathe in a river and suddenly discovered to his great amazement that he did not sink, that he walked on the water. He told his master, who was very much pleased to see that his disciple had accomplished something. Then the disciple thought he had gained exactly what he wanted, and he wished to make a show of it; so he left his master and came home to surprise his brother, who asked him what he had gained. He said, "Brother, come with me to the river-side; I will show you what I have gained." When they went this young psychic Yogi showed his brother by walking over the surface of the water of the river. In the meantime, his brother took a ferry-boat and went on the other side by paying a penny. Then, when they reached the other shore, the brother asked this young psychic Yogi, "My dear brother, how did you acquire this wonderful power?" His brother answered, "Why, I have gone through tremendous hardships and privations; I have practiced for fourteen long years without eating or drinking much, and without sleeping." Then his brother, who had a little common-sense, said "What a pity! You have spent so much time and energy and have gone through so much trouble to get that which is worth a penny! How foolish you have been!"

Psychic powers are glorified by those who are on the plane of worldliness; they are great powers in the eyes of the world. Worldly people admire and run after them, but the great spiritual teachers do not care for them. On the contrary, they consider them as great obstacles in the path of spirituality; they do

not deny their existence; they admit it, but at the same time they say that, if you pay attention to these powers, you will not rise on the higher plane of God-consciousness, you will remain confined within the psychic realm. It is for this reason that Jesus the Christ, that Buddha, Ramakrishna, and other great spiritual leaders of mankind, forbade their disciples to make any demonstration of psychic powers or psychic phenomena, but taught them to obey the true spiritual laws by rising above psychic nature.

Those who care for name, fame, and worldly prosperity may run after psychic powers and exercise them for their selfish motives, but true seekers after spiritual perfection never crave them but shun them as obstacles and as the source of bondage and self-delusion. He is truly spiritual who wishes to rise above nature, transcend all psychic powers and who struggles hard to enter into the realm of Divinity which is beyond the plane of psychic phenomena.

### REALIZATION

*(From the unpublished Gospel of SRI RAMAKRISHNA)*

THE realization of God is not the same as psychic power. There are many Yoga powers, but when you see one who exercises these powers you may know that such an one has not realized God, because the exercise of these powers requires egotism, which is an obstacle in the path of spirituality.

Most subtle is the path of spirituality. God cannot be realized so long as there is the least desire for powers in the heart. You cannot thread a needle so long as there are fibers at the point of the thread. Krishna said to Arjuna: "Brother, if thou wishest to realize Me (God), thou must not desire any psychic powers. The possession of psychic power brings pride and egotism, then one easily forgets God. So long as there is egotism, Divine realization does not come."

Learn to love God. Be absorbed in His love. Those who seek after God with intense longing see Him, make acquaintance with Him, speak with Him, just in the same manner as I am speaking to you. I am telling you the truth when I say that God can be seen.

**VEDANTA IN INDIA**

THE Swamis of the Order of Ramakrishna are carrying on a vigorous relief work in the districts recently visited by the earthquake. Altogether four have gone to the scene of the calamity, and with supplies of food and clothes they have penetrated into localities where before them no aid had come. Only the lack of sufficient funds has set bounds to their loving efforts and even with the limited resources at their command they were able during the first six weeks following the disaster to relieve the distress of nearly one thousand men, women and children. Along their way at the outset they would often stop to build with their own hands shelter for some homeless family, but as the need for sheds multiplied, they were finally forced to secure the services of four laborers who have since journeyed with them. Many lepers, too, have received help from them, and wherever they have passed they have brought consolation to hundreds of grieving hearts. "On reaching Sara," they write, "we found the headman of the village weeping bitterly. The poor old man of 70 had lost all his children and grandchildren. Similar accounts were given by many others." In Youl "the people were trying to erect temporary sheds, which are quite inadequate as shelter and are likely to be washed away in the rainy season. No one had visited these parts before us. Food was given to 11 women, 20 men and 9 children." So they have been travelling from place to place carrying help and comfort and living the lesson so eloquently taught by Swami Vivekânanda:

"I do not believe in a religion or God which cannot wipe the widow's tears or bring a piece of bread to the orphan's mouth.

"Do you love your fellowmen? Where go to seek for God? Are not all the poor, the miserable, the weak, Gods? Why not worship them first? Why go to dig a well on the shores of the Ganges?

"I am no metaphysician, no philosopher, nay, no saint. But I am poor, I love the poor. Let these be

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your Gods. Think of them, work for them, pray for them incessantly,—the Lord will show you the way.”

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“The people here are very fond of Rudyard Kipling, and about all their knowledge about India, I find, has been derived from his books and from the reports of the Christian missionaries. . . . How I wish I was gifted with as high a power of speech as Swami Vivekananda to enlighten the people throughout the length and breadth of this country about the true condition of India, and to tell them that the money that they spend on mission work in India could be a thousand times more profitably spent in trying to ameliorate the material condition of the people there. I fully sympathize with the spirit with which your countrymen are actuated, but I am afraid the way in which it works is rather misdirected. The poverty problem, if not the only problem, is the chief problem of India, as the race problem is perhaps the chief problem of your country. The famines which carry away millions of lives in India year after year, are they due to the insufficiency of the crops grown in India to meet the demands of her people? Far from it. India is a vast tract of land having all kinds of soils and climatic conditions. If some parts suffer from drought, others do not, so what is produced in the whole country, even when there is a failure of crops in some parts, is enough for the people of India, if only they have the means to pay as high a price for the grains as that for which they are bought by foreign countries. And these epidemics which break out and decimate the population every year would have been more infrequent if the people could afford to have a better standard of living. Am I impudent enough to say that we have nothing to learn from your countrymen except what your colleges and factories impart to us in the way of scientific and technical education? Far from it. We have a great deal to learn from your social life—the equal rights of men and women, the high qualities of body and mind, I mean the wonderful activity, discipline, unity and the spirit of self-help, which characterize you as a nation;

and these we can learn by coming to your country, living in your midst and being in direct touch with you, and not by the sending of missionaries and the preaching of Christianity in India. Who would think of propagating the ethical principles of his religion to a highly moral, temperate and sober people half the world away, when he has so much field left in his own country among the lower classes given to drunkenness, gambling and all the concomitant vices! If your countrymen cherish the welfare of India in their hearts, they cannot do better than by enabling thousands of our earnest students to come over here and helping them to solve our poverty problem. Is not the wonderful progress of the Japanese in the last quarter of a century due to the sending of their students abroad for the education of the head, heart and hand, and is that not a beacon light to us? Oh! if every man of my country could have a glimpse of your highly organized life with his own eyes, and not through books, I believe India would once more regain her position among the countries of the world, which she lost by isolating herself from the rest of the world when the other formerly more backward countries progressed by mutual contact."

Such is the frank and intelligent opinion expressed in a recent letter to an American friend by a young Hindu, now studying in one of our leading universities. His judgment is the result of thoughtful observation, and makes plain that if we really wish to help India, we must cast aside religious vanity and prejudice, study her needs and listen to the voice of her own people. Otherwise all effort and money spent by us in her behalf will continue to be wasted.

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All souls are playing, some consciously, some unconsciously; religion is learning to play consciously.

Religion is not in books, not in theories, nor in dogmas, nor in talking; not even in reasoning. It is being and becoming. Religion is realization.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

# Vedanta

## Monthly Bulletin

That which exists is one; men call it by various names.—Rig Veda

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### FREEDOM OF THE SOUL

(Lecture by SWAMI ABHEDANANDA)

THE ideal of the universal religion of Vedanta is the attainment of absolute freedom, the emancipation of the soul from all bondage of selfishness, imperfection and earthly attachments. It is called in Sanscrit "Moksha" ("Mukti"), which literally means freedom. From very ancient times, the saints, sages, philosophers and spiritual teachers of this universal religion have upheld this grand ideal, have preached it amongst the masses, and have struggled themselves to attain it during their lifetime. When we read the history of the Orient, we find that kings and princes have renounced their thrones, wealthy men and women have given away their riches and property, have cut off all earthly ties and have retired to the forest in order to attain this grand ideal. They have sacrificed all earthly relations and luxuries, considering them as the source of bondage and unhappiness. But before renouncing all these earthly objects of senses, they had realized the limitations of human existence, they had understood that the life of an ordinary mortal on this plane is like that of a slave, it is a state of constant slavery to the masters who are governing us from within as well as from without. In fact, if we examine our own conditions of life, we find that no one of us is absolutely free; yet we do not realize our own state of slavery. When we look around us, we do not find a single man or woman who may be called perfectly free, but we see very few who have realized that the life which they are living is a life of

constant drudgery and unhappiness. Few have realized that individual souls are enchained by the attractions of the objects of the external world. Fewer still struggle for emancipation, and the rest delude themselves by thinking that they are free; they love their bondage and consider that this is the real condition of life, and that there is nothing higher or greater. Are we not slaves of our desires and passions? Do we not see around us men and women mad for material prosperity and powers, mad for name and earthly fame? Do we not serve these masters who are constantly ruling over our minds and souls? Where is our freedom? How can we call ourselves free, when we are slaves of anger, hatred, fear, jealousy, self-conceit, beauty, ambition and sense-pleasures? We have tied ourselves down to luxuries and bodily comforts, and we think we cannot live without them. Is this state desirable? We may delude ourselves for the time being by thinking that we are very happy, but the soul is not happy. The soul wants to get out of this condition of slavery. Are we not slaves when we consider how elated and flattered we feel when some kind words are uttered to us, and how wounded and hurt we are when we hear unkind and harsh words? Few people try to know the real condition of things. We go on living as blind led by the blind. We do not ask any questions. We find many people who are willing to help and uplift others, but they should first of all try to uplift themselves, to correct their own faults and become free from all this slavery. Here we must not forget what Jesus the Christ said: "First cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote of thy brother's eye." No one can help another, no one can lift another from the mire of slavery, unless he himself has become free and has got a firm foothold upon the rock of absolute freedom.

We are now sleeping the sleep of self-delusion; we must wake up from this sleep. We must find out how slave-like and miserable we have become. Then we must search after that freedom, attain it and give it to others. The majority of people are chasing the phantoms of hope, which appear bright at first, but which as we approach them change their colors and suddenly vanish, to reappear again and attract the pursuers to chase them over again. We do not realize that these phantoms of hope are the causes of suffering, misery and disappointment. We do not learn the lesson. We go on doing the same thing over and over again, until we are tired and exhausted, until our nerves are shattered, and we are dead. In this way we are living and obeying the commands of these pitiless masters who are governing us. We never ask for a moment whether we are born to serve these relentless masters always, or how long we will continue in this manner. We never ask these questions. Each individual loves and strives after something, not knowing what it is or how to attain it; yet the individual soul cannot rest unless it has attained that ideal. But we must find out what that ideal is, what it is that our soul wants. Our soul wants freedom and happiness. We all seek for happiness, but we do not know the conditions under which true happiness comes to the soul, because we are living in the darkness of ignorance. True happiness never comes in slavery, but in absolute freedom. The conditions under which we are living to-day will never bring true happiness in our souls. We may think ourselves happy; a fool may delude himself by thinking that he is happy but when he wakes up from that foolish dream, he will discover that it was after all self-delusion, he had not reached true happiness. He is truly happy who has become absolutely free. True happiness is the constant companion of absolute freedom.



True happiness does not change, it is eternal; and along with it come absolute peace and divine wisdom. These are the signs of true happiness. When we are truly happy, we must possess absolute peace and divine wisdom. Our spiritual eyes will be opened, we shall be able to see things in a different light, and then we shall have a glimpse of the Absolute. This freedom is the goal for all individuals. Every individual soul is bound to reach it sooner or later. It is also the goal of evolution. The evolution of nature, as well as of all individual souls, reaches its perfection, and has fulfilled its purpose when that ideal of freedom is gained.

In our everyday life, we find that we are truly happy when we have neither wants nor desires. When all our desires and wants have subsided, leaving a peaceful and restful state within us, then we are happy. As desires increase, our happiness decreases. When we want a great many things, we are not happy, because then we are limited by those wants. The soul is tied down by those desires and clamors for the fulfillment of them; it strives to regain that freedom which it had before these desires and wants took possession of it. And this desire, this want, is the cause of our misery. So long as there is one single desire or want left unsatisfied we cannot become absolutely happy. When we have certain wants, we seek to remove those wants and fulfill our desires; but, if we fail in our attempts; we are unhappy. And this desire has been the cause of a great many of the troubles that we are going through. We cannot help it, because we were born with desires. These desires we have brought from our previous incarnations. In our previous incarnations we passed away with our desires unfilled, and we are trying to fulfill them in this incarnation.

There are two ways by which we can remove these wants and desires: First by obtaining the objects of

desires, by enjoying them; and, secondly, by removing these desires through proper discrimination, by subduing them. All those desires which are connected directly with the sustenance of life, like food and clothes, should be fulfilled by getting the objects of desires, because we must protect our body first. This body will be the means by which we shall attain to freedom, shall reach perfection. And this body is the abode of the soul; we must take care of it first in order to fulfill the purpose of our life, but other desires, other passions, we can easily remove by discrimination, by exercising self-control. If we can live in this way, we shall attain unbounded peace and happiness during this lifetime. What is the use of becoming slaves to ambition and greed for wealth and possessions; what is the use of increasing our wants and desires when that is only the condition under which we become unhappy and miserable? Each individual soul is born with a tendency to create a circle of "I" and "mine." Whatever we hear or perceive with our senses, we want to bring within the limit of that circle of "I" and "mine," and call it our own. If we see anything in a shop, we want to get possession of it, that is, bring it within the circle of "I" and "mine," and then we are happy. All the things that exist outside of the limit of that circle we crave to bring within the limit, and that is the tendency in each individual soul. In lower animals you will find the same thing; but their desire is limited by hunger and appetite; that is, they collect their food and keep it for the future. But we not only collect food, we collect other things which attract our senses, and this tendency you will find is at the bottom of all those works which produce trusts and make millionaires and wealthy people at the expense of others. The fulfillment of these desires may bring happiness to a few wealthy people, but it brings misery and suffering to a

large number of individuals. Those who are living in this world, being attracted by that tendency, do not understand the real purpose of life. Their souls are enchained by greed, avarice, and ambition. They try to get possession of as many things as they can. They want to be the rulers of all, but they forget that they cannot be the rulers of the whole earth; it would be impossible for them. They are constantly serving the masters like anger, hatred, jealousy, ambition, and greed for luxury and comforts. If you examine and study the characters of wealthy men and women, you will find that they are never happy. They are constantly trying to serve these pitiless masters; they have no peace in their souls; they do not know what is meant by peace. They do not understand the purpose of life; they are merely fooling away their time in running after this thing for a few minutes, then after that thing, and so on. They are following the phantoms of hope, chasing the objects of desire, and are always restless. Contentment—they do not know what it is.

There are four kinds of souls that are to be found in this world. Those who are absolutely bound by these earthly desires and earthly tendencies; they cannot get away from them. Next, those who are trying to be free; they are called "mumukshu." They are trying to get out of this slavery and to become free. The third, those who have attained to freedom; and the fourth, those who are born free. They are like Christ, like Buddha, they are born not worldly, not as slaves, but as free souls. Their number is very small. True freedom comes to those who have reached the knowledge of their own true nature, who have realized that they are children of the Immortal Being, and whose wants and desires have become limited. This is the sign of spirituality. A truly spiritual man or woman needs very little, his desires are less. He does not seek any

comfort or luxury, he does not care for earthly possessions, he understands the transitoriness of earthly life, and he is contented and happy under all conditions and circumstances, whether agreeable or disagreeable, whether pleasant or unpleasant, and he has become absolute master of his own animal tendencies and propensities, he exercises self-control and is free from the sense of "I," "me" and "mine." We must first of all become free from the sense of "I," "me" and "mine" before we can understand what God is. Where "I" exists God cannot come. God is far from that state.

And how are we going to get rid of this sense of "I"? There are two ways by which we can get rid of this sense of "I," "me" and "mine." The first is the path of discrimination, and the second is the path of devotion. Those who travel on the path of discrimination realize that everything belongs to the universe and nothing belongs to the individual soul. Whatever belongs to the universe we cannot call our own. Through proper discrimination and analysis, they discover that when we cannot possess this physical body which we call our own, when we cannot keep it permanently, how can we expect to possess other things which are externally related to this gross material body? It is impossible. Therefore they abandon the sense of "I," "me" and "mine," and claim nothing, say that they do not possess anything. Nothing belongs to us; everything belongs to the universe. The things which we call our own in reality belong to the universe. They live as creation's servant, calling themselves nothing, and seeing everything in that Universal Being. They realize that they are not one with the body, but that the body is only a transitory abode, a shell, through which the soul is manifesting its powers. This world is like a stage where we are playing our parts, consciously or unconsciously. Some playing the part of a husband, others of a wife, others

of a mother, or a father, friends, and so on. We do not know it. These are not our actual works which we have come to do, but these are the modes of expression by which we are gaining experience, learning the lessons regarding the true nature of things, how things exist in nature, and what benefit they can bring to the soul. If one part which we have played seems to be unpleasant or seems to produce undesirable results, then we try to play another part, and this is the way we are living in this world. But those who have had their eyes opened to the reality, to the truth, have understood their true nature. And we can realize that we are not one with the body, that we are souls, that we are children of immortal bliss; then why should we run after material things which do not and cannot belong to us? Why should we run after earthly objects which can never bring true happiness and freedom? The wise man knows this, and therefore he renounces everything, renounces the attachment to earthly objects because he knows that earthly objects will never bring freedom and true happiness; and, instead of wasting his time in chasing these objects of the senses, he devotes his time and energy to seeking the highest, the eternal, the Immortal Being, which is dwelling within us.

The other method by which a devotee reaches absolute freedom and happiness is through the path of devotion. The travellers on this path believe in the existence of a personal God. They understand that the Lord of the universe is one, and whatever exists in the universe belongs to Him. They do not claim anything as their own. House, property, children, furniture, wealth and other things,—all of these things they declare belong to God. Nothing belongs to them. They say, "This child is not mine, but it is God's child. This house, this property, does not belong to me," but they give everything to God and think that He is the one being

in the universe. We are all His children. We cannot possess anything. They become free from that sense of "I," "me" and "mine"; and, instead of "I," "me" and "mine," they say "thou," "thee" and "thine." "Whatever is mine is Thine, O Lord," that is their constant prayer. Everything they possess they give to the Lord. "It belongs to Thee, O Lord, make me free from all this bondage, this attachment to earthly things, make me, O Lord, attached to Thee, the Infinite Immortal Being." And, gradually, they rise above the plane of selfishness. Selfishness exists so long as we consider ourselves as independent of God. "This is I; this belongs to me," and "This is you, and this belongs to you." This idea of separateness, of differentiation, makes us selfish. But, when we overcome our individual egoism and think of the Lord as the Universal Being who possesses all, then there is no room for selfishness. Think of Christ. Christ said: "Whatever is mine is Thine, O Lord; let Thy will be done." He resigned his individual will to the will of the Lord, and in his lifetime you will notice that he never had his own will fulfilled, but he did not care for it. He was happy when he found that the will of his Father was fulfilled. Now, how many of us can live that way? Not caring for the fulfillment of our own little individual will, but for the fulfillment of the Divine Will that is governing these individual wills? That state comes to a soul who has attained to freedom. The soul then becomes the playground of the Almighty, the Almighty Being plays through him. He has become free from all desires and wants; he does not care whether he possesses this thing or that thing; if everything is taken away from him, he is still happy. If this body be taken away from him, he does not mind. It is not a state of indifference; it is a state of strength. Very few people have realized this spiritual strength which comes to the soul who has

resigned his individual will to the will of the Lord. Resignation is necessary. In time of distress, of sorrow and suffering, when we cannot find any remedy, when we cannot find any help from ordinary mortals or from any earthly being, then we are resigned. And in resignation comes true peace and happiness. That is the real state which we are longing for. Because we cannot resign constantly, we are unhappy. We want this and we want that, and we suffer; but a true devotee of the Lord is free from all wants and desires. He cares not whether his desires are fulfilled or not, but he prays to the Lord, saying: "O Lord, Thy will be done; not mine." He has absolute contentment and at the same time he understands the true nature of the soul, the relation which the individual soul bears to the Infinite Being. He understands that all individuals are children of the Almighty Being. He has neither enemy nor foe. All are friends, all are friendly to him. He has no attachment to any particular condition or particular object; he does not care; because he knows that he can possess nothing. Everything that he had, he has given to the Lord. And then he enjoys that wisdom which we are longing for. That happiness comes to him in the present life, and, after the dissolution of the body, he remains happy always. He is no longer subject to birth and death; he has transcended the laws of nature. He communes with the Lord and sees the presence of Divinity around him everywhere. He discovers that everything dwells in God, and God dwells in everything, and realizing this he lives for the good of humanity, and all the acts of his body become a free offering to the world. He does not seek any result, but he gives them as a free offering, and, having transcended the laws of nature, the law of action and reaction, the law of Karma, he attains to divine glory and reaches perfection which lasts throughout eternity.

**POEM BY SANKARACHARYA**

*(Translated by SWAMI VIVEKANANDA)*

I am neither body nor changes of the body;  
Nor am I senses or object of the senses.

I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss  
Absolute;

I am He, I am He.

(Shivo Hum, Shivo Hum.)

I am neither sin nor virtue; nor temple nor worship;  
Nor pilgrimage nor books.

I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss  
Absolute;

I am He, I am He.

(Shivo Hum, Shivo Hum.)

I have neither death nor fear of death;  
Nor was I ever born, nor had I parents.

I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss  
Absolute;

I am He, I am He.

(Shivo Hum, Shivo Hum.)

I am not misery, nor ever had I misery;  
I am not enemy, nor had I enemies.

I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss  
Absolute;

I am He, I am He.

(Shivo Hum, Shivo Hum.)

I am without form, without limit, beyond space, beyond  
time;

I am in everything; I am the basis of the universe;  
everywhere am I.

I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss  
Absolute;

I am He, I am He.

(Shivo Hum, Shivo Hum.)



**NOTES ON LIFE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA***(By a DISCIPLE)*

AFTER Swami Vivekananda's return from America, his reception in India and Ceylon was a unique event and one of the grandest things that happened in the history of the nineteenth century. Every town and every city through which he passed was beautifully decorated; the atmosphere was filled with deafening shouts of "Jai, Jai," while crowds of men and women, young and old ran madly after him to pay their homage with flowers and garlands in their hands. He was universally revered both by the orthodox and heterodox communities. As a human being, he was honored more than a prince or a king, and as an Incarnation he was revered more than Sankaracharya, the greatest expounder of the Vedanta Philosophy.

The first thing he did after his arrival in Calcutta was to send Swami Ramakrishnananda to Madras to open a Centre which should be the Headquarters of the Southern Presidency and to give a push to the two magazines *Brahmavadin* and *Prabuddha Bharata*, started about a year and a half before. In the course of a few years the work of Swami Ramakrishnananda progressed marvelously, and to-day almost every large city in that Presidency is proud to possess a branch Society. The Swami makes a tour through the different centres every year, giving discourses on Vedanta and practical lessons on Yoga and Meditation, and he celebrates the anniversary of each as it occurs.

The next thought that occupied the attention of Swami Vivekananda was to make a permanent home for the Swamis, which should be the main centre of India and the Institution for training future teachers of Vedanta. With this end in view, he bought a big plot of ground of about eight acres situated on the western bank of the Ganges. It is a beautiful, lonely retreat, undisturbed by the hurry and bustle of a busy city like Calcutta, which is on the eastern bank of the Ganges. It consists of a large garden of flowers and fruits of divers kinds, which the tropical climate is apt to produce in season and out of season. Besides that there are two build

ings looking out on a green lawn of about three acres, upon groves of mangoes, palms and cocoanuts with two small ponds containing lotuses. One of the houses is used for practising Yoga, Meditation and other devotional services, and the other for dwelling purposes. There is a parlor in the latter which contains a library, and here morning and evening classes are held daily to teach the Neophytes. In the course of three or four years Swami Vivekananda trained some twenty young men, who later started various Centres of work in different parts of India. A few of them were sent to the Ashrama at Mayavati in the Himalayas, which had been opened a short time before by the late Captain Sevier, a European disciple of Swamiji. The Prabuddha Bharata Magazine is now published by the Sannyasins there. One of the characteristic features of this institution is that all the Brahmacharins and Sannyasins are brought up in the purely Advaita or Monistic school, hence it is called the *Advaita Ashrama*.

A third work established by Swami Vivekananda is the Orphanage at Murshidabad, one of the chief cities in northern Bengal. There a number of orphan boys are taught practical trades, such as weaving, carpentry, sericulture, and so forth. Along with this training, moral and spiritual instructions are given by Swami Akhandānanda, the founder of the Orphanage. It is supported by local help, and some of the Zemindars of the Province have contributed a sum of money and given a piece of land for building a permanent home for the orphans.

A fourth work is the "Home of Service" in Benares. This historical old city is the Jerusalem of the Hindus. Pilgrims come from all parts of India throughout the year to visit this holy land. There is a mythological tradition that he who dies in this holy land will go after death to Shivaloka, or the realms of Shiva, the giver of Atmajñānam, or the knowledge of the Self, and will attain liberation. Men and women, rich and poor alike, from every part of India retire in their old age to spend the rest of their lives in peace and devotion. There are many houses kept to let out apartments and rooms to those who wish to stay in Benares. The

poorer people, being unable to afford much, generally hire only a single room in which to pass their remaining days in peaceful retirement. But when any kind of misfortune or sickness visits them, rendering them unable to pay their rent, the cruel owners of the houses, after selling their meager possessions, turn them out to be left in the streets and to be taken care of by God. To redress the distress of these destitute and suffering souls is the aim and object of the "Home of Service." To carry on this relief work Swami Vivekananda sent some of his new Brahmacharins to Benares. The initial work was started on a small scale, but now it has grown to such an extent that they have hired a big house in which there are some fifty indoor patients. Besides these there are many outdoor patients who have a room to live in but no one to look after them. All of them now get proper medical help as well as the requisites of life. This work is entirely supported by local and provincial subscriptions. A householder disciple of Swamiji has lately contributed to the building fund of this work about two thousand dollars. Swami Shivananda, who is in charge of it, gives talks on Vedanta and Gita every afternoon.

The fifth work, founded by Swami Vivekananda, is the "Sevashrama" of Kankhal. This is a place of pilgrimage situated at the foot of the Himalayas about fifteen miles south of Hrishikesh. Sannyasins and Yogins of every sect live here all the year round. There are many *chatrams*—places where food is doled out to support them. These have been established by the Rajas and rich merchants of India. As I have told you, when Swamiji was so ill a few years back, there was in Hrishikesh no hospital to offer medical help and proper diet when these pilgrims suffered from any sickness.

To remove this want, Swamiji sent two of his Sannyasin disciples to open a hospital. Now, poor *Sadhus* get proper nursing, dieting and medicine besides sundry other necessities. A branch of this work is opened in winter every year at Hrishikesh. A gentleman of Calcutta has offered three thousand rupees to the building fund of this hospital. About four acres of land were purchased in 1902, and the building is now under construction.

About the year 1896, Swamiji's mind was bent upon doing some work amongst the women of India. Accordingly he instructed Sister Nivedita to open a school for girls wherein the Kindergarten system should be introduced along with religious and moral training. This work prospered fairly well, but there was a break a few years back when Sister Nivedita came to America to study methods in this country. Now this work has been taken up again and is being carried on with the assistance of Miss Christina Greenstidel, one of your American sisters and a disciple of Swami Vivekananda. She has not only given fresh impetus to this work, but she has started a new school for grown-up women. Along with the general line of education, she is teaching them sewing, weaving, music and other branches of useful knowledge. She is very popular, and everyone loves her. A disciple of Swamiji has presented her with a very good carriage and a horse which she utilizes for the conveyance of students. This work is supported by local help and expects to have a permanent home of its own in the near future. Several of Sri Ramakrishna's women disciples help and co-operate with her. Swami Saradananda enlightens them with talks on the Bhagavad Gita every Tuesday.

These and many other works of similar nature are being done in different parts of India, of which I need not give further detail. In short, Swamiji's spirit of work has covered the length and breadth of India.

The last wish of Swami Vivekananda and one that was left unaccomplished, was to found a Vedic Institution in Calcutta. A few months before his passing away, I mean during the Christmas Holidays, the National Congress of India was held in Calcutta. Delegates, reformers, professors and great men of various callings from all the different provinces of India assembled there on that occasion. They all came to the Belur Math to pay their respects to Swamiji every afternoon during their stay in Calcutta. Swamiji enlightened them on various subjects, social, political, religious, etc. In fact, these meetings formed a Congress in itself of a type far superior and more beneficial than

the former. One afternoon they proposed that he should start a Vedic College in Calcutta, and assured him that they would help him to carry it on in every way that lay in their power. But before the plan was matured Swamiji left this world and went to his eternal abode of peace and bliss. Thus poor India lost her brightest Kohinoor once more.

During the latter part of Swami Vivekananda's life, he used to tell his brother Swamis and his disciples that he had accomplished his mission in life and that he would shortly give up his body which was no longer of use to him. So his remaining days were chiefly devoted to giving the final impetus to his main Centre of work, the Belur Math. Three days before his passing away, as he was pacing up and down the green lawn of the Belur Math in the afternoon with a few Swamis, he pointed to a particular spot on the side of the Ganges and said to them, "When I give up this body, do you cremate it there."

On the 4th of July, 1902, he held the morning and afternoon classes in the Monastery as usual and then went out for a walk in the evening and came back, making a round of about a mile and a half. Then he joined again in the evening meditations. At about nine in the evening he retired to his own room calling one of his Brahmacharins to wait upon him. Then he sat in meditation, and after a short while took a long, deep breath and went into *Mahasamadhi* from which he did not come back. Several doctors came afterwards, examined his body minutely, and staid the whole night there trying to bring him back to consciousness. They exhausted all the means and methods of rousing him which the storehouses of their knowledge could bring forth, but all was of no avail. They could not make out the cause of his death. He did not die of any disease as ordinary mortals do, but he gave up the body of his own accord. He was born a Yogi and he died a Yogi. On the following evening, after twenty-four hours, his body was cremated on the spot chosen by him. Over this spot will be built a Memorial Hall, in which every year a sort of religious Congress will be held at the time of his birthday anniversary.

# Vedanta

## Monthly Bulletin

That which exists is one; men call it by various names.—Rig Veda

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### PRE-EXISTENCE AND IMMORTALITY

*Lecture by SWAMI ABHEDANANDA*

ONE of the fundamental principles of the philosophy and religion of Vedanta is the immortality of the human soul. According to the teachings of Vedanta, each individual soul is immortal by nature. However sinful it may appear to be from the moral standpoint, it will continue to exist after the death of the body. It cannot be annihilated or destroyed into nothingness. It can never cease to exist.

On this point the religion of Vedanta differs from the dogmas of those dualistic religions which maintain that immortal life can be obtained only by a few chosen ones as a special gift of God while others will perish. Many of the orthodox Christian theologians hold that the soul's continued life after death in eternal future is not a natural gift but a special gift, being conditioned upon the proper use of this life. They think that immortality is a reward of merit, or of good works, or of an ethical life or faith in the Christ. Here we may ask, who will decide how many degrees above zero one must be, morally, in order to obtain the gift of immortality?

If we examine minutely we shall find that this dogma of conditional immortality is not based upon a rational foundation. It makes God, the merciful Father, partial and unjust. How can we imagine that

a just, impartial and merciful Father will grant immortality to some of his children and allow the rest to perish, simply on account of their immoral acts or mistakes? The religion of Vedanta does not teach this dogma of conditional immortality, but, on the contrary, it says that immortal life cannot be a reward or a gift of any superior being, because that reward or punishment is nothing but the result or reaction of our own actions; [and since every human action is finite or limited by time and space, and consequently non-eternal, it cannot produce an eternal effect in the form of immortal life. No human action, either of the mind or of the body, however good or virtuous it may be called, can produce an eternal effect, that is, an effect unlimited by time or by space.] It will then be against the law of cause and sequence, which makes every effect or result similar to its cause, both in nature and quality.

There is another important point on which the conception of immortality in Vedanta differs from that of Christianity. Christianity, believing in the theory of special creation of the individual soul at the time of birth, denies the pre-existence of the human soul previous to the birth of the body; yet it admits the continuity of the soul after death in an eternal future. This doctrine again is not based upon a rational foundation, nor is it supported by any fact of nature, because it is impossible for a thing which has a beginning in time to last forever. No one has ever seen or heard of any substance which began to exist at a certain time but continued forever in future. Can we imagine a stick, the one end of which is in our hand and the other end is endless, unlimited? No, it is impossible. We cannot think of a thing which has a beginning or a limit either in time or in space, on one side, and on the other side is unlimited by either time or space. As

we cannot imagine any earthly object, or material thing, of such a nature, how can we imagine that the soul, which had its birth in time and space, will continue to exist forever? We cannot conceive of a soul which came into existence at the time of birth and will remain forever after death in eternal future or endless time. Therefore, immortality, which means the eternal continuity of existence, presupposes the existence of the soul previous to the birth of the body. If we believe in the immortality of the human soul we shall have to admit its pre-existence also, because that which is born must die, and everything that has a beginning must have an end. This is the law of nature. We cannot go against it.

The laws of nature are always uniform and universal; there is no such thing as an exception. All exceptions are governed by other laws which we may or may not know; they are only the expressions of different laws. Anything that is born must be subject to death, and that which has a beginning must have an end. If we wish to be endless or immortal in future we must have to admit that we were beginningless or immortal in the past. Here some people may think how is it possible that we existed in the past? If you apply that law, that because we exist to-day we could not come into existence out of nothing, then you will get a glimpse of the idea of pre-existence. And for this reason Vedanta teaches both immortality and pre-existence. No theory of immortality can be perfect or complete without admitting the pre-existence of the soul. No theory has successfully proved the necessity of an eternal future life in the case of one whose existence in the past has been proved to be unnecessary. If you say that your pre-existence was unnecessary so your immortal life will be equally unnecessary. If the world could get along without you before why should it not



get along without you hereafter? What necessity will there be for an immortal life in future if you did not exist before? If you have come into existence all of a sudden, you can go out of existence all of a sudden. Who will prevent us from becoming such an ephemeral substance?

In Vedanta, true immortality means eternal existence in the past as well as in the future. Pre-existence and immortality are so closely related to each other that if we deny one we cannot accept the other. For logically, we shall be incorrect; we shall go against the laws of nature and our statement will be founded, not upon rational ground, but upon some dogma or doctrine which has no foundation. In Vedanta, therefore, we learn that each individual soul existed before the birth of the body. If we believe that we shall continue to exist after death we shall have to admit that we existed in the past, otherwise we cannot have immortal life in future. We have not come into existence for the first time out of nothing, but our present is a connecting link in the chain of our past and future existence. We may not know it, we may not possess the memory of our past lives; still we existed just the same.

Here it may be asked, if we existed before our birth why do we not remember? This is one of the strongest objections often raised against the belief in pre-existence. Some people deny the existence of the soul in the past simply because they cannot remember the events of their past. Others, again, who hold memory as the standard of existence say, if our memory of the present ceases to exist at the time of death, with it we shall also cease to be; we cannot be immortal; because they hold that memory is the standard of life, and if we do not remember why then we are not the same beings.

Vedanta answers these questions by saying that it

is possible for us to remember our previous existences. Those who have read "Raja Yoga" will recall that in the 18th aphorism of the third chapter it is said: "By perceiving the Samskaras one acquires the knowledge of past lives." Here the Samskaras mean the impressions of the past experience which lie dormant in our subliminal self, and are never lost. Memory is nothing but the awakening and rising of latent impressions above the threshold of consciousness. A Raja Yogi, through powerful concentration upon these dormant impressions of the subconscious mind, can remember all the events of his past lives. There have been many instances in India of Yogis who could know not only their own past lives but correctly tell those of others. It is said that Buddha remembered five hundred of his previous births. Krishna says, in the "Bhagavad-Gita:" "Both thou and I, Arjuna, have gone through many births; thou knowest them not; but I know them all." This shows that Krishna remembered them because he was a Yogi; and Arjuna could not remember because he had not the power to do so.

Our subliminal self, or the subconscious mind, is the storehouse of all the impressions that we gather through our experiences during our lifetime. They are stored up, pigeon-holed there, in the Chitta, as it is called in Vedanta. "Chitta" means the same subconscious mind or subliminal self which is the storehouse of all impressions and experiences. And these impressions remain latent until favorable conditions rouse them and bring them out in the plane of consciousness. Here let us take an illustration: In a dark room pictures are thrown on a screen by lantern-slides. The room is absolutely dark. We are looking at the pictures. Suppose we open a window and allow the rays of the midday sun to fall upon the screen. Would we be able to see those pictures? No. Why?

Because the more powerful flood of light will subdue the light of the lantern and the pictures. But although they are invisible to our eyes we cannot deny their existence on the screen. Similarly, the pictures of the events of our previous lives upon the screen of the subliminal self may be invisible to us at present, but they exist there. Why are they invisible to us now? Because the more powerful light of sense-consciousness has subdued them. If we close the windows and doors of our senses from outside contact and darken the inner chamber of our self, then by focusing the light of consciousness and concentrating the mental rays we shall be able to know and remember our past lives, and all the events and experiences thereof. Those who wish therefore to develop their memory and remember their past should practice Raja Yoga and learn the method of acquiring the power of concentration by shutting the doors and windows of their senses. And that power of concentration must be helped by the power of self-control. That is, by controlling the doors and windows of our own senses.

These dormant impressions, whether we remember them or not, are the chief factors in moulding our individual characters with which we are born, and they are the causes of the inequalities and diversities which we find around us. When we study the characters and powers of geniuses and prodigies we cannot deny the pre-existence of soul. Whatever the soul has mastered in a previous life manifests in the present. The memory of particular events is not so important. If we possess the wisdom and knowledge which we gathered in our previous lives, then it matters very little whether or not we remember the particular events, or the struggles which we went through in order to gain that knowledge. Those particular things may not come to us in our memory, but we have not lost the

wisdom. Now, study your own present life and you will see that in this life you have gained some experience. The particular events and the struggles which you went through are passing out of your memory, but the experience, the knowledge which you have gained through that experience, has moulded your character, has shaped you in a different manner. You will not have to go through those different events again to remember; how you acquired that experience is not necessary; the wisdom gained is quite enough.

Then, again, we find among ourselves persons who are born with some wonderful powers. Take, for instance, the power of self-control. One is born with the power of self-control highly developed, and that self-control may not be acquired by another after years of hard struggle. Why is there this difference? Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was born with God-consciousness, and he went into the highest state of Samadhi when he was four years old; but this state is very difficult for other Yogis to acquire. There was a Yogi who came to see Ramakrishna. He was an old man and possessed wonderful powers, and he said: "I have struggled for forty years to acquire that state which is natural with you." Sankaracharya, the great commentator of the Vedanta philosophy, wrote his commentary when he was twelve years of age, and there are very few thinkers and philosophers in the world who can understand the spirit of his writings. They are so deep and so sublime that ordinary minds cannot grasp them. There are many such instances which show that pre-existence is a fact, and that these latent or dormant impressions of previous lives are the chief factors in moulding the individual character without depending upon the memory of the past. Because we cannot remember our past, because of the loss of memory of the particu-

lar events, the soul's progress is not arrested. The soul will continue to progress further and further, even though the memory may be weak.

Each individual soul possesses this storehouse of previous experiences in the background, in the subconscious mind. Take the instance of two lovers. What is love? It is the attraction between two souls. This love does not die with the death of the body. True love survives death and continues to grow, to become stronger and stronger. Eventually it brings the two souls together and makes them one. The theory of pre-existence alone can explain why two souls at the first sight know each other and become attached to each other by the tie of friendship. This mutual love will continue to grow and will become stronger, and in the end will bring these lovers together, no matter where they go. Therefore, Vedanta does not say that the death of the body will end the attraction or the attachment of two souls; but as the souls are immortal so their relation will continue forever. But we must not forget here that that relation and that love must be mutual. If you love some one and that person does not love you then it will be one-sided. It will not bring the two souls together. There must be mutual attraction. In Vedanta we learn that as immortality means the continued existence in eternal future, so pre-existence means the continued existence in the eternal past; the one cannot exist without the other. And each of these only expresses the one-half of our soul-life, which is eternal, and both of these together make a complete whole; that is the eternal soul-life. It existed before, and it was always unborn, and therefore it will continue to exist in future forever. Our present life is the resultant of the past, and our future will be the resultant of the present. Nothing will be lost.

Modern spiritualism has thrown a little light upon

the future, that even the departed spirits do remember their past relations. This shows that memory does not depend entirely upon the physical organism, but memory goes with the soul wherever the soul goes. That is the real memory. The physical organism may be destroyed; it is only the machine through which that subliminal self is reproducing the powers which are latent in it. So our present life is the resultant of the past; it contains all the previous impressions and experiences of past lives; only under certain conditions can they be remembered. But here we must remember that immortality does not necessarily imply that we should go to heaven to eternally enjoy the celestial pleasures, or to go to eternal perdition in order to suffer punishments on account of our evil deeds. These ideas are not necessarily included in the meaning of immortality. According to Vedanta, immortality includes the meaning of progress, growth and evolution of the soul from lower to higher stages of development; it also includes the idea that each individual soul will manifest the powers which are already latent in the soul by going through different stages of growth and development until perfection and omniscience and omnipresence are acquired. In order to attain to this, in order to accomplish this highest end, the soul must manifest itself in various stages of life and gain experience after experience. That cause which brought us on this plane of existence will continue to bring us here again in future. If the same cause remains in us, even after the death of the body, then nothing can prevent us from coming back to this plane of existence in order to fulfill our desires and purposes. This idea leads to the theory of rebirth and reincarnation of the individual soul. The rebirth and reincarnation of the individual soul is based upon the truth of the eternity of the soul-life which is expressed by

pre-existence and immortality. The exodus of the soul after death into heaven or into some realm of punishment or lower realm depends entirely upon the thoughts and deeds of the individual soul, and the soul's stay in these realms is temporary, dependent upon the condition of reaping the results of those thoughts and deeds. That is, the soul will remain there as long as it has not thoroughly reaped the fruits of its thoughts and deeds. At the expiration of that time the inmates of heavens and other realms will come back on this plane in order to gain further experience, to gain more powers, more knowledge, until perfection is reached. Vedanta does not say that heaven is eternal, but the soul has the power to transcend heaven and go beyond all celestial realms; why should we be limited to one particular spot? If we do not care to return to this realm we shall be dissatisfied even when we have gone to heaven. Then will come the time when we shall try to go further beyond until we have become absolutely perfect and omniscient and omnipresent. Therefore it is said in Vedanta: Even the highest heaven is temporary and non-eternal. The realms that exist between the earth and the highest heaven mark only the phenomenal growth and progress of the individual soul. Those who go there and remain there are subject to birth and rebirth. They will come back again. But those who have attained to perfection transcend all heavens, understand eternal life and remain perfect for ever and ever.

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### A MISSIONARY'S VIEW OF VEDANTA

REV. T. E. SLATER, of the London Missionary Society, in a recent work, makes the following significant, if somewhat reluctant, admission: "Vedantic thought

is so thoroughly Indian that the Indian Christianity of the future will of necessity take a Vedantic coloring. Each nation of the world is the manifestation of a human want, and the demand of the Indian heart is for a fixed, unchangeable foundation on which the soul may rest amid the changes of this fleeting world. The God whom India seeks and must find is a God who abides in the heart, whose true home is the inmost soul of man. The West has to learn from the East and the East from the West. The questions raised by the Vedanta will have to pass into Christianity if the best minds of India are to embrace it; and the church of the 'farther East' will doubtless contribute something to the thought of Christendom of the science of the soul, and of the omnipenetrativeness and imminence of Deity."

This is in line with the more unqualified tribute paid by a Scotch lawyer sent out by the British government to collect statistics on the religions of India. After spending twelve years at his task he frankly acknowledged that he could no more help believing in the fundamental doctrines of the Hindu faith, such as Reincarnation, Karma, etc., than he could help believing in his own existence, for they seemed to him to offer the only rational explanation of the existing conditions of human life. Otherwise he declared that he found the average run of people in India much what they were in England or America, but "when I found a real example of their spiritual teaching," he continued, "it so far transcended in its purity and loftiness anything that Western minds can conceive of that it is futile to try to make them understand it." And he added: "If the quality of the milk is to be judged by the cream, then there can be no doubt that India has been vouchsafed a higher spiritual vision than other nations."



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### VEDANTA IN AMERICA

MANY have thought that the philosophy and religion of Vedanta, which thrives so vigorously in India, would not bear transplanting; those who know its teachings have never doubted that it was a world-plant of perennial growth. Yet even to these the rapid spread of Vedanta, especially in America, is a source of constant surprise. From Texas to the northernmost borders of Canada, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, there is not a state or province from which the Society has not received orders for its literature or inquiries concerning its teachings; and within the last five years 39,836 books and pamphlets on Vedanta have gone into circulation from its head-quarters. The other day came a letter from Bohol, Tagbilaran, Philippine Islands, asking about the conditions of Society membership; and in the same week a large order of books was shipped to Alaska. Such is the vast area which the work now covers.

Strangely enough one of the most active among these new centers of interest is a thickly settled mining district of South Dakota. Less than a year ago frequent orders for our publications began to come from there, each a little larger than the previous one; then we received a letter asking whether in buying Swami Vivekananda's Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga by the dozen a discount would be allowed; and soon followed an order amounting to \$25.00. This led us to write and beg some information regarding what was being done. The response to our question ran thus: "Vedanta Philosophy was brought to us by Dr. ——— (an American physician), whom you already know. We like it and accept it to be the clearest explanation, and whenever we can get someone interested, we are glad to spread the Advaita idea. We are all laboring men, and most of our earnest men are married men, but there are some who are single, who may eventually be brought to the point of renunciation. In such case I would like to know if the Society has a branch of the order of Sannyasins established in this country? Or if it

makes any provision for those who are willing to devote their time to distributing literature and lecturing? One grand feature of Vedanta is that it gives a clear explanation of the New Testament, without which explanation many things written in it are too dark and veiled for the ordinary mind. I anticipate some radical changes in the churches of this country, dropping off of many fetichistic ideas and appealing to the intelligence of humanity. Ramakrishna says: 'When the lotus unfolds the bees come of their own accord to gather honey; but the bee can travel only so far in a day, so when lotuses are scattered, some bees can obtain honey that might otherwise go without.' There must be many who long for an explanation of the phenomena of life, and Jnana is as clear as can be had. Write me of your method of reaching people; it is sometimes a little awkward to approach those outside of one's own circle of acquaintances." It was suggested in the answer to this letter that a co-operative community might be formed and a Swami brought from India. To this our correspondent replied: "As I wrote before, most of our men, in fact most of the men of the town, are laboring men, and we will have to increase our number very much before we could think of having a Swami come. We are dependent upon the mining industry almost entirely. An agricultural district would be better suited for a co-operative move and I have thought much of conducting a cattle-raising business along these lines. Our season is too short to do much tilling the soil. There are but two things for us to do, increase our number to what would insure a living for a Swami or those who are interested to move to where they could be with an instructor."

This is only one of many instances which are constantly coming up to disprove the prevailing belief that Vedanta is only for the few, that it appeals only to those who have the leisure and opportunity to study all that the world has to offer. On the contrary, experience shows that it draws with equal power those who have been less favored by fortune, whose knowledge has come from a hand-to-hand encounter with

the stern conditions of actual life, in the farms, factories and mines. One man from northern New York, recently writing for advice about the study of Vedanta, closes his letter with the sentence: "I am only a poor laboring man and cannot afford expensive books." Another from a town in Pennsylvania tells us that he works nine hours a day as a trackman and only earns \$1.32 a day and asks how much he can accomplish in the Yoga training under such conditions. Still another sends us a weekly order for some book with such regularity that we suspect that it is thus that he marks pay day. Here in New York one of our most persistent customers at one time was a motorman on the Eighth Avenue line, and he assured us that "there were a lot of boys at the car-house reading the books," which was the reason he bought so many.

One Sunday in the early summer a man was seen walking up and down before the Society House casting an occasional furtive glance towards the windows, evidently not daring to venture in. At last, picking up his courage, he slid sidewise through the half-open door, dragged a dollar out of his pocket and asked for as much literature as could be had for that sum. "But what special subject will interest you?" we asked, pointing to the row of pamphlets on the table. "Oh, I don't know," he replied with a broad Scotch accent, "but the man who talked to me about it told me I ought to read the Bag—something, only he said I'd have to read it fifty times before I'd understand it." So we gave him the Bhagavad-Gita with some single lectures, and he turned to go. But as he reached the door, he paused and said, "If Mr. Hadelin ever comes to you just tell him that Mac, the ship's carpenter on the Ward Line, was here."

In the face of such facts can one doubt the practical usefulness of the teachings of Vedanta in our busy bread-earning American life?

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Vedanta was well represented at the Lewis and Clarke Exposition in Portland, Oregon, this summer. A

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young Hindu, G. Mukerji, who is in this country studying agriculture, entirely through his own initiative arranged an exhibition of Vedanta publications. At his request books and pamphlets were sent by the Society, and with most commendable energy and business sagacity he secured a favorable location for the exhibit, entered into agreement with local book-sellers to handle the literature, and received from the Public Library of Portland a request to place a full set of the Society's publications on its shelves.

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The usual Sunday morning services with lecture, held at the Vedanta Society House in New York, will be resumed on the first Sunday in November. The list of subjects for November and December will be published in the next number.

The course of class lectures will reopen on the following Tuesday. The Yoga classes will begin their regular weekly meetings on the 5th of October.

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Swami Nirmalananda has remained in charge at the Society House throughout the summer, carrying on the usual work of the Society and meeting all strangers and non-resident members who have called at the Society House.

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### VEDANTA IN INDIA

It will be remembered that when the plague was raging in Bhagalpur last year, the public authorities appealed to the Ramakrishna Mission and the Vivekananda Society in Calcutta to aid them in exterminating the disease. Several young men were sent and with fearless energy and the greatest wisdom they set

about cleansing the infected quarters and establishing a better system of sanitation. So effectual were their efforts that the same municipal authorities have again come to the Calcutta Society and to the Belur Math for assistance and three Brahmacharins have recently gone from the Math this time not to nurse the sick and comfort the dying, but to take proper precautions and thus prevent a fresh outbreak of the plague.

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Swami Bodhananda, who, with Swami Vimalananda, is in charge of the Vedanta Society of Bangalore, writes that they are holding five classes a week in the City and Cantonment of Bangalore and at Ulsoor, besides giving frequent public lectures. A meeting of unusual interest was held there recently, when a householder disciple of Swami Vivekananda, R. A. Krishnamacharya, delivered a discourse on "Swami Vivekananda and His Message to the World." Mr. Ananda Charles, C.I.E., presided, and there was a large and enthusiastic attendance. The Swami also reports that the work of Swami Ramakrishnananda throughout the Southern Presidency is making rapid strides forward.

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Babu Priya Nath Sinha, a classmate and disciple of Swami Vivekananda, is preparing a life of his great Master. He has written to ask us to collect all possible facts concerning Swami Vivekananda's two visits to America. Anyone who could send us letters, newspaper clippings or incidents of his sojourn in this country would render us a service.

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Neither money pays, nor name, nor fame, nor learning; it is character that can cleave through adamant walls of difficulty.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

# Vedanta

## Monthly Bulletin

That which exists is one; men call it by various names.—Rig Veda

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### VEDANTA IN DAILY LIFE

*Lecture by SWAMI ABHEDANANDA*

It has been asked again and again whether the teachings of Vedanta, sublime though they are, can be applied to our practical every-day life. Some people have an idea that, being a philosophy, Vedanta must be speculative, like any other philosophy of Europe and America, that it gives a few grand theories which can never be carried into practice. Such statements would be true if Vedanta were simply a philosophy and not a religion.

In order to become a religion, the teachings of Vedanta must be intensely practical, because where theory ends there is the beginning of true religion. Vedanta gives not only the principles of the highest philosophy, but it also teaches the practical methods which are necessary to make it a religion. If the ideals of Vedanta do not cover the whole field of life, if they do not enter into every plane of our thoughts, nay of our very existence in home life, in social and business life, in moral and spiritual life, then we must reject them as mere theories of a speculative philosophy, and must not call Vedanta a religion. The ideals of Vedanta, however, are so broad and so universal in their scope that for the last four thousand years men and women living in retirement, in caves and forests, as well as those holding the most responsible positions in society and in the state, have successfully harmonized their lives with those ideals, and have proved them to be intensely practical.

There is an impression among some people that the teachings of Vedanta are fit for those only who live like ascetics, in caves and forests, but not for those who lead a busy American's life. Such people are entirely mistaken, because they do not know that the truths of Vedanta were first discovered and practised, not by ascetics who dwelt in caves or forests, but by kings and monarchs, ministers and statesmen who lived the busiest and most luxurious lives that we can imagine. If we read the Upanishads, the Epics—Mahabharata, and Ramayana and other historical works, we find that there were not only Hindu ministers and statesmen, but kings sitting on their thrones, discharging their royal duties of governing the states and of looking after the welfare of their many subjects, and living a busier and much more responsible life than that of an ordinary business man of the present day, found ample time and opportunity to study Vedanta and to carry out its sublime tenets in their practical lives. When such persons could live the ideal life as given by Vedanta, what can we say of ourselves? We are not half as busy as they were. I can quote from the Upanishads many names of the ancient Hindu monarchs who faithfully followed the teachings of Vedanta while fulfilling the duties of their royal position. They not only lived up to the ideals of Vedanta, but taught others and were considered by the people as the living example of this practical philosophy. Those who have read the Bhagavad Gita, or "The Song Celestial" as Sir Edwin Arnold calls it, will remember that the great commander of a huge army, standing in the battle-field, in the midst of the din of battle at Kuruk Shetra, found time to discuss the ideals of Vedanta and succeeded in applying them in practice.

Many of you have seen and heard the late Swami Vivekananda. He was a living example of the practical side of Vedanta. Up to the last moment of his life, he worked like a giant under all conditions, favorable or unfavorable, bearing all kinds of hardship, discomfort and tribulation, and never moving an

inch from the highest ideal of this great philosophy and religion of Vedanta. He lived a pure and chaste life always, working for others, trying to help humanity without seeking any return for his labor. He showed to the world what a true Karma Yogi was like. In other words, he proved by his example that, even in this age of materialism and commercialism, one can be a sincere worker who always works for others, and lives for the good of humanity, without being guided by selfish motives or selfish desires.

The most practical side of Vedanta, which will appeal to American minds, is the Karma Yoga. Karma Yoga is that branch of Vedanta which teaches that we should always work and fulfil all the duties of life, household, social or official, but, at the same time, we must not consider that the performance of these duties is the highest aim and ideal of our life. On the contrary, we must regard these duties and the works of our daily life as a means to a higher end. We should also remember that every one of these works brings us new experience, makes us realize the transitoriness of earthly objects, purifies our inner nature and uplifts our souls, if it be not guided by any selfish motive. Vedanta teaches that any work which proceeds from extreme selfishness is wrong and wicked, and we should avoid it. Moreover, it tells us that every action must bring a similar reaction; that all good or unselfish works bring as their results peace, good health, prosperity and happiness in the end, and all evil or selfish works produce evil results such as sorrow, suffering, misery, disease and death. Holding this ideal before his mind, and applying it to his practical life, a student of Vedanta can go anywhere and live under any conditions, without deviating from the path of righteousness and virtue; under all circumstances, he will live a pure, unselfish life and remain contented. This is the simplest and easiest thing to practise.

First of all, we should form an ideal, and few people have their ideals. We think that we possess the highest ideal, but that may be only for a short time;



next moment, perhaps, the ideal has vanished, and we do not know the purpose of life, or why we are here. Therefore our mode of expression is very poor and it proceeds entirely from selfishness. Selfishness is the result of ignorance. We do not know the laws, nor do we understand how we ought to live. We look after ourselves and take care of ourselves, because that is the nearest thing to us. But we must not forget that any person in any country, possessing a fair amount of earnestness and sincerity, will get from this practice of Karma Yoga wonderful results, most beneficial in this life and hereafter, if he knows the ideal and if he follows it at every moment of his life. On the contrary, if we consider that the work which we are performing is the highest aim of life, that there is no further ideal, then our life will not be worth living. But whosoever holds the highest ideal and walks in the path of unselfishness is virtuous, is unselfish, is righteous and is spiritual.

Every householder should study Karma Yoga and understand the philosophy of work, and, applying those teachings to the daily life, he will eventually attain to the highest ideal of all religions. If he believes in a personal God or in an impersonal God, or in any divine incarnation like Christ or Buddha or Krishna or Ramakrishna, what should he do? He should every night before retiring offer the results of his daily works, both good and bad, to Him; and, by this method, he will become free from the law of Karma, the law of action and reaction, and reach the highest goal of salvation in the end. The works of our daily lives will be transformed into acts of worship when we have learnt to offer their results to the Supreme Lord of the universe, and this can be accomplished by any man or woman, engaged in any kind of profession or business: It is the easiest method by which we can make the religion of Vedanta enter into every plane of our daily life, and herein lies the secret of great success, of freedom, of unselfishness,—that is, either offer the results of your works to God, or work as an act of worship. He who has learned to offer

the results of his daily works to the Almighty has learned the secret of work and is always peaceful and contented. This will be beneficial to all those who live the busiest lives, engaged in any kind of work. Works are neither low nor high; every work is great, and every work will be a means to the attainment of divinity.

This Karma Yoga is a method by which we can get greater results by less output of our energy. The majority of people in every country waste their energy in unnecessary rush and worry for results; they have no patience to wait for the results, and what is the effect? They shatter their nerves and suffer from nervous prostration. The lack of self-control and this nervousness they will overcome if they understand the secret of work and the laws of action and reaction, of cause and sequence, that every action must bring its result, whether we worry over it or not. It must; and what a great saving it would be, if, instead of wasting that energy in worry, we could devote it to doing other works and let the results take care of themselves! We must do our best and stop there. After performing your best, you cannot do any better, and what is the use of worry? If we lived this way, then we should be great workers.

Vedanta teaches that the less passion for work there is, the greater and more do we work. If we read the lives of all the great workers of the world, we find that they were wonderfully calm men. Men and women of impulsive nature cannot do great work, cannot be steady workers: they will lose their heads. Persons who are easily disturbed by passions like anger, jealousy, hatred, ambition and selfishness cannot accomplish much. They will shatter their nerves and eventually become useless. As we find in this country, persons who are impulsive can do great work for the moment, but in the reaction they break themselves to pieces. They suffer from nervous prostration. Therefore self-control is the secret of great work, success in business, health and longevity. This we learn from Vedanta. What can be more practical

or beneficial than to gain self-control and exercise it in our everyday life?

Vedanta teaches how to be strong, physically, mentally and spiritually. Physical strength proceeds from mental strength, and mental strength in its turn is the outcome of spiritual strength. Spiritual strength must be at the back of mental and physical strength, and that spiritual strength will come to those who live the right kind of life, who understand the laws which govern our lives. The knowledge of these laws will make us free from committing mistakes, and this knowledge comes through the study of Vedanta. The practice of Raja Yoga will help us in acquiring that knowledge. That branch of Vedanta which is called Raja Yoga is the most practical of all applied sciences. Every step of this science depends entirely upon practice. It must enter into the daily life of every individual. Take, for instance, one of the teachings of Raja Yoga,— concentration. How absolutely helpful and necessary this power of concentration is! Nothing can be achieved without it; no one can accomplish anything without possessing some amount of this power; no one can become a great artist, astronomer or physician; no one can have success, even on the Stock Exchange, without this power of concentration. It is absolutely necessary for success in business, and this power we acquire through the practice of Raja Yoga.

The same power of concentration can be applied for material prosperity as for spiritual advancement. If we want material prosperity, we can use our power of concentration in that direction and get wonderful results. If we are spiritually-minded, we can gain spiritual results by it. Concentration, when practised for spiritual results, will gradually lead us to meditation, and meditation will eventually direct the soul into the state of God-consciousness, and then we shall be able to realize the true nature of the soul and its relation to God. Thus you can understand how in Vedanta the highest ideals of true religion are

made into a practical science which is intensely useful and beneficial in every possible way.

Another practical side of Vedanta is the science of breath. Anyone who understands this science of breath possesses physical, mental and spiritual strength, can stand the sudden changes of weather, can go through any hardship without being broken to pieces. Those who have practiced regularly the lessons as given in the Yoga classes held under the auspices of the Vedanta Society of New York will know how wonderful the teachings of this science of breath are and what wonderful powers can be attained. The students of Vedanta will eventually gain perfect health. By gaining control over your breath, you will make your system do anything you like. You will bring every inch of your muscle and nerve-centers under your control. As breathing exercises bring physical results, so mental powers are developed by the regulation of breath. The power of self-control is bound to come to one who has learnt the control of breath or one who has faithfully practiced the breathing exercises as given by the Swamis from India. The utility of this wonderful science is proved by medical practitioners, mental scientists, and by those who teach physical culture or voice culture. Again, when this breath is brought under control it brings peace of mind. When the mind is directed towards the Supreme Ideal, you will obtain spiritual enlightenment, in which you will discover the past and future of your soul-life. Thus Raja Yoga when properly applied to our daily lives will make us strong physically, mentally, and spiritually.

A student of Vedanta does not require any special or separate training in ethics or religion, because the highest ideals and the practical side of ethics are included in the teachings of Vedanta, and, if we try to live according to the ideals of Vedanta, we cannot but be ethical. For instance, one of the injunctions of practical ethics is to be truthful. Now, why should we be truthful if by telling lies we can gain more and enrich ourselves? This question has never been

answered by any system of ethics so rationally as by Vedanta. Vedanta tells us that truthfulness is not a mere virtue, but it is the means of attaining to the absolute Truth. The absolute Truth is revealed to those only who are absolutely truthful in thought word and deed. Moral weakness and selfishness lie at the bottom of falsehood, therefore we should abandon it. We should shun the company of those who are untruthful; and although we may go through all kinds of suffering, sorrow, misery, and changes of fortune, still we must not give up the ideal of truthfulness, we must hold on to it until the last breath has passed out of our body, because truthfulness will lead to absolute Truth. The eternal Truth is never gained by falsehood but by truth.

Another ethical law which is considered to be the highest law in all religions is: "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Now, here we can ask the same question: Why should I love my neighbor as myself? Like Christianity, Vedanta teaches this ideal. Christianity teaches it as a dogma based upon the authority of the Scriptures, and does not give any reason why and what for, but Vedanta gives the rational explanation and tells us why we should love our neighbors as ourselves: Because the true Self of our neighbor is one with our true Self. And that recognition of this spiritual oneness when understood is the meaning of love. Love means spiritual oneness, oneness of two souls,—that is true love. Wherever there is true love, there is divinity, there is the manifestation of God, and that divine love reigns in the heart and soul of a student of Vedanta and therefore he loves all humanity. When the same love which we call human love is not backed by selfishness, it becomes divine love, and that divine love is the means by which we can realize God. God can be realized through divine love; therefore we should practice in our daily lives that unselfish love which is the highest, and never encourage or practice that which is called love but which means something different, which is based upon selfishness, which produces attachment and brings bondage in the end.

We should not practice or encourage it, otherwise we shall be the sufferer and the ideal of love, which is divine, will not be attained by us.

The highest aspiration of the individual soul is fulfilled when it realizes spiritual oneness with the Divine Being, and that spiritual oneness or divine love is the central ideal of Vedanta. Vedanta teaches that there is one existence, one reality, one Truth, one God, one life, one Spirit. All these differentiations and distinctions, which we perceive with our senses, are fictitious and unreal, they are all on the surface; but go below the surface and there you will see the undercurrent of one Spirit; and when that oneness is properly realized, when we have understood that we are parts of that one stupendous whole, the Universal Spirit, how can we help loving that whole? We must love, we cannot help loving, and through that divine love we realize the highest ideal of our lives. A student of Vedanta, who recognizes that spiritual oneness, sees that one Universal Spirit is manifesting through all living creatures, and all human beings, and therefore he loves all human beings; through all animals, and therefore he loves all animals. The most practical result of this love, this recognition of oneness, is that a student of Vedanta never injures or kills any living creature, because he knows that there is one life, that the difference between an animalcule and a human being is only in degree but not in kind. The same life-force is expressed in so many ways, and wherever the humanitarian ideas of Vedanta are preached there prevails compassion for everybody; there is compassion for poor animals, there hospitals are built, not only for men, women and children, but for lower animals, and there is to be found the desire to take care of the poor, suffering animals just as you would take care of a poor, suffering brother. Therefore a student of Vedanta does not kill any animal for food, because he says: "When I cannot give life to any living creature, what right have I to take it? Let it stay on and live; it has its purpose to fulfill; I must not interfere." And having this ideal in his mind he does good to all,

and he would rather give his own life than take the life of another. Such a soul is a great blessing to humanity, as also to all living creatures. The practice of this ideal will bring the most wonderful results which are morally and spiritually perfect. We should teach our children that lower animals possess life and feelings. From our childhood, we have been taught that lower animals have been created for our food. Now we must change that idea and teach children that they are fulfilling certain principles of life, that they are on certain grades of evolution, and in course of time they will become human beings; we must be kind to them, and so in practical life we should learn compassion, and that compassion, when properly carried out, will lead to divine love and realization of the Supreme.

The teachings of Vedanta drive away the fear of death, because they say that death cannot attack our souls; we are immortal; by our birthright we are children of that Universal Spirit and therefore we are immortal. Fear of death will never trouble the mind of a student of Vedanta. "As we throw away our old worn-out garment, so the soul throws away the garment of the old body at the time of death and manufactures a new one, according to its thoughts and deeds." What a great consolation is this! That we are no longer dependent upon the whim of an anthropomorphic God; that we have not been created out of nothing by the sudden whim of a Creator, but that our souls existed in the past and shall exist after death, that our pleasures and sufferings are the results of our own actions, that we are responsible for our future happiness and misery. We are not going to eternal perdition, nor are we born in sin and iniquity. Thus the teachings of Vedanta take away all fear of death and make us happy and contented in our earthly career. What can be more beneficial to us in our practical life?

Another great help in practical life which we get from Vedanta is the knowledge of the Divine Being. The Divine Being is not far from us; He is the soul

of our souls; He is dwelling within us; He is both personal and impersonal, and beyond both; He can be worshipped under any name, in any form, by anyone under any sect, creed or denomination; He is one and eternal, and when we understand this all religious animosities, quarrels, fights cease forever. Then we consider all sectarians as our brothers and sisters; we embrace them as children of God. What could be more practical than this! Can a sectarian do so? Can an orthodox Christian embrace a Mahometan or a Buddhist? Very few possess so broad and liberal a mind as to embrace another belonging to another religion, but Christ Himself would have embraced a Mahometan or Buddhist or any heathen as the child of divinity, of his Heavenly Father, and we should follow that example. We should try to live up to it, and then in our daily lives we shall be able to understand that secret by which we shall attain to the highest wisdom, of spiritual oneness, that will make us free. This is the meaning of salvation, emancipation from bondage, from ignorance and selfishness. According to Vedanta that salvation does not begin in the grave, but it should begin right here and now; and Vedanta shows us the way to attain to that salvation and perfection in this life. And when that knowledge and divine wisdom come, all darkness is dispelled and the divine powers begin to flow through our souls and produce their results; then we rise above the animal and material plane and shine with the spiritual light of the eternal sun.

Now we can see how all these teachings of the different branches of Vedanta fit into the different departments of our lives and how practical Vedanta is. Not only this, there is another thing, which we should not forget, that Vedanta includes the truths that have been discovered by different branches of science and shows us how those truths can be applied to our daily lives; how we can mould our daily lives according to these ideals and direct our efforts towards the highest goal, which is one. No other religion has done that; no other religion has ever been able to harmonize



with the different branches of science or with the different philosophies of the world; but Vedanta includes all sciences, all philosophies and all religions, and therefore it is universal. A student of Vedanta can be a Christian, Mahometan, Buddhist or a heathen, or an agnostic. Distinctions of caste, creed, nationality, are never recognized in the light of Vedanta. Wherever the truths of Vedanta are preached, there prevail peace, tranquillity, self-control and spiritual enlightenment. If we understand the teachings of Vedanta and live up to the ideals, then we shall be able to say with the old philosopher Schopenhauer: "Vedanta has been the solace of my life, and it will be the solace of my death."

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### SILENCE

(Poem by the Hindu poet BHARTRIHARI, who lived about the seventh century A.D.)

God made for ignorance a guise,  
 With which to hide its nakedness  
 And give its wearer fame;  
 Worn in the presence of the wise  
 'Tis e'en an ornamental dress,  
 And Silence is its name.

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Live in the world like a dead leaf. As a dead leaf is carried by the wind into a house or on the roadside and has no choice of its own, so let the wind of Divine will blow you wherever it chooses. Now it has placed you in the world, be contented. Again when it will carry thee to a better place, be equally resigned. The Lord has kept thee in the world, what canst thou do? Resign everything to Him, even thine own dear self; then all trouble will be over.—*Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna.*

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**VEDANTA IN AMERICA**

SWAMI ABHEDANANDA met the members of the Society at an informal reception held at the Society House on the evening of October 31st, and told them some interesting facts about his summer travels.

The Swami's itinerary stretched from Alaska to Mexico. With the President of the Society, Prof. Parker of Columbia University, he climbed some of the high peaks of the Canadian Rockies, spent a few days at the Portland Fair, skirted the coast of the Northern Pacific and rode through the Grand Cañon of Arizona. On his way South he stopped in San Francisco and Los Angeles to visit the Swamis in charge of the Societies there. He was especially gratified to find that the Vedanta Society in San Francisco, under Swami Trigunatita's active administration, had already grown strong enough to purchase a plot of land and erect permanent headquarters which will soon be ready for occupancy. In Los Angeles Swami Satchidananda arranged a reception for Swami Abhedananda, who delivered a short address to the members. He was deeply impressed with their earnestness and the general spirit of enthusiasm in the Society.

Not in these centers alone, however, but everywhere did he find interest in Vedanta. At Lake Louise he was obliged to devote one whole evening to answering the questions of some fifty persons. At the urgent request of the passengers, he gave a lecture on the boat going to Alaska, as also on the lake steamer from Toronto, and he was especially surprised to be accosted by name on the street in the city of Mexico by a Spanish gentleman who drew from his pocket copies of several of his lectures, among them the "Reincarnation." This gentleman introduced him to a number of others who were devoted students of Vedanta and who were so eager to learn more that they begged the Swami to remain long enough among them to deliver a course of lectures and establish a center. When told that this was not possible, they insisted that he return later in the winter for a protracted stay. They told

him that Vedanta was spreading rapidly among the people of Mexico and that Swami Vivekananda's Raja Yoga had already been translated into Spanish by a scholar in Barcelona, Spain. Such instances show how ripe the Occidental mind is for the great message of the Orient.

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We have been much interested to learn from a recent visitor to the Society House that there is a group of earnest students of Vedanta in Vancouver, B. C., who hold regular weekly meetings and are doing their utmost to widen their circle in order that they may bring a Swami from India and establish a Vedanta Society of their own.

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The regular Sunday Service with lecture will be resumed on November 5th. The subjects for November will be "The Great Saviours of the World," "Krishna and His Teachings," "Buddha and His Teachings," "Shintoism in Japan." This study of the great religions of the world will be continued by Swami Abhedananda through December.

The Tuesday evening Class Lectures will begin on November 7th. The Yoga classes reopened on the first of October.

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Swami Abhedananda has been invited to deliver a course of six lectures on "India" before the **Brooklyn Institute**, beginning on Tuesday evening, November 14th, and continuing on successive Tuesdays until December 19th. The subjects for the lectures in November are "The Prevailing Philosophy of To-day," "The Religion of India To-day," "The Social Status of the Indian People; Their System of Caste."

## INDIA

AFTER long residence in India, the Rev. T. J. Sunderland tells the following plain facts in a recent article in the Boston Transcript: "These men (Lord Ripon and others) see in India one of the most fertile and productive lands in the world, capable of supporting in comfort and plenty a population much larger than at present it contains. And yet instead of its people living in comfort and plenty, three-quarters of them are sunk in conditions of poverty such as are seen nowhere else in the world. Famines sweep over the land with ever-increasing frequency. The London 'Lancet' estimates the number of deaths from famines in ten years to have reached 19,000,000, and when the famines have passed by the plague follows. . . . What is the cause of these awful famines? Lack of food in the country? Not at all. In the worst famine years India exports food. In the worst famine years there is plenty of food in the land and in the famine areas themselves, and generally at moderate prices. This the Famine Commissioners themselves have told us. Why, then, do the people starve? Because they are so poor, so wretchedly poor, that they have no money with which to buy.

"What is the cause of that poverty? . . . The evidence grows steadily more clear and unmistakable that it is England's exploitation of India that is primarily accountable for the poverty. The Indian people are taxed almost beyond endurance. In India taxation is three times as heavy according to the resources of the people as it is in England. The British by their tariff manipulation have broken down the once flourishing manufactures of India, and for a century and a half they have drained away the wealth of India to England in an unremitting stream. That drain is going on at the present time at the rate of from \$100,000,000 to \$150,000,000 a year. What country in the world would not be impoverished under such conditions? Nearly every position of emolument in the land is in the hands of the British. Nearly

all paying business enterprises are controlled by them.

“But if the people of India desire food, they also desire intelligence. Long and earnestly they have been praying that at least enough of their own hard-earned money taken from them in taxes might be devoted to education to allow their children to be taught to read and write. What is the result? After one hundred and fifty years of British dominance in India the number of persons there who are able to read and write is less than six in each hundred of the population. The Indian Government spends sixteen times as much on its army as on education. That tells the whole story. It is alleged last century \$450,000,000 of money taken out of the pockets of Indian taxpayers was spent on wars outside of India. Army expenditures go steadily and rapidly up and up, while the Government can spare annually for primary education, to teach the people to read, only a little more than a cent and a half per person of the population.

“The Indian people want some share in shaping their own destinies. They are Aryans, belonging to the same ethnic family with the peoples of Europe. Lord Curzon reminded the people of England a year or two ago that India was a highly civilized land, with elaborate industries, arts, and letters and profound philosophic systems at a time when the ancestors of the English were running wild in the woods as painted savages. Is it any wonder that such a people cannot be content to remain forever robbed of their industries and political rights, looked down upon as inferiors, called ‘niggers,’ compelled to occupy the place of mere hewers of wood and drawers of water for alien masters?”

# Vedanta

## Monthly Bulletin

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### HEALING POWER OF BREATH.

*Lecture by SWAMI ABHEDANANDA.*

OUR earthly life consists in a continued adaptation to environments. A living substance is that which is capable of adapting itself to its surroundings and the very moment when it completely fails to do so, it is dead. The more perfect the adaptation, the more perfect is the manifestation of life. All vegetable, animal, and human life is subject to this great law of adaptation. This law manifests itself and governs every step of the existence, growth, evolution, and development of a living creature. That power by which an organism can adapt itself to its environments is not a mechanical power, not merely a chemical force, but it is what we understand by the word life-force or vital energy. Wherever there is the manifestation of this life-force there is a natural tendency to bring a perfect harmony with the surrounding conditions as well as with the laws that govern them. This tendency is to be found in all living beings, in every department of nature, whether vegetable, animal, or human. Therefore, the fulfillment of this tendency, the establishment of perfect harmony with the environment and obedience to the natural laws are implied in the meaning of adaptation, and these are the products of the life-force or vital energy.

The normal manifestation of the life-force under favorable environments, creating perfect harmony with

them and obeying the laws that govern them, is the state which is ordinarily understood by the common expression "health"; or, in other words, health means life under natural conditions, where the law of adaptation and other laws that govern the environments are not violated in the least. But if these laws be violated, if the conditions be abnormal, and if the adaptation be imperfect, then the result will be lack of health, or that state which is meant by such expressions as ill-health, sickness, or disease—all of which mean lack of health. Disease is not a real entity, which stands outside of ourselves as the enemy of health and attacks us from time to time, as some people may think; but it is simply an imperfect manifestation of life-force under abnormal conditions. It does not take possession of us from outside, but it is produced by the inability of the life-force to adapt itself to its environments and to obey the laws of nature. In order to adapt ourselves to our surrounding conditions, whether internal or external, we need a certain amount of energy and force, and when that amount decreases, either by waste or dissipation, or by lack of proper nourishment, or by the violation of the hygienic laws, then we grow weak and consequently become unable to resist the environmental influences which are constantly working against earthly existence and are trying to crush it; then we succumb under the pressure and become subject to various ailments. For example, when the temperature of the atmosphere is low, if we cannot adapt ourselves to that external change by getting enough of warmth, our system will be affected; we shall catch cold or be frozen. If the food be too rich or unwholesome, our system will try its best to assimilate it, but if it fails, then the result will be indigestion, etc. If water which we drink

contains germs or impure substances, they will enter into our system and try to dwell there, producing various symptoms of abnormal conditions which our system will naturally struggle to throw off and recover its normal condition.

If there be enough of life-force, the organs will destroy all the germs of disease, all the microbes and bacteria which are constantly entering into our bodies through breath, food, and drink, as well as through the pores of the skin, and attacking the cells and tissues. An abundance of life-force is necessary to resist their influences or to drive them away or to kill them and eventually bring back the normal condition, which we understand as health. No disease can arise in the system if there be a sufficient amount of life-force, and if the cells are able to resist the influences of the common environments. The life-force has the primary tendency to preserve itself. This tendency for self-preservation is manifested not only by the individual being, but also by every organ, every tissue, nay, in every minute cell of the whole organism. Propelled by this force, each cell acts instinctively, as it were, to protect its normal or healthy state and to remove all such obstacles as stand in its way. If any part of the body be wounded or injured, immediately the minute cells which are floating in the blood begin to work with extra force to remove that obstacle, to attack that enemy, and to recover the normal state of that part. As in a beehive, when any part is injured, thousands of bees will rush to attack and remove the enemy, to repair and restore the natural state of the hive, so when the body receives any injury, or when any germ enters the system and attacks the cells, the other cells rush forward with tremendous force and fight against the enemy; and if they succeed in driving



that enemy away or killing that germ, the health or normal condition of the body is restored; but if they fail, the result will be pain, aches, or disease. Each cell possesses that life-force or power by which it preserves itself and heals the wound. Ordinarily we say that the healing power is generated by drugs and medicines which are given by physicians, but do they impart the healing power to us? Take a concrete example. When a bone is broken, what does the medical surgeon do? He simply sets it in its proper place, and with the help of the bandage keeps it in the same position for a few days. The mending and repairing are done by nature, as we all say. But what do we mean by nature? Nothing else but the life-force or vital energy which dwells in the organs and cells. No other force of nature than the life-force can perform this task. It is the healing power of nature which manifests itself in the human body in the same manner as in all animals and vegetables. When the bark of a tree is scratched or torn the same life-force of the tree heals it and makes it perfect. The healthy condition of the body is the result of the normal activities of the vital energy or life-force. We all know that if the life-force or vital actions are perfect a man can easily recover from any injury or disease however malignant it may be. But when the vital force is wasted, the nervous system is run down, the recovery becomes much more difficult, and recuperation is impossible when the life-force is impaired or extremely weakened or compelled to work continuously under adverse conditions.

No disease will ever arise if free scope is given to the vital or life-force to act under proper conditions. On the other hand, limit its scope and provide adverse conditions, the life-force will naturally take vigorous

measures to overcome or remove the obstacles. The results of this effort will appear in the form of aches and pains, and, eventually failing to resist and recover the normal activities, the organism will die under heavy pressure, producing the symptoms of incurable disease.

Thus we can understand that nature has supplied us with a certain amount of healing power. This power dwells in every form of living substance. But its quantity varies in different individuals; some have tremendous power of healing; others have little. A healthy child possesses an abundance of life-force. If a bone is broken or any organ is injured, it will be cured in a shorter time than in a grown-up person whose life-force is wasted by dissipation.

In the science of Yoga, this healing power of nature is called Prana. It is a Sanskrit term, meaning life-force, or vital energy, sometimes translated the "breath of life." That breath of life, which is described in the 7th verse of the Second Chapter of Genesis: "And the Lord God had formed a man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life;" and again in "The Spirit of God hath made me and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life" (Book of Job, Chapter XXXIII, Verse 4), does not mean merely the atmospheric air which enters into the nostrils, but it means the life-force, or Prana. It does not signify that a specific quantity of air was bottled up in the human system by God at the time of our birth which must be exhausted before death comes, but it means the power of Prana, which is the source of life, the cause of the respiratory process and the producer of vital actions.

According to the science of breath, each living soul possesses the power of Prana, by which are caused the activities of the motor and sensory nerves. The nerve

currents which travel through these nerves are produced by the vibration of Prana. The nerve-centers in the spine are the storehouse of this life-force where it is generated and kept; in case of emergency this life-force goes through the different parts of the body, distributing the healing powers. The more we can store away this power of Prana, the stronger we shall be physically and mentally. He who possesses sufficient quantity of this breath of life or Prana has perfect health and enormous vitality and strength, which he can impart to others if he wishes to do so.

This is the secret of magnetic healing. The loss of Prana, or nerve-force, is the cause of nervous prostration and of all other diseases. He who has gained mastery over this breath of life can consciously direct the healing power of Prana to the diseased part, generate new vibrations in the cells of those parts and by the higher breathing exercises, destroying the cause of the disease, he can easily gain perfect health and strength. He can bring health and strength constantly to every part of his body. By polarizing the activities of the cells he will remove the obstacles that prevent the normal vibration of the vital current of those cells. The cells are moving in certain directions, but he can make them all obey his will power, and then he can do anything with them and cure all diseases. But an ordinary person who has no control over the breath of life cannot do it. A true Yogi claims that he can gain mastery over this breath of life and can cure all diseases—of course, such diseases as have not produced decomposition or disorganization; but all other diseases in the preliminary stages can be cured by these higher breathing exercises. The breathing exercises will bring actual control over this nerve-force and they will help us to draw Prana

from the atmospheric air, from food, water, etc., because this life-force is all-pervading.

The manifestation of this force is only to be found through the nerve-centers and nerves; therefore, if we know the secret of drawing from the atmosphere life-force, or Prana, into our system, since the quantity of air, which passes through our lungs, possesses Prana, if we can extract it and store it in the nerve centers, then we can use it at any time when it is needed.

Nature possesses it, but no individual can give it, unless that individual possesses a superabundance of Prana. Therefore, when we go to a healer he may give it and we may feel better for the time being, but as soon as it is used up, we shall be obliged to return to him once again. The true Yogi, however, says if you know the method by which you can manufacture that life-force in yourself, then there will be no need of your going to others and borrowing it from them.

Christian Scientists, Faith Healers, Mental Healers can cure diseases without using drugs, but if they knew the secret of manufacturing the life-force, or Prana, through the breathing exercises, as taught by the Yogis of India, they would surely gain more marvellous results. Having learned the secret of manufacturing the power or life-force, a Yogi says one can easily become master of his body and mind. Here we must not forget that all these different methods of healing, which are prevalent in different countries, directly or indirectly refer to that healing power of Prana. It can be brought into activity by various methods, either by the power of arousing the healing power of Prana in the patient through suggestion, or by transmitting that power of Prana to the patient. A Yogi can cure diseases by the power of touch or by the power of command, by simply saying, "Be

thou cured, be thou healed"; such instances of instantaneous cures can be found in all countries. Jesus the Christ was one who possessed the power of command, Buddha and Sri Ramakrishna also had this power.

The power which is developed through the breathing exercises as given in the Yoga classes, held under the auspices of the Vedanta Society of New York, will produce wonderful results in a very short time. Those who know the secret of manufacturing and storing away the Prana possess perfect health. But this cannot be achieved in a day or in a month; it will require some time to gain that mastery over the breath of life; it will also require an absolute self-control. One should live a pure and chaste life and should learn the secret of transmuting the nervous energy and sex energy into the will power by practicing the higher breathing exercises of a Yogi.

In order to cure diseases, we must wield a tremendous will power. There are Yogis who can cure diseases by simply willing and their will never fails, and that will power can be strengthened and increased by the breathing exercises. This development of will power is one of the ideals of a Yogi or a student of the science of breath. The first effect of successful breathing exercises is the control of the nerves, or what we call freedom from nervousness, as well as from all diseases which proceed from nervous disorder. Physical strength will be almost unlimited and the person will be so strong and so hardy that he will not be easily affected by sudden changes of weather, nor by hunger or thirst; a small quantity of food or drink will be enough to produce great results. Any one who practices the breathing exercises faithfully as given in the Yoga classes will gain highly beneficial results both in body and mind. He will remove all impuri-

ties from his system and overcome all abnormal and diseased conditions. He will no longer be subject to rheumatism, stiffness of joints or muscles, paralysis and other ills, for the higher vibrations of Prana will destroy their causes. Every individual, whether young or old, man or woman, is bound to get some result if the exercises be properly practised for six months. He is furthermore sure to cure mental *dis-ease*, that is, a restless state of mind. He will be master of his senses, as well as of passions and animal desires. He will conquer anger, hatred, anxiety, jealousy, worry, by raising the vibration of Prana on the higher plane of psychic activity.

This Prana produces the will power, and this will power is the highest manifestation of power, and spiritual power will also come to him who has gained absolute mastery over himself. Thus gradually conquering hunger and thirst, gaining mastery over his body, mind, and senses, he will live in the world like a true Yogi; then he will know what this breath of life is and how wonderful is the healing power of Prana.

## THE MARRIAGE-FEAST IN JAMBUNADA

*From THE GOSPEL OF BUDDHA*

THERE was a man in Jambunada who was to be married and he thought, "Might Buddha, the Blessed One, be present at the wedding." And the Blessed One passed by his house, and when he read the silent wish in the heart of the bridegroom, he consented to enter. When the Holy One appeared with the retinue of his many *bhikshus*, the host, whose means were limited, received them as best he could, saying: "Eat my Lord, and all your congregation, according to your desire."

While the holy men ate, the meats and drinks remained undiminished, and the host thought to himself: "How wondrous is this. I should have had plenty for my relatives and friends. Would that I had invited them all." When this thought was in the host's mind, all his relatives and friends entered the house. They sat down at the table and ate, and there was more than enough for all of them. The Blessed One was pleased to see so many guests full of good cheer and he gladdened them with words of truth, proclaiming the bliss of righteousness.

"The greatest happiness which a mortal man can imagine is the bond of marriage which ties together two loving hearts. But there is a greater happiness still; it is the embrace of truth. Death will separate husband and wife, but death will never affect him who has espoused the truth.

"Therefore be married unto the truth and live with the truth in holy wedlock. The husband who loves his wife and desires a union that shall be everlasting must be faithful to her so as to be like truth itself, and she will rely upon him, and revere him and minister unto him. And the wife who loves her husband and desires a union that shall be everlasting must be faithful to him, so as to be like truth itself; and he will place his trust in her, he will honor her, he will provide for her. Verily I say unto you, their wedlock will be holiness and bliss, and their children will become like unto their parents and will bear witness to their happiness.

"Let no man be single, let every one be wedded in holy love to the truth. And when Mara, the destroyer, comes to separate the visible forms of your being, you will continue to live in the truth, and you will partake of the life everlasting, for the truth is immortal."

## VEDANTA IN AMERICA

THE opening of the new season has proved full of encouragement for the Society and all friends of Vedanta. The attendance at the lectures has been large and the interest shown unusually marked. On the first Sunday every seat was filled, and it was the universal opinion that Swami Abhedananda's lecture on "The Great Saviours of the World" was one of the best ever delivered by him. He spoke of Moses, Zoroaster, Confucius, Laotze, Mahomet, Krishna, Buddha, Christ, Ramakrishna, and the whole treatment of his subject illustrated forcibly the universality of Vedanta. "If we cannot recognize the divinity in the prophets of other nations, in the Saviours of other people," he said, "then we have not realized the divinity of our own prophet and have not understood the eternal truth of the unity of Divine being under the variety of names and forms. If a mother cannot recognize her son when he changes the color of his garment or puts on the dress of a foreigner, I am sure that she is not a true mother. Similarly, I am sure that the Christian who sees divinity in Christ alone and does not recognize his own Master when he comes in the form of Buddha or Krishna, has not realized the divinity of Jesus the Christ." "All these prophets, these messengers of God, are great. Each one was commissioned by the Almighty to deliver His message. Each one of them was a glorious Son of God, a perfected soul, manifested for the good of humanity to establish righteousness and to destroy evil."

In the succeeding lectures on Krishna, the Swami called especial attention to the marked similarity between the lives of Christ and Krishna, and showed how false were the claims of certain missionaries that the Hindus had borrowed the story of Krishna from the Bible, since it could be proved historically that whether or not Krishna was a real personage, the legends and accounts of him far antedated the Christian Era.

The other two lectures of the month were on "Buddha" and on "Shintoism in Japan." The same course will be continued through December and the subjects



will be "Lamaism in Tibet," "Zoroaster and His Teachings," "Laotze and His Teachings," "Christ and His Teachings," "Mahomet and His Teachings."

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A business meeting of the Vedanta Society of New York was held at the Society House on the evening of Nov. 15th. The secretary, Mrs. Cape, reported the accession of an unusual number of new members, but she pointed out eloquently that although the membership list was lengthening, the Society still remained in great need of more workers, of members who would come forward with true love and earnestness and offer to bear their share of the burden of labor and responsibility which must be carried by some one in so great a work as this. Its growth, she further emphasized, depended upon the coöperation and united effort of all the members, who must feel that they constituted one large family with one common interest,—the maintaining of the parent home

Different matters concerning the general management of the Society were then discussed; among them the question of procuring permanent headquarters, and several members offered valuable suggestions, a fuller report of which will be given in a later number.

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Swami Abhedananda opened his course of six lectures on "India and her People" before the Brooklyn Institute, in Art Association Hall, on Tuesday evening, November 14th. An audience of several hundred people was present and listened with the closest attention to the Swami's learned and comprehensive exposition of "The Prevailing Philosophy of To-day." "India has always been the fountain-head of systems of Philosophy," he explained. "In 2000 B.C. philosopher's conventions were held under the auspices of the monarchs, and kings, priests, commanders, merchants and educated women of the higher class, all took part. These ancient philosophers discovered the laws of thought and of the universe. Their minds were

absolutely free from limitations of creed and dogma. The toleration of the Hindus toward all forms of truth was said to be unrivaled in other parts of the world. . . . Even these earliest philosophers had worked out their theory of the laws and processes of evolution in form to correspond with the modern idea." The Swami then gave a clear outline of the six great schools of Indian Philosophy, of which Vedanta was the culmination and the flower.

The other lectures in November were on "The Religion of India To-day," and "The Social Status of the Indian People: Their system of Castes." The subjects for December will be: "The Political Institutions of India," "Education in India," "The Influence of India on Western Civilization, and the Influence of the Western Civilization on India."

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Swami Nirmalananda will continue to give the Tuesday evening lectures on the Upanishads during the first three weeks of December, while Swami Abhedananda is completing his course of lectures before the Brooklyn Institute.

### INDIA

It is with pleasure that we give below a few extracts from the speech delivered by the Hon. P. Anandacharu at the Memorial Meeting held recently in honor of Swami Vivekananda at Bangalore and noted in the October Bulletin.

"He (Swami Vivekananda) died to multiply. So long as he is a beacon light, so long as his voice is there for the purpose of guiding others who have his germ in them, these latter will not keep quiet. But the disappearance of a character of that description is for the purpose of entering into the potentialities of others and through them to the world. . . On the eve of starting for America he was in Madras. A party had been arranged in his honor one evening. All the intellectual luminaries of Madras were there. Many of them heard his flashes of intellect and a small con-

spiracy of scholarly men was formed in a corner to attack him for the statement he made. He declared he was Advaitin (Monist) boldly, almost challengingly. The clique put him this question: 'You say you are one with God. Then your responsibility is gone. There is nothing to check you when you are doing wrong and when you stray from the right path.' The Swami turned round at once and gave this crushing reply: 'If I honestly believe that I am one with God, I will abominate vice, and no check is needed.' This reply silenced the objection.

"Every time he spoke or presided, I made it a point to be present; and on every such occasion the hall would be full to over-crowding. This is to indicate to you what great power he had in him; his face had a fascination for everybody. There was about him some magnetism which moved the dullest stupid. Some American critic said he had oratory by divine right; nay, there was more behind it all. There was a fervor of Divine fire. That accounts for his having conquered all obstacles before him, for his having succeeded in a country where at first he was shunned and kept out of every decent hotel; and where, after his wonderful electric performance at the Parliament of Religions, those color-blinded people were found to make way for him and make obeisance to him. What is that due to? I will not say that it was merely the fascination of his face, the personal magnetism about him; I will say boldly, all that was due to the Divine fire that burned in him. Every word he uttered was powerful and his face looked divinely beautiful when he spoke. . . . It is not we alone that respect him. Few will dispute that there was Divine fire in him. He was one of the greatest leaders sent by God Almighty to dispel darkness and to illumine Indian wisdom."

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The report just received of the Ramakrishna-Samhiti in Calcutta, which works under the direction of the Swamis at the Belur Math, shows an excellent record of practical philanthropic work. The Society has

assumed the maintenance and education of a number of orphans and the support of several widows, besides having distributed food and clothing to many aged and needy persons.

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It is significant that so eminent an English scholar as Prof. Goldwin Smith should write thus to his fellow-countrymen concerning British rule in India:

“Not by the descent of phantom armies from Himalayan passes, but by the certain and inexorable decree of nature British Empire in India is doomed some day to come to an end. British children cannot be reared in India. The occupation and Government of a country by a race incapable of acclimatisation will not last forever. You made your appearance in Hindustan when it was broken up by the fall of the Mogul Empire. You encountered and subdued successively the usurping and predatory powers which arose out of the wreck. You were carried on for some time, undesignedly, from conquest to conquest without any intention of founding an empire—an aim which, on the contrary, Parliament disclaimed, though an empire was at last organised by the ambition and genius of Lord Wellesley. You have now completely restored the territorial and political unity of Hindustan. You have at the same time greatly lessened the antagonism between the two religions—Hinduism and Mahometanism—which before prevailed, but which your peace-making ascendancy has repressed. Your rule has been and is, in a material sense, at all events, beneficent—more beneficent than that of any other foreign conqueror in history. Yet the people, while they feared and respected, have never loved you. They have eagerly noted every reverse with which you met. Now you have educated the leaders of the people, trained them in subordinate administration, fostered their press, and formed in them a sense of nationality and an aspiration to self-government which show themselves in their speeches and writings. Active politicians and publicists have sprung up among them. To set in motion the desire of nationality and inde-

pendence there is, apparently, needed only an electric shock from without, and this seems not unlikely to come from the marvellous development of Japan, which bids fair to give leadership and a new life to the East.

“What has your Indian Empire really been worth to you, otherwise than as a grand field of adventure and of employment? It would be interesting to see the balance-sheet. On the wrong side must be set down the quarrel with Russia, the Crimean War, and the guilt and odium of maintaining the foul Turkish Empire as a guard of the road to India. One shrewd observer, at all events, Nassau Senior, held it a mistake to believe that to the Indian Empire England owed her greatness. He avowed his wish that you were well rid of it. How you were to get well rid of it, he said was the difficulty. That question seems not unlikely to be answered by the resurrection of Asia.”

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The mission of Vedanta to the West is not to make Christians Hindus, but to make the Christian a better Christian, a Hindu a better Hindu, and a Mohammedan a better Mohammedan; to convince men that in and through all these various religions there runs that one common thread of truth, and go you whatever way, you cannot but reach God. . . . Believe as intensely as you can in the infallibility of your own religion, follow it out in your daily life; at the same time believe that other religions are also as good in reaching God for minds which think differently from you. . . . We shall have to learn the great fact that if one religion is false the others are also false, and if one is true the others are true too. For if religion and revelation come through the process of evolution, it cannot be the exclusive property of any one sect or any one individual. It is as common as God's wind and rain, which come both to the just and unjust; it is like the universal space, embracing everything that is sentient and insentient.

SWAMI SARADANANDA.

# Vedanta

## Monthly Bulletin

That which exists is one; men call it by various names.—Rig Veda

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### DID CHRIST TEACH A NEW RELIGION?

*Lecture by SWAMI ABHEDANANDA*

THE religion of Jesus the Christ was not like the orthodox Christianity of to-day; neither did it resemble the faith of the Jewish nation. His religion was a great departure from Judaism in principles and ideals, as well as in the means of attaining them. It was much simpler in form and more sublime in nature. The religion that Christ taught had neither dogma, creed, system, nor theology. It was a religion without priests, without ceremonials, without rituals, or even strict observances of the Jewish laws.

As in India Buddha rebelled against the ceremonials, rituals, and priestcraft of the Brahmans and introduced a simpler form of worship and a religion of the heart, so among the Jews, nearly five hundred years after Buddha, Jesus of Nazareth rebelled against the priestcraft of Judaism. Jesus saw the insufficiency of the Jewish ethics and ideals and the corruption and the hypocrisy of the priests. He wished to reform the religion of his country and to establish a simpler and purer form of worship of the Supreme Being, which should rest entirely upon the feelings of the heart, not upon the letter of the law.

The God of Jesus was not the cruel and revengeful tribal deity of the house of Israel; He was the Universal Spirit. He was not like the tyrannical master of modern orthodoxy, who kills, damns, or saves mankind accord-

ing to his whim; He was a loving Father. Jesus's worship consisted not in ceremonials, but in direct communion between his soul and the Father, without any priestly intermediary. The idea of God as the "Father in heaven" did not, however, originate with Jesus the Christ, as modern Christians generally believe; it existed in the religious atmosphere of northern Palestine as a result of the Hellenic influence of the worship of Jupiter—Greek, Zeus-pitar; Sanskrit, Dyus-pitar, which means "Father in heaven," and hence *Father of the Universe*. The worship of Jupiter was introduced into Babylon and northern Palestine by Antiochus Epiphanes between 175 and 163 B.C. Although the orthodox Jews revolted against this innovation, yet there were many liberal-minded Jews among the Pharisees who liked the idea, accepted it, and preached it. One of the most prominent of the Jewish priests, who was considered by many as the true master and predecessor of Jesus and who was held in great esteem by the Pharisaic sect of the Jews, inculcated this belief in the merciful and fatherly character of God. His name was Rabbi Hillel. The Talmud speaks of this Babylonish teacher in glowing terms, declaring that he was next to the prophet Ezra. It was Hillel who first preached the Golden Rule among the Jews. He used to spend much time in meditation and study, and recommended such practices to his disciples. Hillel died when Jesus was about ten years old.

Thus we see that the idea of the Fatherhood of God existed in northern Palestine at the time of Jesus, and was preached in public by Rabbi Hillel. Moreover, at the same time Philo and other Neo-Platonist Jews in Alexandria were teaching the fatherly character of God and the only-begotten Sonship of the Logos, or Word. Both the Fatherhood of God and the Son-

ship of the Word were known to the Greeks and other Aryan nations, especially the Hindus of ancient India. Jesus of Nazareth took up this grand Aryan idea and emphasized it more strongly than any of his predecessors in Palestine.

At the time that Jesus appeared in Galilee the religious atmosphere of the place was permeated with Persian doctrines, Hellenic ideas, Pythagorean thoughts, and the precepts of the Essenes, Therapeutæ, Gymnosophists, and the Buddhists of India. Galilee was aglow with the fire of religious enthusiasm, kindled by the ardor of social and political dissensions. The Jews were already divided into three principal sects—the Sadducees, the Pharisees, and the Essenes. Each of these was trying to gain supremacy and power over the others. The Sadducees were the conservative and aristocratic class, while the Pharisees and the Essenes were essentially liberal. It was a time of great disturbance—of intrigues, insurrections, rebellions, and wars. Such a period naturally kindles the fire of patriotism in the hearts of a nation and forces its members to become active in every possible way. The misfortunes and calamities that befell the descendants of Israel made them remember the promises of Jahveh which were handed down to them through the writings of the prophets, and forced them to seek supernatural aid in the fulfilment of those promises. The unconquerable pride of the sons of Israel—that they were the “chosen people” of Jahveh, the only true God, who was their governor and director—stimulated their minds with the hope that, through the supernatural power of Jahveh, the kingdom of their great ancestors would be restored: that a member of David’s house would appear as the Messiah (the Anointed), sit on the throne, and unite the twelve tribes of Israel under



his scepter, and govern them in peace and prosperity. This was the first conception of a Messiah that ever arose in the minds of the Jews. It was the principal theme of the poets and prophets who lived during the Babylonian exile. The glory of the house of Israel and the earthly prosperity of the sons of Jahveh were the highest ideals of the Jews. They did not mean by *Messiah* a spiritual Saviour of the world. The Christian idea of this term owes its origin to the Zoroastrian conception of the coming Messiah *Soshiyanta*, who, according to the promise of Ahura-Mazda, would appear on the day of judgment, destroy the evil influence of Ahriman, and renovate the world. This idea was accepted by the Pharisees, while the orthodox Jews repudiated it.

Although the mind of Jesus, according to the synoptic Gospels, was not free from the superstitious beliefs of the Jews and the national traditions of his time; although he accepted the Zoroastrian conception of a "coming Messiah" and that the end of the world was immanent, as well as the Persian ideas (which did not exist in Judaism before the Babylonian captivity) of the renovation of the world, the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the dead, the day of judgment, the punishment of the wicked, and the salvation of the righteous; although Jesus believed with the Pharisees in the Persian conception of heaven and hell and the devil, and saw many angels ascending and descending over his head—yet he realized that the kingdom of God was a spiritual kingdom: that it was within himself. He felt the presence of the Father within him, and asked his disciples to feel likewise. The Jews understood by the kingdom of Jahveh the kingdom of this world and the prosperity of the house of Israel. But Jesus spiritualized that ideal and taught

a reign of righteousness and justice; not a reign of strife between nations, but a kingdom of peace and love. Jesus preached this idea among his people in the same way that Buddha declared that he came to establish a kingdom of peace and love and righteousness upon earth. Buddha did not use the expression "kingdom of God," but preferably "kingdom of justice, peace, and love." Jesus had to use the former expression because it was dominant in the minds of the people about him.

These ideas regarding a kingdom of peace and love were scattered in northern Palestine for at least two centuries before the Christian era by the Buddhist missionaries. It is indeed a well-known historic fact that the gospel of peace, good-will and love was preached in Syria and Palestine by Buddhist monks nearly two hundred years before Christ. Their influence was felt most deeply by the Jewish sect called the Essenes, or the Therapeutæ, to which sect, as many scholars believe, Jesus himself belonged. It is interesting to note the similarities between the Essenes and the followers of Buddha. The Buddhists were also called *Theraputta*, a Pali form of the Sanskrit *Sthiraputra*, meaning the son of Sthera, or Thera: one who is serene, enlightened, and undisturbed by the world. Thera was one of Buddha's names. These people had the power to heal disease.

Readers of the history of India are aware that, in 249 B.C., Asoka the Great, the Buddhist emperor, made Buddhism the state religion of India and sent missionaries to all parts of the world then known to him to preach the gospel of Buddha. He sent missionaries from Siberia to Ceylon, and from China to Egypt. These missionaries preached the doctrines of Buddhism, not by bloodshed and sword, but by scattering bless-

ings, good-will, and peace wherever they went. The edicts or stone inscriptions of Asoka were written during his lifetime. One of these edicts mentions five Greek kings who were Asoka's contemporaries,—Antiochus of Syria, Ptolemaos of Egypt, Antigonus of Macedon, Magas of Cyrene, and Alexander of Epiros. The edict says that Asoka made treatises with these kings and sent Buddhist missionaries to their kingdoms to preach the gospel of Buddha. "Both here and in foreign countries," says Asoka, "everywhere the people follow the doctrine of the Beloved of the gods, wheresoever it reacheth." Mahaffi, the Christian historian, says: "The Buddhist missionaries preached in Syria two centuries before the teaching of Christ, which has so much in common (with the teaching of Buddha), was heard in northern Palestine."

The labors of these Buddhist monks were not fruitless in these places. They continued to preach through parables the highest ideals of religion, from generation to generation. Their communities, bound to a life of celibacy, which was not a Jewish custom, increased from age to age as outsiders joined their ranks. Even the Alexandrian Neo-Platonist Philo, who was a contemporary of Christ, mentions in his writings once or twice the "Indian Gymnosophists," or Buddhists, and says that the Essenes numbered about four thousand at that time. The doctrines of the Essenes, their manner of living, and the vows of their communities show the results of the Buddhist missionary work during the two centuries immediately preceding the birth of Christ. Pliny says: "The Essenes live on the western shore of the Dead Sea. They are a hermit clan—one marvellous beyond all others in the world, without any women, without the joys of domestic life, without money, and the associates of the palm-trees."

If we read Josephus we find how highly the Essenes of those days were respected.

One of the peculiar practices of the Essenes was the *bath of purification*, which was also a peculiarity of the Buddhist monks. The life led by John the Baptist was typical of that of a Buddhist monk. Exactly like a Buddhist, the Essene rose before sunrise and said his morning prayers with his face turned towards the East. When the day broke he went to work. Agriculture, cattle-breeding, bee-keeping, and other peaceful trades were among his ordinary occupations. He remained at work until 11 o'clock; then he took a bath, put on white linen, and ate plain vegetable food. The Essenes abstained from meat and wine. They also wore leather aprons, as did some of the Buddhist monks. The Essene novice took solemn oath to honor God, to be just toward his fellow-man, to injure no one either of his own accord or by order of others, not to associate with the unrighteous, to assist the righteous, to be ever faithful to all, always to love truth, to keep his hands from theft and his soul from unholy gain. There were some who joined the order after having lived a married life.

Ernest Renan says: "The Essenes resembled the Gurus (spiritual masters) of Brahmanism." "In fact," he asks, "might there not in this be a remote influence of the *Mounis* (holy saints of India)?" According to Renan, "Babylon had become for some time a true focus of Buddhism. Boudasp (Bodhisatta), another name of Buddha, was reputed a wise Chaldean and the founder of Sabeism, which means, as its etymology indicates, baptism." He also says: "We may believe, at all events, that many of the external practices of John, of the Essenes, and of the Jewish spiritual teachers of the time were derived from in-

fluences then but recently received from the far East"—meaning India. Thus we can understand that there was an indirect influence of the Buddhist monks upon the mind of Jesus through the Essenes, and especially through John the Baptist.

Although Jesus never pretended to have created the world, nor to govern it, yet his followers worshipped and loved him as the Messiah; and later on the writer of the fourth Gospel identified him with the "Word," or Logos, of Philo, about the latter part of the third century of the Christian era. According to the synoptic Gospels, the idea of the advent of the end of the world and of the reign of justice and the kingdom of God grew so strong in the mind of Jesus that apparently it forced him to think that he—the Son and the bosom friend of his Father—must be the executor of God's decrees, and that through him such a kingdom of justice and goodness should be established. This thought gradually led him to believe that, as he was the Son of God, he should be the universal Reformer, and was born to *establish* the kingdom of God.

The fundamental principles of the religion of Jesus, however, were purity, charity, self-denial, control of passions, renunciation of and non-attachment to wealth and to earthly things, intense faith, forgiveness and love for enemies, and the realization of the unity of the soul with the "Father in Heaven." During the one year of his public life as a spiritual teacher, Jesus taught his disciples these principles and showed them the way to practice them by his living example. But all of these grand ethical and spiritual doctrines, upon which the religion of Jesus was founded, were practiced for nearly three centuries before Christ by the Buddhist preachers in Babylon and Syria, and they were taught in India for ages before that. The same ideas were

inculcated by the Vedic sages, by the Vedanta philosophers, and afterwards by the Avataras, or Incarnations of God, like Rama, Krishna (who lived about 1400 B.C.), Buddha (547 B.C.), Sankara, Chaitannya, and Nanaka, and also by Ramakrishna of the nineteenth century. If we study the lives of these men, we find that, like Jesus, each one of them lived a pure, spotless, and unselfish life of renunciation, always loving humanity and doing good to all.

Those who have read the doctrines of Buddha know that the ethical teachings of Jesus seem like repetitions of what Buddha taught. Those who have read the Bhagavad Gita, or the Song Celestial, will remember that the fundamental principles of Krishna's teachings were purity of heart, self-denial, control of passions, renunciation, love towards enemies, forgiveness, and the realization of the unity of the soul with the Father. In short, the religion of Christ was taught before Him by Buddha and Krishna in India. Like Jesus the Christ, Krishna said in the Bhagavad Gita: "I am the path. Follow me and worship one God. I existed before the world was created. I am the Lord of all." And again: "Giving up the formalities of religion, come unto me; follow me; take refuge in me. I shall free thee from sins and give eternal peace unto thee. Grieve not."

But although Jesus the Christ did not teach a new religion, still he came to fulfill and not to destroy. He gave a new life to the old truths, and by his wonderful personality impressed them upon the minds of his own people.

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Confucius taught the Golden Rule five hundred years before Christ was born. Tsze-kung once asked him if there were one word that would serve as a rule of con-

duct for all the life, and he replied: "Is not *reciprocity* such a word,—What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others." When this was told to Lao-tze, who was Confucius' senior by fifty-three years, he asked: "What merit is there in that?" And he then expounded the higher principle: "It is the way of the Tao to act without (thinking of) acting, to conduct affairs without (feeling) the trouble of them; to taste without discerning any flavor, to consider the small as great and the few as many, and to recompense injury with kindness." "The good I meet with goodness; the bad I also meet with goodness; for virtue is good (throughout)." Someone of Confucius' school hearing this maxim and being puzzled by it, consulted the master, who still holding to the Golden Rule, replied: "What then will you return for good? Recompense injury with justice and return good for good."

While Lao-tze was thus proclaiming in China the noble precept of returning good for evil, Buddha was at the same moment preaching in India: "Conquer evil by good, hatred by love, the avaricious by generosity, and falsehood by truth." And nearly a thousand years before, Krishna reiterated again and again in the Bhagavad Gita the same lofty ideal: "He who is the same toward friend and foe is dear to Me"; "He who hateth no creature and is kind and compassionate towards all, who is free from selfish feelings and egotism, and forgiving, is dear to Me"; "He who by comparison with himself sees the same everywhere, be it pleasure or pain, he is deemed the highest Yogi." Thus we see that neither the Golden Rule nor the teaching "Overcome evil with good" is peculiar to Christianity as is usually believed.

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### VEDANTA IN AMERICA

THE series of lectures by Swami Abhedananda on "The Great Saviours of the World" continued through December and was closely followed by a large number. On the first Sunday the Swami gave a remarkably learned and exhaustive history of the rise and growth of "Lamaism in Thibet." This was followed by a lecture on Zoroaster of exceptional interest, not only because of the lofty picture it presented of the great Spiritual Leader, but also because to his teachings, as the Swami made plain, was to be traced the origin of many of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. It was indeed from the Persians during the Babylonish captivity that the Jews for the first time learned to believe in Satan and in "their present ideas of heaven and hell, of angels and archangels, of a Messiah, of the Resurrection and the last Day of Judgment." In the study of Lao-tze, which came next, every one was struck with the strong resemblance between the teachings of the great Chinese sage and those of Vedanta, from which he had evidently drawn his inspiration; and it was this which enabled the Swami to give so profoundly spiritual an interpretation of the passages read from the Tao-Teh-King, Lao-tze's written word. The other lectures of the month were on Christ and Mahomet.

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In accordance with the usual custom, a special religious service was held in the chapel of the Society House on Christmas evening. The chapel and altar were decorated with evergreens and flowers, and the service consisted in reading from the Bible, meditation, and a short address by Swami Abhedananda, in which he pointed out the difference between the historical and the Ideal Christ and showed how true religion consisted in the worship of the Ideal Christ seated on the altar of our hearts. His lecture on the previous day had already given a lofty conception of "Christ and His Teachings" and proved once more that as Christ was an Oriental, a fact which we are too



prone to forget, He can best be understood by an Oriental.

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Swami Nirmalananda has opened an evening Meditation Class, which will meet every Monday and Wednesday at 8 o'clock. This will in no way interfere with the afternoon Meditation, which will continue as heretofore.

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The subjects for the Sunday lectures during January will be: "Unity in the Variety of Religions," "Various Aspects of God," "Attitude of Vedanta towards all Religions," "Ethics of Vedanta."

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"If the United States wishes to know what it would have become under British rule, let it look at India to-day." With such potent words did the Swami Abhedananda bring home to his listeners the sad condition of his own country while telling them of "The Political Institutions of India" in his fourth lecture before the Brooklyn Institute. The Swami, in taking up his subject, first gave a clear picture of the early political condition of India under native rule. "Megasthenes (Greek ambassador to India in the fourth century B.C.) speaks in the highest terms of the government of Chandragupta," he quoted, "and Fa Hian and Houen Tsang, who lived many years in India and visited many kingdoms, also speak highly of Hindu administration, and do not cite a single instance of a people being ground down by taxes or harassed by the arbitrary and oppressive acts of kings, or ruined by internecine wars. On the contrary, the picture which they present to us is that of a happy and prosperous group of nations, loyal and well-disposed to their kings, enjoying the fruits of a benign and mild civilized administration."

The Swami then came down through the Mohammedan occupation to the arrival of the East India Company and the subsequent gradual absorption of the country by

England, resulting in a condition of pitiable slavery and impoverishment. He showed how by a system of prohibitive tariffs industry after industry had been killed and the people reduced to a purely agricultural community with the one resource of producing raw materials to feed the factories of Great Britain; yet forced at the same time to meet a tax three times heavier according to their income than that of England and four times heavier than that of Scotland. On one single item alone, salt, he cited as an example, they were obliged to pay two thousand per cent of its value, that is 20 cents for every cent's worth eaten. This has meant an annual drain from India to England of from \$125,000,000 to \$150,000,000, with no return; for India, while she has paid for all of England's military expeditions in the far East,—to Thibet, to China, to Afghanistan, to South Africa,—an expenditure which in the last century amounted to \$450,000,000, and while she contributes \$105,000,000 per annum to the maintenance of an army not in any way needed for her own protection, yet she has no voice in her own government, and for the education of her children is allowed 1 penny and one fifth per head a year! Even the higher government positions are closed to her, being reserved for Englishmen, while the average wage for her working people has dropped to from 2 to 5 cents per day, and of this from 14 to 15 per cent must be paid for taxes. "This will give you some idea of how India has 'progressed' under British rule!" was the Swami's comment.

He further explained that with the English had also come the famines, of which there had been ten in forty years with a loss of life amounting to over fifteen millions—not because there was no food in the country, but because the people were too poor to buy the grain which was being exported to England. India's hope, he said, had been in the Queen's proclamation of 1858, which read: "And it is our further will that, so far as may be, our subjects, of whatever race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to offices in our service, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability, and integrity to discharge." But Lord

Curzon had declared all Indians disqualified because they belonged to a different race; and he had carried out this royal promise by taking away the freedom of the press and passing the Official Secrets bill which makes it possible for a man to be arrested in India to-day and sentenced without trial.

The Swami spoke with impressive calmness, giving statistic after statistic and supporting each statement with quotations from unimpeachable English, not Hindu, authorities. That his audience heard with conviction what he said was evident from the rapt attention with which they listened.

A review of the succeeding lecture in the course on "Education in India" will be given in the next number of the Bulletin.

### INDIA

In the Monastery at Belur near Calcutta, which is the main center of the Order of Ramakrishna, a statue or picture of every great Saviour of the world finds a place and all are worshipped and honored. With the Buddhists the members of the Order keep the anniversary of Buddha's birth; with the Vaishnavas they observe the Krishna festivals; and when the 25th of December comes round they celebrate Christmas with the Christians. On Christmas Eve they build a bonfire on the lawn and sit round it in a circle, chanting, reading from the Bible, meditating and praying. On Christmas morning they bring offerings of fruits and flowers and sweetmeats and lay them before Christ's picture in the chapel, a picture which is doubly sacred because it hung for many years in the room of their Revered Master, Sri Ramakrishna, at the Temple of Dakshineswara. After a morning service, to which friends from Calcutta are also invited, the sanctified offerings are distributed to all those present, after which the Swamis and Brahmacharis (novices) return once more to their usual round of duties and religious exercises.

In this connection, it is interesting to hear that a few years ago some missionaries went to the monas-

tery in the hope of making converts, but when they saw the picture of Jesus hanging on the walls and listened to the Swamis' ideas of Christ and his teachings, they went away again, saying, "These people are already Christians." Could there be any better proof of the universality of Vedanta?

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The Secretary of the Vivekananda Society at Colombo, Ceylon, writes: "We always feel pleasure to read of your doings. We, too, here are trying our best to help ourselves and consequently our brothers. Meetings are regularly held every week. The syllabus for the current quarter (Oct.-Dec.) includes four Bhagavad Gita classes and nine lectures, three in Tamil and the rest in English, on the following subjects: 'The Present Religious Tendency,' 'Ekam sat,' 'Hidden Side of Life,' 'The Aim of Life,' 'Spirit and Matter,' and 'The World of Thought.' Siththiar classes are held on Sundays."

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Some conception of the far-reaching and ever-widening influence of Swami Vivekananda, and consequently of the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, may be formed from the fact that way off in the Malay Peninsula at Kuala Lumpur is a "Vivekananda Reading Hall," established nearly two years ago. Its object is to provide a library for the Hindu residents and a meeting-place where they may gather together and gain an ever new impetus to "follow in the footsteps of the great Swami Vivekananda" by cultivating true love for India and for her lofty spiritual ideals.

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We have also just learned that a Vivekananda Home of Service has been founded in Cocanada in Southern India, and the head of it in the earnestness of his enthusiasm "begs all sympathetic ladies and gentlemen to enquire, pick up, and send to him any poor and helpless orphans or foundlings (boys or girls) of any caste," who will be fed, cared for, and "given moral

and religious, technical and secular instruction and be made fit to earn their livelihood by honest labor." They must be under twelve years of age at the time of admission, and on attaining their majority they are asked to serve the Home for three years or less (if required) as a return for what they have received.

In connection with Swami Abhedananda's lecture on India reviewed on a foregoing page it is interesting to read this testimony:

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, now Premier of England, writes: "Justice demands that England should pay a portion of the great Indian army maintained in India for Imperial rather than Indian purposes. This has not yet been done, and famine-stricken India is being bled for the maintenance of England's world-wide empire."

And the Rev. T. J. Sunderland indignantly exclaims in an article in the *New England Magazine*: "We denounce ancient Rome for impoverishing Gaul, and her other conquered provinces, by drawing away their wealth to enrich herself. We denounce Spain for robbing the New World in the same way. But England is doing exactly the same thing in India. . . . Probe down through the surface of fine words and legal forms to what lies below, and we have the same hideous business that Rome and Spain were engaged in so long, and for which in the end they paid so dear. Called by its right name, what is the treatment of India by England? It is national parasitism. It is the stronger nation sucking the blood of the weaker."

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What you wish others to do, do yourself.

Sayings of SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

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Miserable are they because they see not and hear not the good that is very nigh them; and the way of escape from evil, few there be that understand it.

HIEROCLES.

# Vedanta

## Monthly Bulletin

That which exists is one; men call it by various names.—Rig Veda

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### MISSION OF VEDANTA TO THE WESTERN WORLD

*Abstract of Lecture delivered in Madras by SWAMI VIVEKANANDA*

THERE are times in the history of a man's life, nay in the history of the lives of nations, when a sort of world-weariness becomes painfully predominant. It seems that such a tide of world-weariness has come upon the Western World. There, too, they have thinkers, great men; and they are already finding out that it is all vanity of vanities, this race after gold and power; many, nay most, cultured men and women there are already weary of this competition, this struggle, this brutality of their commercial civilization, and they are looking forward towards something better. There is a class which still clings to political and social changes as the only panacea for the evils in Europe, but among the great thinkers there other ideals are growing. They have found out that no amount of political or social manipulation of human conditions can cure the evils of life. It is only a change of the soul itself for the better that will cure the evils of life. No amount of force, or government, or legislative cruelty will change the conditions of a race, but it is spiritual culture and ethical culture alone that can change wrong racial tendencies for the better. Thus, these races of the West are eager for some new thought, for some new philosophy. The thoughtful men of the West find in our ancient philosophy, especially in the

Vedanta, the new impulse of thought they are seeking, the very spiritual food and drink they are hungering and thirsting for.

I have become used to hearing all sorts of wonderful claims put forward in favor of every religion under the sun. Let me lay before you my reasons why I think that it is the Vedanta and the Vedanta alone that can become the universal religion of man, and that none else is fitted for that rôle. Excepting our own, almost all the other great religions in the world are inevitably connected with the life or lives of one or more founders. All their theories, their teachings, their doctrines, and their ethics are built round the life of a personal founder from whom they get their sanction, their authority, and their power; and strangely enough upon the historical evidence of the founder's life is built, as it were, all the fabric of such religions. If that rock of historical evidence, as they pretend to call it, is shaken and shattered, the whole building tumbles down, broken absolutely, never to regain its lost status. Every one of the great religions of the world, excepting our own, is built upon such historical characters; but ours rests upon principles. There is no man or woman who can claim to have created the Vedas. They are the embodiment of eternal principles; sages discovered them; and now and then the names of these sages are mentioned, just their names; we do not even know who or what they were. But what cared they, these sages, for their names? They were the preachers of principles, and they themselves, as far as they went, tried to become illustrations of the principles they preached. At the same time, just as our God is an impersonal and yet a personal God, so is our religion a most intensely impersonal one, a religion based upon principles; and yet it has an infinite scope for the play of persons, for

what religion gives you more incarnations, more prophets and seers, and still waits for infinitely more? Therefore, if any one or more of these persons in India's religious history, any one or more of these incarnations, and any one or more of our prophets are proved not to have been historical, it does not injure our religion a bit; even then it remains firm as ever, because it is based upon principles, and not on persons. It is vain to try to gather all the peoples of the world around a single personality. It is difficult to make them gather together even round eternal and universal principles. If it ever becomes possible to bring the largest portion of humanity to one way of thinking in regard to religion, mark you, it must be always through principles and not through persons.

The second claim of the Vedanta upon the attention of the world is that, of all the Scriptures, it is the one Scripture, the teaching of which is in entire harmony with the results that have been obtained by the modern scientific investigations of external nature. Two minds in the dim past of history, cognate to teach each other in form, kinship, and sympathy, started, being placed in different circumstances, for the same goal through different routes. The one was the ancient Hindu mind and the other the ancient Greek mind. The latter started in search of that goal by analyzing the external world. The former started by analyzing the internal world. And even through the various vicissitudes of their history it is easy to make out these two vibrations of thought tending to produce similar echoes from the goal beyond. It seems clear that the conclusions of modern materialistic science can be acceptable, harmoniously with their religion, only to the Vedantins. It seems clear that modern materialism can hold its own and at the same time approach spirituality by



taking up the conclusions of Vedanta. It seems to us, and to all who care to know, that the conclusions of modern science are the very conclusions the Vedanta reached ages ago; only in modern science they are written in the language of matter. This, then, is another claim of the Vedanta upon modern Western minds,—its rationality, the wonderful rationalism of the Vedanta. I have myself been told by some of the best scientific minds of the day in the West how wonderfully rational the conclusions of the Vedanta are. . . .

India was to be alone the land of all lands of toleration and of spirituality, for one of the greatest sages that was ever born anywhere found out here in India even at that distant time which history cannot reach—tradition itself dares not peer into the gloom of that past when the sage arose—and declared, “He who exists is one, the sages call Him variously,” one of the grandest of truths that was ever discovered; and for us Hindus this truth has been the very backbone of our rational existence. We love that grand truth in every grain, and our country has become the glorious land of religious toleration. It is here and here alone that people build temples and churches for the religions which have come in with the object of condemning our own religion. This is one very great principle that the world is waiting to learn from us. The world is waiting for this grand idea of universal toleration. It will be a great acquisition to civilization. No civilization can grow before fanaticism stops and bloodshed stops and brutality stops. No civilization can begin to lift up its head until we look charitably upon each other, and the first step towards that much-needed charity is to look charitably and kindly upon the religious convictions of each other.

The other great idea that the world wants from us

to-day is that eternal grand idea of the spiritual oneness of the whole universe. I need not tell you, men from this Madras University, how the modern researches of Europe have demonstrated through physical means the oneness and the solidarity of the whole universe; how, physically speaking, you and I, the sun and the moon and the stars, are all but little waves or wavelets in the midst of an infinite ocean of matter; and how Indian psychology had demonstrated ages ago that similarly both body and mind are but mere names or little wavelets in the ocean of matter; and how, going one step further, it is shown in the Vedanta that, behind that idea of the unity of the whole, the real soul is also one. There is but one soul throughout the universe, all is but one existence. The rational West is earnestly bent upon seeking out the *raison d'être* of all its philosophy and ethics, and you all know well that ethics cannot be derived from the mere sanction of any personage, however great and divine he may have been. Such an explanation of the authority of ethics no more appeals to the world's thinkers; they want something more than human sanction for ethical and moral codes to be binding, they want some eternal principle of truth as the sanction of ethics. And where is that eternal sanction to be found except in the only infinite reality that exists, in you and in me and in all, in the self, in the soul? The infinite oneness of the soul is the eternal sanction of all morality, that you and I are not only brothers, but that you and I are really one. This is the dictate of Indian philosophy. This oneness is the rationale of all ethics and all spirituality. Europe wants it to-day, and this great principle is even now unconsciously forming the basis of all the latest political and social aspirations that are coming up in England, in Germany, in France, and in

America. And mark it, my friends, that in and through all the literature voicing man's struggle towards freedom, towards universal freedom, again and again you find the Indian Vedantic ideals coming out prominently.

Thus there is a great opening for the Vedanta to do beneficial work both here and elsewhere. Carry, therefore, the light and the life of the Vedanta to every door and rouse up the divinity that is hidden within every soul. Then, whatever may be the measure of your success, you shall have this satisfaction, that you have lived, worked, and died for a great cause. In the success of this cause, howsoever brought about, is centered the salvation of humanity here and hereafter.

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Then speak, O Love!—

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

And tell the world—

Awake, arise, 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.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

### VEDANTA IN AMERICA

NEARLY ten years have gone by since Swami Vivekananda uttered the ringing words just given and we may well pause and ask how far the mission of Vedanta has been accomplished in this Western World. The reports in succeeding pages tell something of the story, but not all, for the Societies in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and in New York stand merely as the visible monuments of the work done; still greater have been the unseen results. From New York alone nearly 50,000 books and pamphlets have carried the teachings of Vedanta broadcast over the land and not only has the Swami Abhedananda built upon the deep foundation laid by Swami Vivekananda the sturdy structure of the Vedanta Society of New York, but he has continued the pioneer's work begun by his great predecessor and to-day urgent calls are coming to him from Mexico, from South Dakota, from Canada, and many places nearer home to establish Vedanta Centers. If so much has been achieved in one decade, what may we not hope from the coming years when the movement will have increased in force and numbers?

The twelfth anniversary of the Vedanta Society of New York and the Memorial Services in honor of its founder, Swami Vivekananda, were celebrated together on Jan. 17th at the Society's Headquarters. The afternoon service began at 3 with a Meditation, after which Swami Nirmalananda gave a talk on Swami Vivekananda, relating many facts regarding the Swami's life unknown to his listeners. The evening service, at which over one hundred people assisted, was chiefly devoted to addresses by Swami Abhedananda, by some of the members, and by the guest of honor, Mr. Ramanathan, Solicitor-General of Ceylon, now visiting this country. After a short meditation, Swami Abhedananda spoke eloquently of Swami Vivekananda's wonderful character, his childlike simplicity, his lofty ideals, and his extraordinary oratorical powers. He was regarded, the Swami said, as the patriot saint of modern India and the ideal of modern Hinduism.

No one understood the mind of the East and the mind of the West better than he. He knew that the East, especially India, had always stood for the spiritual life, and the West, especially America, for material life; and that America needed the ideals of the East as India had need of the material practical help of the West. To bring the two together was his aim, and for the first time in the history of this country he poured the spirit of the East into the Western mind. He sought to unite the oldest with the newest civilization, realizing that when the new harmony was established the union would be rich in results for both. With this purpose in view he founded the Vedanta Society of New York and for the first time was successful in tying the wedding knot between East and West for their mutual benefit. "To-day after twelve years of earnest effort we have succeeded in making the Society stand as a recognized center where Eastern and Western thought meet. Blessed are they who are helping in this noble work begun by the great patriot saint Swami Vivekananda!"

After short addresses by Mrs. Cape, Miss Waldo, Mr. Goodyear, and Miss Glenn, Mr. Ramanathan held the fixed attention of his audience for more than half an hour while he told them of the simplicity of the life in India as contrasted with the complexity of our Western civilization. In India, he said, progress means a pilgrimage from the world to God; and the dress, customs, mode of living have all been determined by masters, whose chief aim was to lighten the burden of worldly life in order that man might give his time and mind to higher things. There any man can travel from one end of India to the other with only \$20 in his pocket and a bundle a foot long and 6 inches wide in his hand. This contains several pieces of cloth, each  $2\frac{1}{2}$  yards in length, out of which he makes his one garment without pins or stitches. With a shawl over his shoulders and slippers on his feet, he is ready for his journey. "When I go to a town," he continued, "I inquire whether there is an inn. 'Yes,' is the reply, 'there is an inn, there is your bath and there is the Temple. I will have your breakfast ready in an hour.' At the inn there is no charge. It is intended for travellers who

go from temple to temple for the worship of God. I wash myself under a tree—it is beautiful, clear water—then wash out the cloth I have worn; I go to the Temple and spend an hour before breakfast in worship, including meditation by the riverside, and then at the inn there is the old lady with a good breakfast, for which the charge is 6 cents. You pay your 6 cents, meet a few friends, and move on to the next station, where the same routine is repeated." Mr. Ramanathan also described the overwhelming ovation which had been given Swami Vivekananda at Colombo on his way home from America, when he was the guest of Mr. Ramanathan, and spoke in highest terms of the Swami's character and work.

In India, at the monastery near Calcutta, the celebration in honor of Swami Vivekananda took place on Sunday, January 21st. "As the Swami," so the invitation reads, "insisted so much on the service of the poor as a means of developing our spiritual nature, we have made that the special feature of his day." Therefore, after readings from the Sastras from 11 to 12 in the morning, two hours were devoted to music and other entertainment for the poor, after which, from 2 to 5 P.M., hundreds of poor people were fed.

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The regular annual meeting of the Vedanta Society was held at its headquarters, No. 62 West 71st Street, on Thursday evening, January 11th. Reports (extracts of some of which follow) were read by the chairmen of the different committees and most important suggestions were made for the further advancement of the work. The question of a permanent home in New York was discussed and it was decided to raise the necessary funds for this purpose by issuing a limited number of first-mortgage ten-year 3½% bonds at \$50.00 each. The Vice-President pointed out that as these bonds would be secured by first class Real Estate in New York city they would offer as safe and secure an investment as railroad bonds and would be second only to Government bonds. A location will be selected where property will increase in value, and the securities will therefore

become more desirable as time goes on. About sixty of the bonds were immediately subscribed for, and other members of the society offered to use their efforts in assisting to dispose of the remaining number.

Any readers of the Bulletin who feel the value of the teachings of Vedanta and desire to help the growth of the work should endeavor to purchase at least one bond.

#### **Secretary's Address**

Since our last General Meeting the Society has quietly but steadily been growing, a larger number of workers have been gathered together than ever before, each Committee is becoming stronger, and the different new members who have come forward to help the work are adding greatly to our progress. A Society like this needs everybody's heart and soul to dig deep and work hard and never tire. The grander the goal in any personal or public effort, the more difficulties are met, and the more renunciation is needed. The old subject we often all of us speak of, when as a united body we meet, as to-night, is the ever deep necessity of forgetting self and working for that which is greater than ourselves, and in so doing bring the Truth of Vedanta to each one of us. No man or woman in a human body but may pour a little more of God into his heart, and that is what will make our work grow and be fruitful. Vedanta must be lived or it is *not* Vedanta. We must as students try to let the fire of true love and forgiveness shine out everywhere.

The Chairmen of the various Committees will be able to tell us this evening, through their reports, of the work done throughout the year, and as there are many important questions to be discussed I shall not take up more of your time, but at this beginning of a New Year I wish each one of you the strength and joy that comes to the heart that is filled with sincerity and love.

#### **Extract of Librarian's Report**

The record of additions shows that 52 volumes have been added to the library during the year 1905. Besides this, we have a number of volumes, about 20, received

and not yet entered in the Record. The recommendation of the Library Committee to invite members to use the books at the Society rooms was approved by the Swami, and for the latter part of the year many persons have enjoyed this privilege. The circulation of books shows a slight increase over that of last year.

Gifts of books were received from the Swami and various members. The Publication Committee in particular made a most acceptable gift to the library, consisting of all the publications of the Society. A generous donation of money has also been received from a member, which will be used for the purchase of books. We hope to complete our set of the Sacred Books of the East, or at least to add many of the volumes now missing.

The present Library Committee have arranged to open the library for circulation every afternoon except Friday and Saturday, also Tuesday and Thursday evenings and Saturday mornings. This will give ample opportunity to those wishing to take out books.

#### **Extract of Report of the Publication Committee**

. . . The slow but steady creeping up of the figures by hundreds only, in the year's trade, is perhaps a better proof of the organic and permanent character of the work than if the growth were more rapid and spasmodic. It shows that we are feeding, not the fitful appetite of curiosity-seekers, but rather the quieter taste of earnest searchers after truth, and that our expansion in trade is commensurate with the broadening of the mental horizon of the community; in other words, that the teachings of Vedanta are serving as the little leaven which is gradually leavening the whole lump of existing thought.

The wide area which our orders cover would seem to bear out this conclusion. In one fortnight alone last summer we mailed books or pamphlets to Texas, to Alaska, to Hawaii, and to the Philippine Islands; while in the days which followed came orders from Galicia in Austria, from the little town of Rapallo in Italy, from Neuilly-sur-Seine in France, from Arnhem and Amsterdam in Holland, from Porto Rico in the



West Indies, from Vancouver in British Columbia, from the city of Mexico, and from Fingandenny in Scotland,—all from people unknown to us. The variety in the character and calling of our customers is equally great. Dealers in tobacco, in automobiles, in cedar shingles, in hardware and in coffins; lawyers, dentists, doctors, and Christian ministers; Presbyterian Committees of Publication and Methodist Book Concerns are among them.

To this strangely diverse mass of readers have gone out during the twelve months just closed 7563 books and pamphlets, besides many thousands of catalogues, circulars, and free leaflets. We have likewise published one new volume on "Self-Knowledge" and the lecture on "Simple Living" by Swami Abhedananda, also second editions of "How to be a Yogi" and "Jnana Yoga" and of some of the pamphlets, while other pamphlets are just going into their third edition. Besides these "Raja Yoga" has had a sixth edition, "Karma Yoga" a third, and "My Master" a second edition since January of last year. The original 10,000 copies of "What is Vedanta?" have all been distributed and a reprint of the leaflet has been made. Among the works for which we are selling agents we can now supply not only German translations of a number of our publications, but also the Raja Yoga and several of Swami Vivekananda's single lectures in Spanish. As a result of the Swami Abhedananda's successful visit to Toronto last winter we have developed a much larger trade in Canada; our trade with England in the year has almost doubled; and so great has been the increase in our regular trade relations in this country that at the request of several prominent dealers we now issue a special catalogue of our works without our name and address, upon which they print their own as selling agents.

Another encouraging sign is the disposition on the part of some of our customers, all strangers to the Society, to form what may be called centers of Vedanta literature—either by creating a small circulating library of our books or by having our publications on hand for sale; and we are trying in every way possible to utilize these new channels to enlarge our field of

influence. Our method of work indeed is not unlike that of modern warfare. The men who stand and train their guns on some distant point on the horizon know little of where the shell will strike or what havoc it will cause. So, as we from this one small center send out these messages of Vedanta into space, we can never know whom or how many they will reach, but of one thing we may be certain,—that wherever they fall, they will surely destroy some error and clear the way for the onward march of Truth.

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On the invitation of Rabbi Grossman of the Jewish Temple Rodolph Sholom, Swami Abhedananda delivered a lecture on Buddha and Buddhism before the "Young Men's and Women's Culture Society" of that Temple on Jan. 15th. In the course of his lecture the Swami called attention to the fact that the Jews had never been persecuted by the Buddhists, and later Rabbi Grossman corroborated this statement by saying that he had made an exhaustive study of the history of his race, and that while he had found many accounts of Jewish persecution by the Christians, the Mohammedans, the Zoroastrians, there was no instance recorded of the persecution of the Jews by the people of India. Great interest was shown in what the Swami said, and many inquiries were made regarding the work and the teachings of Vedanta.

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Swami Abhedananda in his fifth lecture before the Brooklyn Institute on "Education in India" gave a remarkably comprehensive and interesting outline of the intellectual conditions of India from its earliest history to the present day. Education there, he explained, could be divided into four periods—the ancient or pre-Buddhistic, to the sixth century B.C.; the Buddhistic, from that date to the tenth century A.D.; the Mohammedan, and the British. In the earliest age the Vedas or Hindu scriptures were the chief study of all classes, priests, warriors, and merchants. The school life of a Hindu at that period extended over twelve, twenty-four, thirty-six, or even forty-eight years, during which time the student lived entirely with his master,

receiving instruction in grammar, law, medicine, astronomy, geometry, philosophy, and committing to memory the Vedas, which were passed orally from teacher to pupil. The object of all the training was the moral and spiritual culture of the soul, and the master, feeling it a sacred charge, accepted no monetary return for his teaching or for the maintenance of his pupil beyond a gift of gratitude at the close of the period of study. As in those ancient days, so later the Hindus continued to give the first place in their social institutions to the acquirement of knowledge and every community had its school. When the Mohammedans came in yet other schools and colleges were founded, but only for Mohammedan students.

The British at the outset of their supremacy in India were little inclined to offer liberal education to the natives. When Lord Wilberforce in 1792 presented a request to send out school-masters for the Hindus the answer was: "We have lost America by our folly in allowing the establishment of schools and colleges. Let us not repeat this. Let the Hindus come to England if they wish education." Although this policy has been in a measure modified since that time, the government still does not feel safe in giving substantial higher education to the Hindus on their own soil as they will get in England, where it is hoped that under a stronger English influence they will become denationalized and thus contribute toward the disintegration of the race. It was a Hindu Raja—Ramohun Roy—who started the first English school in India, and a college was established in Madras by a native in 1839, and it was likewise a Hindu who took the initiative in opening schools for girls; for the government has done virtually nothing towards providing education for women, although degrees are offered to women at all the universities, of which there are now five in India. It furthermore offers no free schooling to any native, boy or girl, and is doing more and more to cripple the efforts of the Hindu private schools and colleges. Yet some idea of the Indian's hunger for knowledge is shown by the fact that under the old régime in the Madras Presidency alone there were 12,498 schools and colleges for a

population of a little more than twelve millions, and that when in 1836 the Hoogli College was opened 12,000 students registered in the first three days.

The Swami gave full credit to the standard of the schools established by the Christian missionaries, but said that Hindus were unwilling to place their children under teachers who without understanding the Hindu nature, institutions, or religion merely sought to alienate their pupils from all beliefs, traditions, and customs of their country and home. "The missionaries do not think for a moment," the Swami exclaimed, "that other people have Saviours and prophets of their own. Why should they give them up for the Saviours and prophets of the Semitic race? Not the Hindus, who have produced many Saviours, each of whom was as great as the Saviour of Nazareth—according to Hindu belief. The Christian missionaries ought to convert the Jews first."

Swami Abhedananda was the guest of Dr. Smyth, pastor of the Lexington Avenue Swedenborgian church, at a dinner given by the New Church Club on Jan. 22d, and afterwards delivered an address before the Club. About fifty persons were present. Dr. Smyth introduced the Swami by reading several paragraphs from the leaflet of our Vedanta Society, showing the development of the Vedanta work. When the Swami rose to speak there was absolute silence. Many had never heard the word Vedanta and they were anxious to know about it. After mentioning the vastness of the subject, the Swami gave a beautiful outline of the Vedanta Philosophy and Religion, making the one thought of "Unity in Variety" as a basis. Dr. Smyth then rose and compared the teachings of Swedenborg with those of Vedanta, but the Swami in his answer showed that the dualistic Swedenborgian conception was only the beginning of religion in Vedanta, which included that as merely one part of its universal teaching. There were a number of prominent members of the New Church present, and in the general discussion which followed great interest and admiration were manifested in the Swami's brilliant defense of his position.

The Vedanta Society of San Francisco dedicated its new headquarters at 2963 Webster Street on the evening of Jan. 7th. One of the members writes of the occasion as follows: "As early as 6 o'clock people arrived, and at 7.30 the beautiful hall was filled although the services were only advertised to begin at 8. By this hour every nook and corner was crowded, some 300 people being in the auditorium and as many more vainly clamoring for admission. The cars were packed bringing the people. The services began with addresses by several of the members. Then Swami Trigunatita delivered a prayer. Chanting, organ playing, and singing followed. Next an address by the Swami on "What is Vedanta?" which was listened to with great attention and which undoubtedly made a deep impression. Then more singing, after which there was a social gathering, with refreshments."

There could be no better proof of Swami Trigunatita's energy and ability than this: that in the four years of his management since coming from India he has built up the Society to the point of being able to procure a permanent home. Constructed on plans personally supervised by the Swami, the house is especially adapted to the needs of the work. The ground floor is given up to an auditorium and the Swami's rooms. On the upper floors are dwelling rooms for members, the general living rooms, and in one corner, away from all noise and bustle, a meditation room built like an Indian temple under a dome. In such favorable environments there is every reason to believe that the Society will enter upon a period of even greater growth and prosperity.

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A perfect man is like a lotus leaf in the water or like a mudfish in the marsh. Neither of these is polluted by the element in which it lives.

As a rope that is burnt retains its form intact, but, being all ash, nothing can be bound with it, so the man who is emancipated retains merely the form of his egoism, but no idea of self.

Sayings of SRI RAMAKRISHNA.

# Vedanta

## Monthly Bulletin

That which exists is one; men call it by various names.—Rig Veda

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### “VARIOUS ASPECTS OF GOD”

(Lecture by SWAMI ABHEDANANDA)

ALL great religions of the world may differ from one another in their doctrines and dogmas, in their rituals and ceremonials, their symbology and mythology, which are non-essentials, but they unanimously teach that there is one God, Who is the Omnipotent and Omniscient Creator and Governor of the universe, and the repository of all blessed qualities, such as justice, goodness, righteousness, mercy and love. Each of the great religions, however, gives a particular name to Him, although He is in reality nameless. To the Jews He is Jahveh or Jehovah, the Christians call Him Father in Heaven, the Mahometans call Him Allah, in Zoroastrianism He is worshipped as Ahura Mazda, the Buddhists worship Him as the Celestial Buddha dwelling in Heaven, in Taoism He is the Great Tao, the followers of Confucianism bow down to Him under the name of Shing Ti, the Hindus give Him many different names, such as Iswara, Brahman, Hari, Krishna, Vishnu, Siva, Divine Mother. While these names may vary, the attributes of the Lord remain the same everywhere. The followers of every religion, great or small, know that there is One Infinite

Being Who is the Lord of all, Who is the essence of all that is good and righteous, Who is all-loving and all-merciful. If you read the Koran, you will find that Allah is described as possessing all these attributes; Allah is infinite, He is omnipotent and omniscient, He is loving, He is just, He is righteous. In the Bible, you will see the same; in the Vedas, in the Zend Avesta, everywhere you will find the same attributes. But those who do not understand the true nature of Divinity quarrel and fight over names, simply because the same name is not given by all nations and by all religions. Every nation gives a particular name, because every language is different. That word which conveys the highest ideal in the Arabic language cannot be the same in the Hebrew, or in English, or in Sanscrit, or in Iranian; but those whose spiritual eyes are opened can see the unity of the Godhead under the variety of names,—and that is what we learn through the study of Vedanta.

As the same One God is called by various names, so He has many aspects which are emphasized by the different religions of the world. The same Jahveh or Jehovah of Judaism is the Father in Heaven of the Christians, is Allah of the Mahometans. From the Jewish scriptures we learn that Jahveh or Jehovah of the ancient Jews was a personal God with a human form. He walked in the garden of Eden, He showed His back to Moses, He ate and drank and sat with Noah or with other elders of Israel, and the same Jahveh has become the Father in Heaven of the Christians. He has not lost His personal nature, or His human form. Among the Mahometans, the same Jahveh, Who is still a personal God with human form, is called Allah. Again, if we analyze the attributes of Jahveh, we find that the same Jahveh is the Ahura

Mazda of the Zoroastrians. Furthermore, the very name Ahura Mazda is the Iranian form of Asura Varuna of the ancient Hindus. In the Rig Veda we read that Asura Varuna was the One God above all other gods. Again in Vedanta He is called *Iswara*, which means the Ruler, Lord and Governor of the universe. Just as one substance, water, may be called by different names in different languages, *aqua*, *wasser*, *eau*, *pani*, etc., so the One God is worshipped under various names by different nations of the world. He is one, but He is personal and with a form. All dualistic religions teach that God is one but with a form, and that form will vary according to the belief and education of the people who worship Him. The Christian conception of a personal God, for instance, is that He is sitting on a golden throne in the heavens with two hands, holding a rod to punish the wicked, His eyes red with anger, flashes of lightning coming out from His eyes, and on His right hand Jesus the Christ is seated. The Hindu may think of his God Vishnu with four hands or of Siva with two hands, sitting in deep meditation, *Samadhi*. A Buddhist will think of his God absorbed in *Samadhi*, communing with the Infinite. A Chinese may have the conception of a God with twelve hands, and so on.

Having given a form to God according to our tendency and ideals, we bind ourselves by some kind of relation to our Divine Ideal, and that relation again will vary according to the nature and tendency of the minds of the worshippers. Some will perhaps bind themselves with the relation of a servant to his master. In Judaism we know that the relation of Jahveh to His worshippers is that of an absolute monarch to his subjects, or of a master to his slaves. That relation was considered to be the highest, and that aspect



of an absolute monarch, a Pharaoh, was accepted in Judaism, in Zoroastrianism and in Mahometanism. They all regard him as the Creator and Lord while we are His creatures, we are servants of God. This is the highest relation in Mahometanism. The word Islam means surrender to the will of Allah. The same despotic and revengeful Ruler of Judaism has become a loving Father in Christianity. Christianity has adopted this first aspect, but in addition it has recognized the fatherly aspect of the Lord. Some people have an erroneous idea that Christ was the first to preach this fatherly aspect of Divinity before the world, but history tells us that the ancient Greeks and Hindus used to worship their God as the Heavenly Father centuries before Christ. The very name "Jupiter"—Greek, *Zeus-pitar*—in Sanscrit, *Dyuspitar*, which means "Father in heaven," existed in India hundreds of years before the Christian era. It was emphasized by Krishna who lived about 1400 B.C., and was preached by Rama and other great spiritual leaders of ancient India. Those who have studied the Bhagavad Gita will remember how Arjuna prays to the Lord, calling Him the Father of the universe. "O Lord, Thou art the Father of all animate and inanimate objects. Thou art worshipped by all nations under different names. There is nothing in the universe that can be equal to Thee. How can there be anything greater!" This prayer was repeated thousands of years before the birth of Christ. How then can we say that Jesus the Christ was the first to preach that idea? Those who worship the Lord as their loving Father bind themselves with the close relationship of a son to his earthly father, and call themselves children of God; God is their Father and they are His children. The same Jahveh of Judaism was regarded

by Christ as the Father of the universe; consequently, the Christians of to-day follow their Master's example and pray to their God as the Father in heaven.

The worship of God is impossible without having some kind of relation between the worshipper and his God. We cannot worship God unless we hold some relation with Him. Either we must think of ourselves as servants of God, like the Mahometans or the Jews of ancient times, or we must think of ourselves as His children, recognizing in Him the fatherly aspect; but it is the same Lord the Creator, who becomes our Father. As the one lord of the house may be the lord or master to the servants, yet is father to his children and at the same time may have still other aspects, such as brother, friend, husband, child, etc., so the same Lord Who is the Creator, has other aspects which we can only realize by approaching nearer to Him. Of course, the fatherly aspect is much higher than the aspect of a Creator or an absolute monarch or a master, because we come nearer to God.

The object of all religions is to bring human souls in closest touch with the Divine, but that object is not fulfilled perfectly when we hold ourselves aloof from God and remain as His servants. When, however, we realize that He is our Father, we come in closer touch. Then He is our own; He is no longer a Master Who is sitting above in the heavens and commanding, but He is our loving Father. In Christianity, we find that this idea of the Fatherhood of God has been very strongly emphasized, but there is another aspect which makes us come to God still closer, and that is the motherly aspect. As the earthly mother is closer to her child than the earthly father, so the Divine Mother of the universe is closer to Her children than the Heavenly Father, Who is separated

from His children by the vast gulf of the phenomenal world, since the conception of God as sitting in heaven on His throne, makes Him distant and far away from us. These two aspects, that is, the aspect of a Creator or a Master and the aspect of Father, are recognized and emphasized so long as we feel that God is outside of us, outside of nature and outside of the universe. In short, so long as a devotee realizes and feels that God is extra-cosmic, that is, beyond the cosmos or the universe, so long is He the Father alone or the Creator and Governor; but, when the devotee begins to see that He is not merely extra-cosmic, He is not dwelling outside of nature, but He is intra-cosmic in nature, He is not far away, but within his reach; then He becomes not only the Father but the Mother of the universe. In the fatherly aspect, God is regarded as the efficient Cause of all phenomena, who like a carpenter or a potter creates or fashions the world out of the materials which exist outside of Himself; but, when God is conceived as both Father and Mother of the universe, He is then both the material and the efficient cause of the universe. According to Christian theology, God is only the Father, while in Vedanta He is both the Father and Mother, the efficient and the material cause of the universe.

Some people may fear that this will lead to Pantheism. Oh, no! It will not lead us into Pantheism, but it will make us realize that God is the one First Cause which contains the material and efficient cause of the universe. (Those who would like to know more about the material aspect of God should read the chapter on the "Fatherhood and Motherhood of God" in the book entitled "The Divine Heritage of Man.") As a true devotee approaches the Lord he realizes Him in many other aspects beside His fatherly and

motherly aspects. He feels that he is the child of God and not of any earthly mortal, that God is his Father, Mother, Brother, Sister, Husband, Wife, Child, Relative, Friend, and everything. He is then all in all, and the temporary relations of the world find their eternal meaning. All these relations can be established with God.

When we begin to see the transitory and ephemeral character of our body and senses and of things connected with these, when, after pursuing the phantoms of hope and ambition, we feel tired and exhausted, when we realize that the objects of our human love and human affection are changeable and unreal, and when experience teaches us that our dearest friends and nearest relatives do not belong to us in reality,—then, like a shipwrecked sailor, we struggle hard to swim across the ocean of despair and misery, the cry for help rises from the bottom of our hearts and souls, and it is then that, by the grace of the Omnipresent Divinity, we discover the raft of true knowledge and divine love which carries us across the ocean of mortal life to the shore of eternal peace and everlasting happiness. To a knower of God the earthly father appears to be the mere generator of the physical form, but not of the immortal soul. Rising above the material plane he loves God as his real Father and the Mother of his soul, and worships Him and prays to Him as a devoted Hindu son would worship, revere, honor and respect his earthly father or earthly mother. He is a true devotee and a genuine worshipper of God who can give to his Divine Ideal all the affections of the human heart. We must give all our affections to God, then we shall feel His other aspects, and He will respond. Then we shall feel his friendly aspect; He will become our companion. Do you know that all the great sages

of the world sought no other companion, but held God as the only true friend and real companion in all the vicissitudes and tribulations of their lives? Whenever a true devotee needs any friendly advice, he seeks it not from a mortal friend, but from Him who is the true and eternal Friend and the disinterested Lover of all souls. Who can be a truer friend than the Almighty Lord who guides and directs human souls along the path of righteousness to the abode of eternal peace and infinite happiness? Who can be more disinterested than the Divine Friend?

A true devotee is never alone. Whenever he needs any companion, he takes his Divine Friend with him wherever he goes. Outwardly he may be alone, but in fact he is never alone but enjoys constant companionship with the Supreme Lord. In the playground of this world, he realizes that every act of his body and mind is a sport of the Almighty, that the Lord is playing through him; and therefore he enjoys everything under all circumstances, remembering that it is a play of the Divine Player. If any misfortune comes, he does not suffer because he sees great fun behind it. When a disease comes, he calls that disease a guest sent by his Divine Friend and he takes proper care of the guest. This is a very peculiar idea, but I have seen sages who had such feelings. They were never worried. In every act of their lives they felt the presence of Divinity; and if we can do that, our home and our earthly life will be blessed. If we can feel the presence of Divinity, we shall have no worry or anxiety for anything in this world. Then our life will be worth living. Otherwise it is a miserable existence. We cannot have peace and happiness under these conditions.

A true devotee throughout his earthly career serves

God as his Master and does not seek any return for his labor; but, leaving his whole heart and soul with God, whatever he does he considers it to be a service to his Master and to his Beloved. He who serves for return does not know how sweet is the work which proceeds from the feelings of pure love. A true devotee, however, always works through love. When the soul of the true devotee comes still closer to the Divine Ideal, it begins to feel the other aspects of Divinity, and ultimately the highest aspect of God as the true Lover of human souls is realized. Then like a sweet, pure and loving maiden the soul of the true devotee communes with God and relishes the infinite bliss and joy of divine communion. At that time, there is no end to his ecstatic feelings and emotions. Sometimes he feels that he is the lover and God is his most Beloved, and again in turn God becomes his Lover and he himself is the most beloved of the Lord. Sometimes his feeling of love becomes infinitely stronger, infinitely more intense, than the most intense human love that can exist between a man and a woman. That current of Divine Love penetrates and thrills every atom of his being and makes him feel ecstatic joy and happiness. At the very mention of the name of his Divine Ideal, at the very thought of the Divine Ideal, the whole soul wakes up with a thrill of divine love. The most intense human love reaches its climax when it is directed toward God. God alone is worth loving. Human mortals are only the partial reflections of Divinity, therefore our love runs towards them, not as mere mortals but as children of God; but, when we find that Infinite Being Who is the source of all love, Who is worth loving, then our human love has discovered its real and eternal meaning.

God is the ocean of love and in that aspect the true

devotee realizes a closeness which is very rare, which is impossible with human mortals. You cannot make your husband or your wife the soul of your soul, the heart of your heart, it is very difficult; but you can make God as the soul of your soul, the life of your life, and that relation will never be destroyed. You may pass out of this body or you may go anywhere, but that relation is eternal—it can never be changed. As a river rising from a mountain runs miles and miles in search after its beloved ocean, so the river of love, rising from the summit of the human heart, at first rushes towards earthly objects, husband, wife, children, friend, relatives, but eventually concentrating all these scattered streams into one mighty current, it flows towards God, the ocean of divinity; then surmounting all the barriers which kept the human soul within the walls of worldliness, it becomes absolutely free and communes with the Lord in all His aspects—as the Lover, as the Beloved, as the Friend, as the Child, as Father, Mother, Master. Gradually the soul approaches closer and closer to God until it becomes perfect and divine. The soul is then no longer separate, but all the blessed qualities of divinity begin to flow through it. Through constant communion the soul becomes one with God and nothing is left unaccomplished.

Such are the various aspects of the One personal God, Who is worshipped under different names and through various relations by true devotees of all climes and all ages. The universal religion of Vedanta recognizes all these aspects of the Lord and teaches that whosoever sincerely loves and worships God with whole heart and soul and offers to Him all human affections, reaches Divinity and attains to perfection and everlasting happiness even in this life.

## JUDAISM AND VEDANTA

THAT Judaism, like all the great religions of the world, came under the direct influence of the Vedanta and was perceptibly colored by its teachings is shown in the following words of an eminent Jewish authority: "To determine the country in which the work (the 'Zohar') originated and the time when its teachings began to develop, it is necessary to ascertain where and when the Jews became intimately acquainted with the Hindu philosophy, which more than any other exercised an influence on the Zohar. As an instance of Hindu teachings in the Zohar may be quoted the following passage: 'In the book of Hamnuna the Elder we learn through some extended explanations that the earth turns upon itself in the form of a circle, etc.' The theory that the earth is a sphere revolving on its own axis, which immortalized Copernicus, was previously known only to the Hindus, who were instructed in the truth of it by Aryabhata (the great Hindu astronomer) in the first century before the common era. As far as is known, the Vedanta school of the Hindu philosophy found nowhere, outside of its place of origin, so many admirers as in Persia in the eighth century. Under its influence the Mohammedans of Persia founded many mystic sects, among them being that of the Sufis. This mystic movement did not fail to exercise an influence upon the Persian Jews, and there arose among them various sects, such as the Isawites, the Yudghanites, etc., the tenets of which, so far as can be ascertained from the scanty information concerning them that is available, bore more or less the stamp of the Vedanta philosophy. Thus the Yudghanites abstained from meat, led ascetic lives, believed in metempsy-



chosis, etc. All these mystic sects had their mystic writings, which they kept secret; and these writings probably formed the nucleus of the Zohar, which is a mystic commentary on the Pentateuch, as the Upanishads are the mystic interpretation of the Vedas and other Brahminic Scriptures."

The belief in the essentially Hindu doctrine of metempsychosis was so widely accepted among certain sects of the Jews that it was even raised to the rank of a dogma by the Cabala; and another Jewish writer, in speaking of this fact, says: "The absolute condition of the soul is, according to the Cabalists, its return after developing all those perfections the germs of which are eternally implanted in it, to the infinite source from which it emanated. Another term of life must therefore be vouchsafed to those souls which have not fulfilled their destiny here below and have not been sufficiently purified for the state of reunion with the Primordial Cause. . . . Like Origen and other Church Fathers, the Cabalists used as their main argument in favor of the doctrine of metempsychosis the justice of God. But for the belief in metempsychosis, they maintained, the question why God often permits the wicked to lead a happy life while many righteous are miserable, would be unanswerable. Then, too, the infliction of pain upon children would be an act of cruelty unless it is imposed in punishment for sin committed by the soul in a previous state." This is too clear a statement of the Vedantic doctrine of Reincarnation to doubt the source from which it was drawn by the Judaic teachers.

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### VEDANTA IN AMERICA

THE attendance at the Tuesday evening lectures has been unusually large since Swami Abhedananda began his present course on the Katha-Upanishad or "The Secret of Death," as Sir Edwin Arnold calls it in his translation. It is not perhaps generally known to students of Emerson that the entire close of his essay on "Immortality," beginning with "Yama, the lord of Death, promised Nachiketas to grant him three boons at his own choice," is nothing but a free rendering of a portion of this Upanishad. This is only another proof of how frequently Emerson drew his inspiration from the teachings of Vedanta.

The subjects for the Sunday lectures during March will be as follows: "The Latest Divine Incarnation," "Search after Truth," "Theory of Transmigration," "How to Gain Self-Control."

A concert was given for the benefit of the Vedanta Society at the Lotus Hall in West 79th Street on the evening of February 26th. The artists who kindly consented to take part were Mrs. Edythe Davies Jones, harpist; Mrs. Katherine Heath, soprano; Miss Jennie W. Chase, pianist, and Mr. Arthur Bergh, violinist. Mrs. Cory also gave two recitations. The great success of the evening must have been a source of extreme gratification to the Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee and the other members of the Society who were instrumental in arranging the concert.

Swami Nirmalananda has returned to India and it is hoped that another Swami will reach New York about the month of April to take his place.

"THE dawn of Aryan civilization broke for the first time on the horizon, not of Greece or Rome, not of Arabia or Persia, but of India, which may be called the motherland of metaphysics, philosophy, science, art, music and medicine, as well as of truly ethical religion." Such was the theme of Swami Abhedanan-

da's final lecture before the Brooklyn Institute under the title "The Influence of India on Western Civilization and the Influence of Western Civilization on India." Between 1500 and 300 B.C., the Swami showed by citing unimpeachable authorities, no nation could compete with India in any of these branches of knowledge. The science of geometry was first invented by the Hindus from the Vedic rules for the construction of sacrificial altars; and the famous proposition that the square of the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle is equal to the sum of the squares of the other two sides, ordinarily ascribed to Pythagoras, was known in India two centuries before Pythagoras was born. The Arabs again learned decimal notation and algebra from the Hindus and carried it to the Western world, while the first lessons in astronomy were also given by India, being borrowed from there, not only by the Arabs but by the Chinese. The musical scale of seven notes was originally used in chanting the Sama-Veda; and Wagner, in a conversation with Schopenhauer, acknowledged his indebtedness to India for his peculiar ideas about music, the "leading theme" having always been a characteristic feature of Hindu music.

Alexander the Great had Hindu physicians in his camp; and Dr. Royal, of King's College, London, in his essay on "Hindu Medicine," proves that Hippocrates, called the father of medicine, borrowed his *materia medica* from the Hindus. Roman law and jurisprudence have also been traced to India. Starting as it may seem to some, it must likewise be admitted that Christianity as a religion owes much to the religious teaching of India through the Buddhist missionaries, who carried into Palestine the ideas of baptism, Divine incarnation, non-resistance of evil, etc., which, although foreign to the Judaic doctrine, were later so strongly emphasized by Jesus, a fact corroborated by the Christian historian Mahaffi. It was interesting among other things again to note, in reviewing our philological debt to the Hindus, that so familiar a word as "punch" comes from the Sanscrit "puncha," meaning "five," so that "to give him a punch" is literally "to give him

five fingers," while punch to drink is a beverage of five ingredients. In closing, the Swami, while pointing out once more the crippling effect of England's governmental policy in India, acknowledged that British rule had at the same time proved beneficial in breaking the rigidity of caste rule, in freeing the people from priestcraft, and in giving the blessing of scientific education to the masses.

### INDIA

THE fifth annual report of the Ramakrishna Home of Service of Benares has just reached us. It shows that those helped during the year numbered 925 (513 men and 412 women) and were of all castes and creeds. In many instances, also, the aid given was not merely immediate relief from illness, but a regular contribution of food for months at a time, besides home care and nursing of whole families. The Swami Shivananda, however, with the great wisdom and largeness of vision which characterize all of Ramakrishna's direct disciples, does not limit the usefulness of the Home to merely furnishing aid to the suffering poor. "There is also," he writes, "an educational aspect of the institution which makes its claim on public sympathy stronger still. The Home of Service is an excellent scheme for turning out philanthropic workers for the Motherland, to train young men into hardy, practical, selfless workers, the need of whom is so keenly felt everywhere. Here has the nucleus of a man-making institution been found. Should not all far-sighted and practical people seize the occasion and strengthen the institution by every means?"

A LETTER has been received from Colombo requesting permission to establish a Vedanta Society at Jaffna, Ceylon, as a branch of the Vedanta Society of New York, and, if the Swami will consent, to give it the name "Abhedananda Society."

SEVERAL exceptionally interesting religious congresses were held in India during the month of January. The first was at Benares, and a second sitting of

the same Congress was convened at Allahabad later in the month. A more unusual and imposing religious gathering was the *Kumbha Mela*, held at the same place on the 14th of January. This is the most universal as well as one of the most ancient religious institutions of India. It occurs every twelve years when the sun is in the constellation of Aquarius, in Sanscrit "Kumbha" (hence the name), and from the furthest corners of the north and the south, the east and the west, the great spiritual teachers, pandits, Sannyasins, princes and pious devotees journey to meet on the banks of the sacred Ganges and exchange their views on philosophy and religion. All the ancient traditions are maintained and for days before the opening of the Congress the streets are filled with the long lines of different orders of Sannyasins (monks) marching in. "On the 7th inst., in the afternoon," our report reads, "a large number of Punjabi *Udasis* (Vedantin Sannyasins or monks) arrived and the scene was very impressive. It was almost a regal procession. Preceded by the ancient trumpets which blew a fanfare every now and then, came a long string of camels carrying silver standards borne by the Sannyasins themselves. Next followed some horses in gold and silver trappings and velvet banners richly embroidered with gold and silver. Seated on the foremost elephant came the Mohunt (Abbot) followed by other holy men. Behind them came solid masses of the *Udasis*, fine, erect, stalwart men, who, if they had not been dressed in the garb of mendicants, might have been taken for soldiers. . . . Daraganj (which is the special quarter of Allahabad lying between the Ganges and the river Jamuna at the mouth of the Jamuna) presents a spectacle of unusual bustle. The ex-Maharaja Holkar is staying in a small house on the road just by the riverside. Pilgrims have come in from Sind and Beluchistan, from Kashmir and Nepal, and from the extreme south of India. The whole scene on the banks of the river at Daraganj and the various encampments is wonderfully impressive. Nothing like it can be seen anywhere else in the world."











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