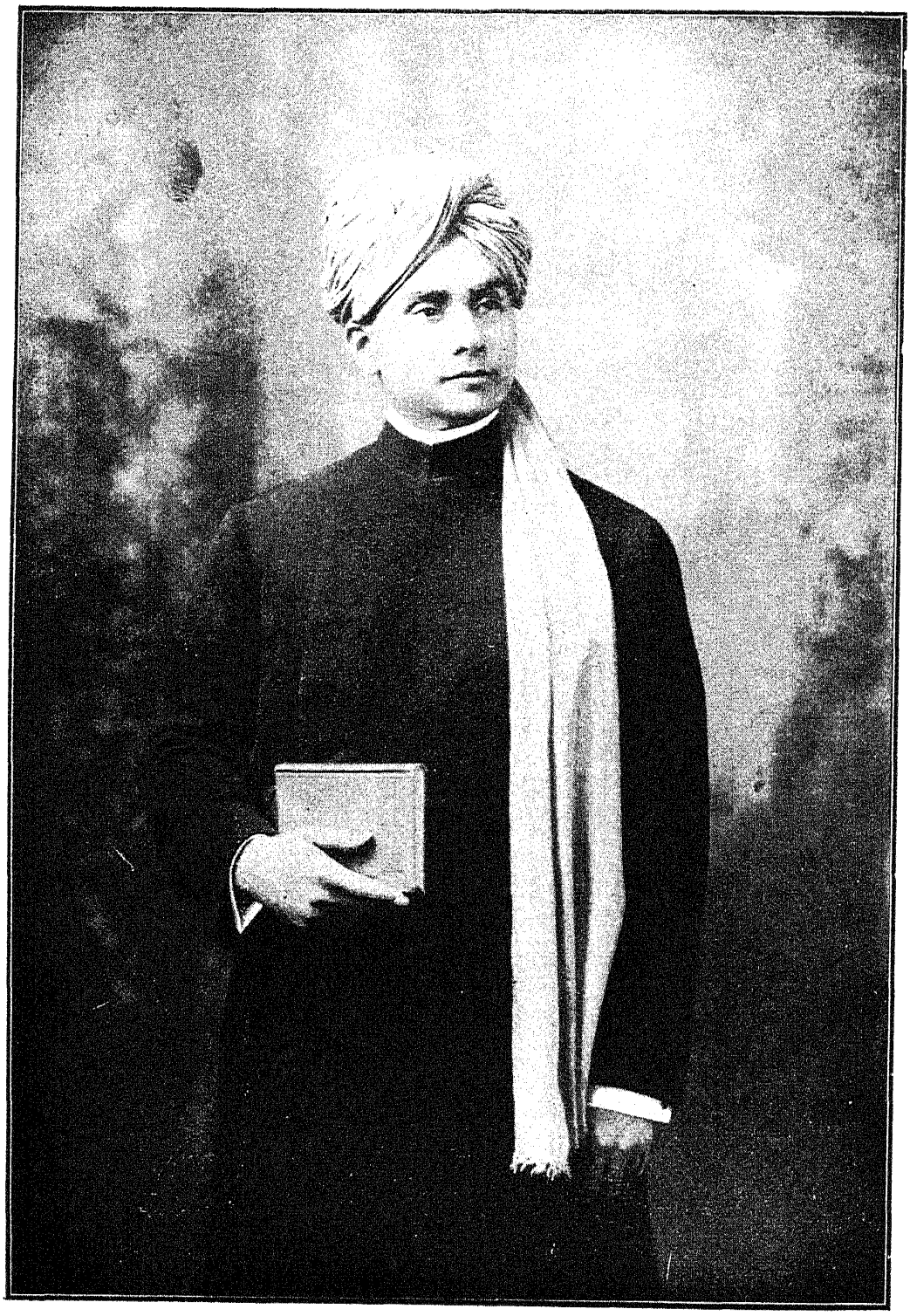
COMPLETE WORKS OF SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

VOL. II



SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

(in America)

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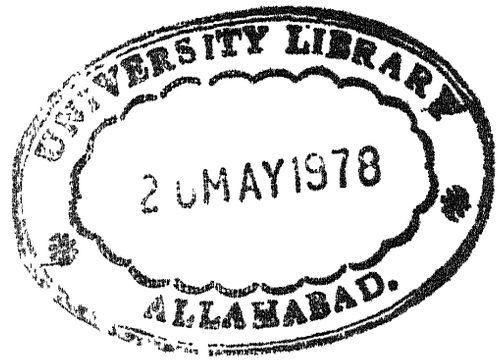

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ABOUT THIS COMPLETE WORKS:

SECOND VOLUME

We offer the second volume of the "COMPLETE WORKS OF SWAMI ABHEDANANDA", published on the occasion of the Swami Abhedananda Centenary Celebration, 1966-67. This volume contains the works of the Swami, some of which were published before and some remained so far unpublished.

The last two books, *Thoughts on Sankhya, Buddhism and Vedanta* and *Steps towards Perfection* are now being published for the first time. They are rich in thoughts and ideas, characteristic of the author. All these lectures have been carefully edited and many footnotes and prefaces have been added

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

Publication Department
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INDIA AND HER PEOPLE

A STUDY IN THE
SOCIAL, POLITICAL, EDUCATIONAL, CULTURAL AND
RELIGIOUS ASPECTS OF INDIA

TO THE

PEOPLE OF INDIA

WITH DEEP FELLOW-FEELING

AND

EARNEST PRAYERS FOR THE RESTORATION
OF THEIR ANCIENT GLORY

AND

NATIONAL FREEDOM

PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR

THE first six lectures contained in the volume were delivered before the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences. As my limited time did not permit me to describe at length the status of Hindu women, I have added a separate lecture on *Woman's Place in Hindu Religion* to complete the subject. My main object has been to give an impartial account of the facts from the standpoint of an unbiased historian, and to remove all misunderstandings which prevail among the Americans concerning India and her people. I have cited Hindu, American, and European authorities to support my statements, and I beg to acknowledge my indebtedness to those writers from whom I have quoted, especially to Mr. R. C. Dutt. C. I. E., for numerous valuable facts and statistics collected by him through years of tireless research in England, and embodied in his historical works, *Civilization in Ancient India, Economic History of India*, and *India in the Victorian Age.*

THE AUTHOR

NEW YORK, MAY 15, 1906.

INTRODUCTION

I am very glad to learn that the course of lectures, recently delivered before the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences by Swami Abhedananda, is to be published. These lectures constitute an exceedingly valuable description of the social, political, educational, and religious conditions of India. They contain precisely what the American wants to know about India. Delivered, as they were by a native of India, they are not coloured by foreign prejudices. I am impressed, by what I heard of the lectures, with the fact that in the hurry and bustle of our Western civilization we have a great deal to learn from the East.

FRANKLIN W. HOOPER,
Director of the Brooklyn institute of Arts and Sciences

BROOKLYN, N. Y., April 26, 1906.

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Appendix I*

Prehistoric
Indus Civilization

Appendix II*

Indian Art in All Its Phases

* It is to note that these two Appendices have been added by Swami Prajnanananda to depict other aspects of Indian culture.

CHAPTER I

THE PREVAILING PHILOSOPHY OF TODAY

Centuries before the Christian era, nay, long before the advent of the prophet and founder of Judaism, when the forefathers of the Anglo-Saxon races were living in caves and forests, tattooing their bodies, eating raw animal flesh, wearing animal skins,—in the remote antiquity, the dawn of true civilization broke upon the horizon of India, or *Bharatavarsha,* as it is called in Sanskrit.

The ancient vedic sages had already perfected their lofty system of moral philosophy, and their followers were well-established in the practice of the ethical and spiritual teachings of the Vedas even before Moses[1] had reformed the lawless and nomadic tribes of Israel by giving them the ten commandments in the name of Jahveh. And while thinkers among the Semitic tribes were still trying to explain the origin of the human race and of the universe through the mythological stories of creation collected from the Chaldeans, Phœnicians, Babylonians, and Persians, the Aryan philosophers of India had already discovered the evolution of the universe out of one eternal Energy, and of man from the lower animals.

Many people have an idea that India is inhabited by idolatrous heathens, who have neither philosophy, ethics, science, nor religion, and that whatever they possess they have acquired from the Christian missionaries; but, since the Parliament of Religions at the World's Fair in Chicago in 1893, the educated men and women of this country have cast aside all such erroneous notions. They have learned, on the contrary, that India has always been the fountain-head of every system of philosophy, and the home of all the religious thought of the world. The majority of Oriental scholars, like Professor Max

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[1] According to the best authorities of the present day, Moses lived about the fourteenth century B C. Dr. Kuenen says: "The exodus is accordingly placed by one in B.C. 1321, by another in B.C. 1320, and by a third in 1314 B.C. Of course, perfect accuracy on this point is unattainable. With this reservation I accept the year 1320 B.C. as the most probable."—*Religion of Israel,* Vol. 1, p. 121.

Muller and Professor Paul Deussen, as also advanced students in America, have now come to realize that from ancient times India has produced a nation of philosophers, and that all the phases of philosophic thought, whether ancient or modern, can still be found there today. Victor Cousin, the eminent French philosopher, whose knowledge of the history of European philosophy was unrivalled, writes: "When we read the poetical and philosophical monuments of the East,—above all, those of India which are beginning to spread in Europe,—we discover there many a truth, and truths so profound, and which make such a contrast with the meanness of the results at which the European genius has sometimes stopped, that we are constrained to bend the knee before the philosophy of the East, and to see in this cradle of the human race the native of the highest philosophy."[1] And elsewhere he declares that "India contains the whole history of philosophy in a nutshell".

You will find no other country in the world where, from prehistoric times down to the present day, philosophy and religion have played so important a part in forming the character of the nation as they have done in India. India is the only country where, at least two thousand years before the Christian era, public assemblies, philosophic conventions, and religious congresses were held under the auspices of the reigning monarchs; and in these active part was taken, not only by priests, philosophers, and scientists, but by kings, military commanders, soldiers, merchants, peasants, and educated women of the higher classes. As early as the vedic period, which dates from 500 to 2000 B.C., the ancient seers of Truth asked the most vital questions, and discussed problems that have troubled the minds of the great philosophers of all ages. In those questions we can discern the development of their intellectual powers, and their insight into the true nature of things. They inquired: "When death swallows the whole world, which deity shall swallow death? What part of man exists after death? What becomes of the vital forces when a man dies? What is the nature of the soul? Where is the foundation and support of this universe? What is the essence of being? What is there that governs all things and yet is separate from

[1] Cf. *The Works*, Vol. 1, p. 32.

everything ?" In trying to answer these and other problems of similar nature, the ancient thinkers discovered the laws of thought and traced the causes of phenomena, applying the rules of logic and reason at every step.

This was the beginning of philosophy in India. The minds of those truth-seekers were absolutely free from all limitations of doctrines, dogmas, and creeds. They never asked what their belief was, or whether they had faith in a personal God ; but the burning questions for them were, how to acquire true knowledge of the universe, of its origin and cause, how to know the real nature of their souls, and how to solve the problems of life and death. At that time philosophic and religious thought began to ferment as actively and universally in the atmosphere of India as we find today in Western countries. Some of the answers given to these questions by the unbiased thinkers of those days are truly astounding ; it seems as though the ancient seers of Truth had anticipated the conclusions of Plato, Spinoza, Berkeley, Hume, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Herbert Spencer, Haeckel, even centuries before their existence.

During the pre-Buddhistic period or before the sixth century B.C., India gave rise to a great variety of philosophical systems, some of which were atheistic, agnostic, nihilistic, materialistic, while others were pluralistic, dualistic, or monotheistic, qualified non-dualistic, idealstic, spiritualistic, monistic systems of thought, such as are common in Europe and America at the present time. In fact, the natural tendency of the Hindu mind from the very beginning was to search after the unchangeable Reality of the universe, to trace the source of all phenomena, to understand the purpose of earthly existence, and above all, to know what relation the individual soul bears to the universal Being. Animated by an intense longing and guided by unswerving love for truth, the ancient thinkers discovered many of the natural laws, and rationally explained them, without fearing contradiction or persecution ; for freedom of thought has always prevailed among all classes of people in India.

These sages understood the process of cosmic evolution from a homogeneous mass into the variety of phenomena, and rejected the theory of special creation out of nothing. In one of the *Upanishads* we read that a sage, after explaining the mystery of creation to his son, said: "My dear child, some

people think that this world has come out of nothing, but how can something come out of nothing?" Thus we see that, unlike the Hebrews, the Hindu thinkers did not believe in special creation, but from ancient times maintained the theory of gradual evolution. It has often been remarked that the doctrine of evolution is the marvel of modern times, and that it was unknown in the past ages, but the students of Oriental literature are well aware that it was well-known to the Hindus of the vedic ages. Professor Huxley admits this when he says: "To say nothing of Indian sages, to whom evolution was a familiar notion ages before Paul of Tarsus was born"[2] And Sir Monier Monier Williams, in his *Brahminism and Hinduism,* declares: "Indeed, if I may be allowed the anachronism, the Hindus were Spinozites more than two thousand years before the existence of Spinoza; and Darwinians many centuries before Darwin; evolutionists many centuries before the doctrine of evolution had been accepted by the scientists of our time, and before any word like 'evolution' existed in any language of the world". This statement is absolutely correct. If we study the philosophical systems of the great thinkers and seers of Truth of ancient India, we shall find the most wonderful discoveries that have ever been recorded in the whole history of philosophy.

In their attempts to solve the mysteries of the phenomenal world, Hindu seers of Truth developed six principal systems of philosophy, each having numerous branches of its own. One school traces the origin of the universe to the combination of atoms and molecules. It is known as the *Vaishesika* philosophy of Kanada. The system of Kanada divides the phenomenal universe into six *padarthas,* or categories, which embrace the whole realm of knowledge. They are these: (1) *dravya,* or substance; (2) *guna,* or quality; (3) *karma,* or action; (4) *samanya,* or that which constitutes a genus; (5) Vishesha, or that which constitutes the individuality or separateness of an object; and (6) *samavaya,* coherence or inseparability. According to some, *abhava* or non-existence is the seventh substance.

Each of these again is subdivided into various classes. There are, for instance, nine substances: (1) earth; (2) water; (3) light; (4) air; (5) ether; (6) time (*kala*); (7) space (*desha*);

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[2] Cf. *Science and Hebrew Tradition,* p. 150.

(8) self (*Atman*) ; and (9) mind (*manas*). These substances, again, cannot exist without qualities, of which there are seventeen: colour, taste, smell, touch, number (that by which we perceive one or many), extension or quantity, individuality, conjunction, priority, posteriority, thought, pleasure, pain, desire, aversion, and will. The substances are affected by five kinds of action: (1) upward motion, (2) downward motion, (3) contraction, (4) expansion, (5) movement from one spot to another. All the objects of knowledge must be either substance, quality, or motion.

According to Kanada, the first four substances are non-eternal as aggregates, but are made up of minute invisible atoms (*anus*) which are eternal. They exist as inorganic and organic matter, or as instruments of sense-perceptions. Kanada describes atmos (*anus*) as indivisible particles of matter which possess no visible dimensions. On this point he agrees more with modern European scientists than with Greek philosophers, who gave visible dimensions to atoms. The first aggregate of these atoms is of two (*anus*). It is called *dvyanu,* or molecule which is still invisible. The aggregate of three molecules or double atoms forms a *trasarenu,* which has visible dimension. These aggregates of composite atoms are destructible, while single atoms are indestructible by nature. How remarkable it is to see that the conception of atoms and molecules arose in India centuries before the time of Empedocles and Democritus! And the latest atomic theory of European science has not in any way surpassed that of ancient India.

Furthermore, the *Vaishesika* system maintains that these atoms are not created by God, but are co-eternal with Him. The power, however, which combines two atoms and makes aggregates of atoms, comes from God, who is personal, who possesses knowledge, desire, and will, and who is the one Lord and Governor af all phenomena. According to this system ether, time, space, *Atman* or Self, and mind or *manas,* are eternal substances of nature. Mind or *manas* is described as infinitely small, like an atom (*anus*) ; but it is distinct from *Atman* or Self, which is vast (*vibhu*). Although mind and Atman or Self are eternal, still they are innumerable. The Self or *Atman* is distinct from the senses, and possesses nine qualities, such as knowledge, will, desire, happiness, etc. The aim of the *Vaishe-*

sika, philosophy (which derives its name from *vishesha,* the fifth substance) is the attainment of perfection and absolute freedom of the soul through the right knowledge of the causes of the phenomenal universe.

Next to the *Vaishesika* is the *Nyaya* philosophy of Gautama. Although it is generally called a system of logic, still it is both logic and philosophy. Its object is the same as other Hindu systems, namely, the true knowledge of nature, soul and God, and the attainment of ultimate freedom. This system, although based upon the atomic theory of Kanada, begins with the enumeration of sixteen *padarthas,* or subjects for discussion: (1) *pramana,* proof or means of knowledge; (2) *prameya,* or objects of knowledge; (3) *samshaya,* or doubt; (4) *prayojana,* motive or purpose; (5) *dristanta,* example or instance; (6) *siddhanta,* or determined truth; (7) *avayava,* syllogism or premisses; (8) *tarka,* reasoning or confutation; (9) *nirnaya,* or conclusion; (10) *vada,* or argumentation; (11) *jalpa,* or sophistry; (12) *vitanda,* objection; (13) *hetvabhasa,* or fallacies; (14) *chhala,* quibble or perversion; (15) *jati,* or false analogies; and, (16) *nigrahasthana,* or unfitness for arguing. The correct knowledge of each of these is the aim of this school. According to Gautama, the means of knowledge are four: (1) sensuous perception or *pratyaksha;* (2) inference or *anumana;* (3) *upamana;* (4) *shabda,* or verbal testimony.

The objects of knowledge are twelve in number: Self or *Atman,* body, organs of senses, objective perception, intellect (*buddhi*), mind (*manas*), will, fault, state after death, retribution, pain, and final emancipation. These objects, as well as the means of knowledge, which are described singly and elaborately, form the fundamental principles of the philosophy of *Nyaya,* while the rest of the *padarthas* belong to the system of logic which it expounds. Therefore it is both logic and philosophy. Gautama is called the Aristotle of India. He was the founder of Hindu logic, which has gradually developed into a perfect logical system, and to which have been added voluminous works by the best Hindu logicians of later date. The principal aim of Gautama's system was to establish right methods of reasoning, and to develop correct inference by the construction of true syllogisms. The Hindu syllogism consists of five parts: (1) proposition, (2) reason, (3) instance, (4) application of the

reason, and (5) conclusion. By omitting two parts of this, we can make it a perfect syllogism of Aristotle. The connection in the major premiss of Aristotle's syllogism is called in Hindu logic *vyapti*, or invariable concomitance. Speaking of Hindu logic, Mr. Davies says: "The right methods of reasoning have been discussed with as much subtlety as by any of the Western logicians". Many European scholars, after finding a close resemblance between the logic of Aristotle and that of Gautama, have arrived at the conclusion that perhaps the Greeks borrowed the first elements of their logic and philosophy from the Hindus. Mr. Dutt says: "Comparing dates, we are disposed to say of this as of many other sciences, The Hindus invented logic, the Greeks perfected it".[1] We must not forget the historical fact that there was a close intercourse between the Greeks and the Hindus from the time of Pythagoras, who, it is said, went to India to gather the wisdom of the Hindus. Alexander himself was so deeply impressed, when he heard about the Hindu philosophers, that he desired to make their acquaintance. It is also said that he brought many Hindu philosophers back to Greece with him. These two schools of philosophy, the *Vaisheshika* and the *Nyaya*, supplement each other, and have at present many followers in some parts of India, especially in Bengal and among the Jains.

Then comes the *Sankhya* system of Kapila. Kapila lived about 700 B.C. He is called the father of the evolution theory in India. His system is more like the philosophy of Herbert Spencer. He rejected the atomic theory by tracing the origin of atoms to one eternal cosmic energy, which he called *Prakriti* (Latin, *Procreatrix*, the creative energy). He maintained that the whole phenomenal universe has evolved out of one cosmic energy which is eternal. Kapila defined atoms as force centres, which correspond to the *Ions* and *Electorns* of modern science. It was Kapila who for the first time explained creation as the result of attraction and repulsion, which literally means love and hatred of atoms, as Empedocles puts it.

The *Sankhya* philosophy of Kapila, in short, is devoted entirely to the systematic, logical, and scientific explanation of the process of cosmic evolution from that primordial *Prakriti*,

[1] Cf. *Civilization in Ancient India*, Vol. 1, p. 292.

or eternal Energy. There is no ancient philosophy in the world which was not indebted to the *Sankhya* system of Kapila. The idea of evolution which the ancient Greeks and neo-Platonists had, can be traced back to the influence of this *Sankhya* school of thought. Professor E. W. Hopkins says: "Plato is full of Sankhyan thought, worked out by him, but taken from Pythagoras. Before the sixth century B.C. all the religious-philosophical ideas of Pythagoras are current in India (L. Schroeder, *Pythogoras*). If there were but one or two of these cases, they might be set aside as accidental coincidences, but such coincidences are too numerous to be the result of chance". And again he writes: "Neo-Platonism and Christian Gnosticism owe much to India. The Gnostic ideas in regard to a plurality of heavens and spiritual worlds go back directly to Hindu sources. Soul and light are one in the *Sankhya* system, before they became so in Greece, and when they appear united in Greece it is by means of the thought which is borrowed from India. The famous three qualities of the *Sankhya* reappear as the Gnostic 'three classes'."[1]

In his *Hindu Philosophy,* John Davies speaks of Kapila's system as the first recorded system of philosophy in the world, and calls it "the earliest attempt on record to give an answer, from reason alone, to the mysterious questions which arise in every thoughtful mind about the origin of the world, the nature and relations of man and his future destiny." Furthermore, Mr. Davies says, in reference to the German philosophy of Schopenhauer and Hartmann, that it is "a reproduction of the philosophic system of Kapila in its materialistic part, presented in a more elaborate form, but on the same fundamental lines. In this respect, the human intellect has gone over the same ground that it occupied more than two thousand years ago; but on a more important question it has taken a step in retreat. Kapila recognized fully the existence of a soul in man, forming indeed his proper nature—the absolute of Fichte,—distinct from matter and immortal; but our latest philosophy, both here and in Germany, can see in man only a highly developed organization".[1]

It is most startling to find that the ultimate conclusions of

[5] Cf. *Religions of India,* pp 559, 560.
[6] *Preface to Hindu Philosophy.*

this *Sankhya* system harmonize and coincide with those of modern science. It says: (1) Something cannot come out of nothing; (2) The effect lies in the cause, that is, the effect is the cause reproduced; (3) Destruction means the reversion of an effect to its causal state; (4) The laws of nature are uniform and regular throughout; (5) The building up of the cosmos is the result of the evolution of the cosmic energy. These are some of the conclusions which Kapila arrived at through observation and experiment, and by following strictly the rules of inductive logic.

Kapila denied the existence of a Creator; but still his philosophy is not considered atheistic, because he admitted the existence of the individual soul, *Purusha,* as an eternal and immortal entity. The different schools of Buddhistic philosophy are based upon the *Sankhya* system of Kapila. The agnosticism of the Jain philosophy, which has now a large number of followers in India, is also based upon the truths of this system; while the main principles of the *Sankhya* teachings have played a most important part in the popular forms of the symbol-worship of modern India.

Next in order comes the *Yoga* philosophy of Patanjali. Patanjali accepts the theory of evolution as explained by Kapila, and maintains that the whole phenomenal universe is the result of the evolution of *Prakriti,* the eternal Energy. Like Kapila, Patanjali believes in the existence of countless *Purushas,* or individual souls, each of which is by nature eternal, infinite, and immortal. But this system differs from *Sankhya* by admitting the existence of a cosmic *Purusha* (personal God), who is formless, infinite, omniscient, and untouched by affliction, activity, deserts, and desires. Patanjali takes up the psychology of *Sankhya,* and explains most elaborately the various functions of the *chitta,* or mind-substance. Both Kapila and Patanjali maintain that mind-substance is material,—that it is the product of the insentient *Prakriti.* On this point they anticipated the conclusions of the materialistic philosophers of modern Europe; but they admitted that mind-substance, or *chitta,* is distinct from *Purusha,* or true Self, which is the source of consciousness and intelligence.

The *Yoga* system devotes itself to the higher psychology of the human mind. It divides *chitta* into five classes of *vrittis,*

or modifications: Right knowledge, indiscrimination, verbal delusion, sleep, memory.[1] Right knowledge proceeds from direct sensuous perception, inference, and competent evidence. These and various other mental functions are minutely described by Patanjali. After explaining all the modifications of the *chitta,* Patanjali shows the method by which absolute control over mind (*manas*), intellect (*buddhi*), *chitta,* and egotism (*ahankara*) can be attained. For, the highest aim of his philosophy is to separate the *Purusha* from *Prakriti,* with which it is at present closely related; and to make it reach *kaivalya,* or final emancipation from the bondage of nature and its qualities.

Patanjali also explains the science of concentration and meditation, the science of breath, clairaudience, telepathy, and various other psychic powers, and shows the way by which one can attain to Godconsciousness in this life. There is no system of psychological philosophy in the world so complete as the psychology of Patanjali. The modern psychology of Europe, strictly speaking, is not true psychology, because it does not admit the existence of *psyche,* the soul; as Schopenhauer says: "The study of psychology is vain, for there is no Psyche". It may be called physiological psychology, or *somatology,* as my friend, Professor Hiram Corson, of Cornell University, calls it. True psychology you will find today in the Yoga system of Patanjali. This philosophy has still many followers in different parts of India.

There is yet another school of philosophy, called the *Purva-Mimansa* of Jaimni. The word *'mimansa'* means investigation, and *purva* means former or prior. This system examines the various injunctions of the ritualistic portion of the Vedas (*karma-kanda*), and points out that the highest duty of man is to follow those injunctions as strictly as possible, for they are the direct revelation of the supreme Being. According to Jaimini, the words of the Vedas are eternal, and the relation of these words to their meaning is also eternal; so the Vedas had no human origin. This system of philosophy explains the authoritative sources of knowledge, the relation between word and thought, and how this world is the manifestation of the word. We see a cow because there is in the Vedas such a word as 'cow'

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[1] Swami Vivekananda : *Raja Yoga,* p. 109.

(in Sanskrit *gau*). If the word 'cow' did not exist, the material object as cow would be non-existent. We may laugh at such conclusions at present, but when we go deep into the subject and try to understand the relation which lies between thought and word, we shall realize the truth of such statements. The sun exists because there is the word 'sun' in the Vedas ; that is, the sun is nothing but a part of the manifestation of that Logos or eternal thought form which exists in the cosmic mind.

The *Purva-Mimansa* may also be called the philosophy of work. It describes the true nature of duty and of daily works, sacrificial, ritualistic, and devotional. Through it we can understand which is right work and in what way it should be performed to produce certain results. For instance, if we wish to go to heaven we shall have to perform certain acts and those acts will create a certain unknown or imperceptible result, which will be rewarded or manifested in the form of our going to heaven. Now, how do these things happen ? What is the law ? And if we perform that very act in some other way, what defects would be produced in the result ? All these minute points are discussed. You may throw them away as speculation, but those who believe in the efficacy of prayers, in the law of action and reaction, of cause and sequence, cannot reject them as mere speculation, because there is some truth in them. We cannot deny it. Every thought that we think or every movement of the body that we make, must produce some result somewhere in some form. What are those results ? How will they affect our being ? We are too busy to think of these subtle problems now, but there are thinkers who can explain a great deal on these higher and finer lines of nature. Referring to the logic of this system, Professor Colebrook says: "Each case is examined and determined upon general principles, and from the cases decided the principles may be collected. A well-ordered arrangement of them would constitute the philosophy of law ; and this is, in truth, what has been attempted in the *Mimansa*". This being an orthodox philosophy, it appeals to the students of the Vedas, and especially to the Brahmin priests.

Lastly comes the *Uttara-Mimansa* or the system of Vedanta. This is the most popular philosophy of India today. Since the decline of Buddhistic philosophy in India, Vedanta has become most prominent and most powerful, having a large following

among all classes of people, from the priests down to the pariahs. Among the six schools, the Vedanta philosophy has reached the highest pinnacle of philosophic thought which the human mind can possibly attain. A careful study of the different systems shows that they contain all the highest truths which were known to the ancient Greek philosophers of the Pythagorean and Eleatic schools. Professor E. W. Hopkins says: "Both Thales and Parmenides were indeed anticipated by Hindu sages, and the Eleatic school seems to be but a reflection of the Upanishads. The doctrines of Anaxamander and Heraclitus were perhaps not known first in Greece".[1] Frederic Schlegel writes: "The divine origin of man, as taught by the Vedanta, is continually inculcated, to stimulate his efforts to return, to animate him in the struggle, and incite him to consider a reunion and re-incorporation with Divinity as the one primary object of every action and reaction. Even the loftiest philosophy of the Europeans, the idealism of reason as it is set forth by the Greek philosophers, appears in comparison with the abundant light and vigour of Oriental idealism like a feeble Promethean spark in the full flood of heavenly glory of the noon-day sun, faltering and feeble and ever ready to be extinguished".[1]

The ultimate reality of the universe, according to Vedanta, is the one Absolute Substance which is beyond subject and object, which is the infinite source of intelligence or knowledge, of consciousness and blissfulness, which is one and not many. It is called in Sanskrit Brahman. It is the same as the Good of Plato, the "Ding-an-sich" or the transcendental Thing-in-itself of Kant, the Will of Schopenhauer, the Substantia of Spinoza, the Over-Soul of Emerson, the Unknowable of Herbert Spencer, the Divine Essence of the Heavenly Father of the Christians, and of Allah of the Mohammedans. It is also the true nature of Buddha and of Christ. It pervades the universe. It is one and universal. No one can divide it: it is invisible. This is the reality of the universe, says Vedanta.

The system of Vedanta is more critical than the Kantian system, because it shows the phenomenal nature of the Kantian ego, of his forms of intuition, and his categories of thought. It is also more sublime than the philosophy of Kant, because it

[8] Vide *Religions of India.*
[9] *Indian Language, Literature and Philosophy,* p. 471.

recognizes and proves the identity of the objective reality of the universe with the subjective reality of the ego. Kant did not realize that the Thing-in-itself (*Ding-an-sich*) of the objective world and the *'Ding-an-sich'* of the subjective world are one. In no other system of philosophy has this oneness been so clearly explained and so strongly emphasized as it is in Vedanta. Professor Max Müller says: "This constitutes the unique character of Vedanta, unique compared with every other philosophy of the world which has not been influenced by it, directly or indirectly".[2] There have been many European philosophies which have denied the existence of the external world, but not one of them has ventured to deny the apparent reality of the ego, of the senses, of the mind, and of their inherent forms. In this respect Vedanta holds a most unique position among the philosophies of the world. After lifting the Self or the true nature of the ego, Vedanta unites it with the essence of Divinity, which is absolutely pure, perfect, immortal, unchangeable, and one. No philosopher, not even Plato, Spinoza, Kant, Hegel, or Schopenhauer, has reached that height of philosophic thought. Professor Max Muller declares: "None of our philosophers, not excepting Heraclitus, Plato, Kant, or Hegel, has ventured to erect such a spire, never frightened by storms or lightnings. Stone follows on stone, in regular succession after once the first step has been made, after once it has been clearly seen that in the beginning there can have been but One, as there will be but One in the end, whether we call it *Atman* or Brahman".[2]

Although Vedanta has united heaven and earth, God and man, Brahman and *Atman,* still it has destroyed nothing in the phenomenal world. It accepts all the ultimate conclusions of modern science ; but at the same time it says that truth is one and not many, yet there can be many expressions and various manifestations of the one truth. Furthermore, it maintains that the aim of the higher philosophy is not merely to ascertain the established conjunctions of events which constitute the order of the universe, or to record the phenomena which it exhibits to our observation and refer them to the general laws, but also to lead the human mind from the realm of the knowable to that which is beyond the knowable. We are now living in the

[10] Cf. *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy,* p. 223.
[11] *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy,* p. 239.

realm of the knowable; but that which teaches simply the laws which govern the knowable phenomena is not the highest kind of philosophy. We must know the laws of the knowable, yet at the same time we should aspire to go beyond the knowable and plunge into the realm of the Infinite. If any philosophy can help us in this attempt, then it must be higher than the ordinary system which keeps us within the limits of the knowable. Vedanta philosophy guides us above all knowable objects of perception, and directs our souls toward the eternal Absolute Being, wherein we find the solution of all problems and the answer to all questions. Its attempt is to trace the relation between the soul and God, not by any unscientific method, but by the most rigorous processes of logic and reason, starting from the ultimate generalizations of the various branches of science.

True philosophy must construct a theory which will be the simplest in its nature, and yet at the same time will explain all the vital problems which the science of the phenomenal-knowable can never explain, and which will harmonize with the highest form of universal religion, without destroying the loftiest aspirations of the human soul. True philosophy in the widest sense must perform three great functions. First, it must coordinate the ultimate results arrived at by special branches of knowledge which we call sciences, and taking up those conclusions, it must form the widest generalizations possible. When it does this, it is called phenomenology. Herbert Spencer's philosophy performs this function most wonderfully, but it leaves out the vital problems which perplex the minds of the greatest philosophers as unsolvable mysteries. Herbert Spencer does not explain all these problems, but without finding their true solution our lives will not be worth living. We must find an explanation, we must solve all the problems which disturb the peace of our souls; and if any system will help us, we will study it, follow its teachings, and satisfy our questioning minds. Secondly, true philosophy must investigate the realm of knowledge and trace its source. You know that you are sitting here and listening: where does this knowledge come from? The minds of even the greatest thinkers have become confused in trying to answer this question. A philosophy which does this is called epistomology. The philosophy of Kant, Hegel, Fichte, and others has performed this function. In his *Elements of*

General Philosophy, George Croom Robertson says: "Epistomology is just philosophy, because it deals with things, deals with being; it deals with things going beyond bare experience, but it treats of them in relation to the fact of knowing. Thus an epistomologist cannot help being an ontologist, because his theory of knowledge treat about things also as being. He must also be a metaphysician, because he is concerned with the whole range of things beyond the physical; he must be a philosopher in being other and more than a man of science, or concerned with things in a way in which science is not." Science, with its various branches, directs us up to a certain point, and cannot go further; but where science ends, there is the beginning of true philosophy. The third function which true philosophy performs is that of leading our minds into the realm of the Absolute or the Unknown, and then it solves the problems of life and death. It explains the origin of the universe and of individual existence, and the purpose of evolution. On the plane of relativity the perfect solution of these vital problems can never be found. Furthermore, when this phase of true philosophy directs our minds toward the Infinite, it helps us in becoming free from all limitations of ignorance and selfishness. These limitations are the greatest bondage that we are now suffering from, and, by performing this function, true philosophy lays the foundation of the highest form of monistic religion. No philosophy in the world performs these three functions so satisfactorily as Vedanta. Hence we may say that Vedanta is the most complete of all systems.

Philosophy and religion must always be in perfect harmony. Ernest Haeckel, in his *Riddle of the Universe,* tries to give a foundation to monistic religion; but his monism is one-sided, because he says that the ultimate substance of the universe is unintelligent. His insentient substance may be compared with Kapila's *Prakriti,* which is eternal and unintelligent. According to Vedanta, however, the final substance of the universe is Brahman, which is *sat* or absolute existence, *chit* or absolute intelligence, and *ananda* or absolute bliss. Vedanta teaches that that which is the substance of our souls must possess intelligence, consciousness, and blissfulness. Thus Vedanta lays the true foundation of a universal religion which is monistic or non-dualistic. The monistic religion of Vedanta

does not admit the *sankhyan* theory of the plurality of *Purushas,* or individual souls, which are eternal and infinite by nature, but on the contrary, by following the strict rules of logic, it establishes that the Infinite must be one and not many. From one many have come into existence, and the individual souls are but so many images or reflections of the absolute Brahman. It teaches that the true nature of the soul is divine. From the absolute Brahman the phenomenal universe rises, and in the end returns into the Brahman. The religion of Vedanta admits the existence of Iswara, the personal God, who is the first-born Lord of the universe, who starts the evolution of *Prakriti,* who loves all living creatures and can be loved and worshipped in return. In Vedanta, the *Prakriti* of the *Sankhya* philosophy is called *maya,* which is the divine energy of the absolute Brahman. *Maya* does not mean illusion, as some scholars think ; but it is that power which produces time, space, and causation, as also the phenomenal appearances which exist on the relative plane. Thus we see that the system of Vedanta is both philosophy and religion. Of the tree of knowledge, philosophy is the flower and religion is the fruit, so they must go together. Religion is nothing but the practical side of philosophy, and philosophy is the theoretical side of religion.

In India, a true philosopher is not a mere speculator but a spiritual man. He does not believe in certain theories which cannot be carried into practice in every-day life ; what he believes he lives, and therefore practical philosophy is still to be found in India. For example, an Indian philosopher who follows Kanada, and believes in the existence of a personal God as the essence of his soul, does not merely accept this theoretically, but he tries to realize it in his daily life. A Buddhist, again, will explain all the most abstruse problems, and at the same time you will see that he is living out his beliefs. So with a follower of the *Sankhya* system, or of Vedanta: they are not mere speculative philosophers, but they live spiritual lives and strive to attain Godconsciousness. In India, if any one writes voluminous works and leads a worldly life, he is not considered a true philosopher ; but in the West a man can become a philosopher by simply sitting in his library and writing a book, although his every-day life may be far from spiritual.

A friend of mine, being asked whether India had produced

a philosopher like Ralph Waldo Emerson, replied: "America has produced one Emerson, but in India you will find an Emerson every five miles". This is not a great exaggeration, and the reason, as I have already said, is that the Hindus not only theorize but live philosophy. Hindu minds are extremely logical. They will not accept any theory which does not harmonize with logic and reason. Therefore, you will scarcely find an irrational doctrine or dogma in the religion of Vedanta. Freedom of thought, as I have already said, has always prevailed in India since the vedic period. For this reason Christian missionaries meet with the greatest opposition when they preach to the Hindus the unscientific and illogical doctrines and dogmas of their faith. When, for instance, they try to teach them the creation of the universe in six days as given in Genesis, the Hindus smile at the missionaries and reject their statements as unscientific and irrational. Similarly they will not listen to other Christian dogmas, like infant damnation, eternal perdition of the heathen, etc.

The philosophy and religion of Vedanta embrace all the sciences and philosophies of the world, accepting their latest conclusions, and classify them according to their order of merit. Consequently, the universality of Vedanta is unique and unparalleled. In this system the people of India find the ultimate truths of all sciences, of all philosophies, as well as of all religions. It is so popular, because it solves the problems concerning the origin and final aim of earthly life, fulfils the highest aspiration of human souls, and inculcates that the true nature of the soul is immortal by its birthright. Vedanta maintains that if the soul were mortal by nature, it could never become immortal. for that which could be made immortal could be unmade. This is an argument which cannot be refuted, and it has taken such hold of the logical mind of the Hindus that, even when they are converted to other faiths, they cannot believe that the soul, which is by nature a child of God, can ever be made immortal by Christ.

Vedanta has the largest following, and is the prevailing philosophy of India today. Since the eighth century A.D., when, after the decline of Buddhism, it was revived by the earnest efforts of its commentator, Sri Sankaracharya, who is now regarded as the greatest philosopher of the world. The Vedanta

philosophy has taken a firm root in the remotest corner of every Hindu community, from the highest to the lowest, and has overshadowed all other systems of philosophic thought. Professor Max Müller, in the preface to his *Six Systems of Philosophy,* writes: "Other philosophies do exist and have some following, but Vedanta has the largest"; and he also affirms that Vedanta is both a philosophy and a religion by saying: "For all practical purposes, the Vedantist would hold that the whole phenomenal world, both in its subjective and objective character, should be accepted as real. It is as real as anything can be to the ordinary mind; it is not mere emptiness, as the Buddhists maintain. And thus the Vedanta philosophy leaves to every man a wide sphere of real usefulness, and places him under a law as strict and binding as anything can be in this transitory life; it leaves him a deity to worship as omnipotent and majestic as the deities of any other religion. It has room for almost every religion; nay, it embraces them all."[1]

[12] Cf. *Three Lectures on Vedanta Philosophy.*

CHAPTER II

THE RELIGION OF INDIA TODAY

Few people realize the vastness of India. If we include British Burmah, it is as large in area as the whole of Europe except Russia, or nearly two-thirds of the United States, with a population almost three and a half times as great. It is a country with a vast conglomeration of nations and languages, far more diverse than in America or in any other country of the world. Among this huge mass of inhabitants we find the followers of every great religion; there are Christians, Mohammedans, Jews, Parsees or Zoroastrians, Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs, and Hindus. According to the census of 1901 the adherents of the different faiths in India number as follows:

Christians	2,923,241
Mohammedans	62,458,077
Jews	18,228
Parsees	94,190
Buddhists (chiefly in Burmah)	9,476,759
Jains	1,334,148
Sikhs	2,195,339
Hindus	207,147,026[1]

The Jews are scattered in large cities like Bombay, Poona, and Calcutta. The Parsees are to be found in the Bombay Presidency; but in India proper there are very few Buddhists. Besides these, there are about six hundred thousand aboriginal non-Aryans who are ancestor or spirit-worshippers. The majority of the population are known as Hindus and their religion is called Hinduism. The words 'Hindu' and 'Hinduism', however, are entirely of foreign origin. In ancient times, when the Persians and Greeks invaded India, they came across a river in the northwest of India which was called in Sanskrit 'Sindhu' (the Indus of modern geography), but, in Zend and in Greek, 'Hindu'. Consequently, those who inhabited

[1] As per statistics of his time, in 1906.

the banks of the 'Sindhu' or Indus were named by the Greeks and Persians 'Hindus' and their land 'Hindustan'. If we remember this derivation we shall be able to understand why these words 'Hindu' and 'Hinduism' do not mean anything to the natives of India, who call themselves, not Hindus, but Aryas or Aryans. The inhabitants of India today are the descendants of the same Aryan family from which the Anglo-Saxons, Germans, and Latin races have descended. They came originally from Central Asia,—some say from the North Pole and others from Europe ; but we do not know the exact spot where the ancient forefathers of the Aryans lived.

The word 'Hindu', therefore, refers to the descendants of the Indo-Aryans who at present inhabit India and call themselves Aryas or Aryans ; while their religion is known among themselves as 'Arya-Dharma' (the religion of the Aryans), or 'Sanatana-Dharma', which means 'that religion which lasts throughout eternity', for, according to the Hindus, this religion is eternal. It has always existed, and will continue as long as the world will exist. Some people may think that it is a natural religion ; but if we trace the origin of all so-called supernatural religions, we shall find that they were in some way connected with India, the home of all the religious system of the world, and that, when other countries and other nations had no religion at all, the eternal religion of the Hindu not only prevailed, but was fully developed.

Under the name of Hinduism there still exists in India today a system of religion which embraces all the religious thought of the world. It stands like a huge banyan-tree, spreading its far-reaching branches over hundreds of sects, creeds, and denominations, and covering with its innumerable leaves, all forms of worship—the dualistic, qualified non-dualistic, and monistic worship of the one supreme God, the worship of the incarnation of God, and also hero-worship, saint-worship, symbol-worship, ancestor-worship, and the worship of departed spirits. It is based upon the grand idea of universal receptivity. It receives everything. It is like an immense hospitable mansion which welcomes all worshippers, from the lowest to the highest, all believers in the existence of God, and which has never refused admission to any sincere applicant for spiritual freedom. The prevailing religion of

India may be compared to a vast mosaic, inlaid with every kind of religious idea and every form of worship which the human mind can possibly conceive. If any one wishes to study the history of the gradual evolution of the worship of the one supreme Being step by step, from its lowest to its highest phase, let him go to India and study the living history of religions. Let him simply watch the lives of the followers of existing sects, for Professor Max Müller says: "No phase of religion, from the coarsest superstition to the most sublime enlightenment, is unrepresented in that country".

This universal religion, strictly speaking, is neither Hinduism nor Brahminism, although it has been called both, as well as by still other names. But why should we call it Brahminism? The term, which is an invention of the Christian missionaries, has no meaning to the Hindus, because no Brahmin was its founder. This eternal religion, indeed, is nameless and it had no founder. Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, Mohammedanism had their founders and were built around the personality of these founders; but the religion of the Hindus is not limited by any book, or by the existence or non-existence of any particular person. If we study the words of the earliest-known *Rishi,* or vedic seer of Truth, even he alludes to others who had seen similar truths before him. It is for this reason that the religion of the Indo-Aryans never had any special creed or dogma or theology as its guide. Everything that harmonized with the eternal laws described by the ancient seers of Truth was recognized and accepted by them as true.

From the very beginning this religion has been as free as the air which we breathe. As air touches all flowers and carries their fragrance along with it wherever it blows, so the Sanatana religion takes in all that is true and beneficial to mankind. Like the sky overhead, it embraces the spiritual atmosphere around all nations and all countries. It is a well-known fact that this eternal religion of the Hindus surpasses Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism in its antiquity, grandeur, sublimity, and, above all, in its conception of God. The God of the Hindus is omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, all-merciful, and impersonally personal. He is not like the extra-cosmic Creator as described in Genesis, but is

immanent and resident in nature. He is more merciful, more impartial, more just, more compassionate, than Jahveh, the tribal god of the sons of Israel. The God of the Aryan religion is more benevolent and more unlimited in power and majesty than the Ahura Mazda of the Zoroastrians. You will find monotheism at the foundation of every religious structure, and other nations do not go beyond this; but the Indian people are not satisfied to stop with monotheism; they want something higher.

The religion of the Indo-Aryans of today can be classified under three heads,—dualistic, qualified non-dualistic, and monistic. The first two, that is, the dualistic and qualified non-dualistic phases, have given foundation to the various sects of worshippers who are known as Vaishnavas, Shaivas, Shaktas, Ganapatyas, Sauryas; of these, the last two sects have become almost extinct at the present time. The majority of the Hindus, both men and women, are either Vaishnavas, Shaivas, or Shaktas.

The Vaishnavas are those who worship the supreme Being, the all-knowing, all-loving, and omnipotent Lord, Governor, and Protector of the universe, under the name of Vishnu. Vishnu is the name of the second person of the Hindu Trinity, the literal meaning of the word being 'all-pervading', 'omnipresent'. According to the Hindu belief, Vishnu, or the Lord of the universe, is both personal and impersonal. In his impersonal aspect he pervades the universe, interpenetrates the atoms and molecules, and fills the infinite space like the glorious light of the self-effulgent sun. In his personal aspect he dwells in the highest heaven. The personal Lord of the universe also incarnates Himself on this earth in every age to establish the eternal religion and to help mankind. "Whenever true religion declines and irreligion prevails", says the Lord, "I manifest myself to establish true religion and to destroy evil".[1]

Some people think that this idea of the incarnation of God was borrowed from the Christians; but it can be proved, on the contrary, that it existed in India centuries before Christ was born. In fact, India is the home of this belief, which was afterwards adopted by other religions. The Hindus maintain that since the beginning of the world God has incarnated many

[1] Cf. *The Bhagavad Gita*, Ch. IV, v. 7.

times, and will come again and again. They have recognized many incarnations in the past, and believe that there will be many in the future. On this point they differ from the Christians, who believe that there was only one incarnation, and that that was the first and the last. According to the Hindu faith, God can manifest in any place at any time, because His powers are unlimited. If we limit Him by saying that there has been only one incarnation, then we make Him finite; but as He is Infinite in His powers, in His glory, and in His manifestations, He ought not to be limited by time, space, or nationality. His love for all nations is equal, and whenever and wherever His manifestation is necessary, there He naturally descends. These incarnations are called in Sanskrit *Avataras*, which means the descent of the supreme Being for the good of humanity.

Rama, the hero of the great epic *Ramayana*, for instance, is regarded as one of the great incarnations of ancient India. Today, in various parts of the country, especially in the North-Western Provinces and in Central India, there are millions and millions of souls who worship Rama as the Saviour of mankind, who look upon him as the ideal son, the ideal king, the ideal father, and the ideal husband; who repeat his holy name with the deepest feelings of love and devotion; who chant his praises in the morning, at noon, and in the evening; who sing songs describing the exploits of this great *Avatara;* who everyday read a portion of the *Ramayana* in Sanskrit or in Hindusthanee, or in any other vernacular; and who in their daily life follow the teachings and the high moral and ethical ideals exemplified in the character of Sri Rama, the embodiment of truth eternal. For the sake of truthfulness, Rama abandoned his throne, went into the forest, and lived there for fourteen long years, practising austerities in order to set an example of perfect truthfulness. His consort Sita, the noblest, purest, and most perfect ideal of womanhood that India has produced, is now the exalted spiritual ideal of every Hindu woman, old or young. Those who have read the *Ramayana* will remember the unparalled character of Sita, the ideal wife and mother. She was the most wonderful character that the world has ever seen. To show her faithfulness to her lord, she sacrificed everything; she was, indeed, like the personification of loyalty and purity. Hanuman, again, who is erroneously called by the Christian missionaries

the monkey god, represents the ideal devotee and the perfect embodiment of faith and devotion ; and whenever a worshipper of Rama thinks of these qualities, he holds Hanuman as the ideal before him. Those who worship Rama are known as *Ramayet Vaishnavas.* They regard Rama and Vishnu as one.

Then there are many millions of Vaishnavas all over India who worship Krishna, the Hindu Christ. Krishna is regarded as the greatest of all *Avataras* or divine incarnations. He lived about 1400 B.C. His life, which is described in the *Mahabharata,* the history of ancient India, as also in many *Puranas,* resembles that of Jesus the Christ, not only in His miraculous birth, but in all the principal events of His earthly career. He was, for example, born in a cave, and at the time of his birth an Indian Herod, Kamsa by name, ordered all infants to be killed. Krishna also resuscitated the dead, brought animals back to life, and performed many other miracles. Those who have read the *Bhagavad Gita,* or 'Song Celestial', as Sir Edwin Arnold calls it, will remember how vast was the divine wisdom of the sin-atoning Krishna, the Redeemer of the world. He is regarded by all Hindus as the Saviour of mankind in the same way as Christ is in Christendom. They worship him, repeat his holy name, and chant his praises at all hours of the day, as a devout Roman Catholic saint would do.

Both Krishna and Rama are manifestations of the same Vishnu, the Lord of the universe. This is a difficult thing for Western minds to grasp, and for that reason they think the Hindus polytheists. But they are not polytheists. They worship one God under different names and forms. Rama was the incarnation of Vishnu, and so was Krishna. In their spiritual essence they are one and the same, but in their manifestations they are different. Both have their statues in all the big temples of India, just as we see the images of Christ and Mary in the Cathedrals of Christendom. The Christian missionaries, however, not understanding the Hindu form of worship, have misrepresented these statues and called them idols. Here, let me assure you that there is no such thing as idol-worship, in your sense of the term, in any part of India, not even among the most illiterate classes. I have seen more idolatry in Italy than in India. The Italian peasants even beat the Bambino when their prayers are not answered, but in India you will not find

such spiritual darkness anywhere. There the people worship the Ideal, not the idol. Statues and figures are kept in the temples as reminders of the deeds of the great Saviours. It is the memory, the spirit of Rama and Krishna, which the Hindus worship ; but if you ask a Brahmin priest whom he worships, or where is Krishna, he will tell you that Lord Krishna dwells everywhere ; he is the Soul of our souls, the Heart of our hearts He is not confined to any particular form made of wood or stone. Is this idolatry? If so, what kind of idolatry is it? It is very easy for any one to say that it is the worship of a false god, or of an idol ; but if a person will look beneath the surface and inquire of the Hindus themselves, he can readily discover how mistaken such assertions are. If the Hindus are idol-worshippers because they show respect to their spiritual Masters like Krishna and Rama, why should not the Christians be called idolators when they show respect to Christ, kneeling down before his statue or picture? If the Hindu is idolatrous because he fixes his mind on some religious symbol, like the cross or triangle or circle, why should not the same term be applied to the Christian, when he thinks of the crucifix and keeps it on the altar?

Images and symbols are also used in Hindu temples as aids to the practice of concentration and meditation. This is a peculiar mode of worship common among the Hindus. There may be no outward signs of worship. A man will perhaps sit cross-legged on the floor, close his eyes, and remain as motionless as a statue ; his devotion will all be internal. He will withdraw his mind from the external world and fix it upon the supreme Being ; but the starting-point of his concentration and meditation will be these symbols and figures, because the natural tendency of the mind is to go from the concrete to the abstract and then to the Absolute. So there may be many symbols in the temples ; the cross, for instance. The cross was a religious symbol in India long before Christ was born. The *swastika* is the oldest of all forms of the cross, and that we have in India today. Then there is the triangle, which symbolizes the Hindu Trinity ; the circle, which represents infinity ; and there are many other symbols, all of which are considered extremely helpful to beginners in concentration and meditation.

The Hindus regard Krishna as the ideal incarnation of

divine Love. His mission was to establish divine Love on this earth, and show that it can be manifested through all sanctified human relations. What Krishna has done in India, and how he has impressed the minds of the people, we cannot understand here. We must go to India to see that; we must go to Mathura where Krishna was born, or to Vrindavana, where he played as a shepherd-boy, to find how the Vaishnavas revere and worship him. The worship and devotion which we see today in India cannot be found in any other part of the world. I have travelled through many countries in Europe and almost all over the United States and Canada, but I have not seen the pathos, the spiritual fire, that I have found among the Vaishnavas in India. God can be worshipped not only as the Master, but also as a friend, as a child, as a husband,—that is what they teach. They bring Him closer and closer, and make Him the closest and nearest to our Being. Time will not permit me to go into the details of the method of worship which these Vaishnavas practise, but I can at least tell you that there are thousands and thousands of Hindu women who look upon Krishna, the Saviour of mankind, as their own child. They do not care for a human child; they want God as their child, and they consider themselves as the mother of Divinity. This is a unique thing. The mother of God! How much purity is required to make a woman think of herself as the mother of Divinity or of divine incarnation! And this is their ideal. I am not exaggerating; I have seen with my eyes such wonderful characters, and I have seen them nowhere else.

These Vaishnavas, or worshippers of Krishna, can be subdivided into different denominations: the followers of Sankaracharya, the great preacher and commentator of monistic Vendanta; the followers of Ramanuja, another great preacher and commentator, who lived in the southern part of India, and whose followers are known as qualified non-dualists; the followers of Madhavacharya, the preacher of the dualistic school; and the followers of Chaitanya, of Ballavacharya, of Ramananda, and of Nimbacharya. Each of them was an ideal prophet, spiritual leader, and commentator of the philosophy of Vedanta, as also the founder of a denomination which still has millions of followers all over the country. They differ only in the minor peculiarities of their doctrines, beliefs, and modes of worship;

but they all agree on one point,—that Krishna was the greatest of all divine incarnations, that He was the Saviour of mankind and the Redeemer of the world.

The worshippers of Krishna and of Vishnu or Rama are all vegetarians ; they do not touch meat, because non-killing is their ideal. They cannot kill any animal for food. They never drink any intoxicating liquor, neither the men nor the women. That is a very difficult thing to find anywhere else. They practise non-resistance of evil, which was taught not only by Krishna, but by Buddha and afterwards by Christ. Their religion makes them loving, not only to human beings, but to all living creatures, and pure and chaste in their morals. They practise disinterested love for humanity ; they will sacrifice everything for the good of others, because their Ideal, their Master, was the sin-atoning Krishna, who sacrificed everything for the good of the world. There are no caste distinctions among the Vaishnavas. Mohammedans and Pariahs have often become followers of this faith. Krishna has indeed given to earnest and sincere souls among the Hindus what Jesus the Christ has given to Christendom, and there is a great similarity in the belief and mode of worship of the Vaishnavas and those of the most devout followers of Jesus.

As the Vaishnavas regard Krishna and Rama as their Ideals, so there are Hindus who look upon other manifestations as their Ideal. The Shaivas, for example, worship Shiva, the third person of the Hindu Trinity. Shiva represents the ideal of renunciation and absolute freedom from worldliness. He is revered by the Hindus as the embodiment of contemplativeness and *Yoga* ; he is therefore worshipped by the *Yogis,* saints, and sages of all sects. They repeat the name of Shiva with tears of love and devotion streaming from their eyes ; they forget everything of the world when they utter his sacred name. Shiva and Vishnu, again, are one and the same in their spiritual essence ; they are two manifestations of the one infinite Being who is called Brahman in the Vedas. A Vaishnava can worship Shiva in the same spirit as he worships his own Ideal, Vishnu, and a Shaiva can worship Vishnu in the same spirit as he worships his own Ideal, Shiva ; because they know that He who is Vishnu is Shiva and He who is Shiva, is Vishnu.

Shiva represents, as I have already said, contemplativeness, *Yoga,* renunciation and absolute freedom from worldliness. As

Vishnu is adorned by the Vaishnavas with all blessed qualities, with all that is beautiful, all that stands for wealth, prosperity, and success in life, Shiva, on the contrary, is adorned with all that is ugly, horrible, and awe-inspiring. His beautific form is encircled by venomous snakes of evil, misfortune, and worldliness; but they cannot injure Him. Shiva dwells in the *shmashana* or cremation ground, where horrors of death and destruction surround Him, but they cannot frighten Him or disturb His blissful *samadhi*. He is the ever-undaunted conqueror of all dread, danger, passion, and distress. He is attended by ghosts and wicked spirits, but they cannot hurt Him. Shiva renounces the world for the good of humanity. Voluntarily He takes upon Himself the burdens, anxieties, sufferings, and pains of all humanity, and swallows the deadliest poison to bestow immortality upon His earnest followers and true devotees. His consort, the Divine Mother of the universe, is His only companion in austerities and penances. He lives where nobody cares to go and He accepts the tiger-skin and the ashes from crematories as His ornaments. He is the ideal of the *Yogis*. If any one wishes to see and understand what renunciation means, let him go to India and study the worship of Shiva. He has many forms, many incarnations, and there are many symbols connected with His life. The Shaivas worship the snow-white form of Shiva, which symbolizes purity and freedom from all taint of worldliness, the form of Him who is the Master of the universe. Shiva can be worshipped under all circumstances. If a follower of Shiva cannot find a temple, he may sit under a tree; he does not need any form, statue, or symbol; he simply closes his eyes and meditates upon Shiva as the Lord of the universe, beyond good and evil, beyond all relativity, the embodiment of the infinite and absolute Being.

The Vaishnavas and Shaivas, as we have just seen, regard the Lord of the universe as masculine and give Him masculine attributes; but there are Hindus who give to God feminine attributes and call Him the Mother of the universe. India is in fact the only place in the world where God is worshipped as the Mother, and where all women are considered as representatives of ideal divine motherhood. Some people think that the Hindus deny salvation to women, but no Hindu ever imagined anything so crude; on the contrary, womanhood is attributed

by him to the Lord of the universe. He knows that the soul is sexless, and that it manifests on the physical plane as a man or a woman only to fulfil a certain purpose in life. The *Bhagavad Gita* says: "All men and women, whether they believe in God or not, are bound sooner or later to reach perfection".

Those who thus worship God as the Mother are known as Shaktas, the worshippers of Shakti, the divine Energy, the Mother of all phenomena. These Shaktas believe that the Mother of the universe manifests Her powers from time to time in human form and incarnates as a woman. There have been various feminine incarnations among the Hindus. These divine incarnations of Shakti or divine Energy, are in different forms such as Kali, Durga, Tara, etc. Foreigners connot understand the meaning of these symbolic figures, used as aids to concentration and meditation at the time of worship, and they think, 'How hideous these forms are!' Of course some of them are hideous to Western eyes, but to the Hindus they are spiritual symbols; for the people of India are not merely optimistic, they recognize both sides. They are brave. They do not deny the evil side of the world; they take that also, and adorn the Mother on the one hand with evil, murder, plague, and the most horrible things, while, on the other hand, they represent Her as overflowing with blessings and all that is good and beautiful. Those who have only optimistic ideas shut their eyes to evils and misfortunes and curse either God or Satan when these come upon them; but among the worshippers of the divine Mother you will find both men and women, who in time of distress face danger bravely, and pray to Her with unflinching faith and whole-hearted love, recognizing Her grandeur and divine power even behind misfortune and calamity.

The whole truth of the *Sankhya* philosophy[1] is symbolized in the Shakti-worship, or the worship of divine Mother. You will remember that the *Sankhya* believes in the evolution of the world and of the whole universe out of one eternal Energy, while the individual soul is known as *Purusha,* the infinite Spirit. So Shiva represents *Purusha,* the formless Infinite Spirit, and His consort or Shakti is that eternal Energy, which is called in Sanskrit *Prakriti.* The union of the male and female princi-

[1] Described in previous lecture.

ples of Divinity is the beginning of cosmic evolution. Here you will notice how the ultimate conclusions of science have been symbolized by the Hindus and made into objects of devotion and worship. Ask how the evolution of the world began and they will show you the symbol of the *Purusha* and *Prakriti*. The religion of the Hindus, in fact, embraces science, logic, and philosophy. They think that, that which is unscientific, illogical, and unphilosophical cannot be called religious, so they take the scientific truths, make symbols out of them, and, relating them to the eternal Being, they use them as the most helpful objects for devotion and worship. The Hindu mind is very inventive along spiritual lines. It gives its inventive genius full play in the spiritual field. There is no other religion in the world which is so rich in mythology, symbology, rituals, and ceremonials, and which possesses so many phases of the divine Ideal, as the Sanatana Dharma, or the eternal religion of the Hindus. Its followers are freely allowed to choose their ideals in harmony with their thoughts and spiritual tendencies. They believe that one particular set of doctrines and dogmas cannot satisfy the aspirations of all human souls. As one coat cannot fit all bodies, so one particular ideal cannot fit all minds, cannot suit all the spiritual tendencies of all nations in all countries. Do we not see how Christianity has failed in that respect when it has tried to make the whole world adopt one ideal? Do we not see today how, among the followers of Christianity, there is a constant fight and struggle for lack of a better understanding of their religious ideal? Human minds need variety; and the paths which lead to the supreme goal should vary according to the tendency, capacity, and spiritual development of the individual. Therefore the eternal religion of the Hindus prescribes no set path, but offers various ones to suit different minds,—the path of right knowledge and right discrimination (*Jnana Yoga*); of concentration and meditation (*Raja Yoga*); of work for work's sake (*Karma Yoga*); and of devotion and worship (*Bhakti Yoga*). Each one of these, again, has various branches. Thus we see that the Hindus alone have succeeded in giving to the world a religion which fits all minds and all tendencies under all conditions, a religion which preaches the worship of one God, the infinite Being, under a variety of names and ideals. Truth is one, but its manifestations are many.

This noble and sublime conception has made the Hindus extremely tolerant towards other faiths and other forms of worship outside their own; for they consider that all religions, sects, and creeds are like so many paths which lead to the same goal.

Those who do not understand the Hindu mode of thought, have called it Pantheism; but it is the worship of one universal Spirit, which is infinite, omnipotent, all-merciful, impersonal and yet personal. If you call it Pantheism, then you use the term in the wrong sense. Pantheism never means that. When I think that this table is God, or, if I consider that God has become this chair, then, it will be Pantheism. But if I believe in one God, who pervades and interpenetrates the atoms and molecules of the chair and the table, or any other object of the world, then that will be the worship of the one supreme Being, who is infinite and all-pervading.

True religion, according to the Hindus, does not consist in belief in a certain creed or set of dogmas, but in the attainment of Godconsciousness through spiritual unfoldment. It is being and becoming God. It is the subjugation of selfish love and desire for self-aggrandizement, and the expression of divine love, truthfulness, and kindness to all. The object of such a religion is the freedom of the soul from the bondage of the world. A Hindu is not limited by sectarian doctrines and dogmas; he can go anywhere, worship any ideal that suits him and make that his chosen Ideal. As long as he believes in one God, there is no danger, he will have salvation; and this salvation can be attained in this life.

Outside of the Vaishnavas, Shaivas, and Shaktas, we find Hindus who follow other phases of religion. In the Punjab the North-Western Province of India, for instance, there is a large population which is known as Sikhs. The word 'Sikh' is derived from the Sanskrit 'Shishya', which means 'a disciple'; and the Sikhs are so called because they are disciples of their master, Guru Nanaka, who was a contemporary of Luther. Guru Nanaka was a great soul. He is regarded today by his disciples and followers as the manifestation of Divinity, and he left sayings and teachings. These are written out in a book, and this book the Sikhs hold in the same light as the Christians their Bible, the Mohammedans their Koran, and the orthodox Hindus their

Vedas. It is to them the revealed word of God. They put it upon an altar, burn incense before it, and worship it as the word of God. They cannot bear any other form or symbol or image, or the statue of any incarnation or manifestation of Divinity. They are as fanatical as the Protestant Christians in their attitude towards forms and images. They observe no caste prejudice ; they are very broad and liberal-minded, and will accept the followers of any faith in their religion. At one time they converted hundreds of Mohammedans and made them Sikhs. Their book is called the *'Granth-Sahib'*, or the Great Scripture, and contains the most sublime moral and spiritual ideals, which harmonize with the teachings of the Vedas. They believe in one supreme God who is formless. As the Mohammedans believe in Allah, the one formless Being, who can take no form, so these Sikhs believe in the same way. Perhaps Sikhism arose in India through the influence of Mohammedanism. It is one of the recent sects.

Besides these orthodox Hindus, there are Jains and Buddhists. The Jains have their own scriptures and their own prophets, Parsvanath, Adinath, Mahaviranath, and many others, who are called Tirthankaras (perfected souls). These are great and immortal spiritual leaders who came down to teach mankind ; any one who follows their teachings will reach absolute freedom from this world of imperfection. Jainism arose in India about the same time as Buddhism. Buddha lived about 557 B.C. He was the founder of the great religion which has civilized the larger portion of Asia, which predominates in China and Japan, which has made the Japanese a great nation, and which prevails today in Tibet, Siam, Burmah, Ceylon, Sumatra, Java, and many other Asiatic countries. But the orthodox Hindus regard the Jains as agnostics and the Buddhists as atheists ; because the Jains neither accept nor deny soul or God; while the modern Buddhists in India do not believe in the existence of one supreme Being, or in the existence of the individual soul as an eternal entity, neither do they honour the revealed word of the Vedas. For this reason they are classed by the orthodox Hidus as atheists, although Buddha himself is recognized as one of the incarnations of Vishnu. Every Hindu believe that Buddha came to help mankind, and ranks him with Rama, Krishna, and other *Avataras.*

There are still other heterodox Hindus who are known as

Brahmas and Arya-Samajis, and who may be compared to the Unitarians in this country. They reject all symbols and images but worship one God who is personal and without form.

Thus I have given you a brief outline of the existing phases of the dualistic and qualified non-dualistic branches of the one religion. But there is still another which is the monistic phase of the same religion. It is based upon the fundamental principle of unity in variety. It teaches that there is one existence, one reality, one truth, one substance, in the whole universe. All the distinctions and differentiations which we perceive with our senses are phenomenal, therefore transitory and unreal. This one Substance is called by various names. In the Vedas, we find the first mention of this universal and eternal law of unity in variety. In the Rig Veda, which is the oldest scripture of the world, we read: "That which exists is One; men call it by various names".[1] Men worship it in different forms, under different names. The same Substance, the absolute eternal Being, manifests itself as Brahma, the Creator, Vishnu, the Preserver, Rudra, the Destroyer, and Shakti, the divine Mother. The same eternal Being is worshipped as Allah by the Mohammedans, Father in Heaven and Christ by the Christians, Buddha by the Buddhists, Jina by the Jains, Ahura Mazda by the Zoroastrians, Ti-Tien by the Chinese, and Shiva, Divine Mother, or Brahman, by the Hindus. The substance is one, although the names may vary. As the one substance water is called in different languages by different names, such as aqua, wasser, eau, agua, pani, vari, jalam, etc., so the one infinite absolute Being is worshipped under different names in different countries. This phase of religion unifies all sects and creeds; and, putting each in the place where it belongs, it builds up the universal religion, which is not confined by any particular book or scripture, but embraces all the scriptures of the world. Its principal teaching is that the individual souls are not born in sin and iniquity, nor have they inherited as a birth-right the sins of some fallen man who was tempted by an evil spirit called Satan. On the contrary, it tells us that all men and women, irrespective of their colour, creed, or religious beliefs, are children of immortal Bliss and the sons of immortality; that each individual

[1] '*Ekam sad vipra vahudha vadanti*'.

soul is immortal by its birthright, will attain to immortality, and continue to remain immortal forever. For, if the soul were not immortal by nature, it could not be made so by any being however powerful. Each soul is a storehouse of inifinite potentialities and possesses infinite possibilities. It was not created out of nothing, nor by the will of some creator; but it is eternal, beginningless and endless. That is the teaching; and it declares that we are not helpless victims of our parents' sins, but that our present condition is the resultant of our past deeds, and that our future state will be the result of our present actions. Parents do not create the souls of their children; they are but the channels, the instruments through which the individual souls incarnate or manifest themselves on the physical plane. This is popularly known as the doctrine of reincarnation, which means the remanifestation on this earth of the individual soul, or the germ of life, according to its desires and tendencies, which will determine the conditions of its existence. The Hindus accept the law of *karma* and do not believe that God creates one man to enjoy and another to suffer, nor do they maintain that He punishes the wicked and rewards the virtuous. Punishment and reward are but the reactions of our own actions. Each individual soul reaps the fruits of its own acts, either here or in some other existence.

This universal religion may be called the 'science of the soul'. As modern science does not deal with dogmas and does not insist upon belief in the authority of any person or book, but depends entirely upon correct observation and experience of the facts of nature to discover the laws which govern the phenomena of the universe, so the monistic religion does not deal with dogmas and creeds, but explains through logic and reason the spiritual nature of man or the true nature of the soul. It describes the origin, growth, and process of its gradual evolution from the minutest germ of life up to the highest spiritual man, as Christ or Buddha or Ramakrishna; for it claims that all souls will become perfect in the course of evolution. Each individual soul, however imperfect it may be at present, is bound in the end to attain perfection and become divine. It teaches that the human soul in the progress of spiritual evolution passes step by step from dualism or monotheism to qualified non-dualism, and ultimately reaches the spiritual height

of absolute non-dualism or monism. So long as a soul is on the plane of duality, or of monotheism, it believes in a God who dwells outside of nature, who is extra-cosmic, who, as the Creator of the universe, creates something out of nothing, and who is far, far away from us. We cannot reach Him so that He is too high, too great, too distant. He is the Master, and we are His servants; we must worship Him in that relation. But when we approach nearer to the infinite Being, we gradually begin to see that He is not so far from us, that He is immanent and resident in nature. He is near us: why should we consider Him as beyond, far out of our reach? Then we come to that phase which is called qualified non-dualistic. In this we realize that God is one stupendous whole and we are but parts; each individual soul is a part of the infinite Being. But when the soul rises still higher, it transcends all relativity and plunges into the realm of the Absolute. There, forgetting all names and forms, it reaches absolute oneness with Divinity, and then it declares: 'I and my Father are one'. In that state the soul becomes perfected; all the divine qualities and divine powers begin to flow through it, and it is transfigured into divine Glory. Then it becomes Christ-like; it reaches that state which is represented by the word 'Christ'.

The word 'Christ', according to the universal religion, means a state of spiritual perfection, of spiritual realization or attainment of oneness with the supreme Being. Whosoever reaches that state becomes Christ. And this universal religion teaches that each individual soul is a potential Christ, is potentially divine, and that potentiality will become actual when the soul awakens to the consciousness of its divine glory. When, transcending all bondage, all laws of the relative, phenomenal world, it comes face to face with the Absolute, it reaches the height of monistic religion, then it will be Christ, then it will be Buddha, 'the Enlightened One',—or he who has attained to spiritual enlightenment. According to this religion, when Jesus attained to that state, He became Christ, when Buddha attained to that state, He was held by the world as the Saviour of mankind, as the Redeemer. This universal religion brings great comfort and consolation to us, because it assures us that we are not going to eternal perdition; for it does not believe in hell-fire or eternal damnation. It teaches

that men commit mistakes, and those mistakes will bring their results through the law of cause and sequence, of action and reaction, but they will not last throughout eternity. Death, therefore, cannot frighten the followers of this religion.

Although this universal religion is founded upon the teachings of the Vedas and is as old as the Vedas, yet it has been forgotten again and again, and again and again it has been revived and preached by the great Saviours and spiritual leaders who have flourished in India from time to time. Krishna preached it 1400 years before Christ; after the decline of Buddhism it was preached again by Sankaracharya in the eighth century after Christ; and lastly it was preached by Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, who lived in the latter part of the nineteenth century and who is regarded by thousands and thousands of educated Hindus as the latest incarnation of Divinity. He is recognized as the prime-mover in the great religious upheaval which has begun in India. The tidal wave of this universal religion, rising from Ramakrishna as its centre, has inundated the whole spiritual field of India and is rapidly spreading all over the world, creating a revolution in the world's religious thought, which will surely produce wonderful results in time to come.

CHAPTER III

THE SOCIAL STATUS OF THE INDIAN PEOPLE: THEIR SYSTEM OF CASTE

In the last lecture, we saw how the Indo-Aryans hold the loftiest ideal of absolute freedom in their religious belief. From time immemorial they have shown perfect toleration toward the followers of every faith, and no religious persecution has been recorded in the whole history of India. Even atheists and agnostics have been allowed to live unmolested. Although the Mohammedans and the Christians hate the Hindus, still the Hindus do not persecute them, but live in absolute peace and harmony with them. India is indeed the home of universal tolerance and religious freedom. In their social life, on the contrary, the Hindus are more restricted than any other nation of the world. Their society is different from that of Europe or America ; its laws are more rigid and binding. They will not associate or intermarry with the Mohammedans or Christians, not however because of their religious beliefs, but on account of their social ideals.

The Hindu people are extremely conservative in their manners and customs, perhaps more so than the Chinese or Japanese ; and this conservatism has been the outcome of long-standing foreign rule and of continuous inroads and invasions by foreign nations. We ought not to forget that India was first invaded by the Greeks, then by the Scythians, and afterward by Mongolians, Tartars, Mohammedans, and lastly by the Portuguese, the Dutch, and other Christians. These powerful nations fell upon India like avalanches, devastating the land of its wealth and prosperity and destroying the glorious monuments of the Indo-Aryans. They came not to help the Hindus, but to plunder their country and rob them of their valuable possessions. What nation could withstand such successive invasions and survive such repeated disasters without possessing a tremendous power of conservatism? The Egyptians, Persians, and other nations which were unable to conserve themselves in time of need have been swept out of existence. This power of

conservatism which has been so marvellously displayed by the Hindu people is indeed a great lesson to the civilized world. It has kept the nation alive, and has protected the Aryan blood and Aryan literature, by creating impregnable social barriers which the destructive forces of successive invaders have never been able to break through.

No foreign power can demolish the social structure of the Hindus. It has stood for ages, firm like the gigantic peaks of the Himalayas, defying the strength of all hostile forces, because its foundation was laid—not upon the quick-sand of commercialism, not upon the quagmire of greed for territorial possessions, but upon the solid rock of the moral and spiritual laws which eternally govern earthly existence. The ancient founders of Hindu society were not like the robber-barons or ambitious political leaders of mediæval Europe; but they were sages and seers of truth, who sacrificed their personal interest, their ambition and desire for power and position upon the altar of disinterested love for humanity.

The Hindus of modern times trace their descent from these great sages, saints, and *Rishis* of pre-historic ages, and consider themselves blessed on account of such exalted lineage. They glory in the names of their forefathers, and feel an unconquerable pride because of the purity, unselfishness, spirituality, and Godconsciousness of their holy ancestors. This noble pride has prevented the members of different communities from holding free intercourse and from intermarrying with foreigners and invading nations, and has thus kept the Aryan blood pure and unadulterated. If they had not possessed that tremendous national pride and had mixed freely with all people by whom they were over-run, we should not find in India today the full-blooded descendants of the pure Aryan family.

Hindu society is divided into hundreds of communities; each community consists of several clans and each clan has its own peculiar customs and rules. These clans, again, are made up of numerous families, *'kula'*, and the members of these families are the individual units. The members of the family are governed by the *'kula-dharma'* or family customs, the families must obey the clan family customs, and the clan families must be governed by the rules of the community. The members of the family enjoy absolute freedom in everything that is approv-

ed of by the other families of the same clan. If the common opinion of the majority of the families of one clan be against any act of violation of its long-standing custom, then it should not be performed. If any one dares to violate such custom, then he forfeits all the privileges which he may have in his family-life in the community. He will be deprived of social intercourse and relationship with the clan family and of the protection of the community.

This clan family is called in Sanskrit *'gotra'*. There is no English word by which I can translate this term, the literal meaning of *'gotra'* being 'lineage', that is, the descendants of common ancestors. Originally there were about twenty-four *Rishis* who were *gotra*-makers or makers of clans. They were all sages and seers of truth, who lived in the Vedic period and were inspired. The hymns of the Vedas and other holy scriptures in India came through them, and they were leaders as well as clan-makers. We all trace our descent from these great *Rishis*.

Again, the community of many clans is called in Sanskrit *jati*, Greek *'genus'*, Roman *'gens'*, or the patriarchal family in the largest sense of the term. Each community consists of many clans, which live together, obeying the laws of the community. The rules of propriety and impropriety, marriage ceremonies and funeral rites, rituals and ceremonies, amusements and occupations, professions and industries, nay, all the details of social life must be in perfect harmony with the laws and customs which have been handed down through generations to the existing communities. These social laws are called *'jati-dharma'* or the duties of a *jati* or community. Each clan family, from the lowest Pariah to the highest Brahmin, is guided and governed by the *jati-dharma*. No position, profession, or industry can be accepted by any member of a community if the community as a body disapproves of it. If any member wishes to fulfil a desire, he must first consider whether it is in perfect harmony with the customs of the family (*kula-dharma*), then with the duties of the clan family (*gotra-dharma*), and lastly with the laws of the community (*jati-dharma*); and, after establishing harmony with all these, he can do what he pleases. In case of difference of opinion, whatever the community decides for the family and the individual they must implicitly obey. The

leaders of the community are the final authorities. The individual sacrifices his freedom for the sake of the family, the interest of the family is merged into that of the clan, and the clan sacrifices its interest for the community.

This is a peculiar system of government, but it has existed in India for many centuries. A Hindu, from the time of his birth up to his last moment, lives a life which may be called a life of self-sacrifice. Whether a man or a woman, his or her ideal is not to think of himself or herself, not to seek his or her own comfort, not to enjoy selfish pleasures, but to live for the good, first, of the family, then of the clan, then of the community. Such is the custom in India. Of course this government by community we find in almost every country in some form and to some extent, but nowhere is it so strict and so perfectly organized as in India.

The communities, again, have no social rank or grade among themselves. All communities are equally great and all clans are equally good. Each community is like a small social republic in itself. The rules and customs of one community do not interfere with those of another, and in this respect every community enjoys absolute freedom as a body, but the individuals in it cannot enjoy this freedom. They must obey the laws of their community; and if they violate any existing custom they must go through certain penances and austerities. Otherwise, they wlll be excommunicated, and excommunication is the worst punishment that can be given to a Hindu. He will not be invited by other members of the same community, neither will his invitation be accepted by them. At the time of birth, death, or wedding, he will be left alone and absolutely friendless in the world. No other community will take him. Nor can he join another clan, because his birthright prevents him. Such is the rigidity and power of the communal form of social government among the Hindus.

Outsiders and foreigners do not understand this government, because they do not belong to any community, and those who do not belong to a community cannot know anything of it. These are unwritten laws. You will not find them in books; but the unwritten laws are more binding than the written laws. Strangers who go to India cannot see the reason why the members of different communities under the name of

Brahmin, Kshatriya, or any other caste do not intermarry or have free social intercourse with one another. There are, for instance, Brahmins all over India; but a Brahmin of Bombay will not intermarry with the Brahmins of Calcutta, or Madras, or the Punjab. Why? Because although they are all Brahmins, they do not belong to the same community. Again, all the Brahmins of the Province of Bengal do not intermarry or mix freely or eat together, because they are members of different communities. The descendants of different clans (*gotra*) belonging to the same community, however, will intermarry and have free social intercourse.

The tendency of each community is to preserve the clan family intact and to keep the Aryan blood of the individuals in it as pure as possible, and also to make its members live on the highest moral and spiritual plane. The community approves of everything that is truly ethical and uplifting and rejects that which debases the moral and spiritual conduct of the family or individual. Being thus protected by the laws and customs of the community, individual members grow up, rear their children, live in joint families, fulfil their social or rather communal duties, enjoy pleasures and amusements, and serve the community by performing such acts as will help other families and members of the same community. If there be a millionaire, for example, his duty is to help first his own family, then all the families of his own clan, then other families of the same community. He can then extend his charitable and philanthropic works to the members of other communities or do anything for the good of the public in general. Each community is like one family and tremendous unity exists among its members. For this reason, there never was any need in India of such philanthropic organizations and asylums as you have in Europe and America. Orphanages, poor houses, and charitable institutions were not necessary, because the community took care of its own poor and its own orphans. You put the poorer classes in asylums; but we take them into our homes, feed them, and clothe them. That is our duty, because they are our brothers. No grander system was ever established in the world.

Hindu leaders of society, after trying various methods, discovered that this form of social government was the best suited for the Hindu people. Their idea was that if all the existing

communities into which the whole Hindu population is divided enforced these moral and spiritual laws among the members of the different families, then the whole nation would be moral and spiritual; just as the whole street will be clean if every one keeps the front of his house clean. Thus they started from these individual units and built up a system upon natural laws, making one family of the whole nation.

But these communities at present are not perfect. They have now become fixed entities; their laws, rules, and ideals have lost their flexible nature and have become so rigid and binding that they cannot be changed, for they are considered to represent the highest and best ideals. But the individual living within the limits of the community may change his ideas and adopt new ones, better suited to immediate conditions, which will put him at variance with the communal life and alienate him from his clan family. Herein lies one of the serious defects of the present system. This government by community, however, is more effective and beneficial than the church government such as we find in this country. Why? Because social questions must be kept separate from religion; othrewise there will be religious dissension and persecution. And this is the secret of religious toleration in India. Religion is never interfered with on account of social affairs. As I explained in my last lecture, the Hindus are absolutely free to choose any form of worship they like, but that has nothing to do with their social status. The government by community, however imperfect it may be, has at least this advantage, that it gives freedom in religion and confers upon all the members of these communities equal rights, equal privileges, and equal opportunities. Both men and women are allowed the same right to discuss and vote upon any disputed question.

Each community has its aristocracy, middle classes, and lower classes. The lower and middle classes aspire to rise to the higher ranks of the community and expect favour, help, and support from the superior classes. A man may possess enormous wealth in the community, but he can never change his birthright. Neither will he change his clan (*gotra*) or community (*jati*). No other clan will accept him as a member, no other community will give him better privileges or protection. The social status of a Hindu depends upon the rights which he

or she has acquired by birth in the family, clan, and community. There was, for example, a community of fishermen. A lady in that community inherited a large estate. In India the women hold property, manage their own estates, and in such matters have great freedom. Now this lady had unusual power and ability and she managed her property most admirably. She built temples, performed other charitable and philanthropic works, and did incalculable good by her example to all the members of the families and clans of the same community. She was considered to be the queen of that community. All of its members honoured and respected her as the jewel of their society, as did the communities of Brahmins and other castes: but she never thought of changing her clan or of rejecting the laws and customs of her own community.

These communities, again, are subdivisions of larger classes, which are known in English as 'castes'. The word 'caste' has become most mischievous and misleading, and the less we use it the better we shall be able to understand the social conditions of the people of ancient and modern India. The term 'caste' is the Anglicized form of the Portuguese word 'casta', which means 'breed' or 'stock'. It was first applied by the rough Portuguese sailors of the sixteenth century to certain divisions of the Hindu society. It was originally used in the sense of pure, unmixed breed, but in Sanskrit there is no equivalent of such a word as caste. In the writings of the Hindus, from the Vedas down to the Laws of Manu and the Puranas, we do not find any word which has the same meaning as is conveyed by the term caste, and in India to ask a Hindu what is meant by caste would be like asking an American what caste means in America. The Sanskrit word which has been translated (or mistranslated) by caste is *varna* (colour), which implied some ethnological distinction of complexion as separating the dominant from the inferior classes, the Aryans from the non-Aryan aboriginal tribes of ancient India. Mr. R. C. Dutt says: "The very word *varna,* which in later Sanskrit indicates caste, is used in the Rig Veda to distinguish the Aryans and the non-Aryans, and nowhere indicates separate sections in the Aryan community".[1] This distinction of colour, however,

[1]Cf. *Civilization in Ancient India,* Vol. 1, p. 65.

gradually gave rise to separate divisions in the Aryan community itself; as in the Bhagavad Gita we read: "The Lord has divided the whole human race into four classes, according to their colour, qualifications, qualities, and works".[2] The four original colours of different races were white, red, yellow, and black; and the intermixture of these four original colours has produced all the various race divisions of the world. Among the Aryans those who were white in colour were called Brahmins; the red, Kshatriyas; the yellow, Vaishyas; and the black, Sudras. Again the different qualities and works of these four classes are thus described: "The duties of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, as also of Sudras, are divided in accordance with their nature-born qualities. Peace, self-restraint, austerities, purity, forgiveness, and uprightness, knowledge, direct intuition, and faith in God are the natural qualities of the Brahmin. Of the Kshatriyas, bravery, energy, fortitude, dexterity, fleeing not in battle, gift and lordliness are the nature-born qualities. Agriculture, protection of cows, merchandise, and various industries are the nature-born duties of the Vaishyas. Conscientiousness in menial service is the nature-born duty of the Sudras. A man attains perfection by performing those duties which he is able to do".[3] Here you see a man's caste was determined not only by his colour but also by his natural qualifications. That was the original idea behind all caste distinctions among the Hindus. It is quite different from the explanation given by foreigners and missionaries.

The Brahmins were naturally qualified to fulfil certain duties, and they discharged them faithfully and perfectly. Propelled by a nature-born tendency they devoted themselves to the study of the various branches of science and philosophy, as well as the vedic scriptures, and performed the religious rites and ceremonies of all classes of people and other priestly duties. The Kshatriyas were those who became warriors, soldiers, commanders, and rulers of the country. The trades, industries, and agriculture were managed by the Vaishyas; while the Sudras were those who were qualified to do only the menial and domestic service in the household life of the other three classes. Thus

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[2] Chapter IV, verse 13.
[3] Cf. *Bhagavad Gita*, chapter XVIII, verses 41-45.

there arose a complete system of division of labour. To every man his place, work, and remuneration were assigned.

This division was made probably during the Vedic period, or perhaps earlier; but we find it given in the Vedas. When the Aryans first invaded India from Central Asia they were highly civilized. They knew agriculture, and had wonderful social and political organizations. And when a division of labor became necessary, they divided themselves into different classes in accordance with their natural tendencies. But at first these divisions were flexible and interchangeable. The social distinctions were not iron-bound; neither were the occupations and professions hereditary. We read in the Vedas and other ancient writings of the Hidus that the Brahmins could intermarry with the Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Sudras. They could also become warriors if they were so qualified; while the Kshatriyas often became the teachers of the Brahmins; in fact, most of the philosophical and spiritual ideals which we have to-day were first given by the Kshatriyas, and not by the Brahmins. The members of these classes mixed freely, and whenever any one had the qualifications of a Brahmin or a Kshatriya he was called Brahmin or Kshatriya. There were many Kshatriyas who were afterward called Brahmins on account of their spiritual wisdom and greatness. You will notice that almost all the incarnations of Divinity in India were Kshatriyas, and very few were Brahmins. Another theory about the origin of caste is given in the *Mahabharata*. In the *Shanti Parva* (chs. 188-189), we read,

"A sage Bharadvaja asks another sage Bhrigu: "If colour is the principle of differentiation of caste in the fourfold caste system, then there is indeed seen the confusion of colour among all castes;

"Desire, anger, fear, avarice, grief, anxiety, hunger, and weariness sway all of us, how then is the division of caste?"

"Innumerable are the species of moving and unmoving beings; of these various classes, whence the determination of castes?'

"Bhrigu replied:

"There is no distinction of castes. The whole world being created by Brahma in the beginning consisted of Brahmins only. By actions it underwent (the distinctions of) caste.

"Those twice-born men or Brahmins, who were fond of the enjoyment of desires, fierce, passionate, and daring in (the pursuit of) desired objects, who had abandoned their own duties, men of ruddy complexion,—these attained the rank of Kshatriyas.

"Those twice-born men or Brahmins, who had taken to the profession of tending cattle, who were yellow in colour, lived by agriculture, and abode not by their own duties,—these attained the rank of Vaishyas.

"Those twice-born men or Brahmins, who were fond of killing and telling falsehoods, covetous, who lived by all (kinds of) occupations, dark in colour, and who abandoned all cleanliness,—these attained the rank of Sudras.

"Separate by these actions, the twice-born have undergone differentiation into castes".

These four main divisions of the Indo-Aryans of the Vedic period, according to their *varna* (colour) and occupations gradually lost their flexible nature and became a system of hereditary caste as early as six centuries before Christ, when Buddha arose as a great reformer against the separation and distinction of castes. He gave a death-blow to priestly power and equalized all classes of people by breaking down the barriers of this artificial hereditary caste division. Under this system if a Brahmin was a priest, his son must be a priest also ; while the son of a Kshatriya (soldier) must be a soldier. This was of course started at first with the idea of perfecting the different lines of work, and the ancient thinkers and social leaders understood the laws of heredity so thoroughly that they tried to develop the best qualities through hereditary transmission. Buddha, however, strove to bring the whole social system into its original simple form, and make it as flexible as it was at the outset. He would not recognize a Brahmin, because he was born a Brahmin, but he distinguished all people according to their merits and qualifications. Any one who possessed the beautiful qualities of peace, self-restraint, self-control, righteousness, devotion, love for humanity, and divine wisdom, was called by him a Brahmin ;[4] and during the period of nearly a thousand years, while Buddhism reigned over India, people of different classes

[4] Vide *Dhammapada*, chapter XXVI.

forgot their hereditary caste distinctions and enjoyed social and political freedom.

About 600 A.D., however, Buddhism declined, corruptions crept in, and the orthodox Brahmins, regaining their power, reestablished the original social organization in accordance with the hereditary system of class divisions. Then later the Mohammedans came, and for six hundred years tried in vain to destroy the social structure of the Hindus. Whoever favoured the Mohammedans ideals was ostracized and excommunicated by the Hindus. Thus Hindu society lost many of its most brilliant men and women. Those who intermarried or associated freely with the Mohammedans were deprived of all social rights in their community, and under no circumstances could be taken back by the Hindus. Such was the tyranny and abuse of power exercised by the fanatical descendants of the great Aryan *Rishis* and sages of ancient India. The Brahmins and social leaders of the middle ages were short-sighted and superstitious; they had love of power, they wished to rule over the people and keep them under their control. Today India would be one of the mightiest nations in the world if these short-sighted orthodox social leaders had not pursued a policy of seclusion and isolation, which resulted in absolute disunion among the members of the different classes of the Hindus. England could not have held her dominant sword over the heads of three hundred millions of people in India if there had been unity among the isolated communities and clans of the four divisions. Well has it been said by Sir Monier Monier Williams: "And certainly the antagonism of these caste associations and trade leagues has helped us to govern the country by making political combinations impracticable".[5]

But now the conditions are changing. India of today is different from what she was fifty years ago. Education and intellectual progress are opening the eyes of the nation. The cry for social reform is to be heard in every corner of this vast country. People are beginning to see the defects of the existing social organism. The educated classes are now convinced that if the present conditions are allowed to continue, the absolute disintegration and complete annihilation of the national life

[5]Cf. *Brahminism and Hinduism*, p. 474.

will be the inevitable result. Thinking people are no longer satisfied with the seclusion and isolation of the different communities by iron barriers of superstition. They wish to unify all communities into one homogeneous whole, to make every member feel that he is a part and parcel, not merely of a family, clan, or community, not merely a part of a section of the Hindu nation which is limited by colour or caste, but a most important part of the Indo-Aryan nation as a whole. The solidarity of all classes and all communities is the aim of the social reformers. The work has begun, but it will take a long time to make this reform effective and universal.

Today the integrity of the social organization is weakened : social chaos and anarchy have prevailed. Fifty years ago every one was proud of his noble birth, but with the hard competition and extreme poverty of the masses, brought about by an alien government, the question of bread and butter has absorbed the whole attention of the people. The people to-day are very poor. They need food and clothes and a shelter over their heads. They have no means to support their families. Their present social status depends upon wealth. A high-class Brahmin, disregarding the ancient tradition and custom of his caste, will now perform the most menial tasks, like cooking in a private house or working as a servant. Today the question is how to live. A Brahmin again will bow down to a Sudra of the lowest class if the latter happens to be rich. Twenty years ago the brother looked upon his elder as his superior, but now he considers him merely as a good companion. The rigors of the social organization, which formerly ensured obedience to authority have been loosened, and every one now feels that he is at liberty to go his own way.

The Hindus are passing through a transition period. Social progress is at present checked by the vigorous efforts of an unsympathetic, greedy, selfish, and despotic foreign government, whose heartless officials are sucking the life-blood of the Hindu nation. All the trade guilds and industrial leagues which exercised such tremendous power in the social life of the Hindus have no longer voice or authority in the community. English merchants, protected by the British government, have taken possession of the market, have driven out the native manufacturers, have destroyed the trade and commerce of the country,

and have thus ruined millions of people. If you go to India today, you will find thousands and thousands, perhaps millions and millions, who have no occupation. No industry is encouraged. People are driven to live upon agriculture. The English government wanted to make India an agricultural country and she has succeeded in doing so. The labouring classes in consequence are obliged to live and support their family on from two to five cents a day. What social progress can we expect to see under such destructive power vigorously exercised by the so called monarch of European civilization? Christian missionaries blinded by their fanatical zeal to Christianize India, do not see the faults and the demoralizing influence of the present system of despotic government which is ruining the country, but they trace the origin of all social evils to the religion of the Hindus Directly or indirectly their efforts are to destroy the Hindu social structure, but have they any better system to give in return ? We see that the present social government in Europe and in this country is not perfect. It is not even as perfect as the corrupted caste system which exists in India! These Christian missionaries do not realize that the majority of the Christian converts in India repent as long as they live for the great mistake they have committed in alienating themselves from the Hindu society. Have they any social standing even among the Christians themselves? Are the negroes of America on an equal footing with the white Christians? No. First let the Christians root out from their hearts the prejudice against race and colour. Have they succeeded in doing that ? How then can they solve the tremendous social problem which faces the Hindu people? India needs social reconstruction, but will they find that through Christianity ? No, Christianity cannot help them, because the Christians know how to destroy, but they do not know how to build—especially in India. They may give their church government, which would be worse in a country like India. The people have suffered enough from priestcraft ; they do not want any more of it.

India needs social reorganization and social regeneration. The Christians, like the Mohammedans, have poured their ideals into the sea of Hindu society and have created waves of radical reform. Today the waters of that social sea are being constantly stirred by the anglicized and half-Europeanized reformers of the

present generation. Now the time has come for the Hindu leaders of society to stand on a broader and more universal platform and reconstruct their system, accepting whatever is good and noble, among Western nations and adding it to their own lofty ideals. They will have to make their social organization more flexible than it has ever been. That reconstruction must be based upon the broadest and most universal ideals of the Hindu nation, tempered by the need of occidental aggressiveness and commercialism. The remedy has already been discovered in the all-embracing and unifying system of Vedanta, which proclaiming the divine right of all humanity irrespective of caste, creed, or colour, and teaching that all are children of God, whether Christians or Hindus, Pariahs or Brahmins, will once more purify the social conditions, remove the evils of the caste system, uplift the individuals, bring solidarity among the members of different communities, and make the Hindu nation stand once more as a great civilizing power among the civilized nations of the world.

CHAPTER IV

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS OF INDIA

Those who have studied the history of the civilization of ancient India are well acquainted with the fact that the Hindus were highly civilized at least five thousand years ago. The earliest records of Hindu civilization are to be found in the Rig Veda, the oldest Scriptures of the world, and in other writings of the vedic period. From these sources we learn, as was shown in the last lecture, that the Indo-Aryans of those prehistoric times organized their society into four general classes: Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Sudras, according to their colour, qualifications, and professions. The Brahmins were entrusted with literary and priestly duties ; while the Kshatriyas were those who devoted their energy to protect the country against invaders, to govern the land, and to look after the welfare and safety of all other classes. Industry, trade, commerce, agriculture, and the various duties of a commercial life were undertaken by those who were known as the Vaishyas or the merchant class ; and the Sudras belonged to the serving class.

The vedic writings also tell us that the Indo-Aryans of those days cultivated the land with ploughs, used oxen and horses in the field, undertook irrigation by means of canals, and knew the use of wells and reservoirs for drinking as well as for irrigation. Various kinds of industry, trade and commerce, as also the existence of current money—like pieces of gold of a certain fixed value, for use in buying and selling are mentioned in the Rig Veda. The Indo-Aryans, we read, furthermore, were continually engaged in fighting against the non-Aryan aboriginal tribes who were the original inhabitants of India, and remnants of whom are still to be found in some parts among the hill tribes, just as you find today in some of the original inhabitants of America in certain parts of this country. In these battles with hostile tribes "the (Aryan) warriors used not only armour and helmets, but also protecting armour for the shoulder, probably shields. They used javelins and battle-axes, and sharp-edged swords, besides bows and arrows. All the weapons of

war known elsewhere in ancient times were known in India four thousand years ago. Drums assembled men in battle, banners led them on in compact masses, and the use of war horses and chariots was well-known. Tame elephants were in use too".[1]

The Rig Veda contains numerous allusions which show that the use of iron, gold, and of other metals was known to the Hindus. Armours worn in war are mentioned in Book I, 140, 10; in II, 39, 4; in IV, 53, 2, as in various other places; while the javelin, in Sanskrit *Rishti,* and the battle-axe *Bashi* in Sanskrit, are mentioned in the Rig Veda, V, 52, 6, and 57, 2. Three thousand mailed warriors are spoken of in the same Veda, VI, 27, 6; and sharp-edged swords are described in VI, 47, 10. That the arrowheads were made of iron is shown in Book VI, 75, 15: "We extol the arrow which is poisoned whose face is iron", and in the next book (83, 1) we read: "When the battle is nigh and the warrior marches in his armour, he appears like the cloud".

It was by ceaseless fighting that the ancient Indo-Aryans protected themselves in their newly-conquered country, extended the limits of cultivation, and built new towns and villages. This interminable warring and fighting forced the conquering Aryan tribes to organize their political and military institutions. Thus the political institutions of the Hindus are as old as their civilization. They divided the country into various kingdoms, principalities, and chiefships, each enjoying perfect autonomy. At the head of each province or kingdom was a Hindu chief or governor, who was called a Rajah, which means 'prince' or 'king'. These Rajahs were absolutely independent of one another. They entertained friendly relations with the Rajahs of other neighbouring provinces, and sometimes they were jealous of each other. But there never was a universal sovereignty over the whole of India, like that of the great autocrat of Russia, although there were powerful monarchs and emperors to whom other kings, chiefs, and governors of states acknowledged subordination and paid tribute. Their autonomy, however, was never sacrificed. Their alliances generally bore the character of confederacies, or federal unions, and not that of feudal baronies

[1]Cf. *Civilization in Ancient India,* Vol. I, p. 58.

subject to a ruling chief; and under no circumstances were the servile duties of the feudal barons of Europe exacted from the weaker Rajahs or governors. The bond between them was of the feeblest kind, and easily broke at every favourable opportunity. In the vedic period, there were many such emperors or Chakravartins, as they were called in Sanskrit. In the *Ramayana,* we read that Rama was the emperor of Ayodhya (modern Oudh), and his power extended all over northern and southern India as far down as Ceylon. From the *Mahabharata,* which contains the history of the Hindus who lived as early as 1400 B.C. ,we learn that Yudhishthira became the emperor of India after the battle of Kurukshetra. His successors, Parikshit, Janmejaya, and many others, were known as emperors. These emperors had a number of Rajahs under them, who paid allegiance and tribute to them. But their bond could break at any time for very insignificant causes.

When Alexander the Great invaded India, there was on the throne the most powerful Buddhist emperor, Chandra Gupta, whose capital was Pataliputra, modern Patna, on the river Ganges. His grandson was Asoka, who lived in 260 B.C. and became the most celebrated emperor of those days. He was like Constantine the Great among the Buddhists. He made Buddhism the state religion of India; he sent missionaries from Siberia to Ceylon, from China to Egypt, and made treaties with kings of foreign countries. One of the edicts of Asoka, which were written during his lifetime, says that he made treaties with five Greek kings who were his contemporaries, namely, Antiochus of Syria, Ptolemaos of Egypt, Antigonus of Macedon, Magus of Cyrene, and Alexander of Epiros; and he sent missionaries to those places, as far as Alexandria, to preach the Gospel of Buddha.

Alexander the Great, however, invaded only the northwestern corner of India, and defeated in one battle some of the hill-tribes, but afterwards, when he heard of the power and strength of Chandra Gupta, he withdrew his troops and returned to Greece. His successor, Seleucus, sent the Greek ambassador Megasthenes, who lived for several years at the court of this great emperor. From the accounts of Megasthenes, which are the most authentic historical records that we can gather from an outsider, we learn many facts about the political insti-

tutions of the Hindus as witnessed by a foreigner during the fourth century B.C. Megasthenes left a valuable record of the actual work of administration as observed by him. He says. "Those who have charge of the city are divided into six bodies of five each. The members of the first look after everything relating to the industrial arts. Those of the second attend to the entertainment of foreigners. To those they assign lodgings, and they keep watch over their modes of life by means of those persons whom they give to them for assistants. They escort them on the way when they leave the country, or, in the event of their dying, forward their property to their relatives. They take care of them when they are sick, if they die, bury them. The third body consists of those who inquire when and how births and deaths occur, with a view not only of levying a tax, but also in order that births and deaths among both high and low may not escape the cognizance of government. The fourth class superintends trade and commerce. Its members have charge of weights and measures, and see that the products in their season are sold by public notice. No one is allowed to deal in more than one kind of commodity unless he pays a double tax. The fifth class supervises manufactured articles, which they sell by public notice. What is new is sold separately from what is old, and there is a fine for mixing the two together. The sixth and last class consists of those who collect the tenths of the prices of the articles sold".

The military officers "also consist of six divisions, with five members in each. One division is appointed to co-operate with the admiral of the fleet; another with the superintendent of the bullock-trains which are used for transporting engines of war, food for the soliders, provender for the cattle, and other military requisites. .... The third division has charge of the foot-soldiers, the fourth of the horses, the fifth of the war-chariots, and the sixth of the elephants."

In addition to the military and municipal officers, there was a third class whose duty was to superintend agriculture, irrigation, forests, and the general work of administration in rural districts. "Some superintend the rivers, measure the land, as is done in Egypt, and inspect the sluices by which water is let out from the main canals into their branches, so that every one may have an equal supply of it. The same persons have charge

also of the huntsmen, and are entrusted with the power of rewarding or punishing them according to their deserts. They collect the taxes, and superintend the occupations connected with land, as those of the woodcutters, the carpenters, the blacksmiths, and the miners. They construct roads, and at every ten stadia set up a pillar to show the by-roads and distances".[2]

The laws of war among the Hindus were more humane than among the other nations of the world, and Megasthenes mentions this fact. All these Rajahs governed their country in accordance with their laws and for the welfare of their people, and what accounts we get from Megasthenes are exactly the same as those we read in Manu, Apastamba, and other Sanskrit lawbooks of ancient time. Regarding the military law, or the laws of war, the Hindu lawgiver Apastamba says: "The Aryans forbid the slaughter of those who have laid down their arms, of those who beg for mercy with flying hair or joined hands, and of fugitives" (II, 5, 10, 11.), "Let him not fight with those who are in fear, intoxicated, insane or out of their minds, nor with those who have lost their armour, nor with women, infants, aged men, and Brahmins" (*Bodhayana*, I, 10, 18, 11). "The wives of slain soldiers were always provided for" (*Vasishtha* XIX, 20.). Megasthenes says: "For whereas among other nations it is usual, in the contests of war, to ravage the soil, and thus to reduce it to an uncultivated waste, among the Indians, on the contrary, by whom husbandmen are regarded as a class that is sacred and inviolable, the tillers of the soil, even when battle is raging in the neighbourhood, are undisturbed by any sense of danger. . . . Besides, they (the warriors) never ravage an enemy's land with fire nor cut down its trees. They never use the conquered as slaves".[3]

The duties of the king, according to the lawgiver Manu, were "to protect his subjects, to deal impartial justice, and to punish the wrongdoer." (VII, 12, 16.) These were the three principal duties. "Drinking, gambling and licentiousness, and hunting were the most pernicious faults of the king" (VII, 50.). The private life of kings is described by Manu thus: "The king should rise in the last watch of the night, and, having per-

[2] Vide MacCrindle's Translation.
[3] Ibid.

formed his personal purification and devotional exercises, he should enter the hall of audience in the morning. There he should gratify all subjects who come to see him, and, having dismissed them, he should take counsel with his ministers in a private chamber" (VII, 145-147.). "When the consultation is over, then he is ready to take care of his physical needs, meals, and so on". But his first duty is to give an audience to his subjects and to gratify their demands. "In the afternoon, the king should review his army, inspect his fighting-men, his chariots, animals, and weapons, and then perform his twilight devotions. After this he should give audience to his secret spies and hear private reports" (VII, 221-225.). "The king was always assisted by his council of seven or eight ministers," as we read in the laws of Manu (VII, 54-63), "who were versed in sciences, skilled in the use of weapons, and descended from noble and well-tried families. Such ministers used to advise the king in matters of peace and war, revenue and religious gifts. The king also employed suitable persons for the collecting of revenue, and in mines, manufactories, and store-houses; and he employed ambassadors for carrying on negotiations with rulers". For the protection of villages and towns, separate officers were appointed. The king appointed a lord over each village, over ten villages, lords of twenty, of a hundred, and of a thousand villages; and these lords were not merely governors, but they used to check crime and protect the villages. These were the special duties of these special officers. They were like superintendents. Similarly, each town had its superintendent of all affairs, who personally inspected the work of all officials and got secret information about their behavior and private character, because the Hindu law says: "The servants of the king, who are appointed to protect the people, generally become knaves, who seize the property of others; let him protect his subjects against such men" (Manu, VII, 115-123.). From this you will see that, in ancient times, government officials used to become knaves, as they do now in a highly civilized country like America. Think of the time when this law was written,— centuries before Christ!

The income of the state from the royal demesnes was supplemented by taxes. Manu fixes an income-tax of two per cent on cattle and gold. The land revenue varied from one-sixth

to one-eighth or one-twelfth of the crops,[4] and this was much less than the land-revenue tax under British rule. Under the Hindu rule, the king was strictly prohibited from exacting excessive taxation. He was allowed to take one-sixteenth part of the price made on butter, earthen vessels and stone wares, and might exact a day's service in each month from artisans, mechanics, and other working-people; that is one day in a month these people would give their service free. Of course, they were maintained by the king, that is, they were fed by the king at that time; and with this institution, in ancient times, they could erect wonderful buildings, palaces, and monuments for public use, which now they cannot do because the cost is so great.

All these and others laws regarding administration and taxation show that an advanced system of government prevailed in India before the beginning of the Christian era. Megasthenes, who lived in India in the fourth century before Christ, as also the Chinese travellers, Fa Hian, who visited India about 400 A.D., and Houen Tsang, who came to India about 630 A.D. and resided there for nearly fifteen years, spoke in the highest terms of praise of the government and administration of the Hindu Rajahs. Frequently we hear that the Hindus were so badly governed at that time that they had no peace or justice and were constantly engaged in fighting; but these witnesses of other nations, who came from other countries and lived in India, left records which speak differently. They do not cite one single instance of a people being ground down by taxes, or harassed by the arbitrary acts of kings, or ruined by famines, plagues, or internecine wars. On the contrary, they say: "The people were happy, prosperous, enjoying peace and justice. Agriculture flourished, the fine arts were cultivated". Houen Tsang, in his diary, which has been translated into English by Samuel Beal, wrote thus, describing the administration of India: "As the administration of the country is conducted on benign pirnciples, the executive is simple. . . The private demesnes of the crown are divided into four principal parts: the first is for carrying out the affairs of state and providing sacrificial offerings; the second is for providing subsidies for the ministers and chief

[4] Vide *Civilization in Ancient India,* Vol. II, p. 102.

officers of state ; the third is for rewarding men of distinguished ability ; and the fourth is for charity to religious bodies, whereby the field of merit is cultivated. In this way the taxes on the people are light, and the personal service required of them is moderate. Each one keeps his own worldly goods in peace, and all till the ground for their subsistence. Those who cultivate the royal estates pay a sixth part of the produce as tribute.

The merchants who engage in commerce come and go in carrying out their transactions. The river passages and the road barriers are open on payment of a small toll. When the public works require it, labour is exacted, but paid for. The payment is in strict proportion to the work done.

"The military guard the frontiers, or go out to punish the refractory. They also mount guard at night round the palace. The soldiers are levied according to the requirements of the service ; they are promised certain payments, and are publicly enrolled. The governors, ministers, magistrates, and officials have each a portion of land assigned to them for their personal support".

Houen Tsang also says that tributary kings from China sent hostages to Kanishka, the great Buddhist emperor, who reigned in Kashmir (north-western India) about 78 A.D., and he treated them with special favour, and set apart for their residence that portion of the country which afterwards was named Chinapati. The Chinese introduced the pear and the peach into India, "wherefore the peach is called Chinani and the pear is called Chinarajaputra(son of the Chinese monarch)".

Such political conditions existed in India from the time of Megasthenes down to Houen Tsang, that means from nearly the fourth century B.C. to the seventh century A.D. Besides these, the most remarkable feature of the political organization of ancient India was the village community and municipal institutions. This village community was called 'panchayat', or committee of five. There was originally a committee of five, then afterwards it was increased to twelve. Each community formed itself into an independent little republic, which managed its own affairs and governed itself, but which was bound to the central government by the regular payment of an assessment or tax on the produce. Each district, again, was divided into territories which were governed by the village community, or

'panchayat'. Under this self-government by community, every individual member enjoyed absolute political freedom and independence. Each had full voice in the government. This government by *panchayat* is described in Manu and in other law-books of ancient India, and it has always existed among the Hindus. The people first elected their head-man, or president, who was a kind of mayor, and who was paid by a fixed proportion of land. He was the chairman of the village or town council, and used to call regular meetings. The next important officer of the community was the notary, or local attorney, who transacted the village business and kept an account of the land and produce, the rents and assessments. Then there was a Brahmin priest, a village schoolmaster, a barber, a carpenter, a blacksmith, a cowman, a shoe-maker, a potter, a washerman, a druggist, an oilman, the watchman, and the sweeper. These made up the village community. These members discussed and managed the whole affairs of the territory.

From the time of Manu, or from at least four hundred years before Christ, this form of municipal institution has existed in India, undisturbed by foreign invasions and political convulsions, internal wars, famine, plague, or earthquake. Sir Monier Monier Williams says: "And here I may observe that no circumstance in the history of India is more worthy of investigation than the antiquity and permanence of her village and municipal institutions. The importance of the study lies in the light thereby thrown on the parcelling out of rural society into autonomous institutions, like those of our own English parishes, wherever Aryan races have occupied the soil in Asia or in Europe. The Indian village or township, meaning thereby not merely a collection of houses forming a village or town, but a division of territory, perhaps three or four miles or more in extent, with its careful distribution of fixed occupations for the common good, with its intertwining and inter-dependence of individual, family, and communal interests, with its provision for political independence and autonomy, is the original type the first germ, of all the divisions of rural and civic society in mediaeval and modern Europe. It has existed almost unaltered since the description of its organization in Manu's code, two or three centuries before the Christian era. It has survived all the religious, political, and physical convulsions from which India

has suffered from time immemorial. Invader after invader has ravaged the country with fire and sword, . . . but the simple, self-contained Indian township has preserved its constitution intact, its customs, precedents, and peculiar institutions, unchanged and unchangeable, amid all other changes".[5]

During the Mohammedan rule of six hundred years, all these political institutions of the Hindus remained unaltered. They were never modified or disturbed. The Hindu villagers did not know that they were governed by the Mohammedans. The throne was occupied by a Mohammedan or Mogul emperor, to whom the native Rajahs and queens paid tribute, but beyond that they had no obligation ; they were quite independent. Each Rajah had his own laws, his own court, and his own separate administration. The government of the country according to the Hindu system has always been continued in the native states. Even at the present time there are native states governed by Hindu Rajahs where you will still find this kind of government. The Mohammedans never gained absolute control over the whole of India. Before the advent of the British rule, the administration of justice, the repression of crime, and other functions of the police, the collection of cesses and taxes, were all carried out by the government of the village community. Today in British India this self-government of the Hindus has been destroyed by the short-sighted policy of the British autocrats, and its place has been given to a most costly system of judicial administration, unparalleled in the history of the world. They talk about English justice. Of course there is justice in English government, but it is very expensive and one-sided. Indians have justice among Indians, but if an Indian's rights are outraged by a European he cannot hope for similar justice. The poorer classes, furthermore, cannot pay for justice under any conditions ; it is too expensive. The present oppression of the police and the cruelty of revenue collectors under British management have already driven the masses to the verge of absolute despair and rebellion.

Many people in this country think that England conquered India by force of arms, but history tells us that some English merchants first came to India to trade at the time when the

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[5]Cf. *Brahminism and Hinduism*, p. 455.

Mohammedan power was in its decline, and the Hindus were fighting against the Mohammedans to throw off their yoke and reestablish Hindu power upon the throne of Delhi. At this time of anarchy and revolution, these British traders, under the name of the East India Company, took the side of the Mohammedans and gained the confidence of the last of the Mogul[6] emperors, who was then merely a titular sovereign. He had lost all power; nobody obeyed him. As a return for what he had received from the East India Company and as favour to Lord Clive, this last of the Mogul emperors, in 1765, gave a charter making the East India Company of British traders the Dewan, or administrators, of Bengal. Though the Great Mogul had no real power to do such a thing, still, as long as he was the titular sovereign of India, his charter gave the East India Company a legal status in the country. The officers of the Company held that charter in their hands wherever they went. Lord Clive himself, in his letter to the Court of Directors from Calcutta dated September 30, 1765, writes: "The assistance which the Great Moghal had received from our arms and treasury made him readily bestow this grant upon the Company". "I mean the *Dewanee,* which is the superintendency of all the lands and the collection of all the revenues of the provinces of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa". These three provinces first came into the hands of the East India Company, and at that period the revenue from them was enormous. Lord Clive writes again: "Your revenues, by means of this acquisition, will, as near as I can judge, not fall far short, for the ensuing year, of 250 lakhs of Sicca Rupees, including your former possession of Burdwan, etc. Hereafter they will at least amount to twenty or thirty lakhs more. Your civil and military expenses in time of peace can never exceed sixty lakhs of Rupees; the Nawab's allowances are already reduced to fortytwo lakhs, and the tribute to the king (the Great Moghal) at twenty-six; so that there will be remaining a clear gain to the Company of 122 lakhs of Sicca Rupees, or £1,650,900 sterling."[8] "An annual remittance of over a million and a half sterling was to be made

[6] Mogul, Moghal, Mughal, etc. these are different spellings in different books.

[7] Three rupees make one dollar; a lakh was 100,000 rupees.

[8] *House of Commons Third Report*, 1773, Appendix, pp. 391-398

from a subject country to the shareholders (of the East India Company) in England."[9]

This was the beginning of British empire in India. That annual remittance has now increased and swelled to nearly thirty million pounds sterling. "The scheme administration introduced by Clive was a sort of dual government. The collection of revenues was still made for the (Mohammedan) Nawab's exchequer; justice was still administered by the Nawab's officers; and all transactions were covered by the mask of the Nawab's authority. But the East India Company, the real masters of the country, derived all the profits; and the Company's servants practised unbounded tyranny for their own gain, overawing the Nawab's servants, and converting his tribunals of justice into instruments for the prosecution of their own purposes."[10] It is a long story; time will not permit me to describe the harrowing tales of the foul and treacherous methods which were adopted by the unworthy representatives of the English people, under the name of the East India Company, to secure for their motherland a market-place for her trade and commerce, and to bring benefit and prosperity to the British nation, which was at that time the poorest nation in Europe. Those who have read the impeachment of Warren Hastings by Burke, as also impartial students of the history of the East India Company, are already acquainted with the brutal policy of the Company, which has ruined the most prosperous country of India. Zemindars were dispossessed of their hereditary rights, their lands were let to the highest bidder by public auction, trade and manufacture were destroyed by monopoly and coercion, prohibitive duties were charged on manufactured articles, etc.

Terrible famines began for the first time with the British rule in India. In 1770 there was a terrible famine in the district of Purneah, in Bengal, in which above one-third of the population died of starvation; but the revenue from land-tax was exacted with such tyranny and oppression that even during that famine it was larger than in previous years. On the 9th of May, 1770, the Calcutta Council wrote to the Court of Directors: "The famine which has ensued, the mortality, the beggary,

[9] *Economic History of British India*, p. 39.
[10] Cf. *Economic History of British India*, p. 42.

exceed all description. Above one-third of the inhabitants have perished in the once plentiful province of Purneah, and in other parts the misery is equal." On the 12th of February, 1771, they wrote: "Notwithstanding the great severity of the late famine, and the great reduction of the people thereby, some increase has been made in the settlements (of taxes) both of the Bengal and the Behar provinces for the present year."[11] Mr. Dutt says in his Economic History of India: "Famines in India are directly due to a deficiency in the annual rainfall; but the intensity of such famines and the loss of lives caused by them are largely due to the chronic poverty of the people. If the people were generally in a prosperous condition, they could make up for local failure of crops by purchases from neighbouring provinces, and there would be no loss of life. But when the people are absolutely resourceless, they cannot buy from surrounding tracts, and they perish in hundreds of thousands, or in millions, whenever there is a local failure of crops."[12]

The reports of the Indian Famine Commissions of 1880 and 1898 show that between 1860 and 1900, that is, within forty years, there were ten widespread famines in India. In 1860 a famine broke out in Northern India and the loss of life was estimated at 2,00,000, but was probably much larger; in 1866 a famine in Orissa carried off one-third of the population, or about a million people; in 1869 there was another famine in Northern India, during which at least 1,200,000 people died; in 1874 Bengal was visited by famine, but the land-tax in this province is light and is *permanently settled*; the people are therefore comparatively prosperous and resourceful, and there was no loss of life from this famine. The land-tax of Madras, on the contrary, is heavy and is enhanced from time to time, and the people are poor and resourceless; when, therefore, a famine broke out there in 1877 and five millions perished. A third famine in Northern India in 1878 cost the lives of 1,250,000 people; and during the famine of 1889 in Madras and Orissa the loss of life was very severe, but no official figures are available. In 1892, again, there was a famine in Madras, Bengal,

[11] Extracts from India Office Records quoted in Hunter's *Annals of Rural Bengal*, 1868, pp. 21, 399.

[12] Ibid. 51.

Burma, and Rajputana, causing a heavy loss of life in Madras but none in Bengal. In 1897 famine swept over all Northern India, Bengal, Burma, Madras, and Bombay. The number of people on relief works alone rose to three millions in the worst months. Deaths were prevented in Bengal and elsewhere, but in the Central Provinces the death rate rose from an average of thirty-three per mile to sixty-nine per mile during the year. The famine of 1900 in the Punjab, Rajputana, the Central Provinces, and Bombay was the most widespread ever known in India. The number of persons relieved rose to six millions in the worst months. In Bombay, in the famine camps, so Sir A. P. Macdonnell, President of the Famine Commission, reported, the people "died like flies." "The results of the three famines within the last ten years (1891-1901), and of the increasing poverty of the people, are shown in the census taken in March, 1901. The population of India has remained stationary during the last ten years. There is a slight increase in Bengal, Madras, and Northern India, while there is an actual decrease of some millions in Bombay, the Central Provinces, and the Native States affected by recent famines. In other words, the population of India to-day is less by some thirty millions than it would have been if the nominal increase of one per cent per annum had taken place during these ten years."[12]

Warren Hastings, who had succeeded Clive as Governor of Bengal, was made first Governor-General in 1772. Pitt's India Bill became a law in 1784. It removed the administration of the East India Company from the hands of directors and placed it under the control of the crown, thus compelling some reforms. Lord Cornwallis then became the successor of Warren Hastings. The policy of all of the Governor-Generals under the East India Company was to extend the British territory, to absorb the Native States by declaring war on the slightest pretence, to increase the revenue, and to drain the country of her resources. "The people of India have no votes, and are not even represented in the Executive Councils of India. They have no voice in the matter of taxation or of expenditure. They have no share in the work of adjusting the finances of India. Taxation exceeds all reasonable limits in India, and the

[12] Cf. R. C. Dutt: *Indian Famines*, p. 2.

proceeds of the taxation are not all spent in India. A large sum, estimated between twenty and thirty millions in English money, is annually drained from India to this country (England). The disastrous results of this annual drain have been described by many English writers and administrators throughout the century which has just closed".[13] Sir Thomas Munro, for some time Governor of Madras, after forty years' experience in India, wrote in 1824: "They (natives of India) have no share in making laws for themselves; little in administering them, except in very subordinate offices; they can rise to no high station, civil or military; they are everywhere regarded as an inferior race, and more often as vassals or servants than as the ancient owners and masters of the country . . . . All the civil and military offices of any importance are now held by Europeans, whose savings go to their own country". Mr. Frederick John Shore, of the Bengal Civil Service, wrote in 1837: "The halcyon days of India are over; she has been drained of a large proportion of the wealth she once possessed, and her energies have been cramped by a sordid system of misrule, to which the interests of millions have been sacrificed for the benefit of the few". Professor H. H. Wilson, the noted English historian, also says of the annual drain from India: "Its transfer to England is an abstraction of Indian capital for which no equivalent is given; it is an exhausting drain upon the country, the issue of which is paid by no reflux; it is an extraction of the life-blood from the veins of national industry, which no subsequent introduction of nourishment is furnished to restore". John Sullivan, at one time a Member of the Government of Madras and President of the Board of Revenue, writes thus in one of his reports: "As to the complaints which the people of India have to make of the present fiscal system, I do not conceive that it is the amount, altogether, that they have to complain of. I think that they have rather to complain of the application of that amount. Under their own dynasties, all the revenue that was collected in the country was spent in the country; but under our rule, a large proportion of the revenue is annually drained away, and without any return being made for it; this drain has been going on now

[13] Cf. by R. C. Dutt: *Indian Famines*, p. 10.

for sixty or seventy years, and it is rather increasing than the reverse. . . . Our system acts very much like a sponge, drawing up all the good things from the banks of the Ganges, and squeezing them down on the banks of the Thames. . . . They (the people of India) have no voice whatever in imposing the taxes which they are called upon to pay, no voice in framing the laws which they are bound to obey, no real share in the administration of their own country; and they are denied those rights from the insolent and insulting pretext that they are wanting in mental and moral qualifications for the discharge of such duties".[14]

The British administrators, in the first part of the nineteenth century, did all they could to promote English industries at the sacrifice of Indian industries; for the policy of English administration in India is shaped, not by statesmen and philosophers, but by merchants, traders, and manufacturers, who are the voters of Great Britain. British manufactures were forced into India through the agency of the Company's Governor-General and commercial residents, while Indian manufactures were shut out from England by prohibitive tariffs, as the table in the next page will show.

"Petitions were vainly presented to the House of Commons against these unjust and enormous duties on the import of Indian manufactures into England. One petition against the duties on sugar and spirits was signed by some four hundred European and Indian merchants,"[15] and it was rejected by the British Government in England. The policy of England was to make Great Britain independent of foreign countries for the raw material upon which her valuable manufactures depend, and to make India the producer of raw materials for English manufactories. The German economist, Frederick List, said: "Had they sanctioned free importation into England of Indian goods, the English manufactories would have come to a stand."[16] Thus, within fifty years, India was reduced from the state of manufacturing to that of an agricultural country.

Cotton and silk fabrics, shawls and woolen fabrics, sugar, tobacco, rum, dyes, saltpetre, coffee, tea, steel, gold, iron, copper,

[14] Cf. *Report of the Select Committee*, p. 402.
[15] Cf. *Economic History of India*, p. 294.
[16] Cf. *The National System of Political Economy*, p. 42.

TABLE OF TARIFFS

	1812 Per Cent on Value	1824 Per Cent on Value	1832 Per Cent on Value
Ornamental cane-work	71	50	30
Muslins	$27\frac{1}{5}$	$37\frac{1}{2}$	10
Calicoes	$71\frac{2}{3}$	$67\frac{1}{2}$	10
Other cotton manufactures	$27\frac{1}{3}$	50	20
Goat's-wool shawls	71	$67\frac{1}{2}$	30
Lacquered ware	71	$62\frac{1}{2}$	30
Mats	$68\frac{1}{3}$	50	20
Raw silk	£2 13s 6d on value *plus* 4s per pound	4s per pound	1d per pound
Silk manufactures	Prohibited	Prohibited	20 per cent on value
Taffetas or other plain or figured silks	,,	,,	30 per cent on value
Manufactures of silk	,,	,,	20 per cent on value
Sugar (cost price about £1 per cwt.)	£1 13s per cwt.	£3 3s per cwt	£1 12s per cwt.
Spirits	1s 8d per gallon *plus* 19s $1\frac{1}{2}$d excise duty	2s 1d per gallon *plus* 17s $\frac{3}{4}$d excise duty	15s per gallon
Cotton wool	16s 11d per 100 pounds	6 per cent	20 per cent

coal, timber, opium, and salt,—all these, and grains of all kinds, India had traded with other nations, both Asiatic and European; but, under the pretence of free trade, England has now compelled the Hindus to receive the manufactured products of England free of duty, and has imposed prohibitive duties on Indian manufactures imported to England. No Indian industry of any kind has been encouraged by the British Government during the last one hundred and fifty years. And no less than two hundred and thirty-five articles were subjected to internal duties under the East India Company. Section 6 of the Cotton Duties Act of 1896 runs thus: "There shall be levied and collected at every mill in British India, upon all cotton goods produced in such mill, a duty at the rate of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per centum on the value of such goods". And Mr. Dutt, in commenting upon this Act, says: "As an instance of fiscal injustice, the Indian Act of 1896 is unexampled in any civilized country in modern times. Most civilized governments protect their home industries by prohibitive duties on foreign goods. The most thorough of Free Trade Governments do not excise home manufactures when imposing a moderate customs duty on imported goods for the purposes of revenue. In India, where an infant industry required protection, even according to the maxims of John Stuart Mill, no protection has ever been given. Moderate customs, levied for the purposes of revenue only, were sacrificed in 1879 and 1882. Home-manufactured cotton goods, which were supposed to compete with imported goods, were excised in 1894. And home goods which did not compete with foreign goods were excised in 1896. Such is the manner in which the interests of an unrepresented nation are sacrificed".[17] This will give you a rough idea of how India has prospered in her economic condition during British rule.

A special law still exists under the English Government to provide labourers for the cultivation of tea in Assam. "A dark stain is cast on this industry by what is known as the 'slave-law' of India. Ignorant men and women, once induced to sign a contract, are forced to work in the gardens of Assam during the term indicated in the contract. They are arrested, punished,

[17] Cf. *India in the Victorian Age*, p. 543.

and restored to their masters if they attempt to run away; and they are tied to their work under penal laws such as govern no other form of labour in India. Hateful cases of fraud, coercion, and kidnapping, for securing these labourers, have been revealed in the criminal courts of Bengal, and occasional acts of outrage on the men and women thus recruited have stained the history of tea-gardens in Assam. Responsible and high administrators have desired a repeal of the penal laws, and have recommended that the tea-gardens should obtain workers from the teeming labour markets of India under the ordinary laws of demand and supply. But the influence of capitalists is strong; and no Indian Secretary of State or Indian Viceroy has yet ventured to repeal these penal laws, and to abolish the system of semi-slavery which still exists in India".[18]

Now let us see what is the present political condition of the Indian people: "The East India Company's trade was abolished in 1833, and the Company was abolished in 1858, but their policy remains. Their capital was paid off by loans, which were made into an Indian debt, on which interest is paid from Indian taxes. The empire was transferred from the Company to the Crown, but the people of India paid the purchase-money".[19] In 1858 the public debt was seventy million pounds, which had been piled up by the East India Company during the one hundred years of their rule in India, while they were drawing tribute from India, financially an unjust tribute, exceeding 150 millions, not counting interest. Besides this, they had charged India with the cost of the wars in China, Afghanistan, and in other foreign countries. India, therefore, in reality owed nothing at the close of the Company's rule. Her Public Debt was a myth. On the contrary, there was a balance of over 100 millions in her favour out of the money that had been drawn from her. The administration of the Crown doubled this Public Debt in nineteen years, bringing it up to 139 million pounds in 1877, when the Queen became Empress of India. Over 40 million sterling of this represented the cost of the Mutiny wars, which was thrown on the revenues of India. India was also made to pay a large contribution to the cost of the Abyssinian war of 1867. In 1900 the debt amounted to

[18] Cf *India in the Victorian Age*, p. 352.
[19] Cf. *Economic History of India*, p. xii.

224 million sterling. The construction of railways by Guaranteed Companies or by the State, beyond the pressing needs of India and beyond her resources, was largely responsible for this increase. It was also largely due to the Afghan wars of 1878 and 1897.

India pays interest on this debt, which annually increases. Besides this, she pays for all the officers, civil and military, and a huge standing army, pensions of officers, and even the cost of the India Building in London, as well as the salary of every menial servant in that house. For 1901-2 the total expenditure charged against revenue was £71,394,282 out of which £17,368,655 was spent in England as Home Charges, not including the pay of European officers in India, saved and remitted to England. These charges were as follows:

1. Interest on Debt and Management of Debt . . .	£3,052,410
2. Cost of Mail Service, Telegraph Lines, etc. charged to India ..	227,288
3. Railways, State, and Guaranteed (Interest and Annuities) . .	6,416,373
4. Public Works (Absentee Allowances, etc.) ..	51,214
5. Marine Charges (including H. M. Ships in Indian Seas) .	173,502
6. Military Charges (including pensions)	2,945,614
7. Civil Charges (including Secretary of State's Establishment, Cooper's Hill College, Pensions, etc.) ...	2,435,370
8. Stores (including those for Defence Works)	2,057,934
Total	£17,368,655

The following, again, is a comparative table of salaries paid out:

	Natives	Europeans	Eurasians	In Thousands of Rupees		
				Total Salaries of Natives	Total Salaries of Europeans	Total Salaries of Eurasians
Civil Department	55	10	1211	947	151	25,274
Military	1	1	854	12	11	13,268
Public works	3	4	239	33	45	3,415
Incorporated local funds	1	—	9	10	...	113
	60	15	2313	1002	207	42,070

Besides these, 105 officers drawing Rs. 10,000 a year or more are employed by the railway companies; they are all Europeans,

and their salaries amount to 16 lakhs and 28 thousand rupees (about $542,667). Among the officers, who are paid between Rs. 5000 and Rs. 10,000 a year, we find 421 natives in the civil department as against 1207 Europeans and 96 Eurasians. In the military department 25 natives are employed and 1699 Europeans and 22 Eurasians; while, in the Department of Public Works, there are 85 natives, as against 549 Europeans and 3 Eurasians.

Mr. Alfred Webb (late M.P.), who has studied the subject with care, says: "In charges for the India Office (in London); for recruiting (in Great Britain, for soldiers to serve in India); for civil and military pensions (to men now living in England, who were formerly in the Indian service); for pay and allowances on furloughs (to men on visits to England); for private remittances and consignments (from India to England); for interest on Indian Debt (paid to parties in England); and for interest on railways and other works (paid to shareholders in England),—there is annually drawn from India, and spent in the United Kingdom, a sum calculated at from £25,000,000 to £30,000,000" (between $125,000,000 and $150,000,000).

It would have been bad enough if this drain had continued for a few years, or even for one year, but it began with the day when India came under England's power and has been kept up ever since. Of this Mr. Brooks Adams writes: "Very soon after Plassey (fought in 1757) the Bengal plunder began to arrive in London, and the effect seems to have been almost instantaneous. . . . Possibly since the world began, no investment has ever yielded the profit reaped from the Indian plunder".[20] The stream of wealth ruthlessly drawn from the conquered people of India, and poured from Indian treasuries into English banks, between Plassey and Waterloo (fifty-seven years, has been variously calculated at from £500,000,000 to £1,000,000,000. The *Westminister Gazette* of London, April 24, 1900, estimates the drain from India to England, during the closing twenty-five years of the nineteenth century, to have been £500,000,000 ($2,500,000,000). It would be impossible to believe these enormous figures if they were not taken from authentic records. Can we wonder that India today is so im-

[20] Cf. *Law of Civilization and Decay*, pp. 259-264.

poverished ? Could any nation withstand so merciless and unceasing a drain upon its resources ?

The popular belief is that England has sunk her enormous capital in the development of India ; but the truth is, that England has not spent a cent in governing India (compare this with the Colonial Governments). The Indian Government means today the government of a bureaucracy, which includes the Viceroy and the Members of the Executive Council, the Commander-in-Chief, the Military Member, the Home Member, the Public Works Member, the Finance Member, and the Legal Member. The people are not represented in this Council ; their agriculture, their landed interests, their trades and industries, are not represented ; there is not, and never has been, a single Indian member in the Council. The members are high English officials, who draw large salaries and get pensions for life after their service is over.

Then in each large Indian province there is a Legislative Council, and some of the members of these smaller Councils are elected under the Act of 1892. The principal function of the Legislative Council is legislation. In theory it exercises control over finance, but in practice the budget is submitted to the autocracy merely for criticism ; the representatives, however, can exercise no control over its being passed.

The Council consists of twenty-five members, four of whom are Indians, recommended by certain constituencies but appointed by the Viceroy. He has the power to appoint any one he pleases. He calls them elected, for the purpose of argument. The four Indians sit at one end of the table and the Englishmen at the other end. Beginning with the Indians, each one reads the speech he has prepared in order of seniority, each speech being prepared without knowledge of what the others will say, consequently without reference to what they have said. There is no real discussion. The Viceroy may turn its course as he pleases. The representatives cannot produce any impression on the Council, nor can they divide the Council or shape the decision in any way. It is indeed no representation of the natives in the proper sense of the term.

The Viceroy of India is under the orders of the Indian Secretary of State, who is a member of the English Cabinet. The Secretary of State lives in England, six thousand miles

away from the governed people. He is assisted by a Council of ten retired Anglo-Indian officials, who seek the interest of their own nation. The whole system is, as Sir William Hunter calls it, an "oligarchy" which does not represent the people.

The Government of India is as despotic as it is in Russia, because three hundred millions of people who are governed have neither voice nor vote in the government. The interest of the British nation is the first aim of the present system of government. People pay heavy taxes of all kinds, and that is all. The government sends out expeditions to Sudan, Egypt, China, Tibet, and other places outside of India, and then the poor people of India are forced to pay the enormous cost of these expeditions, amounting to millions of dollars.[21] The land-tax, income-tax, and various kinds of taxes are higher than in any other civilized part of the world. "In India the State virtually interferes with the accumulation of wealth from the soil, intercepts the incomes and gains of the tillers, and generally adds to its land-revenue demand at each recurring settlement, leaving the cultivators permanently poor. In England, in Germany, in the United States, in France, and in other countries, the State widens the income of the people, extends their markets, opens out new sources of wealth, identifies itself with the nation, grows richer with the nation. In India the State has fostered no new industries and revived no old industries for the people; on the other hand, it intervenes at each recurring land settlement to take what it considers its share out of the produce of the soil."[22]

"But the land-tax levied by the British Government is not only excessive, but, what is worse, it is fluctuating and uncertain in many provinces. In England, the land-tax was between one shilling and four shillings in the pound, i.e., between 5 and 20 per cent. of the rental, during a hundred years before 1798, when it was made perpetual and redeemable by William Pitt. In Bengal the land-tax was fixed at over 90 per cent. of the rental, and in Northern India at over 80 per cent. of the rental, between 1793 and 1822".[23]

Today the masses of people in India live on from two to

[21] Vide *India in the Victorian Age*, p. 604.
[22] Cf. *Economic History of British India*, p. xi.
[23] *Ibid.* p. ix.

five cents a day and support their families with these earnings. Expecting to have their grievances removed by the government, they have been agitating for the last twenty years by calling annual public meetings and special public meetings, where the best classes of educated people have been represented. Although the Indian Government has spared no pains to stop all such agitations, still the people have been passing resolutions and sending them to the Viceroy and to the Secretary of State. Not one single word of encouragement has ever come from the despotic rulers, who are determined to follow the steps of the Russians in their methods of administration. Indeed, Sir Henry Cotton says: "Even the Russian Government, which we are accustomed to look upon as the ideal of autocracy, is not such a typical autocracy as the Government of India".

Ambitious, unsympathetic young civilians go out to India for a few years to exploit the country, satisfy their greed and self-interest, and return home to live like lords, drawing upon the taxes of the impoverished millions. I will give you an illustration of Lord Curzon's administration. Lord Curzon was the most unpopular Viceroy ever in India. His policy was one of interference and distrust. He is no believer in free institutions or in national aspirations. He took away the freedom of the press, which was steadily gaining in weight and importance, by passing the Official Secrets Act. The policy of his administration was to keep all civil as well as all military movements of the government secret. He sent expedition to Tibet. He wasted the resources of the country on the vain show and pomposity of the Durbar while millions were dying of famine and plague. He condemned the patriotic and national spirit of the Indians, and lastly he carried out the Roman policy of divide and rule by partitioning the Province of Bengal, simply to cripple the unity of the educated natives, as also of seventy millions of inhabitants. All these and many acts he carried out with such despotism and high-handedness, against the unanimous opinion of seventy million people, that they were driven to boycott all English goods and manufactures. The fire of boycott has spread all over the country, like wild-fire in a forest. The people have unanimously appealed to the Viceroy and to the Secretary of State again and again, but all the higher officials of India and England have turned deaf

ears to them. It is to be hoped that this boycott will bring the English autocrats and despots to their senses.

The people of India are loyal and peace-loving, but they are discontented and impoverished after carrying for one hundred and fifty years the burden of an unsympathetic alien government. There would have been continuous rebellion and mutiny had they not so long depended upon passive resistance with the expectation that some day the famous proclamation of the late Queen Victoria would be carried into effect. On the morrow of the dark mutiny Queen Victoria proclaimed:

"We desire no extension of our present territorial possessions; and, while we will permit no aggression upon our dominions or our rights to be attempted with impunity, we shall sanction no encroachment on those of others. We shall respect the rights, dignity, and honour of Native Princes as our own; and we desire that they, as well as our own subjects, should enjoy that prosperity and social advancement which can only be secured by internal peace and good government.

"We hold ourselves bound to the Natives of our Indian territories by the same obligations of duty which bind us to all our subjects, and those obligations, by the blessing of Almighty God, we shall faithfully and conscientiously fulfil.

"Firmly relying ourselves on the truth of Christianity, and acknowledging with gratitude the solace of religion, we disclaim alike the right and the desire to impose our convictions on any of our subjects. We declare it to be our royal will and pleasure that none be anywise favoured, none molested or disquieted, by reason of their religious faith and observances, but that all shall alike enjoy the equal and impartial protection of the law; and we do strictly charge and enjoin all those who may be in authority under us that they abstain from all interference with the religious belief and worship of any of our subjects, on pain of our highest displeasure.

"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, duly to perform."

(Lord Curzon, however, openly declared that all Indians were disqualified by reason of their race.)

This proclamation was repeated by King Edward VII on the day of his coronation. But have the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy shown any desire to do the things which were promised by the late Empress and the present Emperor, King Edward ? No.

People have now organized themselves, have sent delegates to England and America, and have awakened to the truth of what John Stuart Mill said: "The government of a people by itself has a meaning and a reality, but such a thing as government of one people by another does not and cannot exist. One people may keep another for its own use, a place to make money in, a human cattle farm for the profit of its own inhabitants".

The natives of India are now determined to stand on their own feet, but it is a hard problem for an enslaved nation to raise their heads while the dominant sword of a powerful alien government is held close to their necks. If the people of America wish to know what would have been the condition of the United States under British rule, let them look at the political and economic condition of the people of India today.

Well has it been said by Mr. Reddy, an English friend of India: "England, through her missionaries, offered the people of India thrones of gold in another world, but refused them a simple chair in this world".[24]

[24] Cf. *India*, Oct. 13, 1905.

CHAPTER V

EDUCATION IN INDIA

Education in India can be divided into four periods: The first, the pre-Buddhistic, or before the sixth century B.C.; the second, the Buddhistic period, from 500 B.C. to the tenth century A.D.; the third, the Mohammedan; and the fourth, the period under British rule.

In order to get a correct idea of the education of a people, we must first be familiar with the civilization of that people, because the standard of education must go parallel with the culture and civilization of a nation. As we have already seen, the earliest civilization of the Hindus began in the vedic period. History tells us that during that time the Indo-Aryans developed their voluminous scriptural works known as the vedic literature, which consists of the Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda, and Atharva Veda, with their *Brahmanas, Aranyakas,* and *Upanishads.* All these are in the Sanskrit language and are the most ancient Scriptures of the world. The Hindus of today consider these Vedas as revealed just as other nations believe in their scriptures as revealed. Long before the art of writing was known these Vedas were studied, committed to memory, and taught from mouth to mouth. In those early days the study of these sacred scriptures formed the principal feature in the education of the boys and girls of the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas.

The life of a Hindu at that time was divided into four periods. The first was that of the student. The Aryan boys were initiated as students between the ages of eight and twelve. They then went to the teacher's house, remained there and studied the Vedas. As in this age the students of civilized countries live in the universities for several years, so in ancient times the Hindu boys used to leave their homes and stay with their teachers. Some lived with them for twelve years, some for twenty-four, others for thirty-six or forty-eight years, in accordance with their desire to master one, two, three, or four Vedas. When they had finished these years of study under

various instructors and professors, the students returned to their homes, after making a handsome gift to their masters. According to Hindu custom, no teacher should ever sell his knowledge or receive any salary in return for his instruction, but the students were allowed to make presents to their masters at the close of their studies. Having returned home, they married and settled themselves as householders. Some, however, did not return, but devoted their whole life to the study of various *Shastras* or sciences.

The main object of education at that time was the moral and spiritual culture of the soul, the attainment of God-consciousness and the knowledge of the various sacrifices that are described in the Vedas. Along with the Vedas the students had to learn the six *Vedangas* or limbs of the Vedas. These were regarded as the most important branches of Scriptural study. The first was *Shiksha* or the science of phonetics, that is, the science which explains the correct pronunciation of the Sanskrit words and texts used in the Vedas. The second was *Chanda,* or metre. The vedic hymns have different metres, and one must be familiar with them in order to read or chant correctly. The scholars and professors of Sanskrit in Europe and America find great difficulty in pronouncing Sanskrit words and sentences because their tongues are not flexible enough to express the minute shades of differences that exist in the sounds of Sanskrit words. The Hindus, however, used to study metre, as also the science of pronunciation and grammar. At that time (even as early as 1400 B.C.) they had a scientific grammar. The Greek and Sanskrit languages have the best grammars, but the Sanskrit is the most perfect grammar that exists in the world. Then *Nirukta,* the fourth branch, was the science which describes the etymology, the meanings of different words, as well as the use of the same word in various senses. Also there was *Kalpa,* which includes *Shrautasutras,* or the laws about sacrifices, *Dharmasutras,* or laws regarding the duties of a true citizen, *Grihyasutras,* the rules of domestic life, and *Sulvasutras,* the geometrical principles for constructing sacrificial altars. And the last branch was *Jyotisha,* or astronomy. In order to fix the time for vedic sacrifices they had to study astronomy. Without knowing astronomy they could not understand the Vedas and could not perform any

of the sacrifices. For this reason we find many astronomical references in the Vedas.

These were the main branches of study to which every Hindu belonging to the upper three classes, Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas, was entitled. Besides this private education in the house of some teacher who, as I have already said, took no salary; there were public places for instruction. The courts of the enlightened kings and Maharajas were the principal seats of learning where education was bestowed free of charge; and there were also the *Parishads,* which corresponded to the universities of Europe. "At the period of transition from the vedic to the Brahmanic stage of religious development about 1200 B.C. the courts of the kings were the centres of culture. . . . At a later period, 1000 B.C., there arose Brahmanic settlements, called *Parishads,* which we might call collegiate institutions of learning".[1] These public institutions were started and established by Brahmin professors and scholars. The students in them used to stay with the teachers and do some work in their households in return for free board and tuition. Professor Max Müller, in his "History of Sanskrit Literature", says that a "*Parishad* used to consist of 21 Brahmins well-versed in philosophy, theology, and law. Sometimes three or four learned Brahmin scholars would form a small *Parishad* in a village". In the *Upanishad,* we find mention of this kind of ancient Hindu university system. For instance, in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad,* VI, 2, we read that Svetaketu went to the *Parishads* of the Panchalas for education.

In these colleges, were taught the Vedas, philosophy, theology, and Hindu law, civil and criminal—law of agriculture, of property, of usury, laws of inheritance and partition. These laws still govern Hindu society even under British rule. England has not succeeded in changing the Hindu laws and has not found any others more just or more perfect than those of the Hindus. This is not an exaggeration. Students of law, who have studied Roman and European law for years, cannot complete their course without studying Hindu law.

I have already shown in the first lecture that there were

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[1] Cf. W. I. Chamberlain, Ph.D.: *Education in India,* p. 20.

six schools of philosophy among the Hindus of the pre-Buddhistic period, that is, between 1400 and 600 B.C. These six schools of philosophy included logic, psychology, the science of numbers and the evolution theory of Kapila, the atomic theory of Kanada, the science of thought, metaphysics, and the monistic science and philosophy of Vedanta. The students received instruction in these various branches in the *Parishads* or universities. Arithmetic, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, decimal notation, and astronomy were also taught during the pre-Buddhistic period. You may be surprised to know that in those ancient times such sciences and philosophies were known to the Hindus; but it is a matter of history that these various branches of science and philosophy owed their origin to the vedic religion of India. Geometry was developed from the rules for the construction of vedic altars as described in the Vedas. For instance, it is told there to describe a circle, make a triangle, or inscribe a triangle in a circle, and so on. When geometry fell into disuse in the Buddhistic period, after sacrifices were no longer made, algebra took its place. "The science of algebra indeed received a remarkable degree of development in India; the application of algebra to astronomical investigations and to geometrical demonstrations is a peculiar invention of the Hindus; and their manner of conducting it has received the admiration of modern European mathematicians".[2]

Besides these, the great epics of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata,* which contain the ancient national history of the Hindus as well as the essence of all Hindu sciences and philosophies, came into existence during the pre-Buddhistic period. They were studied by all classes of people, both men and women. They were written especially for those classes who were not fitted for vedic studies. The Vedas and the various sciences and philosophies existed among the Hindus long before the art of writing was known in the world. Can you believe that the hundreds of volumes which have been handed down to us were originally learned and taught from memory? They were transmitted from generation to generation by word of mouth. What a marvellous memory the people of that time had! The *Mahabharata,* for example, contains one

[2] Cf. *Civilization in Ancient India,* Vol. II, p. 246.

hundred thousand verses in Sanskrit, and when I was in India, I knew a Brahmin lady who could recite every sentence from the beginning to the end; and there are many scholars who can recite a volume with its commentary without looking at the book. All sciences and philosophies were originally written in Sanskrit, but lately they have been translated into the various spoken dialects, of which there are at present about one hundred and fifty in India. Through these the masses obtain their moral and spiritual training. Public lectures and readings are given in almost every Hindu village for the education of the illiterate classes. Even today, in all Hindu communities, this old system of reading a Sanskrit verse and then explaining it in the vernacular language is very common. Those who cannot read or write receive moral and spiritual instruction through these *Kathakata* or public readings.

There were also medical schools for the study of *Ayurveda,* or the medical science. The word 'ayus' means life, and 'veda' means wisdom, knowledge, and hence science. Ayurveda, therefore, is the 'science of life'. It contains the Hindu *materia medica,* which is much older than the sixth century B.C. It was taught long before the time of Hippocrates, the 'father of medicine', who lived about 400 B.C. Even in that early pre-Buddhistic age, Hindu medicine received scientific treatment, and there were separate schools and colleges for medical students. During the Buddhistic period, medical science made considerable progress, and exhaustive scientific works were written on medicine. Among these, the works by Charaka and Sushruta were the best. Their writings became so widely known that translations of them were already familiar to the Arabs in the eighth century A.D., at the time of Haroun-al-Raschid; and they still remain today the standard medical works among Hindu physicians. They contain exhaustive chapters on anatomy and physiology; on symptoms, diagnoses, and causes of various diseases, and on their proper treatment. Their words may be archaic, but they give a scientific treatment which was unknown in any other part of the world at that time.

Chemistry, in Sanskrit *Rasayana,* was also familiar to the Hindus from very early times. "Nor is this surprising, as the materials for preparing many chemical products have abounded in India. Rock-salt was found in Western India; borax was

obtained from Tibet; saltpetre and sulphate of soda were easily made; alum was made in Cutch; and sal ammonia was familiar to the Hindus; with lime, charcoal and sulphur they were acquainted from time immemorial. The alkalies and acids were early known to the Hindus, and were borrowed from them by the Arabians. The medicinal use of metals was also largely known. We have notices of antimony and of arsenic, of medicines prepared with quick-silver, arsenic, and nine other metals. The Hindus were acquainted with the oxides of copper, iron, lead, tin, zinc, and lead; with the sulphurets of iron, copper, antimony, mercury, and arsenic; with the sulphates of copper, zinc, and iron; with the diacetate of copper and the carbonates of lead and iron".[3] Dr. Royle also says, in his essay on *Hindu Medicine*: "Though the ancient Greeks and Romans used metallic substances as external applications, it is generally supposed that the Arabs were the first to prescribe them internally. . . . But in the works of Charaka and Sushruta, to which, as has been proved, the earliest of the Arabs had access, we find numerous metallic substances directed to be given internally".[4] History tells us that Alexander the Great kept physicians in his camp for the treatment of diseases which Greek physicians could not heal; and in the eighth century A.D. the Mohammedan Badshaw, Haroun al-Raschid, retained in his court two Hindu physicians. As early as 260 B.C. the Buddhist emperor Asoka also established many public hospitals, not only for men, women, and children, but also for animals.

Megasthenes, after his long residence at the court of Chandra Gupta in the fourth century B.C., testified that he found among the Hindus various kinds of schools suited to the different castes. There were Brahmin schools, whose function was to train priests and teachers; warrior schools, where the pupils received military training; industrial schools for the merchant class; and schools for the lowest caste where manual labour was taught.

During the Buddhistic age, and before the Mohammedan invasion, Hindu culture in every branch of science and philos-

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[3] *Civilization in Ancient India,* Vol. II, p. 254.
[4] Royle, p. 45.

ophy made tremendous progress. Arya Bhatta, the noted Hindu astronomer, who lived about 476 A.D. and who is called the Newton of India, wrote many works on algebra and astronomy. It was he who first discovered the rotation of the earth on its own axis. As a Jewish writer says: "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 Aryabhatta in the first century before the common era".[5] He also discovered the true cause of solar and lunar eclipses, and it was he who, for the first time, grasped the idea of gravitation toward the centre (called in Sanskrit *madhyakarshan,* that is, attraction toward the centre, and correctly calculated the distance of the earth's circumference. His successor, Varahamihira, another noted astronomer (500-587 A.D.), left valuable works, especially his *Brihat-Samhita,* which covered almost every department of natural history and was encyclopedic in its nature. Brahma Gupta, who lived in 628 A.D., described in his astronomical system the true places of the planets, the calculation of lunar and solar eclipses, and wrote a treatise on spherics. There are still some ruins of Hindu observatories in Banaras and other cities.

In the sixth century A.D., this golden age of science and letters reached its climax in the reign of the great Hindu emperor, Vikramaditya, who was what Augustus was to the Romans, what Alfred was to the English, what Charlemagne was to the French, what Asoka was to the Buddhists, and what Haroun-al-Raschid was to the Mohammedans. He was the great supporter of learning and education among the Hindus. To the learned, to the illiterate, to poets, to story-tellers, to dramatists and novelists, to astronomers, lexicographers, and historians, to the old and to the young, the name of Vikramaditya is as familiar in India as the name of any great patron of science, drama, poetry, and education of modern Europe. He had nine gems in his court, and the finest among them was Kalidasa, the great Hindu dramatist. He was as great as Shakespeare of England; indeed, he is called the Shakespeare of India. His best known drama, *Shakuntala* has been

[5] *Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol XII, p. 689.

translated into more than one European language, and has been considered by such great scholars as Augustus William Von Schlegel, Alexander Von Humboldt, and Goethe as one of the dramatic masterpieces of the world. Goethe speaks thus of it:

"Wouldst thou the life's young blossoms and the fruits of its decline,
And all by which the soul is pleased, enraptured, feasted, fed—
Wouldst thou the earth and heaven itself in one sweet name combine?
I name thee, O Sakuntala, and all at once is said."

You have heard something about *Shakuntala, Vikramorvasi,* and the other dramas and masterpieces which Kalidasa left. His *Meghaduta,* or the 'Cloud Messenger', can stand side by side with the best poems of Shelley and Wordsworth, if not higher. One critic says: "Like Wordsworth, he looked upon Nature with the eye of a lover, and his knowledge of the physical laws is superior to that of any other Hindu poet." Kalidasa's successors,—Bharavi, Dandin, Banabhatta, Subandhu, Bhartrihari, Bhavabhuti,—all these great Hindu poets and dramatists lived in the sixth century A.D. Their writings are still studied in all Sanskrit colleges, as they were twelve centuries ago.

The fables of *Panchatantra* and of *Hitopadesha*[5], which gave foundation to Æsop's fables and to the fables of Pilpay, are also still studied in the primary schools of India. They came into existence in the sixth century after Christ, and have been translated into all the civilized languages of the world. Panchatantra "was translated into Persian in the reign of Nausharwan (531-572 A.D.). . . . The Persian translation was rendered into Arabic, and the Arabic translation was rendered into Greek by Symeon Seth about 1080. . . . A Spanish translation of the Arabic was published about 1251. The first German translations were published in the fifteenth century".[7] Besides these, the vast literature known as the *Puranas* is still studied by all classes of people, both men and women, as they were a thousand years ago.

From this you will get an idea of the civilization of the Hindus during the ancient pre-Buddhistic and mediæval ages, and you will be able to form some conception of what kind of

[6] The fables of *Hitopadesha* have been translated by Sir Edwin Arnold under the name of *The Book of Good Counsels.*

[7] *Civilization in Ancient India,* Vol. II, p. 297.

education they received before the advent of the British in India. The Hindus, it must be remembered, have gone through a great many national disasters, calamities, and vicissitudes; and during the Mohammedan occupation, which began in the eleventh century A.D. and continued for nearly six hundred years, they made very little progress in scientific education. They had to fight to protect themselves against the invaders, and turn their attention to their political condition: consequently they neglected the study of science. Furthermore, the Mohammedan sword and fire destroyed the glorious monuments of Hindu culture and civilization. The Mohammedan rulers never encouraged any kind of study outside of the reading of the *Koran*, for which classes were attached to the mosques. It is said that the Moghul Emperor Aurangzeb, in the seventeenth century, established universities in all the principal cities and erected schools in the smaller towns, but it is now difficult to get any historical evidence to support this statement. A Mohammedan believes that the essence of all literature and of all science is summed up in the *Koran*, so nothing outside of the *Koran* is to be studied. If all that is worth knowing is in the *Koran*, then there is no use of studying any other books. So they destroyed all the scriptures, and all the works on science and philosophy, which they could get hold of. But the caste prejudice of the Hindus kept the Brahmins from mixing with the Mohammedans, and one of the most beneficial effects of the caste system was the preservation of the sacred books of the Hindus from the destructive hands of fanatical Mussulmans.

Mohammedan elementary schools were started for the study of the Persian and Arabic languages. Many Hindu boys used to study these languages in Mohammedan schools. They had no feeling of prejudice, so far as education was concerned. In the advanced Mohammedan schools, there were complete courses in rhetoric, logic, law, ritual, and theology; all these and the Arabic language were taught to Mussulman students, but not to the Hindus. Euclid and Ptolemy's astronomy, and other branches of natural philosophy, were also taught in the high schools for Mohammedans at the time when British rule began in India, about the middle of the eighteenth century.

The pioneers of Western education in India were the Christian missionaries. Some Danish missionaries arrived at

Tranquebar, in Southern India, in 1706, and at once began to study the vernacular languages in order to teach the Bible. They founded some schools for that purpose, which were of minor importance. Their object was to convert the students to Christianity. In 1727, the first English mission established in India a society for promoting Christian knowledge, but it did not make much progress until the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the third missionary society of the English Baptists was established in Bengal. Their representatives were Carey and Marshman, who were men of ability and distinction. They studied the vernacular languages, and established schools for the teaching of the Bible.

The East India Company, however, hesitated to impart English education to the natives of India. When, in 1792, Welberforce proposed to add two clauses to the Charter Act of the year for sending out schoolmasters to India, the directors of the Company strongly objected to the proposal. "On that occasion one of the Directors stated that we had just lost America from our folly in having allowed the establishment of schools and colleges, and that it would not do for us to repeat the same act of folly in regard to India ; if the natives required anything in the way of education they must come to England for it.".[8] The policy still exists at the bottom of the educational system established by the British Government in modern India. Although this policy, or rather fear, has apparently been modified, and schools, colleges, and universities have been founded, still the government of India does not feel safe in giving the natives substantial higher education of the same nature as can be obtained in England, Europe, or America. It was on account of this fear that the only educational institutions which were established upto 1792 were a Mohammedan College at Calcutta, founded by Warren Hastings in 1781, and a Sanskrit College at Banaras, founded by Lord Cornwallis in 1992. The main object of these institutions was to train law officers, both Mohammedan and Hindu, to help the English judges in the judicial administration of the country. For twenty years longer the English Government was disinclined to spread English education in India.

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[8] Cf. C. Marshman's *Evidence, Lords' Second Report,* 1853.

In 1813 the British Parliament, for the first time, offered the sum of £10,000 from the revenue of India, to be appropriated for the education of the people of the three provinces of Bengal, Bombay, and Madras. Nothing, however, was done for ten years until 1823.[9] In the meantime the Hindus themselves, under the leadership of the great Hindu reformer, whose name is known all over the world, Rajah Ram Mohun Roy, became anxious to learn the English language. He was the first Hindu who learned English thoroughly by his private exertions, for there was no school at that time; and he was the first native of India who went to England, where he died. His grave still exists in Bristol. At that time there was in Calcutta an illiterate English watchmaker, Mr. David Hare by name. He was a man of great energy and practical sense. Rajah Ram Mohun Roy consulted with him and planned to open an English seminary. The project started in 1815, and this energetic Mr. Hare had some circulars written out and distributed. He first succeeded in interesting some of the English officers and some representative Hindus, and in 1817 he established a school in Calcutta which is known to-day as the Hare School. It was the first respectable English seminary in Bengal, and was founded by the Hindus themselves before the British Government did anything for education in India.[10]

In 1820 the Government of India started an inquiry to find out the indigenous method of education among the Hindus in the Presidencies of Madras, Bombay, and Bengal; but for two years nothing was done. In 1822 Sir Thomas Munroe, the Governor of Madras, finding the decay of literature and arts and the deep ignorance of the masses, started an investigation, from which he discovered that the number of Hindu schools and colleges under the old Hindu system, in the Presidency of Madras alone, amounted to 12,498 among a population of something over twelve millions. In his report to the Court of Directors, which was made known in 1826, he says: "I am inclined to estimate the portion of the whole population who receive school education to be nearer one-third than one-fourth of the whole. The state of education exhibited, low as it is, compared

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[9] *Vide* Sir Charles Travelyan's *Evidence, Lords' Second Report*, 1853.
[10] *Vide* Rev. Alexander Duff's *Evidence, Lords' Second Report*, 1853.

with our own country, is higher than it was in most European countries at no very distant time".[11]

In 1823 Lord Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay, found that there was in the Bombay Presidency alone 1705 Hindu schools and colleges; and in 1835 Lord Bentinck discovered 3355 Hindu schools among a population of seven millions in Bengal alone. This will prove how the Hindus have always cared for knowledge, culture, and education. In every village there was an elementary school where the village boys were taught reading, writing, arithmetic, and the elements of mensuration. These elementary schools were called *Pathasalas,* or school-houses. Besides these, there were collegiate institutions like the *Parishads,* which I have already described, for higher education in grammar, mathematics, rhetoric, poetry, astronomy, and other branches of science and philosophy, as they were known to the Hindus at that time. The proportion of the latter to the former, that is, of collegiate schools to village schools, was one to three.

A Committee of Public Instruction was appointed by the East India Company's government in 1823, and the £10,000, which had been granted by Parliament ten years before, were expended in establishing an English school, under the name of Hindu College, in Calcutta, six Oriental colleges, and a number of elementary schools in Bengal and Rajputana. The Committee also gave its attention to the publication of Oriental books, and started a press in 1824.

Between 1823 and 1833 no special thing was done in the educational line other than to add classes in English in all the chief colleges. In 1835 Lord Bentinck, the Governor-General of India, enlarged the Committee of Public Instruction and appointed Macaulay as its president. Two distinguished Hindu gentlemen of the time, Sir Rajah Radha Kanta Deb Bahadur and Rossomoy Dutt of Calcutta, and Takawar Jung, the Mohammedan Nawab of Bengal, were enrolled as members of the Committee. With Macaulay's support and assistance, Lord Bentinck passed the famous resolutions of March 7, 1835, by which the English language was established as the language of superior education in India. The resolutions were these:

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[11] Cf. Minute dated March 10, 1826.

(1) That the chief aim of the educational policy of the Government should be to promote a knowledge of European literature and science.

(2) That henceforth no more stipends should we conferred, but that all existing stipends should be continued as long as the natives continue to avail themselves of them.

(3) That the printing of Oriental books should at once cease, and that the funds thus set free should be employed in promoting European studies through the medium of the English language.

In Madras, about this time, a Hindu, named Pachiapa, left a large donation for religious uses, and out of this sum, which amounted to nearly £80,000, a central educational institution, which is now known as Pachiapa's College, was established by the Hindus in 1839. It still continues to be the most flourishing college for the study of English in Madras, and it was the first college established there. In 1830 Alexander Duff arrived in Calcutta as the missionary of the General Assembly of the Scotch Kirk, and established a school which was at first a great success; but his aim was to convert the natives to Christianity, and when some of the students were persuaded to accept Christianity, the whole Hindu community protested against the object and plan of the missionary schols and would not allow their children to enter them as students. During his stay, Alexander Duff succeeded in converting only forty young Hindus who were studying in his school, and the conversion of these created a great sensation in the city of Calcutta. About that time the Hindus began to study Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*. The book spread like wildfire among native students and scholars, and Dr. Duff, finding that it was a great obstacle in the path of converting the Hindus, bought all the copies that were in the market, piled them in the street and made a bonfire out of them; but the Hindus reprinted the book and distributed it among themselves.

Being thus aroused, the native Hindus of Calcutta were determined to start schools and colleges for the education of their boys in English. Foremost among them was Pundit Iswara Chunder Vidyasagar, the most distinguished educationist and the greatest Hindu scholar of his time. He established by his own individual efforts, unaided by the Government, the

Metropolitan Institution in Calcutta, and today it is one of the most powerful and best conducted colleges in India. It has always been entirely under Hindu management, and all its teachers and professors are Hindus. Hundreds and thousands of students study English and are graduated every year under native professors.

Lord Hardinge established one hundred schools in the different districts of Bengal for the purpose of imparting education in the vernacular as a preliminary step to higher education in English. He also passed the famous resolution of 1844 for the selection of candidates for public employment from those who had been educated in the institutions established. This gave a tremendous impetus to native efforts to start schools, colleges, and seminaries in Calcutta and other places. Intense desire to learn and teach English was expressed by all classes of people and no caste distinction was observed. Students from all castes and all classes wanted to study and to teach English, and schools sprang up on all sides for imparting English education.

In 1836 Hoogly College was opened, and in three days twelve hundred names were enrolled and an auxiliary school was immediately filled. In 1843 there were fiftyone schools and colleges, containing 8,200 students, of whom 5,132 were studying English, 426 Sanskrit, 572 Arabic, and 706 the Persian language. In 1839 Lord Auckland offered a grant from the Government treasury of 25,000 rupees (about $8000) to promote Oriental education; and in 1845 Mr. Thomson, the Governor of the North Western Provinces, started a plan to encourage the native village schools of the Hindus, which have existed in India for ages. This plan involved the establishment of: (1) An elementary school for circles of villages, each school to be situated in a central village and no village to be more than one mile from the central school; (2) A middle school at the headquarters of each subdivision; (3) A high school in each Zillah or district. This plan was sanctioned by the Directors, who made an allowance of 500,000 rupees. Operations began in 1850, and after four years there were eight District High Schools in the whole North Western Province. For the support of these state schools (which were not free) monthly fees, which varied from one to twelve rupees, were exacted of

all students. In the state schools the fees were higher than in the private schools.

The missionary schools were mostly elementary or primary. Only three or four of them imparted secondary education, and some of them were free of charge to help the poorer classes. Up to this time the Government had not taken any step to educate the girls. Female education received no support from the Government; while the missionaries were trying their best to educate native girls in the tenets of Christianity, denouncing the religion of their forefathers and condemning everything of Hindu origin or which had to do with Hindu society and religion, in the same manner as they did in the schools for boys. This is one of the greatest drawbacks in the missionary methods of education. They condemn everything that is outside of their religion, their standards and their ideals. They are too narrow to see good in any but their own creed and dogmas. They do not consider the Hindu religion as a religion or the Hindu Saviours as Saviours; but they think that the Hindus are all going to eternal perdition and so they are very anxious to save their heathen souls! An American missionary, in referring to the schools for non-Christians in India, writes: "These are especially established with a view to reaching and affecting the non-Christian community. . . . They represent the leaven of Christianity in India. They furnish excellent opportunity to present Christ and his Gospel of salvation to a large host of young people under very favourable circumstances. . . . And I fearlessly maintain that more conversions take place and more accessions are made through these schools than through any other agency." This will give you an idea of the fanaticism and bigotry of these apostles of Christianity, who pretend to impart free education to the boys and girls of poor, illiterate parents. The poor Hindu boys and girls come to study and learn something, but instead of receiving the blessing of true education, their minds are filled with superstitious and unscientific doctrines and dogmas, and they are forced to leave the community of their parents and relatives and become converts to Christianity. These missionaries do not think for a moment why the Hindus should give up their own prophets and Saviours and worship the prophets of the Semitic race, especially of the Jews. Why should the Hindus abandon their ancient

traditions and the religion of their Aryan forefathers? Why should they forsake the Aryan prophets and accept the Jewish prophets instead? Those who never had any higher philosophy, higher religion, or a spiritual leader like Christ, may accept with delight the banner of Christ, but not the Hindus, who have many Saviours,—Krishna, Rama, Buddha, Chaitanya, Ramakrishna,—each of whom, according to the Hindus, was as great as the Saviour of Nazareth. The Christian missionaries, before preaching Christ among the Hindus, should first convert the Jews.

The East India Company's Charter was renewed in 1853, and a Lords' Committee was appointed to make necessary additions or modifications in the policy of the government of India. Among other things, the Committee discussed the subject of education of the people of India. After collecting evidence from all sides, the Committee issued a Despatch in 1854, constituting the great Charter of Indian education; and on this Despatch the whole system of education in India of to-day is based. It approved of the higher education and the establishment of universities in Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras, the chief towns of the three Presidencies under British rule. The Despatch of 1854 extended the field of education and prescribed these objects: "First, the constitution of a separate department of the administration of education. Second, the institution of the universities at the Presidency towns. Third, the establishment of institutions for training teachers for all classes of schools. Fourth, the maintenance of the existing Government colleges and high schools, and the increase of their number when necessary. Fifth, the establishment of new middle schools. Sixth, increased attention to vernacular schools, indigenous or other, for elementary education. And seventh, the introduction of a system of grants-in-aid.

"Aid is to be given (so far as available funds may render it possible) to all schools imparting a good secular education, provided they are under adequate local management and subject to Government inspection, and provided that fees, however small, are charged in them." In the assignment of these grants, however, there were no less than five systems in operation. They were as follow:

(1) The *Salary Grant System,* in use in Madras only, was applied to secondary education. Under this system the Govern-

ment contributed a fixed proportion of the teacher's salary in accordance with his qualifications.

(2 The *Results Grant System* was in Madras applied to primary education only, and in Bombay to secondary education. To obtain this grant it was necessary to pass Government examinations.

(3) The combined *Salary Results System.*

(4) The *Fixed Period System* was in operation in the greater part of Northern and Central India. Under this an average grant was paid for period of three or five years.

(5) The *Captitative System* was applied to a few girls' schools in Bengal.

The seven articles of the Despatch of 1854 helped in a systematic manner the promotion of education in India. The English language became the medium in the higher branches and the vernacular in the lower. The system of grants-in-aid was based upon the principle of absolute neutrality. Aid was given from 1854 to all schools imparting a good secular education. Three universities were established in 1857 by Lord Canning after the model of the London University. Thus the inspiring influence of Western education reached a larger circle of the population. Two more universities have been added since,—one in the Punjab in 1882 and the other in Allahabad in 1887 ; so there are altogether five universities in India,—one is Calcutta, one in Bombay, one in Madras, one in the Punjab and the other in Allahabad. These universities consist of a chancellor, the governor of the Presidency *ex officio,* a vice-chancellor, and not less than thirty fellows, who constitute a Senate. The Senate controls the management of the funds of the universities, and frames rules and regulations, which are subject to Government approval and under which examinations are held periodically in the various branches of art and science by examiners chosen from among themselves or nominated from outside. The Senate is divided into four faculties,—Arts, Law, Medicine, and Engineering. The executive government of the university is in the hands of a syndicate, which consists of the vice-chancellor and eight of the Fellows. This syndicate selects examiners, regulates examinations, recommends for degrees, honours, and rewards, and carries on the business of the university. Boards of studies in the various departments are

also appointed from among the Fellows by the syndicate. The Fellows do not correspond to the Fellows of this country, nor of Europe, nor even of England. The office of Fellow is an honorary office, usually conferred on some representative man or upon those who have been active in the cause of education. The may be natives or Europeans. The Indian universities are without a staff of teachers. They simply hold examinations and grant degrees, but they have no courses of lectures. In India we do not have anything like the universities of this country and nothing like Cambridge and Oxford. I will give you an idea of the examinations that are held under the universities:

The subjects of examinations are: (1) English; (2) A classical (Oriental or European) or vernacular language; (3) Physics and Chemistry; (4) History; (5) Geography; (6) Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry. This is the examination for entrance into college. Under each university there are many schools and colleges started and managed by the natives. Then after two years' study in a college the student prepares for the First Examination in Arts. The subjects are (1) English; (2) A classical language (Oriental or European) or a vernacular; (3) Logic; (4) Mathematics; (5) History and Geography; and (6) Physical Science. Two years later comes the B.A. Examination. This has two branches—the Language Division and the Science Division. The subjects in the Language Division are: (1) English; (2) A classical or vernacular language; (3) Mathematics; (4) and (5) any two of the following: Moral Philosopy, History, and Advanced Mathematics. The Science Division consists of (1) English; (2) Mathematics; (3) Chemistry; (4) Physical Geography; (5) Physics, Physiology, or Geology.

For the degree of Masters of Arts there is an honour examination in Language, Mental and Moral Philosophy, Natural Science, or History and Mathematics. Then there are Law examinations, Medical examinations, and Civil Engineering examinations with degrees.

This system has been in existence for the last forty-eight years. The total number of students in schools and colleges all over British India is 4,405,042. Today, excluding cities, three villages out of four are without schools, and seven children out of eight are growing up in ignorance and darkness.

According to the census of 1901 there are 147,086 educational institutions of all kinds in British India. Of these 104,743 are public institutions (that is, institutions open to all classes but not free), which are divided as follows: 44 Professional Colleges, 141 Art Colleges, 5461 Secondary Schools, 98,133 Primary Schools, 170 Training Schools, and 494 Special Schools. In addition to these there are 42,343 private institutions, of which 4306 are advanced, 26,668 elementary, 11,016 teaching the Koran only, and 263 not conforming to departmental standards. "During the past three years the sum of 4,000,000 rupees has been contributed by the (native) public in the United Provinces towards education. Nearly half of this sum was given in the year 1905. The numbers attending public institutions of all kinds have increased, while those attending private institutions have declined. The past year witnessed the erection of several schools and boarding-houses, the institution of schemes for the development of Sanskrit, Arabic, the enlargement of the Medical School at Agra, the development of mechanical training and electrical work at Rurki and the starting of an institution for mechanical and manual training at Lucknow".[12]

The Government does not give free education in India and although the Hindus pay all kinds of taxes—40 per cent more than the tax-payer of Great Britain and Ireland—and support the most expensive system of administration, still they do not receive from the Government free education. The Government now spends annually nearly 27 million pound sterling for military expenses and about £750,000 for the education of the natives. The Rev. J. T. Sunderland, after long residence in India, says: "Much credit has been given to the Indian Government for education. It has done some good work in this direction, for which let it have full praise. But how little has it done compared with the need, or compared with what the people want, or compared with its ability, if it would only use its resources primarily for India's good! Why has so little of the people's money been spent for education? In the schools of India, of all kinds, high and low, there are some 4,418,000 scholars (if we include the native states). But what is this number in a population nearly as large as that of all Europe?

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[12] Cf. *The Indian Nation*, Jan. 22, 1906.

How much does the Indian Government spend annually for education ? The munificent sum of one penny and a fifth per head of the population ! Think of it ! Is it any wonder that, after a century and a half of British dominance, the number of persons in India who can read and write is only about eleven in a hundred among males, and one in two hundred among females ? With their native industries so badly broken down, the Indian people have special need for industrial, technical, and practical education. But their rulers are giving them almost nothing of this kind. Britain's neglect of education is a dark stain upon her treatment of India".[13]

The Government has no school or college for female education. The first girls' school was established in Calcutta by Mr. Drinkwater Bethune (a legal member of the Governor-General's Council), who gave £10,000 from his own pocket. This school is the most successful institution for girls in India, and teaches up to the highest grades of university examinations. The Indian universities bestow degrees on women, and lady graduates take their degrees in Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay. There are many girls' schools which have been started by the Hindus. In private primary schools, little boys and girls are taught together. The total number of girls who receive education is about half a million ; but the majority of Hindu girls receive their education at home. The illiterate women in India are given moral and spiritual instruction, as well as instruction in religious truths and moral duties, and in their national traditions and literature, to a much larger extent than in Europe.

About 85 per cent of the population of India today depends upon agriculture. Yet the Government had no agricultural institution in the country until recently, when it started an agricultural college in Poona, near Bombay.

Education in India is very expensive, considering that the average annual income per head is £2, out of which 14 to 15 per cent goes towards paying taxes. Furthermore, the educated Hindus, who have spent a considerable part of this income in receiving university degrees, have no prospect of obtaining higher position in Government offices. All the higher

[13] Paper on *The Causes of Famines in India*, before the Canadian Institute, p. 22.

positions are occupied by English officials, who draw large salaries, while native graduates are allowed to remain as clerks on a salary of three to ten dollars per month. Until recently, these Hindu graduates had the one chance of entering Government offices through competitive examinations. But Lord Curzon closed that door by passing the University Bill, which brings the universities and schools under rigid official control. Now none but those who are appointed by the Government can hold any Government position. The Official Secrets Bill passed by Lord Curzon has also gagged the Indian press. There are a number of daily and weekly papers published in English by the Hindus. But they cannot agitate against the political and economic policy of the Government. Thus people are kept in absolute darkness. Notwithstanding his despotic rule, however, Lord Curzon did one good act in allowing a permanent grant of £220,000 from the surplus revenue for primary education.

India needs today free education, and free industrial and technical schools and colleges for the masses. India needs schools and colleges for the education of girls, not under the management of Christian missionaries, but under the management of the Hindus. India needs a national university where boys and girls will receive secular education free of charge, and where all technical and manual training can be obtained freely.

Today the Hindus have shown to the world that intellectually they are equal to the most intellectual people of Europe and America, but they are down-trodden and poor. The whole weight of the British Government is grinding the nation and crushing the spirit of progress. Furthermore, India is impoverished under British rule; yet the Hindus are raising private funds and sending their students to America and Japan to receive a better and more substantial education than what they receive under the British Government. The Hindus are eager to learn, and they are indebted to England for introducing Western education in India. If England has done any good to India, it is by the introduction of English education. This is the greatest blessing that India has received under British rule. The seed of Western education is sown in the soil of India; future generations will reap the fruit.

Herbert Spencer says: "education is training for completeness of life". The Hindus now see the defects of the present system of education in India, and are endeavouring to reform it and to make it as perfect as it can be in this land of free education and political independence. May their noble efforts be crowned with glorious success.

CHAPTER VI

THE INFLUENCE OF INDIA ON WESTERN CIVILIZATION, AND THE INFLUENCE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION ON INDIA

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, logic, astronomy, science, art, music, and medicine, as well as of truly ethical religion. Although students in the schools and colleges of modern Europe and America are generally taught that the Greeks and Romans were the fathers of European civilization and that philosophy and science first arose in ancient Greece, still it has been proved by the Oriental scholars of Europe and by all impartial students of history that ancient Greece was greatly indebted to India for many of her best ideas in philosophy, science and intellectual culture, as also for many of her ethical and spiritual ideals.

If we read the writings and historical accounts left by Pliny, Strabo, Megasthenes, Herodotus, Porphyry and a host of other ancient authors of different countries, we shall see how highly the civilization of India was regarded by them. In fact, between the years 1500 and 500 B.C., the Hindus were so far advanced in religion, metaphysics, philosophy, science, art, music, and medicine that no other nation could stand as their rival, or compete with them in any of these branches of knowledge. On the contrary, many of the nations which came in contact with the Hindus through trade or otherwise, accepted the Hindu ideas and moulded their own after the Hindu pattern. For instance, the science of geometry, as I have already said, was first invented in India by the Hindus from the vedic rules for the construction of sacrificial altars; from these rules they gradually developed geometry, and it has been admitted by the great scholars that the world owes its first lesson in this science, not to Greece, but to India. The geometrical theorem

that the square of the hypotenuse of a rectangular triangle is equal to the squares of its sides was ascribed by the Greeks to Pythagoras, but it was known in India at least two centuries before Pythagoras was born. It was contained in the two rules: "(1) The square of the diagonal of a square is twice as large as that square ; and (2) The square of the diagonal of an oblong is equal to the square of both its sides." These rules formed a part of the Sulva Sutras, which date from the eighth century before Christ. There is a Greek tradition that Pythagoras visited India, and most probably he did, because in his writings we find such ideas as were very common among the Hindus, but which were unknown to other nations. Probably he learned from the Hindus his first lessons in geometry, mathematics, the doctrine of pre-existence and transmigration of souls, and of final beautitude, ascetic observances, prohibition of eating flesh, vegetarianism, the conception of the virtue of numbers, and lastly, the idea of a fifth element, which was unknown in Greece and Egypt at that ancient time. The Egyptians and Greeks admitted four elements, but ether as an element was known only among the Hindus of those days. All these things were taught by the Hindus centuries before the time of Pythagoras. Prof. E. W. Hopkins admits this in his *Religions of India,* as you will recall from the first lecture, when he says: "Before the 6th century B.C. all the religious-philosophical ideas of Pythagoras are current in India".

Geometry gradually fell out of use among the Hindus, and geometrical truths were represented by algebra and arithmetic. The Greeks could not rival the Hindus in the science of numbers. The world indeed owes decimal notation to India. The Arabs first learned it from the Hindus and then introduced it into Europe. It was unknown to the Greeks and Romans, and arithmetic as a practical science would have been impossible with decimal notation. The Hindus have also given algebra (*Vijaganita*) to the Western world through the Arabs, who translated it in the eighth century A.D. ; and Leonardo da Pisa first introduced it into Europe in the thirteenth century. So the world received its first lesson in algebra from India. The Hindus were also the first teachers of plane and spherical trigonometry. The great Indian mathematician, Bhaskaracharya, who lived from 1114 to 1150 A.D., wrote exhaustive

treaties[1] on all these subjects, and his works contain solutions of remarkable problems which were not achieved in Europe until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[2] In astronomical observations, the Hindus were the first to fix the lunar mansions, lunar Zodiac, and the divisions of the constellations. The Chinese and Arabs borrowed these from India. The Hindus first developed the science of music from the chanting of the vedic hymns. The Sama Veda was especially meant for music. And the scale with seven notes and three octaves was known in India centuries before the Greeks had it. Probably the Greeks learned it from the Hindus. It will be interesting to you to know that Wagner was indebted to the Hindu science of music, especially for his principal idea of the 'leading motive'; and this is perhaps the reason why it is so difficult for many Western people to understand Wagner's music. He became familiar with Eastern music through Latin translations, and his conversation on this subject with Schopenhauer is probably already familiar to you.

The Western world, again, owes its first lesson in medicine to India. In the preceding lecture I gave proofs that Alexander not only had in his camp Hindu physicians, but that he preferred them to Greek physicians. Megasthenes, Nearchus, and Arrian spoke highly of the wonderful healing powers of the Hindu physicians. In 1837 Dr. Royle of King's College, London, wrote his celebrated essay on *Hindu Medicine,* in which he showed that Hippocrates, the father of medicine, who lived in Greece in the fourth century B.C., borrowed his *Materia Medica* from India. Dr. Royle says, "We owe our first system of medicine to the Hindus."

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[1] Those treating of algebra and arithmetic have been translated by Colebrooke, and the portion on spherical trigonometry has been translated by Wilkinson.

[2] "A striking history has been told of the problem to find x so that ax^2+b shall be a square number. Fremat made some progress towards solving this ancient problem, and sent it as a defiance to the English algebraists in the seventeenth century. Euler finally solved it, and arrived exactly at the point attained by Bhaskara in 1150. A particular solution of another problem given by Bhaskara is exactly the same as was discovered in Europe by Lord Brounker in 1657; and the general solution of the same problem given by Brahmagupta, in the seventh century A.D., was unsuccessfully attempted by Euler, and was only accomplished by De la Grange in 1767 A.D. The favourite process of the Hindus known as the *Kuttaka* was not known in Europe till published by Bachet de Mezeriac in 1624 A.D."—*Civilization in Ancient India*, Vol. II. p. 246

Herodotus, who lived in the fifth century B.C., states that the Hindus were the greatest nation of that age. He also writes that the Hindus had trade with Egypt, while from other sources, we gather that they had trade with Babylon and Syria. From another authentic source we learn that there was a Hindu philosopher who visited Socrates at Athens, a fact which Prof. Max Müller confirms in his book on *Psychological Religion.* This Hindu philosopher, we are told, had a conversation with the great Greek philosopher. He asked in what the philosophy of Socrates consisted, and Socrates replied that his philosophy consisted in inquiries about the life of man, upon which the Hindu philosopher smiled and answered: "How can you know things human without first knowing things divine?" And that is an answer which could not have been given by any other than a Hindu, because the Hindus ascribed all true knowledge to Divine origin, and did not care much for the knowledge of anything human before knowing God.

Ralph Waldo Emerson says: "Plato was a synthesis of Europe and Asia, and a decidedly Oriental element pervades his philosophy, giving it a sunrise colour". In fact, in teaching asceticism, Plato was more of a Hindu than a Greek, because, of all nations, the Greeks were least ascetic. My friend, Professor Edward Howard Griggs, in his lecture on the *Philosophy of Plato,* before the Vedanta Society of New York, also admitted this in saying: "Plato's belief in the conquest of the senses, as the only means of attaining true knowledge, was pre-eminently Oriental and non-Greek". Moreover, if we study Plato carefully, comparing his ideas with those of the *Upanishads* and other vedic writings, we find that his well-known figure of the man chained in the cave is merely an allegorical presentation of the Vedanta doctrine of *maya,* that the phenomenal world is like a dream; while his other figure of the chariot was a favourite theme of the vedic writers who lived centuries before Plato. In the *Katha Upanishad,* for instance, we read: "This body may be compared to a chariot, intellect to the charioteer, mind to the reins, the five senses to the horses, whose path is the object of senses." Sir William Jones, the first eminent Sanskrit scholar among the English, confirming this fact, writes that "it is impossible to read the Vedanta, or the many fine compositions in illustration of it,

without believing that Pythagoras and Plato derived their sublime theories from the same fountain with the Indian sages".[3]

Professor Max Muller and other Oriental scholars maintain, as you know, that the logic of Aristotle was perhaps a Greek presentation of the Hindu logic. You will also remember that Professor Hopkins writes, in his *Religions of India,* that Thales and Parmenides were both anticipated by the sages of India, while the Eleatic School appears merely a reflection of the *Upanishads.* He even suggests that the doctrines propounded by Anaximander and Heraclitus might not have been known first in Greece. We should, indeed, bear in mind that after the invasion of India by Alexander the Great, the connection between India and Greece became closer than ever before, and many Hindu philosophers lived at Athens and in other parts of Greece. They were known as Gymnosophists, or Hindu philosophers from India. At that time Alexandria became the centre of trade and commerce between India and Greece, and there was great opportunity for interchange of ideas between the Hindus and Western nations. Porphyry speaks of the wise men from India in high terms of praise for their wisdom, morality, and knowledge of the mysteries of the universe. In regard to Neo-Platonism, Professor Garbe has said that Plotinus was in perfect agreement with the Hindu philosophers, and that his disciple Porphyry knew of the Yoga doctrine of union with the Deity. It was unknown to any of the Western nations, like the Hebrews, Parsees, or Egyptians. Through Plato and his followers, the Neo-Platonists, Stoics, and Philo of Alexandria were also influenced by the Hindu philosophy. The idea of the *Logos* which formed the corner-stone of the philosophy of Plato, of the Neo-Platonists, of Philo, and later of the Fourth Gospel, first arose in India. In the Vedas we find reference to it : and it has moulded Hindu thought, as well as the religious ideals of other nations.

Christianity as a religion owes a great deal to India. This may startle some of our friends, but from the historical standpoint it is true. If we read the religious history of the East, we find many evidences which are undeniable. For instance,

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[3] Cf. *Works,* (Calcutta Ed.) pp. 20, 125, 127

Asoka, who lived in 260 B.C., had his edicts inscribed on pillars of stone during his lifetime, and in one of those edicts we read that he sent Buddhist missionaries to different parts of the world, from Siberia to Ceylon, from China to Egypt, and that, for two centuries before the advent of Jesus, the Buddhist missionaries preached the sublime ethics of Buddha in Syria, Palestine and Alexandria. The same ethical ideas were afterwards repeated and emphasized by Christ. The Christian historian Mahaffi, speaking about those Buddhist missionaries, declared it to be a fact that they were the fore-runners of Christ. These preachers influenced the Jewish sect known as the Essenes; and the Roman historian Pliny, who lived between 23 and 79 A.D., described the mode of living of the Essenes,—that they lived like hermits, without having any possession or any sex relation, being celibates and associates of palm-trees. It can be shown that they belonged to the sect founded by the Buddhist monks from India, who lived in Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. Philosophers like Schelling and Schopenhauer, and Christian thinkers like Dean Mansel and D. Millman, admit that the sect of the Essenes arose through the influence of the Buddhist missionaries who came from India. Moreover, it is a well-known fact that John the Baptist was an Essene. Ernest Renan, speaking of John the Baptist, says: "He led there a life like that of a Yogi of India, clothed with skins or cloth of camel's hair, having for food only locusts and wild honey.* * We might imagine ourselves transported to the banks of the Ganges, if special features had not revealed in this recluse the last descendant of the grand prophets of Israel."[4] Again he says: "The teachers of the young were also at times a species of anchorites, resembling to some extent the *Gurus* (spiritual preceptors) of Brahminism. In fact, might there not in this be a remote influence of the *Mounis* (sages) of India? Perhaps some of those wandering Buddhist monks who overran the world, as the first Franciscans did in later times, preaching by their actions and converting people who knew not their language, might have turned their steps towards Judea, as they certainly did towards Syria and Babylon* *. Babylon had become for some time a true focus of Buddhism. Boudasp

[4] Cf. *Life of Jesus*, p. 126.

(*Bodhisattva*) was a reputed wise Chaldean, and the founder of Sabeism. Sabeism was, as its etymology indicates, baptism."[5] And he continues: "We may believe, at all events, that many of the external practices of John, of the Essenes, and of the Jewish spiritual teachers of this time, were derived from influences then but recently received from the Far East. The fundamental practice which gave to the sect of John its character, and which has given him his name, has always had its centre in lower Chaldea, and constitutes a religion which is practised there to this day. This practice was baptism or total immersion. Ablutions were already familiar to the Jews, as they were to all the religions of the East. The Essenes had given them a peculiar extension".[6]

Thus we see that baptism by water was introduced among the Essenes by the Buddhist missionaries, having originated in India. Baptism afterwards became the principal ceremony at the time of the initiation of the disciple in the religion of John. The life of Jesus the Christ as described in the Synoptic Gospels, —the immaculate conception of a virgin mother, the miraculous birth, the story of the slaughter of infants by Herod, and the chief events of his life, all these seem like repetitions of what happened in the lives of Krishna (1400 B.C.) and of Buddha (547 B.C.). In fact, the idea of the incarnation of God is purely a Hindu idea. It was not known among the Jews. The Jews never accepted Christ as the incarnation of Divinity, but from the vedic period the Hindus accepted many *Avataras* or incarnations of the Lord in human form, and this is at the foundation of the religion of the Hindus. Many of the famous parables of Jesus the Christ existed among the Hindus and Buddhists of the pre-Christian era. In the Gospel of Buddha, for instance, we find the parables of the prodigal son and of the marriage feast, which were taught by Buddha to his disciples about five centuries B.C., and they resemble in every way the similar parables of Jesus the Christ. The Roman Catholics have taken a great many of their ideas—their form of worship, the monastic life, the nunnery and the idea of purgatory—from the Buddhists of India. In the religious history of the world, Buddha was the first to organize communities of monks and

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 127.
[6] Vide Renan: *Life of Jesus*, p. 128.

nuns and to establish monasteries and nunneries. Under cover of the legend of Barlaam and Josaphat, the story of Buddha has found a niche in the row of canonized Catholic saints and has his Saint-day in the calendar of the Greek and Roman churches.

The Buddhist missionaries and preachers also influenced the faith of the Gnostics and Manicheans[7] and introduced the idea of reincarnation among them. Many of the early Church Fathers, like Origen, admitted that the soul existed before birth and would be born again, that this was not the first or the last time that we had come or would come to this world. The doctrine of pre-existence and reincarnation of souls was accepted by the majority of the Christians until it was suppressed in 538 A.D. by Justinian, who passed this law: "Whoever shall support the mythical presentation of the pre-existence of the soul and the consequently wonderful opinion of its return, let him be Anathema". It was foreign to Judaism until about the eighth century A.D., when under the influence of the Hindu mystics it was adopted by the Karaites and other Jewish sects. The Jewish Encyclopedia says: "Only with the spread of the Cabala did it begin to take root in Judaism, and then it gained believers even among men who were little inclined toward mysticism". And again: "Like Origen and other Church Fathers the Cabalists used as their main argument in favour of the doctrine of metempsychosis the justice of God".[8]

The Sanskrit grammar of Panini, who, according to Max Müller, was the greatest grammarian that the world has ever seen, has given a key to the science of comparative philology. Many of the English words which we commonly use can be traced back to a Sanskrit origin. For instance: Mother, in Latin *mater,* is in Sanskrit *Matar ;* father, in Latin *pater,* is in Sanskrit *Pitar ;* brother, in Sanskrit *Bhratar ;* sister, *Swasar ;* daughter, *Duhitar ;* path, in Sanskrit *Patha ;* serpent, *Sarpa ;* bond, *Bandha ;* etc. The word "punch" has an interesting history. It originally meant "five" in Sanskrit ; so the expression, "Give him a punch," means literally "Give him five fingers." We also use the name "punch" for the drink, which implies that it is made up of five ingredients.

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[7] Professor E. W. Hopkins declares that "Neo-Platonism and Christian Gnosticism owe much to India" in their philosophical beliefs. See p. 25.

[8] Cf. Vol. XII, p. 232.

In the last lecture, I showed how the fables of Æsop and Pilpay originated in India. Indeed, these stories of animals, with their wonderful Hindu morals, have influenced young minds of Europe and America for many centuries. I think no child is brought up without studying some of them and learning the morals attached to them. Roman law and Roman jurisprudence also were perhaps not left uninfluenced by the more perfect system of ancient Hindu law.

Now, I will show you the more recent influence of India upon Western civilization. Those who have studied Schopenhauer's philosophy have undoubtedly noticed that he was full of Buddhistic ideas, as well as of the principles of the Vedanta philosophy. He paid a great tribute to the latter by his celebrated saying, "There is no study more beneficial and elevating to mankind than the study of the *Upanishads*[9] (Vedanta). It has been the solace of my life, and it will be the solace of my death". And Max Muller declares, "If philosophy is meant to be a preparation for a happy death, or Euthanasia, I know of no better preparation for it than the Vedanta philosophy"; while Schopenhauer's direct disciple, Paul Deussen, writes in his *Philosophy of the Upanishads*: "God, the sole author of all good in us, is not, as in the Old Testament, a Being contrasted with and distinct from us, but rather * * our divine self. This and much more we may learn from the *Upanishads;* we shall learn the lesson if we are willing to put the finishing touch to the Christian consciousness, and to make it on all sides consistent and complete." In fact, the philosophy of modern Europe has obtained a new life since the introduction of the doctrines of Vedanta into it. Carlyle was influenced by the teachings of Krishna through the English version of the *Bhagavad Gita,*[10] first translated by Charles Wilkins during the administration of Warren Hastings, and now well-known to you as the *Song Celestial.* Many other translations have also been published in Europe and America. Frederick Schlegel, Victor Cousin, Amiel, Paul Deussen, Max Müller, and Emerson were

[9] "Fifty *Upanishads*, under the name of Oupenek'hat, were translated from the Sanskrit into Persian in 1656 at the instance of the Sultan Mohammed Dara Shakoh, and from the Persian into Latin in 1801-2 by Anquetil Duperron." Paul Deussen: *Philosophy of the Upanishads*, p. 36.

[10] Published in London in 1785 and in New York in 1867

great advocates of the Vedanta philosophy. Emerson was, indeed, the pioneer of Hindu thought in America. He says in his Journal that the study of the *Upanishads* was a favourite recreation with him. Perhaps you have read his poem on Brahman, which he calls *Brahm*; it begins with this celebrated verse:

> If the red slayer thinks he slays,
> Or if the slain thinks he is slain,
> They know not well the subtle ways
> I keep, and pass, and turn again

This is almost a literal translation of a passage in the *Bhagavad Gita,* which runs thus:

"He who thinketh It to be a slayer and he who thinketh It to be slain,—both of these know not, for It neither killeth nor is killed' (chap. ii, verse 19).

Like Emerson, the Concord sage, Thoreau, was also deeply imbued with the sublime teachings of Vedanta. "The Hindus," he writes, "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 sky.

"The Vedanta 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 Hebrew 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 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".

Today the whole Western world is permeated with Hindu thoughts and ideals. The educated men and women of Europe and America, who have outgrown the superstitions, doctrines, and dogmas of orthodox Christianity, are finding the right solutions of the problems of life and death, and of the riddles of the universe, as also the greatest comfort and happiness in the universal religion of Vedanta, which is in perfect harmony with the science, logic, and philosophy of modern Europe. Today the moral influence of Buddhism and the ethics of Vedanta are strongly felt in all European and American communities. You see how many vegetarians are springing up, how many people now prefer a vegetarian diet to animal flesh. I saw the other day in New York a hospital for dogs and cats, but, as I have already told you, such a hospital was built in 260 B.C. by the Buddhist emperor, Asoka. Then, again, the interest in concentration, meditation, breathing exercises, New Thought, etc., which is to be found at present all through Europe and America, is the result of Eastern influence. Mrs. Eddy's early editions of "Science and Health" had quotations from the *Bhagavad Gita;* and Celia Thaxter, we know, was deeply influenced by the teachings of Krishna, gathered from the same source. The Theosophists have, indeed, disseminated the Hindu teachings most widely all over the world. Even in Mexico I discovered that the teachings of Vedanta were spreading rapidly.

From very ancient times the Hindus as a nation have practised the sublime ethical precept of non-resistance of evil, and the grand moral doctrine of returning good for evil and 'love thy neighbour as thyself'. 'Love thy neighbour as thyself'

was taught by Christ, but why? The reason was not given by Him. In the Vedas we find the reason: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour because thou art thy neighbour in spirit. Thou art one with him". *'Tat twam asi'*, 'That are Thou'. Love means expression of oneness. The Hindus have always practised these higher ethical virtues, but as a result India has been invaded again and again by the greedy nations of Europe and Asia. Today they have been enslaved by the swords of a Christian nation, whose Master proclaimed before the world the doctrine of non-resistance of evil, of returning good for evil, and of loving one's enemies. As nations, the socalled Christian nations of Europe do not follow the path of their Master, do not practise non-resistance of evil, do not love their enemies; on the contrary, they worship Mammon, and seek worldly success and material prosperity instead of the Kingdom of Heaven. They send missionaries as forerunners of conquest and pioneers for territorial possession. They do not spread peace and goodwill among the people, but fire and guns, as we have seen lately in the British expedition to Tibet. We cannot forget how the poor, innocent Tibetans were mowed down by Maxim guns. We cannot forget how the Portuguese and Dutch Christians held in one hand the Bible and in the other a gun, and demolished the Hindu temples in India. We cannot forget how the Christian missionaries, under the name of religion, destroyed the monuments of Buddhism in Japan until they were driven out by the Japanese Government in 1614 A.D. The Hindu and Buddhist missionaries, on the contrary, have always carried, instead of fire and sword, the gospel of peace and goodwill, and have civilized the nations.

Think what Buddhism has done for China and Japan, for Tibet and Burmah. The whole civilization of Japan is indebted to Buddhism for its art, as for most other things. Buddhism was introduced into Japan in the sixth century after Christ, and since that time has lived there in absolute peace and harmony with Shintoism and Confucianism. Buddhism was introduced into China in 65 A.D., and it has existed among the Chinese for nearly two thousand years without destroying anything of Taoism and Confucianism, at the same time broadening the religious ideals of the nation, humanizing and civilizing them. Lafcadio Hearn, in his book on Japan, shows how much

Buddhism has done for Japan ; and those who have read "The Soul of a People," by H. Fielding Hall, cannot help admiring the humane, loving, and spiritual qualities of the Buddhist people. Religious toleration has always been practised by the Hindus and Buddhists. When the Parsees were driven out of Persia by the Mohammedans, they took refuge in India, where they are now flourishing and living unmolested. Under the influence of this religious toleration of the Hindus, Western nations, especially the English, are beginning to learn and practise it. The Hindus and Buddhists have never robbed their neighbours to enrich themselves, but they have given to the world the highest moral and spiritual truths, not in mere theories, but by setting their noble examples. The Hindus and Buddhists have always been the true spiritual teachers of the world ; they know how to preach and how to live religion. By a strange irony of fate, today they are called barbarous and uncivilized heathens by the aggressive pioneers of European conquest.[11]

Practical morality and spirituality have always been considered by the Hindus as greater than mere intellectual culture. In India, religion has been the source of philosophy, science, art, music, and everything. From religion the Hindus have gained their education and culture, therefore religion is a vital thing with them. It is the primary thing, while intellectual culture is secondary. The Hindus cultivate the feelings of the heart and do not care much for external reforms. It is for this reason that their civilization is based upon the highest moral and spiritual standards. Hindu civilization is founded, not upon the commercial and industrial interests of the people, but upon the eternal moral and spiritual laws which govern our lives. It is not like the European civilization of today, which inspires a nation mainly to protect its self-interest at the expense of other nations, and to gain material and commercial prosperity by depriving others of their rights, by robbing the weaker nations who are kind, innocent, and humane.

According to the Hindu idea, that man is civilized who is

[11] "Unhappy Asia! Do you call it unhappy Asia? this land of divine needs and divine thought! Its slumber is more vital than the waking life of the rest of the globe, as the dream of genius is more precious than the vigils of ordinary men. Unhappy Asia, do you call it? It is the unhappiness of Europe over which I mourn"—*Benjamin Disraeli* (Lord Beaconsfield).

versed in the Scriptures ; who is learned and wise in the various branches of knowledge ; who is truthful, unselfish, and who obeys the moral laws ; who helps the poor and distressed ; who returns good for evil ; and who conquers hatred by love, avarice by generosity. These are the high moral virtues which should adorn the character of a thoroughly civilized man. A civilized man must always cultivate these virtues, and control the brute impulses and animal propensities with which he is born. By these virtues the civilized man is distinguished from a barbarous savage, as also from lower animals. A civilized man or woman must have polished manners, not simply as an external form, as we see in Europe today, but they must proceed from the feelings of the heart. European civilization,[1] on the contrary, has left moral and spiritual standards in the background, and made material prosperity and intellectual culture the chief factors of civilization. The old brutal law of 'might is right' is still in its ascendancy in the civilization of the West. The West looks mainly to externals, but India looks chiefly to the internal. With the former, worldly prosperity is the goal, and intellectual pre-eminance is its watchword. With the latter, the attainment of spiritual perfection is the highest aim of civilization, and the cultivation of moral virtues is a necessary step or auxiliary. In Europe, religion has always retarded the progress of true civilization and freedom of thought by the Inquisition, and by continuous persecution on the part of priests and clergy. Think of the fate of Galileo, Giardino Bruno, and a host of other eminent thinkers of the Middle Ages. Consequently religion has been put aside from practical daily life. But freedom of thought must be the constant companion of true civilization. Social and political freedom are also the outcome of the most advanced kind of civilization. Freedom is the goal for every man, but that freedom must be based upon moral and spiritual laws.

Through the influence of the dominant or rather militant civilization of Europe, India has lost her social and political

[1] "Asia revivified would act upon Europe. The European comfort, which they call civilization, is, after all, confined to a very small space,—the Island of Great Britain, France, and the course of a single river, the Rhine. The greater part of Europe is as dead as Asia, without the consolation of climate and the influence of immortal traditions."—*Benjamin Disraeli* (Lord Beaconsfield).

freedom She has become a slave. She cannot talk freely; she cannot discuss the unjust policy and oppressive methods of the socalled civilized government which rules over her. European civilization has given to India the standard of commercialism, and has set an example of extreme selfishness, and this has been undermining the moral and spiritual standards of the Hindus. The ideal of simplicity and of humanitarianism is everyday sacrificed upon the altar of commercialism and greed for material possession. Those who try to live in India a Christ-like life of purity and righteousness are robbed and dispossessed of their property by the selfish pioneers of the aggressive civilization of England. Under the influence of British rule, the culture of the feelings of the heart among the younger generation has become almost an impossibility. The moral and spiritual standards of the Hindus are giving place to hypocrisy and intellectual culture for material gain. The vices of Christian civilization, with slaughter-houses and saloons, with the liquor trade and the opium trade as Government monopolies for revenue, have been spreading all over India under the civilizing power of English rule.

The influence of Western civilization is destroying the social structure of the Hindus, and is breaking the harmony of the household life which has existed from time immemorial. But it has done some good. It has loosened the rigidity of caste rules and caste distinctions, and has removed the degenerating evil effects of priestcraft. India was groaning under priestcraft, but today its evil effects have been removed by English education. English education, on the other hand, has disturbed the minds of the people; has shaken their faith in their religion; has made its students advocates of atheism, agnosticism, and utilitarianism, which are the banes of scientific education. The great mass of Hindu students who come out of the universities every year do not believe in God or the human soul, do not care for anything but worldly success, social position, fame, and glory. Their first object in life is to earn their bread and butter by some honest profession. The heartless and demoralizing influence of business competition, which never existed under caste rules in India, is suppressing the moral and spiritual development of the people. The gladiatorial policy of European civilization is now in full force. The educated Hindus of today

do not know which step to take in the path of their worldly career. They run for help toward the governing power, as a child would run to its father for protection in time of distress, but their hearts are filled with despair when they meet the frowning eyes of task-masters under the garb of Western culture and civilization. A civilized Englishman in India kicks his native servant to death, and is fined perhaps five dollars by the Government. A civilized Englishman on a tea plantation in Assam will carry on a coolie trade, which is almost as bad as the old slave-trade, and is seldom punished by the Government. Such are the examples which the Hindus are witnessing every-day in India.

Western civilization under British rule has opened the eyes of the masses, has made them realize that a foreign government is no better than a curse of God upon a nation ; and a nation which tyrannizes over another nation for its own gain is not entitled to be called civilized, according to the Hindu standard of civilization. But I must say that India has derived certain benefits from English rule. After one hundred and fifty years of oppression and tyranny, it has made the Hindus on their own feet, and has brought out their national and patriotic feelings, in which they were lacking for nearly a century. It has brought India in close touch with European and American culture, and has driven away many superstitious ideas from the minds of the Hindus. The Hindus are now taking lessons in commercialism from the civilized masters of Europe, and are studying their ways and manners, so that in future they will be able to become their worthy disciples. Japan has shown to the world what ready disciples of Western civilization her people have become in less than half a century. Now it will be the turn for poor and downtrodden India. We may not see it, but future generations will enjoy that freedom which is the goal of all nations.

Another good thing has come from the influence of Western civilization, and that is the blessing of scientific education for the masses. It has opened a new field, and has brought a tremendous power of knowledge with it. India is beginning to wake up from her sleep in the darkness which prevailed during the night of the Mohammedan rule of six hundred years, and her children are now receiving the light of science

and the blessings of knowledge which have come from her contact with England. India will always remain gratefully indebted to the West, especially to England, for this blessing, and will always thank the Lord that He has given to her people so glorious an opportunity to accomplish her future greatness and political regeneration. India needs the spirit of Western civilization, while the West needs yet to learn from the Hindus the lesson of religious toleration, as also that practical method by which it will establish its civilization upon the principles of higher ethics and true spirituality taught by the universal religion of Vedanta, which is the crest jewel of the civilization of India.

CHAPTER VII

WOMAN'S PLACE IN HINDU RELIGION

Well has it been said by Louis Jaccoliot, the celebrated French author of the *Bible in India,* that: "India of the Vedas entertained a respect for women amounting to worship ; a fact which we seem little to suspect in Europe when we accuse the extreme East of having denied the dignity of woman, and of having only made of her an instrument of pleasure and of passive obedience". He also said: "What! Here is a civilization, which you cannot deny to be older than your own, which places the woman on a level with the man and gives her an equal place in the family and in society".

Long before the civil laws of the Romans, which gave the foundation for the legislation of Europe and of America, were codified by Justinian, the Hindu laws of Manu were closely observed and strictly followed by the members of Hindu society in general. Many of the Oriental scholars, having compared the digest of Justinian and the Mosaic laws of the Old Testament with the Hindu laws, have arrived at the conclusion that the code of Manu was related to them as a father is to his child. Yet the Hindu law-givers only repeated and codified the ethical principles which were inculcated in the Vedas. Following the teachings of the Vedas, the Hindu legislator gave equal rights to men and women by saying: "Before the creation of this phenomenal universe, the first-born Lord of all creatures divided his own self into two halves, so that one half should be male and the other half female". This illustration has established in the minds of the Hindus the fundamental equality of man and woman. Just as the equal halves of a fruit possess the same nature, the same attributes, and the same properties in equal proportion, so man and woman, being the equal halves of the same substance, possess equal rights, equal privileges, and equal powers. This idea of the equality of man and woman was the corner-stone of that huge structure of religion and ethics among the Hindus which has stood for so many ages the ravages time and change, defying the onslaughts of the short-sighted

critics of the world. Therefore, in India, whatever is claimed for the man may also be claimed for the woman ; there should be no partiality shown for either man or woman, according to the ethical, moral, and religious standards of the Hindus.

The same idea of equality was most forcibly expressed in the Rig Veda (Book 5, hymn 61, verse 8). The commentator explains this passage thus: "The wife and husband, being the equal halves of one substance, are equal in every respect ; therefore both should join and take equal parts in all work, religious and secular". No other scriptures of the world have ever given to the woman such equality with the man as the Vedas of the Hindus. The Old Testament, the *Koran,* and the Zend Avesta have made woman the scapegoat for all the crimes committed by man. The Old Testament, in describing the creation of woman and the fall of man, has established the idea that woman was created for man's pleasure ; consequently, her duty was to obey him implicitly. It makes her an instrument in the hands of Satan for the temptation and fall of the holy man with whom she was enjoying the felicity of paradise. Adam's first thought on that occasion was to shift the burden of guilt on to the shoulders of the woman. St. Paul, in the New Testament, shows that, through Adam's fall, woman was the means of bringing sin, suffering, and death into the world. Popular Christianity has been trying lately to take away this idea, but, in spite of all the efforts of the preachers, it still lurks behind the eulogies that have been piled upon the conception of womanhood in Christian lands. How is it possible, for one who believes the accounts given in Genesis to be literally true, to reject the idea there set forth that woman was the cause of the temptation and fall of man, thereby bringing sin and suffering and death into the world ? For one who accepts the Biblical account, there is no other alternative left.

In India, such ideas never arose in the minds of the vedic seers, nor have kindred notions found expression in the writings of the law-givers of later days. The Hindu legislators realized that both sexes were equal, and said before the world that women had equal rights with men for freedom, for the acquirement of knowledge, education, and spirituality. It is for this reason that we find in the Rig Veda the names of so many inspired women who attained to the realization of the

highest spiritual truths. These inspired women are recognized by all classes as the seers of truth, as spiritual instructors, divine speakers and revealers, equally with the inspired men of vedic hymns. Those who believe that the Hindu religion debars women from studying the Vedas, or from acquiring religious ideas ought to correct these erroneous notions by opening their eyes to the facts, which are indelibly written on the pages of the religious history of India. The one hundred and twenty-sixth hymn of the first book of the Rig Veda was revealed by a Hindu woman whose name was Romasha; the one hundred and seventy-ninth hymn of the same book was by Lopamudra, another inspired Hindu woman. I can cite at least a dozen names of women revealers of the vedic wisdom, such as Visvavara, Shashvati, Gargi, Maitreyi, Apala, Ghosha, and Aditi, who instructed Indra, one of the *Devas,* in the higher knowledge of Brahman, the universal Spirit. All of these are the names of inspired women revealers of the spiritual wisdom. Everyone of them lived the ideal life of spirituality, being untouched by the things of the world. They are called in Sanskrit *Brahmavadinis,* the speakers and revealers of Brahman. They were devout performers of the religious rites, singers of holy hymns, and often discussed with great philosophers the most subtle problems of life and death, the nature of the soul and of God, and their inter-relation, and sometimes, in course of these discussions, they defeated the most advanced thinkers among their opponents.

Those who have read the *Upanishads,* the philosophical portions of the Vedas, know that Gargi and Maitreyi, the two great women seers of Truth, discoursed on philosophical topics with Yajnavalkya, who was one of the best authorities in the vedic lore. There are many instances of women acting as arbitrators on such occasions. When Sankaracharya, the great commentator of the Vedanta, was discussing this philosophy with another philosopher, a Hindu lady, well-versed in all the scriptures, was requested to act as umpire.

If, in the face of such facts, the Christian missionaries say that the Hindu religion prevents women from studying the Vedas, or denies them a place in religion, we can only console ourselves by thinking that the eyes of our missionary brothers and sisters are not open to truths which exist outside the

boundary-line of their own particular creed and religion. It is the especial injunction of the Vedas that no married man shall perform any religious rite, ceremony, or sacrifice without being joined in it by his wife; should he do so, his work will be incomplete and half finished, and he will not get the full results, because the wife is considered to be a partaker and partner in the spiritual life of her husband: she is called, in Sanskrit, *Sahadharmini* or 'spiritual helpmate'. This idea is very old, as old as the Hindu nation. It is true that there were certain prohibitions for some women against certain studies and ceremonies, which were prescribed for those only who were in a different stage of spiritual development, just as a certain class of men were proscribed from the studies of some portions of the Vedas, or from performing certain ceremonies simply because they were not ready for them.

Coming down from the vedic period to the time when the *Puranas* and Epics were written, we find that the same idea of equality between men and women was kept alive, and that the same laws were observed as during the time of the Vedas. Those who have read the *Ramayana* will remember how exemplary was the character of Sita, the heroine. She was the embodiment of purity, chastity, and kindness, the personification of spirituality. She still stands as the perfect type of ideal womanhood in the hearts of the Hindu women of all castes and creeds. In the whole religious history of the world a second Sita will not be found. Her life was unique. She is worshipped as an Incarnation of God, as Christ is worshipped among the Christians. India is the only country where prevails a belief that God incarnates in the form of a woman as well as in that of a man.

In the *Mahabharata,* we read the account of Sulabha, the great woman Yogi, who came to the court of King Janaka and showed wonderful powers and wisdom, which she had acquired through the practice of Yoga. This shows that women were allowed to practise Yoga; even to-day there are many living *Yoginis* in India who are highly advanced in spirituality. Many of these *Yoginis* become spiritual teachers of men. Sri Ramakrishna, the greatest Saint of the nineteenth century, was taught spiritual truths by a *Yogini.*[1]

[1] Cf. *Life and Sayings of Ramakrishna,* by Prof. F. Max Muller, published by Scribner and Sons, New York.

As in religion the Hindu woman of ancient times enjoyed equal rights and privileges with men, so in secular matters she had equal share and equal power with them. From the vedic age women in India have had the same right to possess property as men; they could go to the courts of justice, plead their own cases, and ask for the protection of the law.

Those who have read the famous Hindu drama, called *Shakuntala,* know that Shakuntala pleaded her own case and claimed her rights in the court of King Dushyanta. Similar instances are mentioned in the one hundred and eighth hymn of the tenth book of the Rig Veda. As early as 2000 B.C. Hindu women were allowed to go to the battle-fields to fight against enemies. Sarama, one of the most powerful women of her day, was sent by her husband in search of robbers. She discovered their hiding-place and afterwards destroyed them.

In the fifth book of the Rig Veda we read that King Namuchi sent his wife to fight against his enemies. She fought and eventually conquered them. There have been many instances of women holding high political powers, governing states, making laws, and administering justice to all. Throughout the history of India are to be found the names of many women who have governed their own territories. Some women of later dates resisted foreign invaders.[2] The history of India records the wonderful generalship of the *Rani* of Jhansi, who held a portion of the British army in check during the famous mutiny of 1857-58. She headed her troops against the British, dressed like a cavalry officer, and after a hard fight she fell in battle and died, in June, 1858. Sir Hugh Rose declared that the best man on the enemy's side was the *Rani* of Jhansi, not knowing that the *Rani* was not a man, but the Queen herself.

Not long ago a Hindu lady, Aus Kour by name, was elevated by the Hindus, with the help of the British Government, to the disputed throne of the disorganized and revolted State of Patiala, in the northwest of India. She has been described by English historians as the most competent person to govern that

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[2] The heroic queen Chand Bibi, who defended the fort of Ahmednagar against the attacks of the Moghul emperor Akbar, may be called the Joan of Arc of India.

state. In less than a year she brought peace and security into all parts of her dominions.

Ahalya Bai, the Queen of Malwa, governed her kingdom with great success for twenty years, devoting herself to the rights and welfare of her people and the happiness of her subjects; she was so great and popular that both the Mohammedans and the Hindus united in prayers for her long life; so little did she care for name and fame that, when a book was written in her honour, she ordered it to be destroyed, and took no notice of the author.

America boasts of her civilization and the freedom of her women, but we know how little power and how few privileges have been given to women. The cause of this is deeply rooted in the Biblical conception of womanhood. It is claimed that Christianity has elevated the condition of women; but, on the contrary, history tells us that it is Christianity that has stood for centuries in the way of the religious, social, and political freedom of women. Think of the women's suffrage societies, and how hard they are struggling to win recognition of the rights of their sex.[3] Roman law and Roman jurisprudence

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[3] The following extract from a letter sent by Mrs Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Bishop Potter, of New York, on 15th January, 1901, will give an idea of the situation

"Ever and anon public thought is aroused by a terrible tragedy, like the one enacted in Paterson, or by some unusually open manifestation of vice in the streets of our cities. Though an aroused public sentiment can repress the evils for a time in one locality, they reappear at once, with renewed energy, in many others Occasionally, church officials make their protests, but no one seems to understand the hidden cause of all these outrages.

'The authorities of the Episcopal Church are just now aroused to action. The first step to be taken is to teach woman a higher respect for herself, and the rising generation a more profound reverence

"The Church and the Bible make woman the football for the jibes and jeers of the multitude

"When, in their marriage service, it is the duty of woman to obey, and be given away by some man, she is made the inferior and subject of man.

"All our efforts to supress the social evil are hopeless until woman is recognized, in the canon law and all church discipline, as equal in goodness to bishops, archbishops, and the Pope himself

'The sentiments of men in high places are responsible for the outrages on woman in the haunts of vice and on the highway If in the same respect the masses are educated to feel for cathedrals, altars, symbols, and sacraments were extended to the mothers of the race, as it should be, all these problems would be speedily settled.

"When our good men in State and Church try to suppress the terrible outrages on woman, while they deal with the evil on the surface, they

gave woman a place far more elevated than that given to her by Christianity. The Christians learned to honour women from the pagans. The Teutonic tribes believed, like the Hindus, in the perfect equality of both sexes in all domestic and social relations, and held that a queen was as good as a king. Even to-day the Christian nations fail to see this equality between man and woman.

The Hindu law allows the women a much greater share in the management of property than most of the statutes of the Christian nations. In family affairs, religious or secular, especially in business or trade, a husband in India cannot take any step without consulting the female members of the family.

It is often said that Hindu women are treated like slaves by their husbands, but it is not a fact. On the contrary, the Hindu women get better treatment than the majority of the wives of Englishmen or of Americans endowed with the spirit of an English husband. Sir Monier Monier Williams says: "Indian wives often possess greater influence than the wives of Europeans." The number of wife-beaters is considerably smaller in India than in Europe or America. He is not a true Hindu who does not regard a woman's body as sacred as the temple of God. He is an outcast who touches a woman's body with irreverence, hatred or anger. "A woman's body", says Manu the law-giver, "must not be struck hard, even with a flower, because it is sacred". It is for this reason that the Hindus do not allow capital punishment for women. The treatment of woman, according to Hindu religion, will be better understood from some of the quotations from the laws of Manu and ther law-givers. Manu says:

1. "The mouth of a woman is always pure" V, 130.

2. "Women must be honoured and adorned by their fathers, husbands, brothers, and brothers-in-law, who desire their own welfare" III, 55.

3. "Where women are honoured, there the *Devas* (gods) are pleased; but where they are dishonoured, no sacred rite yields rewards" III, 56.

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should begin the lasting work of securing to her equal honor, dignity, and respect by sharing with her all the liberties they themselves enjoy.

"The lesson of inferiority is taught everywhere, and in these terrible tragedies of life we have the result of the universal degradation of woman."

4. "Where female relations live in grief, the family soon wholly perishes; but that family where they are not unhappy ever prospers" III, 57.

5. "In like manner, care must be taken of barren women, of those who have no sons, of those whose family is extinct, of wives and widows faithful to their lords, and of women afflicted with diseases" VIII, 28.

6. "A righteous king must punish like thieves those relatives who appropriate the property of such females during their lifetime" VIII, 29.

7. "In order to protect women and Brahmins, he who kills in the cause of right commits no sin" VIII, 349.

8. "One's daughter is the highest object of tenderness: hence, if one is offended by her, one must bear it without resentment" IV, 185. (Compare this with the statements of the missionaries that the Hindu religion sanctions the killing of girls).

9. "A maternal aunt, the wife of a maternal uncle, a mother-in-law, and a paternal aunt, must be honoured like the wife of one's spiritual teacher; they are equal to the wife of one's spiritual teacher" II, 131.

(In India, the wife of a spiritual teacher is regarded as a living goddess).

10. "Towards the sister of one's father and of one's mother and towards one's elder sister, one must behave as towards one's mother; but the mother is more venerable than they" II, 133.

11. "But the teacher is ten times more venerable than the sub-teacher, the father a hundred times more than the teacher, but the mother a thousand times more than the father" II, 145.

12. "A chaste wife, who after the death of her husband constantly remains chaste, reaches heaven, though she have no son, just like those chaste men" V, 160. (Compare this with the statements of the missionaries that Hindu widows are cursed by their religion).

13. "In that family where the husband is pleased with his wife and the wife with her husband, happiness will assuredly be lasting" III, 60.

14. "Offspring, the due performance of religious rites,

faithful service, highest conjugal happiness, and heavenly bliss for the ancestors and one's self, depend upon the wife alone" IX, 28.

15. "Let mutual fidelity continue till death; this may be considered as a summary of the highest law for husband and wife" IX, 101.

From other Hindu laws:

"Woman possesses an unequalled means of purification: they never become (entirely) foul".

"Women are pure in all limbs".

1. "Man is strength, woman is beauty; he is the reason that governs and she is the wisdom that moderates".

2. "He who despises woman despises his mother".

3. "He who is cursed by a woman is cursed by God".

4. "The tears of a woman call down the fire of heaven on those who make them flow".

5. "Evil to him who laughs at a woman's sufferings; God shall laugh at his prayers".

6. "The songs of women are sweet in the ears of the Lord; men should not, if they wish to be heard, sing the praises of God without women".

7. "There is no crime more odious than to persecute women, and to take advantage of their weakness to despoil them of their patrimony".

8. "The woman watches over the house, and the protecting divinities (*devas* of the domestic hearth are happy in her presence. The labours of the field should never be assigned to her".

9. "When relatives, by some subterfuge, take possession of the property of a woman, her carriages or her jewels, such evil-doers shall descend into the infernal regions".

10. "The virtuous woman should have but one husband, as the right-minded man should have but one wife".

Here is the definition of a wife given in the *Mahabharata*:

> A wife is half the man, his truest friend;
> A loving wife is a perpetual spring
> Of virtue, pleasure, wealth; a faithful wife
> Is his best aid in seeking heavenly bliss;
> A sweetly-speaking wife is a companion
> In solitude, a father in advice,
> A mother in all seasons of distress,
> A rest in passing through life's wilderness.

The Christian missionaries say that these laws are most horrible! Yet today in some parts of Europe women are yoked together with horses and cattle in the field, and obliged to do the roughest labour!

The unmarried daughter, not the son, inherits the mother's estate. This is the Hindu law. The special property of the wife which she gets as dowry cannot be used by the husband. A wife in India is not responsible for the debts of her husband or son. The mother in India owns her children as much as the father does.

Mrs. F. A. Steele, who has written several novels on Indian life, and who resided in India for twenty-five years, writes of Indian women: "In regard to the general position of women in India, I think it is rather better than our own. Women in India can hold property, and a widow always gets a fixed portion of her husband's estate".

Some American ladies who lived in India, not as missionaries but as impartial observers, have corroborated these statements. It is generally said that the Hindu law makes no provision for the Hindu widow. Let us see what an English historian says:

"In the absence of direct male heirs, widows succeed to a life-interest in real and absolute interest in personal property. The daughters inherit absolutely. Where there are sons, mothers and daughters are entitled to shares, and wives hold peculiar property from a variety of sources over which a husband has no control during their lives, and which descends to their own heirs, with a preference to females".[1]

Much has been said against the marriage customs of the Hindus. I have heard a great deal of objection to them, in this country especially. It is true that marriage by courtship is not considered by the Hindus to be the highest and best system; they say this method generally proceeds from selfish desires, or the mere gratification of passion. Marriage, according to the Hindu ideas, must be based on the ideal of the spiritual union of the souls, and not on the lower desires for sense pleasures. It must be a sacred bond. The Hindus were the first to recognize marriage as an indissoluble holy bond

[1] Cf. Mill: *History of India*, Vol. I. p. 248.

between two souls. Even death does not dissolve it; and this idea prevails in the hearts of many Hindu wives, who do not care to remarry after the death of their husbands, but prefer to devote their lives in fulfilling spiritual duties.

Mrs. Steele says: "I have seen many a virgin widow who gloried in her fate". Marriage is not considered to be the only aim of life. There are nobler and higher purposes, and they must be accomplished before death comes. The whole spirit of the marriage laws in India is in favour of the legal union between one man and one woman, but they allow a little latitude for the preservation of the race. It is said that a man may marry a second wife for progeny alone, with the consent of his first wife, in case she should be barren.

The aim of Hindu law-givers was to build a society where the moral and spiritual evolution of the individual should be free from legal interference. Therefore they divided society into classes, and set forth laws for each class; the marriage laws in India have been many-sided in order to suit the different tendencies which prevailed among different classes. Hindu law-givers understood that one law would not do for all people. The higher the class in society, the more restricted are their laws; for instance, the same law-giver, who allows the marriage of widows amongst the lower classes, sets forth arguments against its practice among women of a higher class. Nearly all Hindu widows of the lower classes can remarry after the death of their husbands; but it depends upon the choice both of the husband and the wife. The Hindu law provides for the remarriage of widow[5] and of divorced women in the same way as for the remarriage of widowers and divorced men. According to the law, a wife may abandon her husband (if she chooses) if he be criminal, insane, impotent, outcast, or afflicted with leprosy, also because of his long absence in foreign lands, and can take another husband. The Roman law gives no other causes of divorce than these. Similarly, a husband may abandon his wife

[5] That the remarriage of widows in vedic times was a national custom can be easily established by a variety of proofs and arguments. The very fact of the Sanskrit language having from ancient times such words as *didhishu*, 'a man that has married a widow,' *parapūrvā*, 'a woman that has taken a second husband,' *paunarbhava*, 'a son of a woman by her second husband, are enough to establish it."—*Indo-Arians*, by Rajendra Lal Mitra, vol. II, p. 155.

if she be drunken or adulterous, afflicted with leprosy, or cruel towards husband and children, and can remarry. But the Hindu law does not allow a divorce simply for incompatibility of temper, nor because of the simple desire in either party to marry another.

It is said that the greatest curse is the child-marriage in India, and that it is sanctioned by religion; but this is not true. Religion distinctly forbids it, and in many parts of India so-called child-marriage is nothing but a betrothal. The betrothal ceremony takes place some years before the real marriage ceremony; sufficient cause may prolong the period of betrothal for even three or four years. In Northern India the real marriage does not take place until the parties are of proper age; it is attended with music, feasting, and the presentation of gifts. A betrothed wife stays in her father's house until the time of her real marriage. In Southern India, customs are not the same; many abuses have crept in, and child-wives are often given to their husbands at too tender an age. The Hindu law does not prevent the remarriage of the betrothed wife after the death of her betrothed husband, but it says that under such circumstances the parents of the betrothed wife commit a sin as of giving false witness before the court of justice.

According to the Hindu law, it is better for a girl of a high caste to remain unmarried for life than to marry one who is not of noble birth or from a family of the same caste, or one who is unqualified and illiterate.

Eight different kinds of marriages are described and discussed by Hindu legislators,[6] among which marriage with the consent of the parents of both parties, and not a sentimental love contract, is considered to be the highest. In ancient times, when the country was governed by Hindu kings, the *Svayambara* system of marriage was very common. It was the system of free choice of a husband by the maiden. Those who have read *The Light of Asia*, by Sir Edwin Arnold, will remember how Buddha was married. But when the Hindus lost their political freedom they would have been unable to prevent the intermixture of races had such liberty been continued; so they abandoned that system of marriage and adopted that of

[6] Cf. *Manu*, III, 21-33.

betrothing their sons and daughters in their youth. The betrothal, however, is not practised in all parts of the country.

Christian missionaries have brought false charges against the moral character of Hindu women; and some of our own country-women, having enlisted their names as Christian converts, have, I regret to say, joined these missionary detractors in bringing false charges against Hindu women. If you wish to know the true condition of the women in India, you will have to reject ninetynine per cent of the statements which you hear from the missionaries, or from Christian converts who come from India. There are immoral women in India, as there are in every other country, but it is more than wicked to make such sweeping statements as that there is no morality among Hindu women. The Pandita Ramabai said: "I would not trust one of my girls in any Indian home. The immorality in that country is horrible".[7]

Self-burning of widows was not sanctioned by the vedic religion, but was due to other causes. Some say that, when the Mohammedans conquered India, they treated the widows of the soldiers so brutally that the women preferred death, and voluntarily sought it. It is often said that the 'Christian government' has suppressed *Suttee;* but the truth is that the initiative in this direction was taken by that noble Hindu, Rajah Ram Mohan Roy, who was, however, obliged to secure the aid of the British Government in enforcing his ideas, because India was a subject nation. The educated classes among the Hindus had strongly protested against the priests[8] who supported this inhuman custom (which prevailed only in certain parts of India), and efforts had been made to suppress the evil by force; but, as it could not be done without official help, appeal was made to the Viceroy, Lord Bentinck, and a law against *Suttee* was passed. Thus the evil was practically suppressed by the Hindus themselves, aided by the British Government.

Sir Monier Monier Williams says: "Perhaps the most important point to which he (Rajah Ram Mohan Roy awakened attention was the absence of all vedic sanction for the self-immolation of widows (*Suttee, in Sanskrit Sati*). It was principally his vehement denunciation of this practice, and the

[7] *Fitchburg Sentinel*, 18 April, 1898.
[8] *Brahminism and Hinduism*, p. 482.

agitation against it set on foot by him, which ultimately led to the abolition of *Sati* throughout British India in 1829" [9]

The exclusion of women from the society of men, which we find in some parts of India, is not due to their religion, but to other causes. Although this custom existed among the aristocratic classes of the Hindu community, still it came into practice largely for self-defence against Mohammedan brutality. The *purda* system, that is, the custom of not allowing women to appear in public without a veil, was not of Hindu origin, but was introduced into India by the Mohammedans. There are many parts of India where the *purda* system does not exist at all, where men mix freely with women, travel in the same vehicle, and appear in public with the women unveiled. Sir Monier Monier Williams writes: "Moreover, it must be noted that the seclusion and ignorance of women, which were once mainly due to the fear of the Mohammedan conquerors, do not exist in the same degree in provinces unaffected by those conquerors".

Every one has heard the old missionary tale of the Hindu mothers throwing their babies to the crocodiles in the Ganges. Touching pictures of a black mother with a white baby in her arms, calmly awaiting the advent of a large crocodile, have adorned many Sunday-school books. Perhaps this story arose from the fact that in certain places poor Hindu mothers place the dead bodies of their little ones by the riverside, because they cannot afford the expense of cremating them.

The zeal of the pious missionaries for Christianizing India was the cause of the story of the car of Jagannath. Sir Monier Monier Williams says: "It is usual for missionaries to speak with horror of the self-immolation alleged to take place under the car of Jaggannath. But, if deaths occur, they must be accidental, as self-destruction is wholly opposed both to the letter and spirit of their religion" [10]

As regards female infanticide, Pandita Ramabai herself wrote:

[9] Some of the Brahmin priests perverted the meaning of the verse in which describes the funeral ceremony of the ancient Hindus. The true meaning of that verse is: 'Rise up, woman, thou art here, by one whose life is gone; come, come to the world of the living, away from thy husband, and become the wife of him who grasps thy hand and is willing to marry thee."—Rig Veda, Bk. 10, Hymn 18, verse 8

[10] Cf. *Brahmanism and Hinduism*, p. 118

"Female infanticide, *though not sanctioned by religion and never looked upon as right* by conscientious people, has nevertheless, in those parts of India mentioned been silently passed over unpunished by society in general".[11]

The Pandita does not perhaps know that numbers of dead bodies of illegitimate babies are picked up every year in the streets and vacant lots of New York and other large American cities. What does American society do about such criminals? Is it not equally reasonable to charge these evils to the Christian religion as to lay all the sins of India at the door of the Hindu religion?

High-caste Hindu women generally learn to read and write in their own vernacular, but they do not pass public examinations. Hindu religion does not prevent any woman from receiving education; on the contrary, it says that it is the duty of the parents, brothers, and husbands to educate their daughters, sisters, and wives. So, if there be ignorance among Hindu women, it is not the fault of their religion, but rather of their poverty.

Malabar boasts of seven great poets, and four of them were women. The moral sentiments uttered by one of them (Avyar) are taught in the schools as the golden rules of life. The writings of Lilavati, a great woman mathematician, still form the text-book in native schools of the Hindus.

It is often said by the Christian missionaries that Hindu religion teaches that women have no souls, and that they are not entitled to salvation. On the contrary, all the sacred books of the Hindus testify against such outrageous falsities. Those who have read the *Bhagavad Gita,* or the *Upanishads,* know that, according to Hindu religion, the soul is sexless, and that all men and women will sooner or later reach the highest goal of religion. It was in India that women were first allowed to be spiritual teachers and to enter into the monastic life. Those who have read the life of Buddha know that his wife became the leader of the Buddhist nuns. There are today hundreds of Hindu *Sannyasinis* (nuns) who are recognized as spiritual teachers by the Hindus. The wife of Sri Ramakrishna, the great Hindu Saint of the nineteenth century, has become a

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[11] Cf. *High-caste Hindu Women,* p. 26.

living example of the great honour and reverence that are paid by Hindus to a woman of pure, spotless, spiritual life.

Lastly, the position of women in Hindu religion can be understood better by that unique idea of the Motherhood of God, which is nowhere so strongly expressed and recognized as in India. The mother is so highly honoured in India that the Hindus are not satisfied until they see divinity in the form of earthly mother. They say that one mother is greater than a thousand fathers, therefore the Hindus prefer to call the supreme Being the Mother of the universe. The divine Mother is greater than the "Creator" of other religions. She is the Producer or the Creator, or the First-born Lord of all creatures. There is no other country in the world where every living mother is venerated as an incarnation of the divine Mother, where every village has a guardian mother who protects all as her own children.

Listen to the prayer that rises every day to the almighty Mother of the universe from the hearts of Hindu worshippers:

"O Mother Divine, Thou art beyond the reach of our praises; Thou pervadest every particle of the universe; all knowledge proceeds from Thee, O infinite source of wisdom! Thou dwellest in every feminine form, and all women are Thy living representatives upon earth".

APPENDIX I

PREHISTORIC INDUS CIVILIZATION

Empires rise and fall. Civilization flash forth and vanish. Vanished off from the face of the earth, the mighty empires of Egypt, Chaldia, Babylonia, Mesopotemia, Assyria, Iran, Greece and Rome and have left behind them a trail of ruins in the shape of Pyramids, Ziggrats, palaces and sculptures. With the help of these ruins, archæologists and historians have tried to reconstruct the history and culture of the peoples inhabiting them, so as to find who they were and what sort of life they lived. Rivers are the veins and arteries of civilization. Rivers like Nile, Tigris, Euphrates, Sarasvati, Indus, Ganges, Jamuna, etc. played conspicuous part in shaping the civilization and culture of the peoples inhabiting their banks. Vedic Aryans first settled on the banks of Sarasvati and then migrated to the Gangetic valley. That the Indus and the Ravi too played an important role in shaping the civilization of prehistoric India was unknown to the scholars and archaeologists for a long time. They, inspite of India's possessing earliest human documents, the Rig Veda, transmitted from generation to generation through human mouth, felt shy, as it were, to assign a place to ancient India in the same rank with the countries of the bygone days, whose national remains they unearthed in other ancient tracts, but excavations of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro by a band of Indian and Western historians and archaeologists have revolutionized their notion about the antiquity of Indian civilization.

In 1920-21, Sir John Marshall directed Rai Bahadur Dayaram Sahni, then Superintendent of Archaeology, to undertake the excavations of the mounds of Harappa in the Montogomery district of the Punjab. Two years later Mr. R. D. Banerjee, Superintendent of Archaeology, Western Circle, undertook the excavation of the Buddhist *stupa* on an old mound at Mohenjo-daro in the Larkana district in Sind. Rectangular stone seals with figure of one-horned bull and inscription in pictographic script were first obtained from Harappa by Sir Alexander Cunningham and published by him

in his Report for 1875. Other specimens were subsequently acquired by the British Museum and published by Dr. Fleet in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* of 1912. But these seals did not attract the attention of the Sumerologists, who were familiar with the bone roll cylinder, found at Susa, bearing an inscription in pictograph of the same type and first published in *Delegation en Perse,* vol. ii. It was not till Sir John Marshall published some of the seals and other objects; discovered by Rai Bahadur Dayaram Sahni at Harappa and Mr. Rakhaldas Banerjee at Mohenjo-daro in the *Illustrated London News* of the 20th September, 1924, that the attention of the Sumerologists was drawn to Indian seals, discovered outside India.

Mohenjo-daro, the 'Mound of the Dead' stands on a long narrow strip of land between the main bed of the Indus and the Western Naro loop. Sir John Marshall has written regarding it: "The mounds which hide the remains of the ancient city, or rather series of cities (since there are several of them superimposed one upon the other) are conspicuous from afar in the rivers' flat, the highest of them, near the north-west corner, rising to the height of some 70 feet, the others averaging from 20 to 30 feet above the plain. The actual area covered by the mounds is now no more than about 200 acres, but there is little doubt, as we shall presently see, that floods and erosion have greatly diminished their extent and that the deep alluvium deposited by the river has covered all the lower and outlying parts of the city". In 1922, the late R. D. Banerjee undertook the excavation of the remains of the Buddhist *stupa* and monastery on the highest mound. Coins, found in the debris of the monument, indicated that it was referable to the early centuries of the Christian era. Immediately below the earliest Buddhist pavement, Mr. Banerjee found remains of masonry structures, constructed with the same type of bricks as used in the Buddhist buildings, but associated with painted pottery and seals bearing designs and inscriptions in pictrographic script.

In 1923-24 and 1924-25, excavations were continued by Messrs. M. S. Vats and Rai Bahadur K. N. Dikshit. Sir John Marshall undertook the supervision of the operations, organised on a much wider scale in 1925-26. The work continued in the following year by Rai Bahadur Davaram Sahni and Mr. Mackey.

Now the level of the plain around Mohenjo-daro was 26 to 39 feet below the present level in the chalcolithic period. Between the level of the subsoil water and the summit of the mound, Sir John Marshall recognised not less than seven strata of remain. The first of the seven strata was termed by him as the 'Late Period', comprised the 1st, 2nd and 3rd strata ; the second, which was termed the 'Intermediate Period' comprised of the 4th, 5th and 6th strata ; while the third, which was termed the 'Early Period' was for the present represented by the seventh stratum, though, as the digging proceeded lower, there was no doubt that earlier strata would be unearthed.

The chalcolithic culture of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa that was some four hundred miles apart, was completely uniform in character. It was not also confined within this narrow zone. Other chalcolithic sites have been found all over Sind as far as Gujo in he south and Vijnot on the dry bed of the Hakra on the north-east. Late N. G. Mazumdar, Assistant Superintendent of Archaeology, who was engaged in exploring the prehistoric sites of Sind up to 1931-32, has discovered a considerable number of them. The same culture probably flourished all over the Punjab. Harappa, on the old bed of the Ravi, is in the heart of the province. Chalcolithic remains have been found in Ruper on the Sutlej just below the Simla Hills. Chalcolithic remains have also been traced through Loralai, Derajat, Zhob, Waziristan as far as Bannu in the north.

The civilization of the seven levels of Mohenjo-daro was contemporaneous with the early Sumerian civilization represented by the relics recovered from the royal graves of Ur and from the ruins of A-anni-padda's temple at al-'Ubaid. The first six dynasties ruled Egypt about the same period. The Indus civilization was ahead of the contemporaneous Summerian and Egyptian civilizations in certain respects. The ordinary townpeople of Mohenjo-daro were better housed and with their wells, baths and elaborate system of drainage enjoyed a greater degree of civic comforts and amenities than the population of the other parts of the then civilized world. The scholars opine that authorities at Mohenjo-daro were perhaps the world's pioneers in city construction. The conservancy and sanitation of the city were looked after by the municipal system. Wells were a remarkable feature of Mohenjo-daro. The most remarkable

edifice was a great bath used for ceremonial purposes, and the remarkable buildings or a group of buildings, discovered at Harappa, were the granary used for storage of grain to be received by the state or municipal administration.

Rai Bahadur K. N. Dikshit has said that the wells at Mohenjo-daro were remarkable feature of the city, but in Harappa they are much less in evidence. It speaks volumes for the technical perfection of the builders that most of the wells, built thousands of years ago, are in perfect working order up to the present day. At Harappa, the only remarkable buildings or groups of buildings discovered as stated above are those known as the parallel wall or granary area. These consist of a series of parallel walls each 52 ft. long standing in two sections divided by a passage 23 ft broad. The walls are of an extraordinary thickness being about 9 ft thick and stand in groups of pairs each divided by about 5 ft from each other, and one pair separated from another by a distance of some 17 ft.

In Mohenjo-daro itself, the largest buildings, that have been discovered, measure 242′ in length by 112′ in breadth, and another of slightly smaller dimension. Each of these has several courtyards, surrounded by living rooms, store rooms, etc., which indicate that they must have been in the occupation of a person holding high position and having a large family and dependants.

In one area at Mohenjo-daro, a hall of considerable dimension of 85 square feet with a roof supported by 20 brick piers arranged in four aisles has been found. Rai Bahadur Dikshit has described that it was used for some public purpose of the community such as religious congregation, as it was in the neighbourhood of the great bath and possibly of the main temple underlying the Buddhist *stupa*. Dr. Mackey considered it to be a market-place. At some places in Mohenjo-daro buildings with large rooms and strong floors having regular depressions sunk in the floor have been found particularly at convenient corners of roads.

The dietary of the Indus people consisted of cereals, fish, meat, etc. Common people used to wear simple clothes, made of cotton and the richer people embroidered ones. In arts of lapidary, gold, silver and copper smiths attained high perfec-

tion. Fragments of potteries both polished and plain, bespeak of the high skill of potters and evoke admiration of people even to this day.

Fine Arts :

As to the fine arts of the Indus Valley people, sculpture is represented by some very beautiful statuettes viz. the limestone statue of a bearded gentleman, and one of the small stone figurines from Harappa, where human anatomy has been perfectly deleneated. Seal-cutter's art was very much advanced. People were very fond of music. They were highly cultured in the arts of dancing and singing. Rai Bahadur Dikshit has said: "Besides dancing, it appears that music was cultivated among the Indus people, and it seems probable that the earliest stringed instruments and drums (with which to keep rhythm in accompaniment with the music) are to be traced to the Indus civilization. In one of the teracotta figures, a kind of drum is to be seen hanging from the neck, and on two seals we find a precursor of the modern *mridanga* with skins at either end. On some of the pictographs appear representations of a crude stringed instrument, a prototype of the modern *veena;* while a pair of castanets, like the modern *karatala* have also been found". Dr. Lakshman Svarup has also mentioned: "One seal has preserved a dancing scene. One man heating a drum and others are dancing to the tune. On one seal from Harappa, a man is playing on a drum before a tiger. On another, a woman is dancing. In one case, a male figure has a drum hung round his neck".

Besides these, a bronze statue of a nude dancing girl, wearing a large number of bangles in one arm, was discovered from the mound by Rai Bahadur Dayaram Sahni. It is in a dancing posture, excellent in execution and represented perfect casting. Sir John Marshall and other archaeologists supposed that the dancing girl belonged to the aboriginal type as suggested by her feature. Now, from all the available sources we learn with a fair degree of certainty that the art of music (i.e. dancing, singing and drumming) was thoroughly cultivated by the higher classes and the masses of the Indus Valley epoch.

Religion :

People of the Indus Valley used to worship Mother goddess, goddess of fertility, trees and a god who was the prototype of Siva Pashupati. Regarding religion or religious cult of the people of the Indus Valley cities, Rai Bahadur Ramaprasad Chanda has said that the religion of the Indus Valley, in the chalcolithic period, appears to include many elements that ultimately developed into Hinduism. "Our main source of information for the religion of the Indus folk is the magnificent collection of seals recovered from Mohenjo-daro and Harappa. As the inscriptions on these seals have not yet been deciphered and interpreted, we are dependent on the designs only. An overwhelming majority of these designs consists of figures of animals. But it would perhaps be as much a mistake to suppose that the religion of the Indus people was mainly animal-worship or worship of gods who were conceived as animals, both real and imaginary, as to suppose that the religion of the Buddhist laymen and monks, who erected the carved railing of the *stupa* of Bharut and the gateways of the great *stupa* of Sanchi, was mainly tree and serpent worship. The backbone of the religion of the builders of Bharut and Sanchi consisted of the worship of the Buddhas or human beings who had attained perfect knowledge by practising *dhyana,* meditation and *samadhi,* rapt concentration, both different stages of Yoga. There is no definite evidence to show that the Indus religion had advanced as far as that, but there is ample evidence to show that it had already begun to move along the same line". The stone heads from Mohenjo-daro also proves the fact.

Funerary Customs :

Though cremation was the main method of disposal of the dead among the Indus Valley people, yet customs of complete or fractional burials and post-cremation burial also prevailed among some classes of population. Rai Bahadur K. N. Dikshit is of opinion that the funerary customs of the Indus people are yet obscure, "and it is unfortunate", he says, "that the elaborate provision for the afterlife made by the ancient contemporaries of the Indus people in countries like Egypt and Sumer, which have yielded such a rich harvest to the archaeologist, did

not find a counterpart among them. At Mohenjo-daro no trace of cemetery or burial place has been discovered, and it is strange that if the people responsible for this civilization had adopted some customs of burial, they should not have been revealed in course of such investigation". Rai Bahadur Ramaprasad Chanda has also said that no such cemetery has yet been found at Mohenjo-daro. "The lower stratum of the cemetery at Harappa has yielded some remains of complete burials and more may be expected in future. But these burials are somewhat later than the Indus period as represented at Mohenjo-daro. The few skeletal remains, recovered at Mohenjo-daro, were evidently buried in Late I or Late II Period in orthodox fashion. Therefore, as yet we have no material to determine what the authors of the Indus civilization were physically like. Among the twenty-four skeletons or portions of skeletons referable to chalcolithic age Colonel Sewell and Dr. Guha recognise four distinct ethnic types, viz. the Proto-Australoid (now represented by the Kols, Bhils, etc.), Mediterranean (like the modern long-headed Hindusthanis), Alpine (like the modern broad-headed Gujratis, Marathas, Bengalis) and the Mongolian. There skeletons, therefore, indicate that in the Late Period the population of Mohenjo-daro was ethnically as mixed as the present population of India. It cannot be expected that the population of the Indus Valley was more homogeneous in the Early and the Intermediate Periods of Mohenjo-daro".

Writing :

The Indus writing has been characterised as pictographic, "but it is obvious", says Rai Bahadur Dikshit, "that, except for a small number of signs, showing the pictures of birds, fish etc. and others indicating varieties of the human form, the rest have more or less conventional character. A remarkable feature of the Indus writing is its clarity and straight rectangular character". The most satisfactory analysis, however, so far made, is that by Dr. Hunter. Mr. Dikshit has said: "Even for the most careful scholar it is possible to follow a majority of the conclusions, reached in his (Dr. Hunter's) work on *The Script of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro.* The signs which are over 230 apart from the compounds or slight modifications, have been

arranged in 100 tables in which symbols of the same character have been grouped together". "A large number of the Indus signs consist of one or more short lines, which are grouped together as the numerical symbols in most of the syllabaris. The short strokes occur only in groups of 1 to 12, mostly vertical or rarely transverse. The longer strokes are 1 to 5. A symbol consisting of one straight and another oblique stroke is also common, while others are shaped like brackets and arrows" " One important figure shows a man carrying on his shoulder pitchers of water hanging from a pole. This sign is sometimes joined together to the commonest U-shaped sign of jar. One group of symbols consists of rectangles divided into a number of compartments by horizontal and vertical lines. We can see in these the representations of house with 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 18 or even 21 compartments". Nowadays many scholars are trying to decipher the scripts of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa, but no satisfactory result has yet been obtained.

Now, from the available data it is possible to form an idea of the civilization and culture of the prehistoric Indus people as prevailed 5000 years ago. Controversy rages round the question of authorship of Indus Valley culture, be that as it may, inspite of the destruction of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa, the culture of the people is still extant in Hindu society in another name and form.

APPENDIX II

INDIAN ART IN ALL ITS PHASES

"The character of a people", says Sister Nivedita, "is their history as written in their subconscious mind and to understand that character, we have to turn on it the lime-light of their history". Each nation creates its own symbol and out of it emerges its conception of art which is directly related to culture. The higher the fine arts of a people or a nation, the higher is its cultural level. The conception, inherent in a nation or a people, colours her creation in the realm of painting, sculpture, architecture, literature and music. Broadly speaking, art in all its phases is the response of man's creative soul to the call of the Beautiful. The function of an artist is to make barren rocks speak, mute stones sing and dance, blank walls and canvas throb with life and spirit, and words vibrate with melody. This can be done by the artist either in realistic or spiritualistic manner. The function of art is to unveil nature and bring into light her inner beauty, and "beauty is truth and truth is beauty" to quote Keats.

Every civilized nation of the past had its own concept or idea of art. Egypt aimed at durability, Assyria and Babylonia at masculine strength and vigour, Greece at beauty of form and proportion, and India at spirituality. A comparison between the plastic art of Gandhara with that of India particularly of the Gupta period will prove the truth of this assertion, though the fundamental impulses of art are neither Eastern nor Western but universal. As has been already said, India's outlook in the realm of art had always been spiritual, her artists be they painters, sculptors, architects or musicians, always tried to create something that would 'tease man out of thought as doth eternity'. They roamed in the realm of light and beauty, and were instrumental in awakening in man a spirit of aesthetic exaltation and spirituality.

In the *Aitareya-Brahmana* of the Rig Veda (3.2.5), it has been said that "the song, which is sung, is an art—a divine art, and in imitation thereof various articles of ivory, bell metal,

cotton, gold and chariot are made and shaped, again he, who is aware that this art is shaped after the divine art, truely attains art, then again art purifies and adorns the soul and makes the soul of the sacrificer rhythmic". Such conceptions of art inspired the painters, sculptors, architects and musicians of ancient India, to paint the mural paintings at Ajanta and Bagh, to carve out marvellous stone images of Buddha and that of the gods and goddesses of Hindu pantheon, and to fashion out of solid rocks, rock-cut temples, like Ellora, Ajanta, Bagh, Bhaja and colossal stone temples and the colossuses thereon of north and south India, and to invent melody types of high order.

Painting :

It must be remembered that painting in India was liked with the ceremonial of love and expressed warmest emotions through this art, as through dancing. Early mural paintings at Ajanta look very much like the logical continuation of the fresh and simplified forms of animal life in the prehistoric caverns of France and Spain. But cave No. 16 is highly decorated and cave No. 17 is a veritable salon of beauty and narrative. Here one finds secular subjects like sweet love and charm, happiness and suffering of man treated in gorgeous colours and majestic rhythms. The paintings at Ajanta are invested with fine conception, brilliant colour and admirable drawing. The graceful and fanciful decorative designs too have been executed with masterly skill. They also depict sacred objects and symbols, the figures of Buddha and the incidents of his past lives (Jataka Stories). The Bagh caves also contain some paintings of high merit. While gazing with wonder at the Ajanta paintings one finds himself in a dream universe.

Sculpture :

Function of a sculptor is to translate into stone or bronze his aesthetic ideal and ideas. The sculptors of prehistoric India demonstrated in their artistic objects unearthed at Mohenjo-daro and Harappa a thorough comprehension of both work in round and relief. The most artistic objects at Mohenjo-daro

are the seal engravings, portraying animals like the humped bull, the buffalo, the bison, etc. Regarding them, Sir John Marshall has observed: "In no sense can these objects be regarded as products of primitive or archaic art * * (they) exhibit a spontaneity and truthfulness to nature of which even Hellenic art might not have been ashamed". The same authority has made the following remarks on two stone statues found at Harrapa: "When I first saw them I found it difficult to believe that they were prehistoric; they seemed so completely to upset all established ideas about early art. Modelling such as this was unknown in the ancient world up to Hellenistic age of Greece".

For more than two thousand years after Harappa and Mohenjo-daro, India produced no sculptures of great merit. It was only in the historical period, particularly between the time of Asoka and the Christian era, that great Chaitya Halls and *stupas* were built, but they contained no images. The religious symbolism of Buddhist devotion of this period found expression in the sculptures of tree, the *stupa,* the rail, the horse-shoe ornament and the foot-print.

In order to form a definite idea of the Asokan art one has to turn his attention to the monolithic pillars, bearing edicts of the august emperor. They are each made of one piece of sand stone, containing lustrous polish. Marvellous engineering and technical skill has been exhibited in chiselling the stone with wonderful accuracy. But these too pale into insignificance before the high artistic merits of the figures crowning them. Of the series Sarnath Pillar is considered to be the best. Sir John Marshall has made the following observation regarding the Sarnath Capital: "It would be difficult to find in any country an example of ancient animal sculpture superior or even equal to this beautiful work of art, which successfully combines realistic modelling with ideal dignity and is finished in every detail with perfect accuracy".

Emergence of Buddhism as an imperial cult first began under the patronage of Asoka the Great and through his efforts it became a world religion. With the introduction of the Mahayana school, Buddhism underwent a great change. Under the patronage of Kanishka, the recognition of Bodhisattva came into being. Images of Buddha appeared in Buddhist sculpture

and received the devout worship of the faithful. As a result of the conquest of north-western India by the Bactrian Greeks, union of India and Greek arts was effected and as a result thereof emerged the Gandhara school of sculpture. This art represented mostly images of Buddha and relief sculptures representing scenes from Buddhist texts. Gandhara sculptors aimed at moulding human body in a realistic manner giving accurate physical details. There was a time when it was believed that Gandhara Buddha image served as a model for those executed at Mathura and other places. But there was a sea of difference between the two. The former aimed at deleneating anatomical details and physical beauty, while the latter at imparting a sublime and spiritual expression to the figure. Both the schools of Mathura and Gandhara flourished independently. Images executed at Mathura in red sand stone became so popular and famous that they used to be carried to the remote corners of India. The classical phase of Indian sculpture began with the Gupta period when the techniques of art were perfected and ideals of beauty were formulated with precision. The stone or bronze images of Buddha, Siva, Vishnu and other Brahmanical gods of the period exhibit charm and dignity, graceful pose and a radiant spiritual expression. The art of the Gupta period is dominated by an intellectual element. Of all the number Buddha images unearthed at Sarnath, Varanasi, one is regarded as the finest in the whole of India.

The Pala period witnessed vast improvement in the domain of literature, art and science. The epoch became memorable by the activities of the artists like Dhimana and Vitpala.

Architecture :

Architecture is called 'Frozen Music'. When the rhythm and tempo of music are applied to architecture it throbs and vibrates like music, 'when soft voices die'. Upto the year 1922, it was believed that the earliest extant example of architecture in India, was the cyclopean stone walls encircling ancient city of Rajgir in Bihar. But the discovery of Mohenjo-daro in the Larkana district of Sindh has made one to revise the above opinion. Here, some five thousand years ago a city was built containing numerous dwelling houses, some of them of elaborate

structure and design. Its streets were wide and straight and was furnished with an elaborate drainage system. From the ruins of the city it is apparent that utility rather than beauty played a prominent part in its construction. The houses were mostly built with kilnburnt bricks. But in the present stage of one's knowledge it is not known, whether the houses contained any decorative designs, as one is expected to find in a city of this dimension.

The Rigvedic Aryans mostly lived in villages though one finds mention of purs occasionally, but it is not clear whether Rigvedic Aryans had cities in the modern sense of the term, unless they were the authors of the Indus Valley cities. With the Magadhan ascendency dawned the epoch of art in ancient India. In the age of Asoka particularly, we come across monuments of high quality. But compared with sculptures the architectural remains of the Maurya period are very poor though contemporary Greek writers spoke highly of the magnificient palaces in the capital city of Pataliputra. In later years Mauryan edifices inspired awe and admiration in the heart of the Chinese traveller Fa Hien. Chandragupta's Palace in Pataliputra was made of wood which evoked unstinted admiration in heart of Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador to the court of Chandragupta. Asoka's Palace in Pataliputra was built in stone and the ruins of his hundred pillared hall has recently been excavated. Asoka is credited with building a large number of *stupas* all over India and Afganisthan, but they have almost entirely perished. The extant architectural remains of Asoka's time consist of monolithic stone rail at Sarnath, the rock-cut Chaitya halls in the Barabar Hills and the *stupa* at Sanchi. The artists of Asoka were artists *par excellence*, having a long history of artistic tradition behind them.

It is a far cry from the end of the Maurva period to the Guptas. During the period intervening the fall of the former and the rise of the latter, a distinct form of art evolved. The period was rich in sculptures, but not so in architecture, though beautiful temples, monasteries, *stupas* and caves hewn out of solid rock and decorated with pillars and sculptures of high order bespeak of the high achievement of Indian architects of the period. The Chaitva caves at Nasik, Bhaja, Bedsa, Karle, Khandagiri and Udaygiri are considered to be the beautiful

works of architectural art. The temples at Sanchi and Deogarh, built during the Gupta period, though small, are well designed, and the sculptured panels thereon are in full harmony with the architectural plans of the buildings. Beautiful temples considered to be marvels of temple architecture were built during the mediaeval period at Bhubaneswar, Konarak, Puri in Orissa and also at Khajuraho and Mount Abu.

The Pallavas ushered in the South India a new era in architecture and sculpture. Rock-cut temples or Rathas of Mahabalipuram bear evidence of this. Cholas too of South India, were mighty builders. The best example of Chola style is the great Saiva temple of Tanjore. Rashtrakutas too were great builders. Their architectural triumph is discernable in the famous Kailasa temple at Ellora, executed by their second King Krishna I, which is a splendid achievement of architectural art and is considered unequalled in the history of the world. The Hoysalas of Mysore evolved a new style of architecture. Their famous Hoysaleswara temple at Holebid is the best known example of the Hoysala style.

From the history of architecture we come to know that different cave-temples were designed and exavated all over India by the Buddhist, Jain and Hindu sects. The cave-temples were excavated in different times in different places but, yet there was a big interval between the early Buddhist and Jain cave-temples and those of other sects. Again from the point of view of the architect mediaeval cave-temples are less interesting than the earlier one. Well has it been said by the renowned historian and archaeologist Mr. Rakhaldas Banerjee that the "earliest Jain caves are those on the Khandagiri and Udaygiri hills near Bhubaneswara in the Puri District of Orissa. Here there are two classes of caves: (a) temples or shrines and (b) dormitories. The dormitories are exactly similar in arrangement to the great Buddhist dormitories at Karle and Bhaja in the Poona district, Pandulena in the Nasik district, Kanheri in the Thana district of the Bombay Presidency and those at Ellora and Ajanta in the Nizam's dominions. In the dormitories in the Khandagiri and Udaygiri caves, there is a stone bench running along the back and the side walls of the verandah, benches for sleeping with one end raised in the cells and arrangements for other creature

comforts. It is the absence of such arrangements in certain caves which enable us to recognise the shrines".

"The cave-temples excavated by the great Maurya Emperor Asoka and his grandson Dasaratha on the Barabar and Nagarjuni Hills in the Gaya district were intended for the occupation of monks of the Ajivaka sect. The Ajivakas were a sect which flourished in the 5th or the 4th century B.C.. They are known to us from the inscriptions in these caves and Jain and Buddhist literature". Further he has said that there are Jain caves at Badami in the Bijapur district, at Maungya Tungya in the Nasik district and at Ellora in the Nizam's dominions, but they are eight or more centuries later than the earliest Jain caves on the Khandagiri and Udaygiri hills of Orissa. Even the later group of Jain caves on the Khandagiri are at least eleven hundred years later in date than the great double-storied Rani Nur Gumpha made by Kharvela, king of Kalinga. According to Mr. R. D. Banerjee "like Hindu temples Hindu caves are much later in date than Buddhist ones. The oldest Hindu cave is cave No. 1 at Elephanta. There may be older Hindu caves in existence, but either we have no data to indentify them as such or date them as precisely as we can date the Kailasa cave at Ellora or Mangalesa's cave No. IV at Badami".

Regarding the great Kailasa temple at Ellora Mr. Banerjee has said: "The Kailasa is partly constructed, but for the greater part excavated. It is now known to be a monument of the time of the early Rashtrakuta king Krishna I and, therefore, belongs to the last decades of the eighth century A.D. In plan, it is an excavation open towards the sky, consisting of a temple, surrounded by an open courtyard on all sides. The fourth side has been enclosed with a porch constructed afterwards. Surrounding the courtyard on three sides, there are galleries along the rock surface, partly single storied, and partly double storied. The rear of side walls of these galleries are covered with bas-reliefs. The main temple, though excavated out of the rock, rises free in the centre of the courtyard in the same fashion as any other mediaeval temple. In this particular respect, the Kailasa is different from all other Hindu temples except the cave-temple of Dharmanatha at Dhamnar in the Rampura Bhanpura district of Indore State and the Kholvi

temple in the Jhalawar State.* * At Kailasa the sanctum or the main shrine is not on the ground level, but at the height of the second storey. It follows the general principle laid down by early Chalukyan architects in having a central *mandapa* where the *chala-murti* or movable image could be placed. On three sides of the central *mandapa,* there are three open porches or *ardha-mandapas,* the fourth being occupied by the sanctum. In another respect, the Kailasa differs from most of the Hindu cave-temples of Northern and Southern India; it possesses a spire of the south-western or Chalukyan type, but of this also we shall have to speak at a later stage. In the Kailasa therefore we see the termination of the evolution of a rock-cut Hindu temple the first stage of which we can see in the Central Hall and the left wing of Cave No. 1 at Elephanta".

But the Muslim invasion in India and their iconalistic zeal snapped further development of Indian art and gradually choked its perennial flow of inspiration. Because art in all phases thrives only in peace and security.

Music :

The moods and temperaments of people are reflected in their music which is called the 'magic of sound'. Music gives expression of joy and grief, pleasure and pain, love and hatred, and it has always been an important element of culture of the people of all nations. Music is an art, and it is included in the category of the fine arts like sculpture, painting and architecture. In primitive culture, music formed an integral part of its rites and ceremonies. Subjective impulse for the art of music manifested as objective forms of singing and dancing among the primitive men. Indian music, which had its origin in the remote past, grew rich in contents through the gradual process of evolution, when microtones, tones, scales, *ragas, gitis, murcchanas, alamkaras, angas,* visual forms of the *ragas,* rhythm and tempo, musical instruments, dances hand-poses, gestures and postures, emotional moods and sentiments etc. came into being. "The science of music", says Swami Abhedananda, "was first developed by the Hindus from the chanting of the vedic hymns. The Sama Veda was specially meant for music, and it is the source of all types of music that evolved in the post-vedic

times. And the scale with seven notes and three octaves was known in India centuries before the Greeks had it. Probably the Greeks learned it from the Hindus. It will be interesting to you to know that Wagner was indebted to the Hindu science of music, specially for his principal idea of the 'leading motive', and this is perhaps the reason why it is so difficult for many Western people to understand Wagner's music. He became familiar with Eastern music through Latin translations, and his conversation on this subject with Schopenhauer is already familiar to you".

During the vedic age, the chanters and common people were content with purely sacred hymnal type of songs, possessing different numbers of tones, registers, meters and literary compositions. The *samans* were replaced during the beginning of the classical period (600-500 B.C.) by the new and novel type of *gandharva* music, the materials of which were collected from the vedic music. In the 2nd century A.D., Bharata systematised the classical type of *gandharva* music with a scientific outlook. Genuine type of *ragas* came into being with ten determining characteristics (*dasha lakshanas*) at that time. In the 3rd-7th century A.D., eminent musicologists like Kohala, Yastika. Durgashakti, Matanga and others began to blend and systematise aboriginal and regional tunes (*ragas*). By the fusion of non-Aryan, Aryan and foreign tunes, Indian music became rich, deep and sensitive. During this period, hundreds of *ragas* evolved with new names and novel forms.

Musical instruments in ancient India were divided into four heads, (1) *tata* or stringed instruments, (2) *vitata* or instruments covered with skin, (3) *ghana* or instruments giving resonance by the concussion of two solid bodies, and (4) *susira* or wind instruments. *Veena,* a musical instrument of the *tata* class was very popular in the vedic time, and *veena* like *vana, kacchapi, kshauni, audamvari, picchora* or *picchola,* etc. were the prominent ones. Mention of different kinds of *veena* is to be found even in the *Ramayana, Mahabharata, Harivamsha,* different *Puranas* and other books of ancient India. *Veena* and bamboo flutes (*venu*) used to be played by both men and women before the vedic sacrifices in vedic time. The wives of the priests and the *yajamanas* used to dance, keeping time with the clapping of their palms.

From the early vedic age down to the Muslim period, the culture of Indian music flowed freely and uninterruptedly. During Maurya period, dancing, singing and instrumental music formed an important part of all festivities. From the sculptures, engraved on the railings and one of the gateways of the Stupa of Bharut, built during the reign of the Sungas, one finds representations of musical concert and dancing, which testify that music was also cultured during the Sunga period. In the Gupta period, there was an upsurge of musical culture. Samudragupta was a great patron of classical music and dance, and himself a lyre player. Chandragupta II was reputed to be an adept in music. So were the Pala and Sena Rulers.

Some scholars are of opinion that Indian system of music owed much to the Mohammedan period, because it produced many stalwart musicians throughout the time. But with the advent of the Mohammedans, the theory of music and the *Shastras* were neglected, and decline of the true spirit of music was speedy, though music contributed to the entertainment of the princes and nobles. Thus the progress and development of Indian art in all its phases, as have been attempted above, go to show the high culture and refinement the ancient Indians attained. It also exhibits that Indian art could reach the realm of Truth and Beauty.*

* Appendices I & II are written and added by Swami Prajnanananda.

THE IDEAL OF EDUCATION

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PREFACE

Education is the background of all nations. Proper education alone can build the character of a nation, and awaken the consciousness of nationality and freedom. Nation's ideal, nation's morality and sense of duty and everything depend upon her education. It is education that enables a man to be a 'real and perfect man'.

But education must be practical. It must reform not only the stereotyped system of education, but also its academic procedure, and impart real knowledge and means that will enable men to stand on their own feet, and make them understand the value of the ideal and principles of education in their everyday life. And such is the earnest appeal of the patriotic author of this book to everyone.

This book contains four lectures, delivered by the Swami at different places in different times. The first lecture was delivered under the auspices of the *Bihar Youngmen's Institute* at Patna in 1925, under the presidency of the then Minister of Education. It was so much appreciated that the President, out of his own accord, defrayed all the expenses for its publication. The second lecture was delivered in 1906 at Kualalampur on the Swami's first return from the West. The third lecture was delivered in Madras in 1906 and has already been published in the book *Lectures in India*. The last lecture was given by the Swami at the *Educational Conference* in America as an amendment for the proposal of Dr. William H. Jackson, the noted professor of the Columbia University.

The readers will find in these lectures the broad vision and views of the Swami. Education should not be based alone upon the principle of economic betterment and industrial growth, but also on the moral elevation and spiritual ground so that it will make the nation in every way progressive and practical. The practical training in all branches of science, art, and industry, along with the philosophical, moral and spiritual development, should be the aim of education. This principle should be worked out by us for the well-being of the nation. The Swami realized this truth as a result of his experiences of

many years' stay in America and in many other countries of the world. His frequent visits to various institutions of education and close contact with the leading educationists in America led him to believe that the progress of a nation entirely depend upon the practical education in all branches of knowledge. And this practical education is to be imparted not only to the boys, but also to the girls as well, regardless of class and community. Without the practical application of this principle, our national progress is impossible. That is why in these lectures the Swami has again and again appealed to India's men of light and leading, to improve the present system of education which is surely a hindrance to our economic, cultural, moral and spiritual advancement.

SWAMI PRAJNANANANDA

CHAPTER I

THE IDEAL OF EDUCATION

Delivered at the Bihar Young Men's Institute, Patna, on January 27, 1925

Mr. Chairman and Brethren,

It is with great pleasure that I stand before you this evening to speak on the *Ideal of Education,* as announced by our Chairman. Before going into the subject of this evening, allow me to make a few introductory remarks about my activities in Europe and America. For the last twenty-five years I was preaching India before the American public, as also in England and other parts of Europe. My object was to defend India and her culture against the unjust criticisms of the Christian missionaries and other sectarians, who wanted to convert the Indians into Christianity and to raise funds for that purpose. I had the honour and privilege of representing India or rather the Indian culture in various universities of the United States and Canada, where I met some of the greatest professors and educators of the West. I also had the privilege of talking with Professor Max Müller in Sanskrit and of meeting Professor Paul Deussen, who translated sixty of our *Upanishads* into German and was the author of *System des Vedanta* and the *Philosophy of the Upanishads.* Professor Deussen once came to India, and delivered a lecture in Sanskrit in Bombay. He spoke in Sanskrit to the ekka-drivers who could not understand him. The same venerable Professor Paul Deussen of Kiel University was in London, when I was there, and to him I was introduced by my illustrious predecessor the world-renowned Swami Vivekananda. Swami Vivekananda called me over to London in 1896, and after giving me the charge of his work in London, he returned to India, his motherland. I stayed on, and carried on the work which he had entrusted on me. Then I was asked to go over to America, and make my headquarters in New York. Our Chairman has already said that the Vedanta Society of New York was started by Swami Vivekananda in 1894.

This Society was in its infancy, when I arrived at New York in 1897. It had only a handful of members at first, but after a hard struggle I succeeded in making it a well-established society. When I landed at New York, I was penniless, and during my twenty-five years' stay in the United States, I never drew a pice from India. I was entertained by the American people, who gave me food, clothes, and a house, and took care of me. They also gave me an Ashram, measuring about 320 acres of land in a farm and a home in the city of New York worth nearly two lakhs of rupees. Now there are four Swamis of our Mission who are working in different centres in the United States of America.

The subject of this evening makes me think of the past glory of India, our holy motherland. The civilization and culture of ancient India were grand and glorious. India has contributed her culture to the Western nations in various branches of knowledge. The world owes its first lessons in geometry and algebra (*Vijaganita*) to India. The 47th proposition of Euclid: A square on the hypotenuse of a rectangular traingle is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides was ascribed to Pythagoras, but it was known in India centuries before Pythagoras was born. It is mentioned in the *Sulvasutras* of the vedic age. Algebra was introduced into Europe from researches we have gathered that Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine of Europe, who lived about 400 B.C., borrowed his *Materia Medica* from India. In chemistry, as also in surgery, we know from the study of the *Sushruta*, the Hindus excelled other nations. We know from the accounts that have been left to us by Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador, who lived in the court of Chandragupta in the fourth century before Christ, that Alexander the Great used to keep Hindu physicians in his camp, because he preferred them to Greek physicians. Nearchus and Arrian spoke highly of the wonderful healing power of the Arabs, who learnt it in India, and Leonardo da Pisa introduced it into Italy and several countries of Europe in the thirteenth century. In fact, geometry, algebra, trigonometry, all these were first taught in India. The Arabs learnt these from India and carried them into the West. The world owes decimal notation to India. It was unknown to the Greeks and Romans; and arithmatic as a

practical science would have been impossible without decimal notation. The world owes its first lessons of medicine to India. Although there is a general belief that Europe derived her knowledge of medicine from Greece, still she is indebted to the Hindu physicians.

In various branches of science, philosophy, art, and music, the Hindus were the first teachers. For instance, the Greeks had five notes of music at first, but the Hindus developed seven notes of music and had three octaves long before the Greeks had them. During the vedic period, Sama Veda used to be sung and chanted with those notes. Wagner's music with its special *motifs* was indebted to Indian music. Schopenhauer, the great German philosopher, had a conversation with Wagner on this subject, from which we learn that the great German musician Wagner studied the Latin translation of the Sanskrit science of music, and that he learnt from the Sanskrit science of music those principal *motifs,* which had made his music so original and so wonderful. In other branches of knowledge also, India developed her culture to a great extent, for instance, in astronomy, and in developing the theory of evolution of the world out of *Prakriti,* the eternal cosmic energy, as described in the *Sankhya* system of philosophy. All these different branches of study were highly developed in India centuries before Christ, and even today the European scholars admit this fact. I can quote from Sir Monier Monier Williams, who in his book entitled *Brahminism and Hinduism,* says that "the Hindus were Spinozaites more than 2,000 years before the existence of Spinoza; and Darwinians many centuries before Darwin; and evolutionists many centuries before Darwin; and evolutionists many centuries before the doctrine of evolution had been accepted by the scientists of our time, and before any word like evolution existed in any language of the world."[1] His remarks were correct, because we learn from the philosophy of the *Sankhya* that the whole world was not created by an extra-cosmic personal God, who is sitting on his throne above the clouds, but that there was one eternal cosmic energy which was called by the name of *Prakriti* (the same as Latin *Procreatrix*), the creative energy of the universe. This energy is indestruct-

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

ible and uncreatable, yet changeable. It is one and eternal. Today Western science admits that there is only one eternal cosmic energy, the sum total of which neither increases nor decreases. This fact was established by Kapila, the founder of the *Sankhya* system of philosophy in the seventh century before Christ. We had our Newton in Aryabhatta who lived about 476 A.D., and who declared that the earth was moving upon its own axis round the sun. Long before the Copernican system of astronomy was known to the Europeans, this Aryabhatta's system was taught in India, and it was Aryabhatta who first declared that the law of gravitation existed; he called it *madhyakarshana,* i.e., attraction towards the centre. We had our Shakespeare in Kalidasa; we had our philosopher greater than Kant and Hegel in Sankaracharya, greater than Hume and Berkeley in Vashistha; and we had materialistic philosophy in the system of Kanada. The atomic theory of Kanada is a wonder to the Western minds, because in such an early age, i.e. in the pre-Buddhistic period, Kanada proved to the world that this external universe was made up of minute particles of matter—*anu* (atoms), which were indestructible. Again, we find that these atoms of Kanada were not the final particles of the material world, but particles finer than atoms were discovered by Kapila, and he called them *tanmatras* which would be similar to the electrons and protons of modern science. The electrons are the force centres of negative electricity and the protons are of positive electricity. Such great advancement was made in different branches of knowledge and science in the pre-Buddhistic age which lasted between 1500 B.C.[2]

Then in moral and spiritual lines, the Hindus were the first teachers in the world. Centuries before the Christian era, nay, long before Moses gave the Ten Commandments to the nomadic tribes of Israel in that remote antiquity, when the European nations were eating raw animal flesh, living in caves and forests, tattooing their bodies, wearing animal skins, the civilization of India was in its high glory. The dawn of civilization first broke not upon the horizon of Greece, Europe, or Arabia, but upon the horizon of India. India is not a country of today, but she had the sublime teachings of Vedanta long

[2] *Vide* Swami Abhedananda: *India and Her People*, pp 18-20.

before the time of Moses, when Krishna sang the *Bhagavat Gita* in the battle-field of Kurukshetra. All those who came in touch with India were benefitted. During the Buddhistic period, as we know from the edicts of Asoka, Buddhist preachers were sent out to different parts of the then civilized world, from Siberia to Ceylon, and from China to Egypt. Buddhist monks travelled and preached the gospel of love for all, and the highest ethics of humanitarianism in foreign countries. Those teachings of Buddha were afterwards emphasized in the teachings of Jesus the Christ. Christianity can be traced back to the Hindu ideals in many of its doctrines and dogmas. The principal part of Christianity i.e., Baptism was not known among the Jews of that time, but it came from the Ganges as Ernest Renan has said in his *Life of Jesus.*

The education of a nation depends upon its ideal of civilization. The Hindu ideal of civilization from prehistoric times was purely moral and spiritual. Consequently, the civilization of ancient India was based, not upon commercial principles of modern times and not upon the selfish ideal of political gain and power over other nations, but upon the eternal spiritual laws which govern our soul. Intellectual culture was not regarded as the highest ideal, but spiritual realization of the relation that exists between the individual soul and the universal Spirit, was the principal aim of education. "Education", as Herbert Spencer has said, "is the training for completeness of life". Education will bring out the perfection of the man, which is already latent in his soul. Education does not mean that a lot of ideas or informations will be poured into the brain of the individual, and they will run riot. But it means the gradual growth and development of the soul from its infancy to maturity. Education should be based upon the spiritual ideal that each individual soul is potentially divine, that it possesses infinite potentiality and infinite possibility, and that knowledge cannot come from outside into inside, but that all knowledge evolves from inside. No one can teach you, but you teach yourself and the teachers only give you suggestions. This should be the principle of education. Today, in our universities, we find just the opposite principle. A student is allowed to study and memorize the notes of his professors and pass the examinations; and then he comes out as a

'*pashakara murkha*'—a learned fool. He gets a diploma for his ignorance. That is not the ideal of education. Education does not mean intellectual culture, but it means the development and spiritual unfoldment of the soul in all the various branches of learning.

The ideal of education, in America, is revolutionizing the ideals of the past ages. Today an infant boy or girl of four or five years of age, in America, is allowed to go into the kindergarten school-room, where all kinds of toys, music-boxes, pictures for painting and drawing are kept. The children are allowed to go inside that room, and are asked to choose what they would like, in order to know their natural inclinations. If any one is attracted to the music-box, he would excel in music, and, therefore, such training should be given to him as would make him the best musician of the world. He should, therefore, not be allowed to go into a college and become a graduate in the literary line, which would mean nothing to him. Some one would be a painter, and another would be an athlete. In every branch of learning, one must excel. The stereotyped way of getting a degree like B.A. or M.A. and then becoming a clerk is not the ideal of education. By following this method, we are ruining our youngmen.[3]

Education should be according to the natural inclination of the individual soul, with the idea that wisdom cannot be drilled into the brain of the individual, and that all the books give mere suggestions, and, in reaction, we get the knowledge of the book. In order to understand a book, our mind must vibrate or be *en rapport* with the mind of the author. Then we get knowledge by itself, for it is a process of transmission. Knowledge does not come from outside. We will have to raise the vibration of our mind to the level of the vibration of the mind of the author, and then, like wireless telegraphy, the wisdom of the author's mind will be communicated to the student's mind. That is the natural principle of proper education. Are we doing that? No. But we had that system in ancient India. The present university system is going to be out of place, because, in England, the professors are beginning to realize the efficiency of our old Brahmacharya *Vidyapitha*

[3] The contention of the Swami is that proper education makes a man perfect, and his spiritual consciousness is awakened.

system. A professor would have a few students around him. He would be their guardian, and would be of pure character, spotless in his ideals. He would be a moral man ; and he would not be like a man who gets a large pay and lives an immoral life. Such a man is not going to be the ideal teacher. And this method is going to be taken up in Europe and America in future. In that system, the student will find an example, and the example is better than precept. One living example will change the whole character of the student, and it will mould his career according to the ideal which is before him. Therefore, the present system of education is not a perfect one.

Again the ideal of a nation should be the ideal of education. Our minds are running towards the spiritual ideal. What is the cause of it ? Because we have learnt all these different branches of science from religion. In Europe, religion was against scientific culture. Christianity stood against all intellectual development, and against all science and all improvements. Think of the miserable condition of Galileo who said that the earth was moving. The Roman Church put him into a dungeon under torture, and asked him to retract his statement. But Galileo said: "No, you can torture me today, but the earth still moves. I cannot retract it, for it is the truth". That truth is an established fact of modern astronomy. The warfare between science and religion in Europe was a long-standing one. It has not stopped yet. The fire of inquisition was kindled, and hundreds were burnt alive at the stake, simply because they did not submit their intellect to the dogmas of the Church. Giardano Bruno was burnt alive in the streets of Rome in 1600 A.D., because he was a believer in one supreme Spirit, whose body was matter and mind was the cosmic one. So, my friends, if religion were powerful in Europe today, there would have been no scientific culture, and no improvement or discovery, because their religion says about the creation in six days out of nothing, while modern science teaches evolution with scientific facts. Religion tells them that the earth was created six thousand years ago before our sun came into existence. But modern astronomy teaches that the sun was created before the earth ; and geology tells us that our earth is millions of years old, and that the first appearance of man was about one hundred thousand years ago. How can we

reconcile these contradictory statements? If we accept one we shall have to reject the other. But in our country, my friends, *Sanatana Dharma* never stood against science or free thought. You may believe in God, or you may not, but so long as you are a moral and spiritual man, you are worshipped and honoured by the masses as the ideal of the nation. Buddha did not believe in a personal God, yet we regard him as an *Avatara*. Kapila did not believe in a personal God. In his *Sankhya* system he says: *Isvarasiddheh prmanabhavat*, i.e. 'there is no proof for the existence of a personal God who is Creator of the universe'. Still Kapila was the greatest of all sages.

We have hundreds of such cases, because free-thought was the watchword of the Hindus in ancient times. They had no bigotry and sectarianism; they did not mean by the Vedas a set of books which must be accepted as true in every letter, but they were meant by Veda, *wisdom*. God is the ocean of wisdom, which is eternal and indestructible. There is only one source of wisdom which occasionally reveals itself to mortal minds, and through them the world learns something about the eternal Truth. Who could have known anything about God, if he did not reveal himself to mortal minds? We know from the life of Mohammed that when he was praying on Mount Heerah, he had a revelation. He was living in a cave in that desert, and his heart was longing for a knowledge of the divine Being, and Truth was revealed to him. Truth is not confined to any particular individual or nation, but it is for everybody. As the sun rises and shines equally upon the heads of all nations, even so does the sun of eternal Truth shine and reveal itself among all nations. Whoever will long for such realization will find a way to the attainment of Truth. This conception has made the Hindu mind broad and tolerant. It does not condemn anybody. The Hindu embraces a Mohammedan, because Mohammedanism is a path to the realization of Truth. He accepts Christianity, because Christ revealed the universal Truth among the Jews who had sectarian ideals. Christ said: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."[1] Our Vedas say the same thing. Where is then the difference?

The essentials of all religions are one and the same, and

[1] St. John, VIII, 32.

that is self-mastery, Godconsciousness, self-control and purity. These are the ideals. He is regarded as a civilized man by the Hindus who lives a pure and unselfish life, who is loving, kind and compassionate to all, and he conquers avarice by generosity and hatred by love. But a man, who robs others to promote his self-interest, is not a civilized man according to the Hindu ideal, and I do not believe that he is regarded as a civilized man according to the Mohammedan ideal either. The ideals are the same. A man must not be judged by his outside, but by his inner nature and character. The outward garb, dress, clothes, formality, and etiquette do not amount to anything. The Lord sees the purity of the heart: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God"[5]. Purity of heart is the *sine qua non* of God-vision. We must be pure in heart and loving to all, irrespective of caste, creed and nationality. Any education that separates mortals from mortals, and disunites brothers from brothers, is not uplifting and should not be the ideal. Therefore, my brethren, I consider that the aim of education should not be mere intellectual culture with commercial ideals, to gain our livelihood in the struggle of competition, but that the ideal of education should be such as will elevate man from his ordinary selfish state into the unselfish universal ideal of Godhood. Anything that makes us kneel down before that grand ideal, is uplifting.

A Hindu philosopher went to Greece, and asked Socrates what he was studying. Socrates answered: "My study is the study of man". The Hindu philosopher smiled and replied: "How can you know anything about man when you do not know God ?" This is an answer that could come from a Hindu alone and not from any other philosopher, because the Hindu alone, from ancient times, has regarded the individual soul as a part and parcel of the divine Being. The divine spark dwells within us, but we must recognize that divine spark is in all methods of education. We must regard the child who is born as a living God; and not that it was created out of nothing and a soul was breathed into its body from outside, but that the soul of the child is the maker of its physical body. The soul is eternal, and it could never be created. It is the body

[5] St. Matthew, V. 8.

that could be created. This highest wisdom is given only in the Hindu philosophy of Vedanta, and the Western world today recognize this fact. When Christ said: "The kingdom of Heaven is within you", he perhaps meant the same thing, but the Occidentals do not understand this meaning. We Orientals understand Christ better than the Occidentals do. The other day I was talking with an Englishman in Calcutta, and he said that he had a theory that the Hindu mind could understand Christ better than the Occidentals. I said: "I share that belief, because I know that the Occidental mind takes everything too literally, while Christ himself spoke in metaphors and parables which should be understood in the same way as that of the parables ond metaphors of Buddha and Krishna". He replied: "I believe you are right". So, my friends, we Hindus can give a new interpretation to the doctrines of Christianity, and perhaps, a new interpretation to the ideals of other religions from the highest standpoint of our Vedanta.

Vedanta means the highest wisdom, and it does not mean any book. *Veda* means 'wisdom', while *anta* means 'end'. The word wisdom is derived from the same Sanskrit root *vid*—to know, and 'end' is derived from *anta*. You will be surprised to know that most of the English words that we use now in our colloquial conversation had their origin in Sanskrit words. The world father, in Latin *pater,* in Greek *pat-er,* is in Sanskrit *pitar ;* the word mother in Latin *mater,* is in Sanskrit *matar ;* the word brother is in Sanskrit *bhratar ;* the word daughter is in Sanskrit *duhitar ;* the word name is in Sanskrit *naman ;* the word serpant is in Sanskrit *sarpa ;* the word path is in Sanskrit *patha ;* the word soup is in Sanskrit *supa :* the word bond is in Sanskrit *bandha ;* the word punch is in Sanskrit *pancha* which means five ; and the *punch* which the Europeans drink, is called so, because it is made up of five ingredients. Therefore, my friends, you can trace most of these English words into Sanskrit roots. Æsop's fables and Pilpay's stories were based upon the stories from the *Hitopadesha.* All these animal stories originated in India, and travelled westward into Europe. Thus you see that the culture of the ancient Hindu people was great, and during the Buddhistic age that culture was improved in various lines. Here you had the Nalanda University. Do you know what that University was like ? Ten thousand students

used to live there. We read a description of that Nalanda University in the writings of the Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang, who lived there for many years. He said that from one hundred pulpits instructions were given everyday to different classes of students, and that no student disobeyed the orders of the University or its rules and regulations during the seven hundred years of its existence. Think of the discipline which the Nalanda University had. I went to see the ruins of Taxila University. There also several thousand students used to live. The Chinese scholars used to come and study various branches of science and philosophy from the Hindu teachers. The principal of the Nalanda University was Shilabhadra, the teacher of Hiuen Tsang, who was a Bengalee from Gauda, the then capital of Bengal. Dipankara, whose birthplace was Vajrayogini in Vikrampur in East Bengal, was a great philosopher who went to Tibet to preach the gospel of Buddha. Buddhist preachers also went to Egypt, China, and Japan. At one time the inhabitants of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa were all Buddhists and Biharis and Bengalees were brothers who had one Magadhi language. The Jagannath temple in Orissa was a temple of the Buddhists. There was no caste distinction, and all were brothers. That brotherliness should be revived once more. At that time, of course, Islam had not risen, and Christianity was not there. But still the ideal of universal brotherhood was preached by Buddha; and even Krishna, who ante-dated Buddha, declared in a trumpet voice before the world:

Vidya-vinasampanne brahmane gavi hastini,
Shuni chaiva shvapake cha panditah samadarshinah.[6]

"He is a pandit, a true philosopher and a scholar, who can see the same universal Spirit in a well-cultured Brahmin, in a cow, in an elephant, in a dog, and in a pariah."

That has been our ideal, but the people have forgotten it, and selfishness has crept in, where unselfishness and brotherly feeling should prevail. We learn in our Sanskrit primer:

Ayam nija paro veti ganana laghuchetasam,
Udaracharitanantu vasudhaiva kutumbakam.

[6] *Bhagavad Gita*, V, 18.

"This is mine, or this is yours, such distinction is made by low-minded people, but those who are broad and liberal should consider the whole world as their relative". Did not Christ teach: "Love thy neighbour as thyself?" If your neighbour be a pariah or a Chandala or a Brahmin, or of any other religion, Christian, or Mohammedan, him you should regard as your own self, and him you should love as you love your own self. This is our religion. Abandoning this ideal of universal religion, if we simply cultivate our intellect for commercial purposes, will that be the ideal of proper education? It is degrading the humanity to instal commercialism in the place of universal religion in educational lines. Therefore, my friends, our national ideal should be brought forward and should be emphasized in every branch of our teaching. I do not mean any sectarian religion, and I do not mean the worship of idols or iconoclastic ideas, but I mean the universal religion which underlies all sectarian religions, whether it be Islam, or Christianity, or Hinduism, or Buddhism. Among all special religions there is an undercurrent of true religion which is nameless and formless, and that nameless religion should be brought forward.

The non-essential parts of every religion, that is, doctrines and dogmas, rituals and ceremonials, must vary according to the needs of the people. In dress, for instance, I may wear a turban, and you may wear some other thing, a cap or a hat, but that does not change your soul or its nature which is a part and parcel of the divine Being. For that reason education should be based upon universal principles and not upon sectarian religious ideals. It would otherwise be degrading the humanity. The object of education should be the attainment of perfection. That is the highest aim of education. In the Vedas, we read of two kinds of *vidya*: *para vidya* and *apara vidya*. *Apara vidya* is that which explains the laws of nature and describes the cause of various phenomena: but *para vidya* is that by which one attains to Godconsciousness, and that should be the aim of *apara vidya*. That is why you are studying all things. Why do you go to a chemical laboratory? You go to study the fundamental elements of all phenomena. Why do you study physics and all the different branches of science? You study to know how this world has come into existence. Why do you

study anatomy and physiology ? You study to understand how the organs of your system are working and co-ordinating in harmonious development and how the body grows from a minute cell. Sir J. C. Bose has been studying the plant-life. You have heard him speak of the wonderful truths which he has discovered. One of them is that in the whole world there is one life and not many. The life that is beating in us is pulsating in the plants and even in a blade of grass. As we eat, so the grass eats, and as we sleep, so the plants sleep. There is a gradual manifestation of life from the lower to the higher, in the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdom ; and we should study them all so that our knowledge should be complete.

Physically we should develop and train our bodies, so that we can have muscles of iron and nerves of steel, and then we should educate our minds, so that we may be able to acquire self-mastery, and not remain slaves of passions, desires and selfishness. Self-conquest should be our ideal in training our minds. In the West, there is psychology without a *psyche* which means the soul. There, in the study of psychology, the existence of a *psyche* is not admitted, but Hindu psychology is far better. We should educate our intellect, so that we can see the all-pervading Spirit, and reason that although there are various manifestations, yet there is an underlying unity of existence. Unity in variety is the plan of nature, and that plan we should discover by training our intellect. Furthermore, we should realize what is eternal and what is non-eternal, what is unchangeable and what is changeable. That would be the function of the intellect which is trained and has reached its ideal education.

Proper education should include moral training. The whole of ethics depends upon love, which means not selfish love, but the expression of oneness in spirit. If you love somebody, you become one with the beloved ; otherwise there is no love. Love means the attraction of two souls, which would vibrate in the same degree, and which would be tuned in the same key. Just as in a room if two musical instruments are kept tuned in the same key and when one is struck the other responds, so is the case with two lovers. When the thoughts and ideas, which rise in the mind of the lover, will vibrate in the mind of the beloved and produce similar response, then

there is love, and that means oneness in thought and in spirit.[7] Again, where there is true love, there cannot be any selfishness. If you love anyone, you should be ready to give him all that you possess, because you would say: "O my brother! Thy necessity is greater than mine. Whatever is mine is thine". We must learn to merge our small personality into the bigger personality of humanity. That should be the ideal of moral education; and spiritual education would reach its climax, when the student would realize the truth of the saying: "I and my father are one"; not physically one, not mentally, and not intellectually, but spiritually we are one, because there is only one Spirit in the universe. Therefore each soul is a potential Christ, each soul is potentially divine, and each soul is Brahman, and any system of education which is based upon this fundamental principle of potential Divinity in the soul of the individual, would be considered as the highest.

Now the question may arise how should we apply this to our social life? That is very easy. We should not be narrow, but we should carry that ideal of unity in variety in all the different stages of our social life. Just as two faces are not alike, so no two minds are alike. Your path is chalked out for you by the Lord himself, and I must be tolerant, and I must allow you to grow in your own way. Just as in a garden there are different kinds of trees, and you do not try to make two trees look alike. Do you try to make two trees bear the same fruit? You would be destroying all the trees. So, my friends, this world is a garden and each individual is just like a plant. Let him grow and bear his own fruit. Allow him to grow. That should be your ideal. Why should you hinder his growth and progress? Take your hands off. Take all the limitations off: and let him grow free; and he will bear the best fruit. But before he can bear the best fruit, you must give him proper environments. Just as a plant cannot give its best fruit, unless you give it proper light and heat, and the nourishment of the earth, air and water, which are the environments under which a plant will bear its best fruit, so you make him manifest the highest ideal of his life by giving him proper conditions. That is your duty. Why should you hate a Chandala? Why

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[7] *Vide* Swami Abhedananda: *Human Affection and Divine Love.*

is he a Chandala ? Because you have made him so. You can make him a Brahmin tomorrow, if you allow him all the proper environments of a Brahmin. Do not blame him, because he lives in filth and dirt, and is unclean. Why is he so ? Because you have made him like that, and now after putting him down in the lowest rank and giving him all the conditions that would be degrading to him, you blame him, condemn him, and hate him. It is not the Chandala who should be blamed, but you, the leaders of the society. You have made him so. Therefore, take the blame upon your own shoulders, and correct it and make him a saint. Give him proper training, grant him proper education, love him, and give him a chance to stand on his own feet. Do you do that? No, you do not. Abraham Lincoln, who was the President of the United States some years ago and who liberated the slaves, was once walking in the streets of Washington with a friend, and found a beetle on the road. It was turned on its back, its legs were up in the air, and it was struggling to stand on its feet. Abraham Lincoln stoopped down and picked up that beetle and put it on its legs. His friend asked him what he was doing. He said: "I made that poor fellow stand on its own feet." That was his nature. So, my friends, I wish everyone of you would become an Abraham Lincoln. If you see a poor man, make him stand on his own legs, give him the proper opportunity, do not tyrannize over him, do not call him names, and do not condemn him ; but love him as you love your own self. Do you give such instruction in your schools and colleges ? If you do, you are worthy of the place you are occupying. If you try to bring that out in your system of education, the world will bow down to you, and the Lord will be pleased that you have worshipped Him in spirit and also in the form of human beings. Where shall we find God, if we leave all men out ? God is not sitting above the clouds. He is here ; Him I see in your faces. He is the *Virat-purusha,*

Sahasrashirsha purushah
sahasraksha sahasrapat.

"The Lord is with infinite eyes, with infinite number of ears with infinite hands and infinite feet". He sees through all eyes, hears through all ears, works through all hands, and

thinks through all minds. The collective spiritual Being is the Lord, and so long as you separate individuals from the whole, you destroy the relation between the individual and the universe, between man and God. Therefore, my friends, we should learn to see God in man and woman, and love them, worship them, feed them, and educate them. Women should have equal rights and privileges with men. That should be the ideal; and then the highest perfection which is latent in each soul, and which is described in all the scriptures of the world, will be realized; and such is the object of ideal education. Education should not degrade man or woman, and it should not be for money-making; but it should be the culture of the soul for the good of all; and that soul-culture will bring in perfection as its ideal, and the whole world will be benefitted by such education. I wish to see that day, when India will have the privilege of imparting such ideal education in and through all colleges and schools, both high and primary. Then the plan of the Lord of the universe will be fulfilled, and then we shall enjoy peace and happiness in this world and hereafter.

CHAPTER II

PRACTICAL EDUCATION

(Delivered at Kualalampur, Rangoon, in 1921)

Mr. Chairman, Sisters and Brothers of Kualalumpur,

I am very pleased to be present on this occasion. I am also pleased to see the progress of this school that was started seven years ago. Under the management of our Swami Videhananda it has made considerable progress and you have noticed during the recitations of the music how cleverly the young boys and girls played their parts. If they had to play these parts in a foreign tongue, I do not believe they would have enjoyed it or you would have enjoyed it as much as you have done now. Because nothing is dearer to us than our mother tongue. Our mother tongue and our motherland are the two things we most revere. Do you know the meaning of the mother tongue ? It is the language which the child inherits from its mother not only after its birth but also before it is born—during the per-natal condition of the mother. Whatever thoughts and ideas the mother may have during that period, the child inherits them. These ideas the child learns to think in the tongue which the mother speaks. You must remember that all our thoughts cannot be expressed unless we use words. Words are absolutely necessary in thinking. For instance, if you think of the table, you will have to repeat the word table, table, table before your mind. There is a relation between thought and words. The science of language tells us that here lies the secret of the thinking power of the child. The child must think in words, and which are the words that are most convenient for the child to utter the words which it learns from its mother, and not in a foreign tongue, because the brain-cells and the whole nervous system of the child is trained by the mother. This happens not after the birth, but from the per-natal days before the birth. Therefore, our mother tongue stands out as the first language. You must not neglect that. What is your

worth, as our Chairman has said correctly, if your mother language is neglected.

You see that I now speak in English, and I never spoke in English before I left India 25 years ago, but when I was lecturing in England many of the Englishmen said that I spoke better English than they themselves. I have no English accent, and you know how Englishmen speak. They close their mouths in a peculiar manner when they speak. They are so proud of their mother tongue that they twist it in any way they like. No matter how ugly it sounds. Still the moment an Englishman talks, we know that he is an Englishman, because of his English accents. Go to the different parts of England and listen how some of them speak. If you go a few miles out to Wales or to Scotland, you will find the accent more marked. Specially is this so in Scotland where a man will say that he will go to *church*. The accent of an Englishman, living in London, is one, and that of people outside is another. Outside London you get what is called 'Cockney'. Even if you understand English you would not be able to understand that language. So there are different pronunciations and different accents in the English language. I have kept off all these accents. In America again, they have their own accents, which amounts to a nasal twang. I do not have any American accents either. I develop all my power of thinking in my native tongue. I was a Sanskrit scholar. If I were not a Sanskrit scholar it would have been difficult for me to speak in a foreign tongue so well, because Sanskrit is the mother of the English language. Several words in the English language can be traced back to the Sanskrit. It is the root, and if you neglect the Sanskrit language you neglect the root. If you let the root rot away and try to water the branches, do you think that the tree will grow by putting water on the branches ? That is absurd. The mother tongue should never be neglected. A child's brain is formed so that it may develop the centre of speech. A study of the nervous system and of the brain will make you realize that the power of speech is created by the soul in the brain. For instance, a man who exercises the right hand in his daily life develops his centre of speech in the left side of the brain, and the man who uses his left hand develops his speech-centre in the right side of the brain. There are two hemispheres in the brain. The

right-hand centre is in the left, and the left-hand one in the right The soul develops the speech-centre which must correspond with the mother tongue first. What is the use of learning a foreign language which is not your mother tongue, and which makes you neglect your mother tongue ? Your whole life, i.e. the whole basis of your family life, depends upon your ideas and imagery you have gathered in your mind. Now, every individual, no matter where he belongs to, has an imagery which he holds in his mind, and which is expressed outwardly by words. You must form your own imagery by your own mother tongue. Otherwise, it would be unnatural. In Europe there are different nations. In Switzerland the boys and girls have to learn five different languages. You know that Switzerland is in the centre of Europe, surrounded by other nations speaking other languages. On one side is Germany, on other sides are Austria, Italy and France. As English is the language of the market, the Swiss has to learn it. So that a Swiss boy has to learn first of all the Swiss language, the German, French, Italian and English. A Japanese must learn his mother tongue before he learns a foreign language. Similarly the English boy or girl must learn English first. Now English is universally spoken all over the world. Anyone who speaks English can easily travel the world. Of course, with us it is different. We are British subjects. We have to earn our bread and butter by serving the Government, and, therefore, we must speak their language. But we should consider English as a secondary language. If we had not to earn our living by serving the Government we would not have to learn English. Our mother language Sanskrit is perfect, it is older and better than any European language. It generally takes two years to train one's mind to think in a foreign language, but one can think easily in one's mother tongue.

The English language is imperfect and ungrammatical, because there are so many exceptions to a rule in English grammar. A foreigner finds it very difficult to learn English. It has no phonetic rule, and therefore it is imperfect. For instance, whereas the letter *'O'* in the word *'to'* is pronounced in one way, the letter *'O'* in *'go'* is pronounced in quite a different way. The sound of the *'O'* varies according to the word in which it is used. Again, we pronounce though (*dho*)

in one way and cough (*kof*) in quite a different way. A Frenchman finds it difficult to learn English ; a German will find it very difficult though the English language is derived from low-German. 'Anglo-Saxon' means English and German mixed together, for the Saxons came from Germany originally. Low-German is the origin of most of the English words. For instance, *wasser* in German became *water* in English, the letter '*S*' being turned into '*T*'. Again, there are other words like father, mother, brother, sister, in the English language which are derived from Sanskrit. Sanskrit travelled through Greece and through Latin countries to England and to all the Anglo-Saxon languages. For instance,

English		*Sanskrit*
Mother	...	Matar
Father	...	Pitar
Brother	...	Bhratar
Daughter	...	Duhitar
Sister	...	Sassar
Serpent	...	Sarpa
Path	...	Patha

So you see when you neglect Sanskrit, our mother tongue, the origin of the English language, we make a fundamental mistake. You are neglecting your mother tongue. And that is the language in which you should try to train your children and not in English which is a market language. What is the use of burdening the young minds with foreign words, a foreign vocabulary, and foreign ideas which are entirely different from the imagery which they have derived from their mothers ? This is the scientific reason why each parent should realize the necessity of educating their boys and girls in their mother tongue first. A rudimentary start at least should be made in the mother tongue. Go to any philologist and he will tell you the same thing. So the parents who neglect their children's mother tongue make a great mistake. They generally make their children unfit for thinking.

What is the object of education ? The object of education is to enable a person properly to stand on his feet and understand the laws of nature, to understand not only the ordinary

law of physical nature, but the mental, intellectual, moral and spiritual nature. If you cannot think, you are not able to express your thoughts in words. But when you can express your thoughts in one language, you are perfectly free to express them in another language. It does not take any time to learn how to speak English. If you try to speak English even when you have passed the fifth standard in your own language, it will take only a short time. It will not be difficult if you have learnt to think in your mother tongue. The object of education is not only to learn to think, but to think independently. You must not be a phonograph of other people's thoughts. You must be original in your own thinking. This is the first thing. You see our great Lord Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. He was absolutely original. He never went to any school or college because he did not want to be a phonographer for the people's thoughts. When you study a book your mind absorbs the thoughts of the writer, and you must know that those thoughts are only suggestions which help you to think in that line. We do not gain any knowledge from outside. Knowledge cannot be poured from outside into the brain of a child. Books help us to acquire suggestions which are like pebbles thrown into a pool. They create ripples and react. So when a suggestion is thrown into a child's mind it beings to react and in that reaction the child gathers what is called 'knowledge'. Knowledge comes from within. Our soul is a part of the Infinite. Our soul is all-knowing. All knowledge is already buried within us and we do not know how to bring it out. You are making mistake by giving the suggestion in a foreign tongue which will not create the reaction so quickly as it would do if you give suggestion in your mother tongue.

In America, do you know what they are adopting in their Kindergarten schools? They are not adopting the usual English alphabet, but they have taken the Hindu system of phonetics, as is seen in Sanskrit. For instance, in Sanskrit we do not use the letter *g-o* (*jio*) and pronounce *go*, because it is not scientific. It is not the scientific way, it is not phonetic. You see all the vowels and consonants in Sanskrit language are perfect. See the first five consonants. All our sounds are produced according to the position of the tongue and mouth from which they are uttered. For instance, when you open

your mouth and utter the guttural sounds, except the vowels, they are five, viz., *ka, kha, ga gha, uma.* Now what sound can you pronounce by keeping your mouth wide opened ? Four out of five: *ka, cha, ta, tha, pa.* The last of these would be when you close the lips and then open. Then you close and utter again from the root of the teeth: *ta, tha, da, dha, na.* Again you have five sounds: pa, pha, ba, bha, ma, which can be pronounced only with the lips. This is absolutely a perfect science. In the English language you neglect the phonetic system. For example *'H' (ech)* is pronounced as *Hah.* Now in the Kindergarten schools in America they are taking up this phonetic system that all the sounds should be called as they are uttered and this is very perfect. In America, they are changing the whole construction of the English language, and are taking out the letters which are not pronounced. There in the Kindergarten system of America, the mind of the child is consulted before they give any education to the child. In a Kindergarten school, different things are kept, for instance, clay, pencils, slates. There are pictures, blocks of letters, and the children are brought into the room and are asked what they would like to make, whether a figure of a cat, a snake or something like that. That is the test, and that test is set before they give any instruction. If the child has any inclination of drawing, it must be developed in that line, if for music, that must be his line. That system should be introduced into our Kindergarten schools. The education that you get in the English schools is not the right kind of education. I have thought about this great problem. We do not want to denationalize ourselves ; we do not want to neglect our mother tongue. But still we must have education. For this end I have made up my mind to have in Calcutta an institute for practical instruction, where there may be not only the development of the body, mind, and intellect, but where men may grow up and become spiritual giants. As I have already stated, you do not understand the value of education and the value of environment. You do not know anything about yourselves. You do not know how you should eat, what food is necessary for the growth of the body. You do not know what food will develop your thoughts, your brain, your muscles, your bones and your nervous system. You eat at random because you do

not know better. You think that a lot of chilly will stimulate your brain, but you do not know that thereby you are ruining your stomach. You do not know practical Chemistry and the results of food analysis. Study Chemistry i.e., practical Chemistry, in which all the food-stuffs are analyzed to their proper elements. You do not know what chemical elements are necessary for the growth of the body, or what amount of acid is secreted by the stomach for digestive purpose. If you take such food as will stop the secretion of the stomach then you will have indigestion. If you increase the secretion of the gastric juice in the stomach then you will have a false appetite. That is another disease. You will have a desire to eat at all the times. That is a disease from which great many people suffer. That is why it is absolutely necessary to have a practical education. You know nothing about your body or how to keep it well or how to protect it from the germs of diseases. You do not know what kind of water to drink and from what vessel. I have noticed that you do not clean the metal vessels from which you drink. They must be cleaned every time and must be well polished so that no dirt can remain. Cleanliness is next to godliness. Water contains germs. This knowledge can be gained only from practical education and this should be taught to our boys and girls. Hygiene must be taught to them. Get a food chart and have it hung in the school. It will give details of the chemical elements of all kinds of food. Rice is the best food. It has all the qualities for the growth of the body, mind and brain. It has everything. But rice must be unpolished. Polishing should not be done. Polished rice is not good and should not be eaten because the polishing process takes away the vitamin of the rice. The Japanese people ate polished rice and they got the terrible disease called *Beri-beri.* The eating of rice will make the growth of your hair perfect and those who do not eat rice gradually become baldheaded or lose their hair. If you imitate the English diet and the English method of eating you will soon find that your digestive system is not fit to digest meat. You will get sick. Your stomach is not trained to eat beef and pork. You have inherited your diet, your tastes and your stomachs from your forefathers and if you discard that diet, you will get sick and contract diseases. You may remain vegetarians, because from the vegetables you

get all the nourishment that one gets from meat. It is not necessary to eat meat. The moment you take to eat meat you will acquire the tendency to drink, because meat and drink must go together. Therefore, those who eat meat cannot stop their drinking habit and accept prohibition. That is why in America where they have prohibition they are encouraging vegetarianism. They have found that they can get all the essential food-elements from peas, beans and other vegetables, and wheat and rice.

My frineds, you are living in a land from where you cannot see the great changes going on in the outside world; the changes are all based upon the fundamental principles of education which we have inherited from our ancient *Rishis*. Another thing must I tell you that it is necessary for us to learn what are the requirements of the body, what are the requirements of the mind. Our education must not only help us to know ourselves physically, mentally and spiritually, but it must also help to understand our environments. You do not understand why seasons come and go. You do not know what is the relation of the earth to the solar system. You ought to know the relations of the planets, and some elementary knowledge of Astronomy should be imparted to the boys and girls, as for instance, that the earth is rotating round its axis. The rising and setting of the sun should be told in a story form. The sun is so far away that it looks to us like a small disc. It is ninety-three millions (93,000,000) of miles away and the light takes nine minutes to come from the sun to the earth, travelling at the rate of one hundred and eighty six thousand (186,000) miles per second. Think of the distance of these stars which are so far away. Some of them are bigger than our sun. The light trvelling from these stars, takes years to reach the earth. In the meantime, the planets might have been destroyed, but still we see the light. When you see a star, you are looking at a thing that was star in the past. You must not think that it is just, as you see it now, but just as it was, when the light started to travel from the star, say fifty years ago. Can you imagine that? You do not see what it is at present, but what it was a hundred or a thousand years ago. This is rather a revelation to you, but these are the things you have to learn. Then you will be able to get a clear idea of what the world is like.

You are thinking of a Creator. Where is He? You are told of the heaven. Where is it? Where is heaven? It is but a mental state. You go on living on this physical plane. It is just as when you go to sleep in a dream. You see certain things in a dream. Do you know where you see those dreams? Is it in the external space? No, it is in the mental space. You must think of these truths and realize them. Then your life will be worth-living. To do a little clerical work is not the ideal of life. If you want to stand on your feet, and enjoy your freedom you must be independent. Manufacture something, and invent something, just as they do in England. There they do not want to be clerks; they want to be independent. That idea of self-help we have lost. That is the greatest degeneration which we are going through now. Unless we reform ourselves and develop our self-culture, no one can help us, and God cannot help you unless you help yourselves. All education must be in harmony with common sense. It is the best sense that God has given us. It is the Divine wisdom. It will be the *Brahmajnana,* when it is developed to the knowledge of the Brahman, the infinite Being. Do not accept blindly the doctrines and dogmas which you hear. If they appeal to your reason, and if they are beneficial to you and your fellow-beings, then accept them. This is the true ideal of education, and it will help you individually to develop your *buddhi* (intelligence), and grasp the fundamental principles of life and death, which is the result of the highest education.

This is explained in the Vedas. We, the Hindu people, have always longed for knowledge. Long before the British Government had built schools in India, we had our village schools, our *Pathashalas,* our high schools for Sanskrit, and other places of education. In almost all villages, we had schools, and these schools imparted knowledge in different branches of learning. Science, philosophy, and moral and spiritual laws were taught.[1] All these different brances, the parents must learn first. If the parents do not know them, then they should not beget children. Ignorant fellows ought not to have children at all. They should go without children and without wives. Unless the parents are properly educated, they cannot educate

[1] *Cf.* Swami Abhedananda: *India and Her People,* pp. 170-215.

their children. By the education of children we give the greatest help to mankind.

Therefore, *vidya* is the highest thing. We worship Saras-vati, the goddess of wisdom. There are two kinds of *vidya, para-vidya* and *apara-vidya. Para-vidya* is the highest knowledge which can be gained. *Apara-vidya* is the knowledge of this world which, as I have already described, is the knowledge of the laws which govern our bodies and mind and which help us to understand our environments. *Para-vidya* is the highest wisdom, the knowledge of the Infinite, which enables us to know that this world is only playground where we live only for a time.[2]

Our highest ideal is to know who we are, what we are, why we have come to this world, why we go, and where we go after death. These are the most important questions. Prepare your children by giving them such education. They will then not only be thankful to you, but they will be able to under-stand their own physical conditions and the laws which govern their life on this material plane and also the moral and spiritual laws which will ultimately lead to the benefit of mankind and the attainment of Godconsciousness. This is the goal of all education. Whether you learn English or any other language, you must remember that the highest ideal of all education is the attainment of Godconsciousness. Then and then only we will realize that we are the children of the immortal Bliss. Then and then only we shall gain true happiness in this world, and after death we shall enter the abode of supreme happiness, eternal bliss and everlasting life.

[2] These have already been discussed before.

CHAPTER III

FEMALE EDUCATION

(Delivered before the Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Girls' School, George Town, Madras, on 17th July, 1906)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

When your worthy Vice-President explained why this school has been called *Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Girls' School,* it occurred to me that this is the most appropriate name by which the school could be styled. There could not have a better name for the Girls' school in this age, because Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna realized that every woman, whether young or old, is the representative of the divine Mother, the Sakti, the Mother of the universe, *Jaganmata.* It was he who, for the first time, made it known to the world that every woman should be considered as the divine Mother in flesh and blood. Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, who is now recognized as the Incarnation of Vishnu, made his first teacher a lady.[1] He was the only *Avatara* who took a Brahmin lady, the *Brahmacharini,* as his spiritual teacher. By doing that, he raised every woman to a position which is desired even by the gods. The highest position that can be given to womanhood was given by Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, and he realized that the greatness of our country could be achieved only by educating the young girls, the women of our country. The young girls who are studying here, will become the future mothers and their children will be the future generation. They will be the heart and soul of the Hindu community and of Hindu nation. How important it is for us then, that these girls should be properly trained and educated. Why should more than half of the Hindu population be deprived of all the privileges that come through right education and of the enlightenment that comes through the

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[1] This lady was the greatest Tantric Sadhika, named Yogesvari Bhairavi. She helped Sri Ramakrishna during his Tantric *sadhana* as an *Uttara-Sadhika,* in Dakshineswar.

knowledge of various branches of science, philosophy and religion? They have more right than we have, because they are going to be the mothers of the future generation. You do not realize how important it is for mothers to be well trained. Otherwise, the children will not inherit those qualities which are great and inspiring. If we want to have children, strong and genius-like, we must educate their mothers first. This has been the great defect in our present system of education in India, especially among the Hindu women ; but from the vedic period we find that the education of women was highly considered and was given freely, irrespective of caste distinction. If we study the Vedas we shall find that there were ladies who were like Incarnations of Sarasvati such as Gargi, Maitreyi, and others. You will find many female names like Gargi in the vedic literature. Even in the *Puranas,* we find that their knowledge and education were supreme, and they were held in great respect, and that they even commanded the male members of the community and guided them ; but today we are so negligent about our education that we pay little attention to our young boys and girls. I appeal to the Hindu parents not to neglect this school but to support it strongly and make it a *Hindu National Girls' College,* where higher education will be imparted to all the Hindu girls and where some girls will be trained as teachers later on. We need women teachers. It is a mistake to let male teachers teach the girls, because women know their needs better than men. Therefore, the first advice that I can give to the Directors of this school is to train women teachers.

I am very glad to know that you have two woman teachers in your school, but we want two dozen. If we have this number, they will be able to go from one *Peta* to another *Peta* and start other schools. If there is any influence brought to bear by the missionary ladies, as has been said, then our Hindu ladies will do better. I also look forward to the time when a principal of a *National Hindu College* for women will be a Hindu lady. If you go to America, you will be able to see the culture of women. They are like the flowers and blossoms of the twentieth century, and those flowers are very beautiful in every respect. Young girls there do not marry so early as here. They devote all their youth to education. I have seen women 35 years old, pure in character, who are devoting their whole

energy to study. They are not willing to be get married, because marriage is considered by them to be the greatest bondage. They are staunch lovers of freedom and knowledge. If you go to public offices and public schools and colleges, there you will find women clerks and teachers more in number than men, and they are the best teachers. In the Kindergarten schools, in Primary schools, in High schools and colleges in America, you will find everywhere women teachers. Why should we not try to train such women teachers among ourselves? Everything is destructive of Hinduism in missionary schools. Nothing there is constructive. It is constructive in their own way, because they try to break the Hindu community. All this should be guarded against. You must unite your energy, and take a stand against such foreign influence. If the parents of the girls do help and encourage such an institution, they would be ruining themselves. It is upon them that the glory of the future generation greatly depends. Therefore, I appeal to all the parents to show proper encouragement without further delay, and help the Directors to erect a large building for this school. I hope that within a short time this school will have thousands of students. I would like to see it growing into a *High National College* for Hindu women. I thank you all for having given me an opportunity to say these few words.

CHAPTER IV

AN ADDRESS

[*To the Educational Conference in America*]

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I should not enter into this discussion this afternoon, but there is a reference of Dr. Jackson[1] in course of his speech. The point which he has emphasized, in spite of the question raised by Prof. Newcombe, is one, I think, of the utmost consideration on the part of the *Educational Conference*. Therefore, I would like to draw the attention to this of the members of this Conference—the difference between the East and the West, which had occurred to me in course of my travels in the West and the East.

Perhaps for many to accept the resolution of Dr. Jackson is a point of detail; but the fundamental question raised there, in any approachment between the East and the West for our mutual understanding of the principles, governing the East and the West, principles of Eastern and Western civilizations should be understood mutually, and is of the utmost importance, if we are at all to arrive at any solid results out of this Conference.

I believe, as I told Dr. Jackson in course of a conversation the other day, that the governing principle of Western civilization is the doctrine of *right*, in the sense of privilege not *right* as distinguished from wrong. If you examine your own literature, or your own conversation, or your own discussion that takes place day by day in the daily papers, you will always find this *right* raised, you will find the people talking about the *rights* of minorities and the *rights* of majorities; and you will find the *rights* of the people, the *rights* of the state, the *rights* of women, the *rights* of a hundred things: and that principle it is that is governing the Western civilization, as it occurs to me. I speak subject to correction.

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[1] Dr. W. H. Jackson was a professor of Columbia University. He was a Sanskrit scholar as well as the professor of the Iranian language of Persia. He died on the 8th August 1937.

Now *right* implies certain definite things. *Right* implies a law to exercise your right, or to assert your right ; *right* also implies efficiency. *Right* also implies individuality and all the features or the cardinal features of civilization, moral and intellectual.

Now, if you go to the East, and I speak with special reference to India (although I am convinced that the culture of Japan and of China is identical in a great measure with that of India), and examine the civilization of the East, you will find the word *kartavyam,* i.e., what you owe to yourself, to your society, to your community, to your own people, to your country, and to the world at large. It has a much wider conception than the word *duty* in the English language, and I might pause here and draw the difference between *duty* and *right.* As I told you, when you regard *right,* you are thinking of what others owe to you ; when you think of *duty,* you are thinking what you owe to others. In the first case you are rightly committing trespass on the rights of others, and in the case of duty there is no trespass there on your side. It may be that you are performing your duty for your ownself, but duty always deals with the contemplation of the attitude or the interest of the other fellows. Therefore, most of the conflicts that we have, are the results of the exaltation of *right* in Western civilization. But at the same time the adoption of the principle of duty is a result of the supervision of the individual interest. It also follows as a corollary that the individual interest is not the efficient instrument in the East as it is in the West. We are governed more by emotion in the East, as you are more by the intellect in the West. These are fundamental differences between the East and the West. I think the study of the Eastern and the Western civilizations ought to be confined to the growth of the two distinct civilizations, now so divergent and so lititle understood, yet fascinating to each other. But if you proceed further and ask how is it that in the West, you have always adopted the principle of right and in the East the principle of duty, then you come to a very difficult question. I venture to say, and I also intend to present my views on this question with considerable hesitation and subject to correction, that this principle of right has been adopted in the West largely because of its urban character of civilization. In the West, even

from the time of the Roman civilization, people have congregated in towns, and the institutions of towns have always determined the character of the institutions of the people as a whole, whereas in the East, since industries have never been popularized there, people have never been concentrated to a large extent in towns, the real civilization being always a static civilization, as opposed to a dynamic civilization, which is the characteristics of urban population. When you have population congregated in large towns, when you have always people not static but dynamic, moving from one place to another and acquiring new interests, you have the suppression of new ideals in society. And it is very essential that each man should remember what rights he is going to acquire, what rights he is going to surrender. If he does not do it, he finds that he is very largely neglected by others and gets himself left behind in the race. Therefore, it is that the people in the West are more on the rights than on duty.

But in more slowly moving civilizations, where people are really static, where institutions are more or less fixed to a greater extent than other civilizations, there rights are more fixed and people learn duty more. The people are just, because they do not move so rapidly as in the urban populations. They turn more to leisure and more to the contemplation of others. I think that is why duty has been fostered more in the East than in the West. If that is so, and I think it is, we are up to this fundamental proposition, how far are we to move forward with the speed with which that civilization moves in the West? If we move in the East, as you do in the West, do we run into the danger of adopting the principle of right, and overcome this duty that we owe to communities outside of ourselves, which is a distinctive part of our ancestral inheritance? Now, on the other hand, if the population has been so static, as they have been in India and China, would it not run to the danger of bringing ruin to ourselves, and forgetting our rights?

I do not know that any one of you will agree with me in the views I have expressed. But if there is any difference in the views I have pointed out as fundamental between the two civilizations, it is of the utmost necessity that people, who like myself have come here as educators of generations to come, should put their minds together, or their organizations should,

to investigate the differences and come to an understanding by which we may avoid these differences and come to a more harmonious co-operation.

That is what I want to say, to emphasize, or to put emphasis upon. I must especially refer to this fact that most of the books that are written about the East, are written by the Westerners—men who believe more of their own civilizations than they do of other civilizations and who are not in a position to measure up the standards of Eastern civilization. I think, it is time that the East should come out so that the West can understand it. The West is not to be blamed for judging the Eastern civilization, alien to them, with their own standards. If the West and the East agree to this, that people in each country will put forward a reasonable presentation of the future—essential features governing their cultural principles of getting together—it will have a forward movement, it will go far forward to overcome the misunderstanding, existing mutually between the East and the West. There I would recommend strongly as one of the proposals, if I am allowed to do it before this Conference, that the *Educational Conference* should invite the people who are so qualified in the various countries as to describe for the benefit of the rest of the world, the essential characters of their cultural civilizations, their difficulties and to interpret to the world their histories, and the progress they made. And by doing so, I hope we shall be able to establish a lesson of co-operation to the greatest nations of the world.

WHY A HINDU ACCEPTS CHRIST AND REJECTS CHURCHIANITY

WHY A HINDU ACCEPTS CHRIST AND REJECTS CHURCHIANITY

A Hindu distinguishes the religion of the churches from the religion of Jesus the Christ. Speaking from the Hindu standpoint, the religion which the churches uphold and preach to-day, which has been built around the personality of Jesus the Christ, and which is popularly known as Christianity, should be called 'Churchianity', in contradistinction to that pure religion of the heart which was taught by Jesus the Christ and practised by his disciples. The religion of Christ or true Christianity had no dogma, no creed, no system, no theology. It was a religion of the heart, a religion without any ceremonial, without ritual, without priestcraft; it was not based upon any book, but upon the feelings of the heart, upon direct communion of the individual soul with the heavenly Father. On the contrary, the religion of the church is based upon a book, believes in dogmas, professes a creed, has an organized system for preaching it, is backed up by theologies, performs rituals, practises ceremonials, and obeys the commands of a host of priests.

The popular history of Churchianity begins from 325 years after Christ, the 20th year of the reign of Constantine the Great, when the famous Council was convened at the City of Nicea. Those who have read the life of this august Roman Emperor will remember how remarkable was the character of this so-called pious supporter of the church dogmas. He put to death his own son and his wife Fausta on groundless suspicion, cut off his brother-in-law Licinius and the unoffending son of Licinius and massacred everyone of his rivals. Nevertheless the Greek church has canonized him, and adores the memory of St. Constantine.

It was Constantine the Great who issued a decree in 321 A.D., for the general observance of Sunday, instead of the Jewish Sabbath. He hated the Jews and everything connected with the Jews, and said: "This day shall be regarded as a special occasion of prayer, because it is the Sun's day, the day of our Lord". Since that time, the church has accepted that

decree, ignoring the fact that this was the day for the worship of the sun among the pagans.

It was Constantine the Great who decided what should be the creed of the church and commanded the assembled bishops to receive the decrees of the Council of Nicea as the dictates of the Holy Spirit. Since that time the church has given authenticity to that creed, which is repeated almost every Sunday in all the orthodox churches in Christendom.

The horrifying accounts of fraud, political wire-pulling, theological jugglery, ecclesiastical scandal-mongery, passions breaking forth into curses and anathemas, bloody massacres and inhuman assassinations in the ecumenical councils, show that these were the principal instruments in the building up of the creed of Churchianity. Readers of ecclesiastical history will remember that in one of the disputes following the great Council of Nicea, maidens were insulted and scourged, the holy temple was profaned, books were thrown into flames, and the church and baptistry were burned and monks were trodden under foot. Such were the deeds of the pious bishops and founders of Churchianity.

In the Council of Ephesus, which was held in 431 A.D., monks and bishops screamed: "Whoso speaks of two natures is a Nestorius, and let him be cut asunder." A bishop was kicked to death by another bishop in course of their arguments, and 137 corpses were left in a church to attest the convincing reasons by which the most ruffianly side proved its orthodoxy.

Such were the assemblies of saints who formed the pillars of the structure of Churchianity. We can easily imagine the nature of the guilding spirit of those councils which established the creed of the church. From the beginning of the history of churches, down to the present day, freedom of thought and freedom of speech, which are the most essential characteristics of true religion, have been suppressed; and fanaticism, bigotry, curses, anathema, religious persecution, tortures of inquisition and diabolical crimes have been committed in the name of religion. Hatred, cruelty and fighting have reigned in the place of love, mercy, kindness, peace and good-will. The creed of the church would have vanished away from the world if swords were not drawn and innocent blood were not shed in the name

of religion. The deeds of Churchianity are written indelibly upon the pages of the religious history of the world. Shall we wonder, then, if the humane, kind, gentle, peace-loving hearts of the Hindus, that are ever ready to send forth blessings, good-will, benediction and a current of love toward humanity, nay, toward all living creatures, reject Churchianity? Shall we wonder that the Hindus, who recognize Divinity in the souls of all, should refuse to accept a system which was founded upon the barren soil of dogmas, fertilized with the vital forces squeezed out of the hearts of innocent humanity, and nourished by the blood of martyrs?

By a strange irony of fate, the Hindu sees to-day that the followers of Churchianity, ignoring its past history, have come over to India to tell the so-called 'heathen' how Churchianity has civilized the world, how it has brought peace on earth, and how it has saved the souls of sinners. But a Hindu is a lover of Truth and Freedom. Freedom of thought and freedom of speech are his guiding stars. From ancient times, search after Truth and unswerving love for Truth have forced the minds of the Hindus to make rational investigation into matters that have been presented to them. It is very difficult to persuade a Hindu to blindly believe in anything. Before he accepts a dogma as truth he must trace its source and weigh all the arguments, pro and con, and then compare it with the highest ideals that are known in his own country. Stimulated by this natural tendency and by his love of truth, when a Hindu studies the facts upon which Churchianity is founded, he first reads the Bible as critically as possible, applies logic and reason at every step, and then he looks into all the available writings to those Western scholars and critics who have made impartial examination of the Christian scriptures from the standpoint of historical researches.

I know many Hindus who read Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason* before they opened a page of the Bible. A Hindu knows that there has been a great dispute in the present century among Western scholars regarding the historical personality of Jesus of Nazareth, as it is described in the Synoptic Gospels. Therefore he doubts the historical side of the personality of Jesus of the Gospels. He also knows that the researches of the higher critics of the Bible have shown that the descriptions of

the canonical Gospels, regarding the events connected with the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, do not harmonize with the facts of history which can be gathered from other sources.

A missionary preaches in India that the New Testament is the revealed scripture, or word of God. The educated Hindus, however, know that Jesus did not leave any writings of his own, nor did any of his direct disciples wrote any of the Gospels which were accepted by the church as the infallible and revealed word of God. They are also familiar with the fact that there are absolutely no contemporary records or accounts of the life and teachings of Jesus, either in the Bible itself or outside of it; and that the earliest of the writings, in the order of their composition, were the genuine epistles of Paul. Out of the fourteen epistles attributed to Paul, four only are held to be authentic; they are these, Epistle to the Romans, First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians, and the Epistle to the Galatians.

Again, Paul never saw Jesus the Christ except once in a vision, and only once did he quote the language of Jesus—a single phrase in connection with a reference to the commemoration of the last supper: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; this do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." It is admitted by many of the orthodox ministers of churches that Paul introduced many of the doctrines and dogmas which were afterwards accepted by Churchianity. It is a well-known fact that Paul did not preach the religion of Christ; if he did, he could not have boasted that he withstood Peter at Antioch to his very face. To the followers of Churchianity who preach to the Hindus that the New Testament is the revealed word of God, the Hindu asks: "If God intended to reveal His word, why did He inspire so many different men to write the history of one transaction, and why is it that almost all of these writings, except four, were afterwards rejected by human beings as fraudulent and incorrect?"

We do not hear about the four canonical Gospels until the time of Irenius, Bishop of Lyons in Gaul, who lived in 178-200 A.D. He was the real founder of the Church Canon. It was Irenius who first mentioned four Gospels. His arguments for accepting four Gospels were very remarkable, though not convincing. He says: "It is not possible that the Gospels can be either more

or fewer in number than four. For, since there are four quarters of the earth, four elements, four seasons and four cardinal winds, the church ought to have four pillars ; for this reason there should be four Gospels". How clever was the argument of this noted bishop!

Moreover, there are so many inconsistencies, discrepancies and errors in the Gospels, that no critical student among the Hindus could say that they are the infallible and revealed word of God. As the church upholds this theory, and preaches the infallibility of this book, the Hindus reject it as a dogma of the church.

When the Hindus read the Apostles' Creed or the 'Twelve Articles of Faith' which were maintained and amplified in the Nicene creed, which formed the main body of the Reformation Theology, and which eventually developed into the Thirty-nine Articles of the Episcopal creed, they find there a set of dogmas which are neither supported by science nor by philosophy, nor do they appeal to reason. They must be accepted whether they appeal to reason or not. But a Hindu's mind is not ready to accept any of these articles of faith as true unless it is based upon sound reasoning and supported by science or philosophy. A Hindu says that while God has given us reason, understanding and intellect, and freedom to use them, we should be acting against His wish if we accepted anything blindly upon the authority of anybody's statement. We must question, we must test every claim in the crucible of logic upon the fire of right reasoning. Therefore, a Hindu says, before we accept any of the articles of faith, we must examine them.

The first article of the creed is a great stumbling-block to a Hindu, because it is backed by the story of creation. The Genesis account of creation of the world in six days out of nothing by an extra-cosmic being seems absurd and childish to a Hindu, because he has been brought up with a belief in the doctrine of evolution ; that the world is the result of a gradual evolution. The Hindu mind cannot believe that this world was created 6,000 years ago, and that this earth came into existence before the sun was created. The Hindu says that the writer of such a story, whether he be divine or human, should have offered a more reasonable explanation, that he cannot believe in a creation out of nothing. In the voluminous writings

of the Hindu sages and philosophers, ancient and modern, you will search in vain for any theory of creation out of nothing or creation by any extra-cosmic being. As Churchianity believes in such a creation, and preaches it, the Hindu rejects it as an absurd dogma.

The second article of the creed is based upon a belief in Jesus the Christ as the only begotten Son of God. This article offers nothing new to the Hindu mind except in its exclusiveness. The doctrine of Incarnation of God or Logos (the Word), is an Indo-Aryan theory, and the Hindus believe that there have been and will yet be many such incarnations. The theory of Logos, or Word, or Son of God, travelled from India to Greece, and found expression in the writings of the early Greek philosophers, Heraclitus, Plato, Neo-platonists, in the writings of Philo and his follower—the writer of the fourth Gospel—until it was accepted by the church as its fundamental doctrine.

Although many of the Hindus believe in the doctrine of the incarnation of God in a human form, still they strongly object to the dogmatic method by which the churches preach it among the heathens. Their first objection is that if God could incarnate in one place for a certain purpose, why should He not incarnate whenever and wherever such an incarnation was needed ? The church dogmas make the love of God for humanity limited by time, place and nationality. The love of God for humanity must be unlimited by such narrow considerations. God loves all humanity ; His love shines equally upon all living creatures like the light of the sun. The Hindu conception of the incarnation of God is beautifully expressed in the *Bhagavad Gita.* In that Krishna says: "Wherever irreligion prevails and true religion declines, I manifest myself in a human form to establish righteousness and to destroy evil".

Among the incarnations of God recognized by the Hindus are Krishna, Buddha, Rama, etc. When a Hindu reads the life and teachings of Jesus the Christ, as given in the Synoptic Gospels, and compares them with the life and teachings of Krishna and Buddha, he is amazed to find the singular coincidences in every minute detail, from the immaculate conception and the rising of the star, to the resurrection and ascension to Heaven. Krishna lived about 1400 years B.C., and Buddha was born in 547 B.C. Many eminent European scholars

of the nineteenth century who have impartially studied Oriental religions have shown by their able articles and non-partisan criticism that the Synoptic Gospels, being the productions of a later date, might well have drawn many of their important truths from the accounts of the lives and teachings of Krishna and Buddha in India. When the Christian missionaries first came to India, they were so astonished to find these singular coincidences in the lives and teachings of Krishna, Buddha and Christ that they satisfied their questioning minds by assuming, as Sir William Jones said: "That the devil foreseeing the advent of Christ, originated a system of religion in advance of His, and just like it". The readers of the history of symbolism know that the cross as a religious symbol had existed in India ages before Christ was born, and many centuries before it was accepted by the Christian church and monopolized by it as its own property. The Hindu mind does not believe in any monopoly in religion, therefore it rejects the claims of Churchianity.

Churchianity depicts in a dramatic way the temptation and fall of Adam from Paradise, seeking in this 'fall' to find the origin of evil and to explain the way that sin came into the world. But this account finds no acceptance from the Hindu. He looks upon it as the mythology of a primitive people, the explanation of undeveloped minds, who believes that one man who lived about 4,000 years before Christ was the parent of the whole human race, and that because he sinned, all his descendants are born sinners. The Hindus know, and have known for countless ages, that such an account of creation is irrational and unscientific. Modern researches have proved the correctness of their views, for evidences of a vast nation with highly developed civilization, existing seven or eight thousand years before Christ, have recently been discovered at Nippur. How, then, is it possible for a Hindu to accept such a theory of the origin of sin? Millions of people lived and died before Adam was 'created.' How could his conduct affect them? The Hindu believes that all men are children of God, and that they inherit divinity as a birthright.

They say that sin means selfishness and trace its cause, not to any mythological devil, nor to a super-natural power of evil, but to man's ignorance of his divine nature, and of the fact that

God dwells in every individual soul. As long as we do not know our true nature, we identify ourselves with the limitations of mind and body and become selfish; but the moment we can realize that God dwells in us and come to understand our true nature, we become unselfish and free from all sin. The fire of true knowledge of the divine nature burns all sin into ashes and makes the soul realize that it is free. Such being the conception of sin among the Hindus, they do not care for any special scheme for the salvation of souls. They do not believe in the hell-fire doctrine, nor in any hell as a place for eternal punishment, therefore they do not need any help of a mediator. Those who believe in eternal punishment may feel the need of a Saviour from it. When Dr. John Henry Barrows, the well-known missionary, went to India, he addressed an intelligent audience in one of the large cities and preached that doctrine. After the lecture one of the audience got up and said; "Sir, we thought you had come from an enlightened country to enlighten us; we did not know until now that your enlightenment is no better than what we call superstition". After Dr. Barrows had returned to America, he said that there were thousands of Brahmins who were waiting to be baptized and requested his audience to send more missionaries, and to give more money for that purpose. One well-known speaker hearing this, said: "My friends, why do you not send a fire-engine instead; it would be so much cheaper?"

The church dogma teaches the doctrine of vicarious atonement; it horrifies the tender feelings and loving nature of the Hindus; they do not interpret this act as an act of mercy or of love on the part of the heavenly Father, but they say it was an act of cruelty and injustice on His part to allow such a sacrifice of His innocent child.

The next dogma of Churchianity is the resurrection of the body. Most of the churches believe that Jesus the Christ was the "first fruits of the dead," the only one that ever arose after death. The Hindus do not believe in physical resurrection, for the same reasons that the scientists and best thinkers of the West do not accept this dogma. The Hindu belief is that the soul is immortal and indestructible; and by death they mean only a change of body. The whole of Hindu philosophy and religion is based upon the doctrine of the immortality of the

soul; but many of the missionaries affirm that the Hindus do not believe in immortality. On the contrary this doctrine is so well-known and so largely accepted by the Hindus that it is unnecessary for anyone to go to India and try to prove it by the traditional resurrection of a single person. The Hindus have better arguments than that. They say that there are two things necessary for the proof of immortality, the pre-existence of the soul, and its existence after death. If anything is created, or if anything has a beginning, it must have an end; this is the law of nature. If the souls of men were created by God out of nothing, they cannot be immortal, they must die. It is illogical to assert that the soul which was created should exist forever. If you wish to preserve immortality, first prove the pre-existence of the soul. The churches do not believe in the pre-existence of the soul, but preach its everlasting life after death, which the Hindus say is absurd on the face of it, and on the contrary to all we know of nature's laws. In the writings of the Hindus you will find that the soul of man is described as free from birth and death. In the *Katha Upanishad* and the *Bhagavad Gita,* occurs that beautiful passage made so familiar in America by Emerson: "If the slayer thinks that he has slain, or if the slain thinks that he is slain, they know not well that the soul can neither slay nor be slain". As Churchianity preaches that the soul of man had a beginning, but will have no end, the Hindus cannot accept it.

The next dogma of the church is the doctrine of predestination and grace, which makes God partial and unjust; while the Hindu believes in the more rational and scientific doctrine of the reincarnation of souls. This theory explains most satisfactorily the problems of life and death, without imputing partiality and injustice to God.

Churchianity teaches that God punishes the wicked and rewards the virtuous; while the philosophy of the Hindus teaches the law of *karma,* that is, the law of cause and effect, and says that God neither punishes nor rewards, but that we punish and reward ourselves by our deeds. Punishment and reward are the reactions of our own actions. Another reason why Hindus cannot accept Churchianity is that its highest ideal is going to heaven and enjoying that pleasures of life through eternity. The highest ideal of religion, according to the

Hindus, however, is not enjoying the eternal pleasures, but the attainment of Godconsciousness and freedom in this life from the bondages of ignorance and selfishness. Salvation must begin here; we must be perfect here, and the hereafter will take care of itself.

Although the Hindus do not agree to accept the doctrines and dogmas of Churchianity, still they do not hesitate to believe in Jesus the Christ as the Son of God, as an incarnation of Divinity in a human form on earth. The Hindu conception of the incarnation of God is much more rational and deeper in meaning than that of the Christians. Those who have read the *Bhagavad Gita* will understand what the Hindus mean by the incarnation of Divinity on earth. Whether Jesus the Christ had a historical personality or not, is not discussed by the Hindus. They understand by the word Christ that supreme state of Godconsciousness where all duality vanishes, where all idea of separateness ceases forever, and where the tremendous onrush of the divine essence of the universal Spirit, breaking down all the barriers and limitations of our human consciousness, causes us to realize our eternal oneness with the heavenly Father on the spiritual plane. Whoever reaches that state becomes a Christ, whether he be Krishna, or Buddha, or Jesus of Nazareth. The particular name makes no difference to a Hindu. They are all great, all divine, all incarnations of God on earth. Show me one who has reached that state, and I will worship him as a living divinity on earth. The Christian may think that Jesus was the greatest of all incarnations; the Buddhist may think that Buddha was the greatest of all, and a follower of Krishna or Rama may say the same thing regarding his Master, but when we examine the lives of these divine men we find that each of them was as great as the other. One may have manifested one phase of divinity; another may have presented another phase. When Jesus of Nazareth lived the life of renunciation and preached the ideal of spiritual oneness as the highest goal of all religions, he showed that he understood that state of Christhood; but ordinary people, forgetting the great mission of Jesus the Christ, fight for his historical personality. The masses quarrel and fight regarding the superiority of this or that incarnation, and the followers of each try to convert the others, but the wise man pities them

all and tries to help them out of superstition, bigotry, race prejudice, fanaticism and religious persecution. The religion of Christ was a religion of love, renunciation and self-control : it was a religion of Godconsciousness. As these are the highest ideals among the Hindus, they accept Christ and His true religion in so far as it is one with their ideals ; but when they see that Churchianity does not preach renunciation, and that its advocates do not practise love for all, nor show self-control : when they see that Christian governments encourage vice by opium trade, liquor trade, and introduce intoxicating things among innocent and temperate people for the sake of gain, they reject a religion which allows such things. They believe in Jesus the Christ as the Son of God, and know that he did not teach such things.

The duty of true religion is to broaden the human mind, to open the spiritual eyes, to lead humanity to the realization of oneness with the supreme Father in Heaven, and to repress all quarrels over dogmas and creeds. As long as we are not spiritual, we fight and quarrel, but when we realize that God dwells within us, that we are all children of God, irrespective of nationality, creed or denomination ; when we rise above all dogmas, above beliefs, theories, and sectarianism, then, and then alone, are we the true followers of the Christ ; then, and then alone, are we able to say with Jesus, "I and my Father are one". The Hindus leave aside the disputed personality, but they accept the Christ principle that dwells in each individual soul and believe that each soul is a latent Christ. They believe that the voice of God tells this truth within each soul, but we do not listen to it, through our ignorance and selfishness. Krishna says: "Giving up all the formalities of religion, come unto Me, take refuge in Me, I shall make thee free from sins, sorrows and sufferings".

Jesus says, "Come unto Me all ye that are weary and heavy-laden and I will give you rest". Let us listen to that voice, for it is one and the same, and let us follow it ; let us realize the spirit of true Christianity which was exhibited in life of Jesus of Nazareth ; let us live as he lived, and be living Christs on earth. The Hindu is not satisfied merely to accept Christ in theory, but he strives hard to live the life which Jesus lived, to lead a life of renunciation, of self-control and of love to all.

Thus he seeks to fulfil the mandates of that eternal Religion which was taught by Christ-Krishna, Christ-Buddha, and Christ-Jesus.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE AND VEDANTA

"The sensations of cold and heat, pleasure and pain, are caused by the contact of transitory senses with unreal objects; they are, therefore, inconstant and ephemeral. O man! endure them and be not happy or unhappy on their account.

"He whom these disturb not, to whom pleasure and pain are the same, and who is self-controlled, is well-fitted for freedom and immortality.

"The Seers of Truth realize: That which is unreal (transitory) hath no existence, while Reality never ceases to exist."—

—*Bhagavad Gita, ch. II,* 14, 15, 16.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE AND VEDANTA

Most startling are the similarities that exist between the fundamental principles of modern Christian Science and those of that ancient system of philosophy known in India as Vedanta.

The followers of Christian Science, unacquainted with the Vedanta and the religious teachings of India, may in all sincerity claim originality for their founder, Mrs. Mary Baker G. Eddy; they may show their gratitude to her for numerous benefits received; they may shut their eyes to all other systems of philosophy and religion, ancient or modern; their revealed text-book *Science and Health,* may change its tone by additions and alterations in every chapter of every new edition; but Mrs. Eddy, herself, is fully aware that the truths which she claims to have discovered were discovered and taught in India by the Hindu sages and philosophers centuries before Jesus the Christ appeared on earth.

In the earliest edition of *Science and Health* Mrs. Eddy had the courage to quote certain passages from one of the most authentic books of the Vedanta philosophy, thus herself acknowledging the harmony that exists between the basic principles of the Vedanta philosophy and Christian Science. Unfortunately, for some reason, since the publication of the 34th edition, these passages have been omitted. In the 24th edition of *Science and Health,* published in 1886, we find the 8th chapter devoted to Imposition and Demonstration. This chapter has been entirely suppressed in later editions. It begins with four quotations. The second is from Sir Edwin Arnold's translation of the *Bhagavad Gita,* entitled *Song Celestial.* Those who have read the *Bhagavad Gita* know that it contains the essence of the Vedas, as well as all truths expounded by the Vedanta philosophy. The passage runs thus:

> Never the Spirit was born; the Spirit will cease to be never;
> Never was time it was not; End and Beginning are dreams.
> Birthless and Deathless and Changeless remaineth the Spirit forever:
> Death has not touched it at all, dead though the house of it seems.

Again, in the same chapter of the 24th edition Mrs. Eddy says: "The ancient Hindoo philosophers understand something

of this principle when they said in the *Songs Celestial,* according to an old prose translation: "The wise neither grieve for the dead nor for the living. I myself never was not, nor thou, nor all the princes of the earth; nor shall we ever hereafter cease and old age, so in some future frame will it find the like. One who is confirmed in this belief is not disturbed by anything that may come to pass. The sensibility of the faculties giveth heat and cold, pleasure and pain; which come and go and are transient and inconstant. Bear them with patience, for the wise man whom these disturb not, and to whom pain and pleasure are the same, is formed for immortality." (p. 259) This is a quotation from one of the old translations of the *Bhagavad Gita* by Charles Wilkins, published in London in 1785 and in New York in 1867. In recent editions of *Science and Health,* this has been omitted, perhaps to show that the founder of Christian Science did not draw the water of truth from any other fountain than the Christian Bible.

Now let us compare the leading propositions of Christian Science with those of the Vedanta philosophy. In the 193rd edition of *Science and Health* (p. 70), these propositions are said to be four in number: First, God is all in all. Second, God is good, God is mind. Third, God, spirit being all, nothing is matter. Fourth, Life, God, omnipotent good deny death, evil, sin, disease. Disease, sin, evil, death deny God, omnipotent good, life. Which of the denials in proposition fourth is true? Both cannot be true.

These four propositions form the four main pillars upon which rests the structure of Christian Science a critical student of philosophy, however, can reduce these four to two. First, accept God, who is spirit, mind, life, being, omnipotent good and all in all. Second, deny matter and that which exists besides God. According to Christian Science, God, spirit, life, mind, being, omnipotence, infinite good, all these terms are synonymous and are applicable to the one real substance of the universe; and in the same manner, matter, sin, disease, ignorance, error, and illusion are also synonymous terms, which can be applied to that which exists as distinct and separate from the God of Christian Science. It has no existence, no reality. Therefore the whole phenomenal world with its innumerable appearances does not exist in reality. It is like a mirage, an

illusion or dream of the mortal mind. But the mortal mind itself falls under the head of illusion, too; because we read in page 8, 183rd edition of *Science and Health*: "Mortal mind implies something untrue, and therefore unreal, and as the phrase is used in teaching Christian Science, it is meant to designate that which has no real existence". The world is an illusion that is seen by the illusion of the mortal mind; but the question arises, Whence comes this illusion? What causes it? Christian Science does not answer. It simply says, "Mind or God is not the author of matter and the creator of ideas is not the creator of illusions"[1]

Thus, according to Christian Science, if God or spirit, life being, absolute, omnipotent good, be all in all and Truth, then the phenomenal universe, including matter and mortal mind, is nothing but an illusion; it does not exist in reality; it has no reality and no existence.

Now let us see what the Vedanta philosophers said on this point centuries before the birth of Christ. In this pre-Christian era a disciple went to a spiritual master and asked: "Sir, please tell me in a few words the fundamental principles of the Vedanta philosophy". The spiritual master, who was a seer of Truth, replied: "I will tell you in half a couplet the fundamental principles of the Vedanta philosophy that have been declared by millions of volumes. Brahman, or the absolute, infinite, and eternal Being, is Truth; the world is false or unreal, and the individual soul is no other than Brahman or the absolute Truth, which is absolute existence, intelligence, and bliss". This is the quintessence of Vedanta philosophy.

In Christian Science, the word 'God' is used to signify the absolute Reality or unchangeable truth of the universe; so, in Vedanta philosophy, the Sanskrit word 'Brahman' is used to designate that all-pervading substance or absolute Being, which is the reality of the universe. This unchangeable reality of the universe, furthermore, forms the reality of all living creatures and all mortal things, everything that we can see, hear or perceive with our senses. If Brahman or the absolute Being whose nature is absolute existence, intelligence, and bliss, be

[1] *Science and Health*, (193rd. edition) p. 145.

the one reality and all in all, it must be one, because there cannot be many absolutes or infinites. Absolute must be one and infinite must be one. As we find this idea in reading *Science and Health,* so we find it also in the Vedanta philosophy. Granting, then, that the absolute reality is one, the question naturally presents itself: Why do we see so great a variety in the phenomenal universe? And what is the cause of this variety?

In answering this question, the Vedanta philosophy gives two theories. The first is the theory of illusion, and the second is the theory of evolution. The theory of illusion is very old; we find it formulated in the Vedas and it was taught by some of the seers of the vedic period. It was maintained and preached by Buddha, who lived 540 years before Christ and by his followers; while later it was explained with great clearness by Sankaracharya, the best exponent of the Vedanta philosophy, who lived in India in the sixth century after Christ. This theory of illusion is the most difficult of all theories for the ordinary mind to grasp. Even the subtlest logicians and the profoundest thinkers often fail to understand how this phenomenal world, which we perceive with our senses and which appears so real to us, can be unreal or illusory. If, however, Vedanta philosophy declares this phenomenal universe to be unreal and false, it does not deny its existence as does Christian Science. It does not say that mortal mind or matter is nothing; but, on the contrary, it is most careful to define the terms unreal and illusion. By these words Vedanta philosophy does not mean negation, but phenomenal or relative existence or reality, conditioned by time and space. It admits that this phenomenal world is unreal from the standpoint of the Absolute or noumenon, but at the same time it says that it has as much (conditional) reality in it as anything presented to us by the senses can ever have.

Although Vedanta philosophy agrees with Christian Science in its fundamental principles, yet there is still a great difference between their respective modes of expressing the same truths. Christian Science, by denying the existence of matter and mortal mind, denies the existence of the phenomenal world and reduces it to nothingness. This reminds us of conclusions reached by some of the nihilistic philosophers of India and

Europe. Hume denied the existence of mind and matter. He reduced the whole universe to a bundle of sensations, impressions, and ideas. Some of the Buddhist philosophers in India denied the existence of the universe in the same way. But this method creates great confusion in the minds of the people. For instance, I am standing before you and speaking, and you are listening; if we follow the teachings of Christian Science strictly, we shall have to deny that I am standing here and that you are sitting there. In other terms, the speaker is nothing, the hearer is nothing, the mortal mind is nothing; consequently, thoughts and ideas are nothing, the words expressed by the mortal mind are also nothing. Not only this, but the very act of denying is nothing, because the act of denying is the act of the mortal mind; it cannot be the act of an absolute or divine mind. "Where God is, no other thing can exist", so there cannot be the denial of anything in God; the divine mind cannot see anything outside of itself, and as mortal mind is nothing, therefore the denial itself is nothing.

This difficulty does not arise in Vedanta philosophy, because it does not deny the existence of matter, mind, and everything that is on the phenomenal plane. Although it tells us that the world is unreal, that matter is unreal, mind is unreal, still it recognizes their existence, but adds that that existence cannot be separated from the absolute existence. If Brahman or the absolute Existence, be all in all, then everything that exists on the phenomenal plane is in reality Brahman or the absolute Truth. The reality of the chair, the table, the earth, the sun, moon and stars, is the absolute existence, is divinity itself. The reality in you, in me, and in all living creatures is the same as the absolute reality of the universe: only on account of names and forms, the one Reality appears to be many. As, for instance, the one substance, clay, appears through diverse names and forms in numberless varieties, such as pots, jars, bricks, etc., so the one absolute Reality, when clothed with varying names and forms, appears to be sun, moon, stars, animals, vegetables, etc. Matter and mind, according to Vedanta, are not two separate entities, but different expressions of the one eternal substance, which is called the Brahman in Vedanta, and God in Christian Science.

Instead of insistently denying the existence of matter,

mortal mind, and objective phenomena, Vedanta tells us how to see through the multiplicity of names and forms the one unchangeable Being which stands as the background of all objects of material existence and gives reality to all. The names and forms have of course no absolute reality, but they have conditional reality; or, in other words, they exist in relation to our minds. The world is real, according to Vedanta, but at the same time it is not as seems to be; it is not that which appears to us at the present moment. This is what is meant by 'illusion' in Vedanta.[2] For example, here is a chair; the substance of this chair is the absolute Reality, because the absolute Reality is all-pervading and one. It is in you, in me, in the table, and in everything, and that which gives reality to the chair is one with the absolute Reality. But the chair appears as chair only so long as it is clothed with the name and form of chair. If we can mentally separate the name and form from the substance of the chair, that which will be left will be common wood; take away the name and form of wood, atoms and molecules will remain; take away the name and form of atoms and molecules, there will be left nothing but eternal energy, and that is inseparable from the absolute substance. In this way, if we can mentally separate the names and forms from the substance, all phenomenal objects can be reduced to one substance which is the absolute reality of the universe.

Thus Vedanta, while giving the most logical reason for the variety of phenomena, does not deny the existence of anything. On the contrary, it tells us that the real existence or true substance of everything is Brahman or absolute Reality, or God, as Christian Science calls it. The whole universe is like one infinite ocean of Reality, which is nameless and formless, and in that ocean waves and bubbles rise spontaneously and take different names and forms. These waves and bubbles are the objects of the phenomenal universe. As in the ocean, waves and bubbles have no existence separate from or independent of the ocean itself, so the waves and bubbles known as the phenomenal objects of the universe have no existence separate from or independent of the ocean of Reality. We are like so many bubbles in the infinite ocean of Reality; we owe

[2] The English translation of *maya* is not illusion, but is delusion or nescience.

our existence to that ocean, live there, and play for a while, then merge into it to reappear in some other form. Such is the conception of Vedanta concerning the relation of phenomena to the absolute noumenon, or the unchangeable Truth which underlies all phenomenal names and forms.

Christian Science, taking its stand on the Bible, tries to defend its position by wonderfully clever interpretations of scriptural passages, in which the meaning of each passage is stretched to its utmost limit. Common sense, however, prevents many from accepting such interpretations, as they depend neither upon logic nor upon reason, but upon the authority of an inspired founder. Vedanta philosophy explains the same truths without resting its evidence upon any book or upon the authority of any man or woman whether of antiquity or of our day. It has no founder, consequently it does not demand allegiance to anyone or to anything save Truth. Christian Science, again, by denying the phenomenal universe, places itself at variance with all science and all philosophy. It also defies all modern scientific methods by restricting its field of investigation to that which is mentioned in the one copyrighted volume called *Science and Health* ; whereas the Vedanta philosophy, admitting the existence and relative reality of the phenomenal universe of mind and matter, accepts all the truths that have been discovered by science and philosophy or by the seers of Truth in all countries and in all ages. At the same time, it tells us that the realm of science and philosophy lies within the limits of time and space that they cannot, in consequence, go beyond relative reality. Christian Science does not see any harmony between absolute Truth and the scientific truths discovered by so-called mortal mind ; but Vedanta, on the contrary, sees perfect harmony underlying all the laws and phases of Truth which human minds have discovered. Truth being one, whether it be discovered by science, philosophy, or religion, is the same Truth. It cannot be many ; why should we deny its diverse aspects as long as we are on the phenomenal plane ?

Christian Science, to go further, is notably uncharitable towards everything not sanctioned by its founder, while Vedanta philosophy declares that truth is universal and cannot be monopolized by any man or woman of any country. Christian

Science rejects the doctrine of evolution and upholds the belief in special creation as described in the *Book of Genesis,* attempting to explain the account there given by the idealistic theory which was adopted by Bishop Berkeley and by a host of other idealists of ancient and modern times. Vedanta accepts the doctrine of evolution and shows that of special creation to be absurd. It also courts free investigation in the realm of nature without imposing the condition that the results of all such investigations be in accord with the tenets of a specific book or of some one teacher; and it thus emancipates the human soul from bondage to any one of scriptures or to personal authority.

In this age of agnosticism and materialism, Christian Science has done an admirable work, in making people realize that this phenomenal world of ours is like a dreamland, and that all objects of sense are nothing more than objects seen in a dream. This is no small gain for Western minds; because the more we realize that this world is like a dream, the nearer we approach to absolute Truth. In this respect, what Christian Science is at present trying to do in this country has been done by Vedanta in India for centuries. Furthermore, Christian Science has rendered a great service to humanity by demonstrating the power of the mind over the body, the power of spirit over matter. Although this fact was in no way new to the spiritual teachers, sages, and best thinkers of every country, still in no other country and at no other time had there ever been so well organized a movement as that recently started by Mrs. Eddy under the name of Christian Science. Like Vedanta, it has brought health to many diseased bodies and rest to many diseased minds. Dazzled, however, by their wonderful success in healing, Christian scientists lay exclusive claim to the method of healing given by Mrs. Eddy, declaring it to be the only right method; while all others, adopted by mental scientists, metaphysical healers, and other kindred sects, are wrong and unscientific. We must not, however, let these extravagant claims made by the over-enthusiastic followers of Mrs. Eddy blind us to the fact that the power of healing is the property of every individual soul. Anyone can develop the gift of healing and cure disease by the mind without becoming a Christian scientist and without reading a page of *Science and Health.*

There have been many remarkable healers in every

country, such as among the Hindus, the Buddhists, the Mohammedans, and those of other religious creeds. It is a great mistake to think that the power of healing comes from any outside source or from belief in this or that. It is developed by living a right life in accordance with the moral and spiritual laws of nature. Christian Science teaches that the power of healing was first shown to the world by Jesus the Christ and His disciples, and asserts that no one ever manifested that kind of healing power before He appeared upon earth ; but if we read the religious history of the world carefully, we find that long before the birth of Christ, the same healing power of mind or spirit was practised by the followers of Buddha with marvellous success. Wherever Buddhist missionaries travelled, they healed the sick without using drugs. The Yogis in India also use no drugs in curing disease, but rely entirely upon the spiritual power which they acquire through right living and the practice of Yoga.

Christian Science, in laying such stress upon the miraculous and exclusive power of healing manifested by Jesus, are evidently ignorant of the fact that similar Christ-like healing powers were displayed by Esculapius, the ancient Greek, who was proclaimed the saviour of mankind because of these very powers. He not only cured the sick of the most malignant diseases, but even raised the dead. Eusebius, the ecclesiastical historian, wrote in glowing terms of the gift of healing possessed by him. For many years after the death of Esculapius, furthermore, miracles continued to be wrought through the efficacy of faith in his name. Christ-like healing powers, again, were shown and miracles performed by Appollonius of Tyana, who was a contemporary of Jesus of Nazareth. The lives of Hindu sages, Buddhist monks, and of the Yogis of India are filled with such descriptions of miraculous cures and even of the raising of the dead. Vedanta philosophy, being fully cognizant of these facts, cannot therefore admit with the Christian scientist that Jesus was the first to exercise this power. On the contrary, it teaches that the power of healing is universal and cannot be confined within the boundaries of any one creed, sect, religion, or book.

Christian Science makes good health the standard of spirituality, a position which the most superficial observation dis-

proves; since if good health be the standard of spirituality, then all those who enjoy perfect health should be exceptionally spiritual. The savages who live in close touch with nature, sleep under the trees, walk barefooted, and eat raw food should, because of their physical vigour, be the most spiritual of all; yet we know that this is not the case. For this reason, Vedanta does not make good health the standard of spirituality. Nor does it stop with the denial of disease, pain, and evil. It goes a step further and says, if you deny disease, pain, sorrow, and evil, why should you not also deny the existence of health and the pleasures of the body and mind? Because, in this world of relativity, the one is just as much dreamlike as the other. If disease be a dream, good health is likewise a dream. Why not? Good is good so long as it stands in relation to its opposite evil; otherwise it can have no existence. Some say that God is good; but that word good cannot be used in its absolute sense, because it creates confusion; that which is good demands something which is better and something best. If you say that God is good, the question naturally arises, who is better and who is the best?

By denying evil its correlative is also denied; so with pain and pleasure, health and disease. If you deny ill health, you deny good health also. Therefore, logically speaking, Christian Science preaches, consciously or unconsciously, a dogma that is based on logical inconsistency. In Vedanta no such inconsistency can be found, because it exhorts us to rise above both good and evil, pleasure and pain, sickness and health.

The curing of disease is a very good thing so long as we recognize disease, so long as we admit its existence and in the dream of ignorance seek good health, or try to avoid suffering and ill health; but the moment that we realize that our nature is above all relativity, above pleasure and pain, above conditions of mind and body, we cease to talk of disease or health. No disease, no pain, no sorrow or suffering, either physical or mental, can affect or touch the soul; neither a healthy body nor a healthy mind can enrich the perfect Being, which is divine, immortal, unchangeable, which is the Soul of our souls and which dwells in each individual. So why should we trouble ourselves first to deny disease and then to try to cure it?

Christian Science teaches a religion which rests entirely

upon the Bible, which in turn is limited by the interpretations of Mrs. Mary Baker G. Eddy. These interpretations, furthermore, are often so obscure and occult that it requires an unusual mind to grasp their import. Few people of ordinary intelligence, even after hours of study, can understand clearly what the author means. At the same time Christian Science insists that only through an unquestioning acceptance of these interpretations can the Truth be reached. Those, on the other hand, who do not accept them, are cast relentless into the abyss of error. There is no hope for them, since they are completely in the wrong. By this attitude alone the religion of Christian Science lays itself open to the charge of dogmatism, sectarianism, and lack of charity towards all other faiths and religious systems; while Vedanta philosophy teaches a religion which is not based upon any book or its interpretation by any man or woman, but upon universal truth and upon the eternal laws that govern our souls and our lives. It teaches that religion which underlies all special religions, and which has no particular name, no creed, no fixed form of worship, and no label of authority stamped upon it by any specific founder. It preaches the truth boldly, and at the same time accepts all the phases of truth discovered by scientists, philosophers, and seers of Truth everywhere and in all ages, while enough room is left in the religion of Vedanta for the admission of any truths that may be discovered in the future. Thus Vedanta establishes the foundation of a universal religion, embracing the teachings of Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, Confucius, Zoroaster, Mohammad, and all other spiritual teachers of the past and of those who will come in the future while it proclaims in a trumpet voice to the world:

"That which is eternal in the midst of non-eternal phenomena, which is the life of all living creatures, which is the infinite source of consciousness, is one. It is also the bestower of happiness to all. Eternal happiness comes to those alone who realize this absolute Oneness; to them comes unbounded joy and peace, to none else, to none else".

VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY

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VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY

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PREFACE

Swami Abhedananda accepted Swami Vivekananda's invitation and sailed from Calcutta to London in August, 1896. His first lecture was before the Christo-Theosophical Society of London, on the Advaita philosophy of *Panchadasi* of Madhava-Vidyaranya. In 1897, at the request of Swami Vivekananda, he crossed the Atlantic and landed at New York, to take charge of the Vedanta Society, started by Swamiji. Swami Abhedananda lived in America for more than twenty-five years, delivering lectures and holding classes on various subjects, and preaching the lofty ideas and ideal of his Great Master, Ramakrishna Paramahansa. There he became familiar with all the distinguished and leading artists, educationists, journalists, scientists, Christian Fathers and clergymen as well as professors, William James, Josiah Royce, G. H. Howison, Lanmann, Jackson, Shaler, Seth Low, Harsel C. Parkar, Dr. Ross, Rev. Heber Newton, and others.

The lecture *Vedanta Philosophy,* which is now published in book form, was delivered in the Philosophical Union, established by Professor Howison, in the University of California, at Berkeley. Prof. Howison was the Chairman of the Philosophical Union, and he taught philosophy at the said University, from 1884 to 1909. He was a philosopher of note in his day. Announcement columns of the old newspapers indicate that the lecture was scheduled for a special meeting of the Philosophical Union, in a lecture room of the Philosophy Building of the University of California at Berkeley, at 8 P.M., on September 6, 1901, Friday. Swami Abhedananda delivered the lecture on the Vedanta philosophy, at the request of Prof. Howison. From the comment of the Editor of the *Vedanta and the West* (Jan.-Feb., 1956) of the 1946 Vedanta Place, Hollywood 28, California, it is known that no report of the lecture itself has been found, since it was on this very day that President William McKinley was assassinated, the newspapers thereafter for some time being mostly given over to the news of this event.

From the personal statement of Swami Abhedananda, we come to know that one afternoon he went to the California

University, at Berkeley, to hear Prof. Howison's lecture, accompanied with Dr. Logans. The subject of the lecture was John Fisk's *Through Nature to God*. The lecture being over, he had a talk on Vedanta with Prof. Howison. Prof. Howison was very much impressed with the learned discussion of the Swami, and requested him to deliver a lecture on the Vedanta philosophy, in the Philosophical Union of the University of California, at Berkeley. The Swami was pleased to accept his request. So, after a month, he, together with Dr. Logans and Dr. Ross, went to the said University, in the evening, on the 6th September, 1901, after finishing their luncheon at the Fraternity Home.

It should be mentioned in this connection that the Philosophical Union at the California University was a unique creation of Prof. Howison. The lectures were arranged in the Union, after every three years, or from time to time. The first lecture, so far as it is known, was delivered on the *Conception of God* by Prof. Josiah Royce, in the year 1895, and it was published in book form in 1897. In 1885, his book *Religious Aspect of Philosophy* created a sensation. The next lecture, in the Philosophical Union, was delivered on the *Principle of Pragmatism* by Prof. William James, in the year 1898. This lecture was given on the central idea of the lecture on *Pragmatism*, delivered by Prof. Price, twenty years ago whence Prof. James delivered his lecture, in a new and novel way. Prof. James' lecture on *Principle of Pragmatism* was also published in a book form. After three years, Swami Abhedananda was invited to deliver his lecture on the *Vedanta Philosophy*, in the said Union, and it was so arranged that he would deliver his lecture at 8 P.M., on Friday, the 6th September, 1901. Prof. Howison was in the chair. The Swami delivered his lecture for one hour and a half. After the lecture was over, Swami Abhedananda was warmly congratulated by almost all the noted 400 professors of different Universities, assembled there, and especially by Prof. Howison himself.

This lecture so long remained unpublished. But fortunately we found a short pencil note of the lecture, in Swami's own handwriting, in his Almirah. It was published in the Puja Number of our Bengali Monthly, 'Visvavani', in the year 1955. It has been mentioned in the note that after the

deliverence of the lecture, when he came back to his residence at the Vedanta Society, California, he noted down a summary of the lecture, from his memory, at his leisure hour. And we are glad to inform our readers that in 1956, we got a letter from 1946 Vedanta Place, Hollywood, U.S.A., that the complete lecture of the Swami was in their possession, and they inquired whether any copy of the same lecture was lying with us, in India. On the receipt of the letter, we requested them to send the copy of the lecture to us. But they informed us that they would be glad to send it after publishing it in their own journal, the *Vedanta and the West*. The complete lecture was thereafter published in 1956, in the January-February issue of the above journal, and a copy of the same was forwarded to us.

Now, how the lecture, delivered in the Philosophical Union, California University, in 1901, came to their possession, has been reported by the Editor of the journal, *Vedanta and the West,* at page 2 of the said journal thus:

"Swami Abhedananda was a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. He taught in the United States from 1897 to 1921. The manuscript of his lecture on 'Vedanta Philosophy' (pages 11 to 25 of the present issue) was given to *Vedanta and the West* by Ida Ansell, before her death on January 31, 1955, who stated that the corrections found in it, were made by the Swami in his own hand. In so far as can be determined, the lecture has never been published".

After we got the complete lecture, through the courtesy of the *Vedanta and the West,* we also wrote a letter to Mr. Clark Kerr, the President of the University of California, for sending a copy of the said lecture, if preserved in the Library, for comparing the text of the lecture. We got the reply from Mr. Stanley E. McCaffery, the Vice-President—Executive Assistant, on the 25th March, 1959, with a microfilm of the complete text of the lecture, delivered by Swami Abhedananda, in 1901, in the Philosophical Union of the University of California. The copy of the letter is given below:

"THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA.

Seal.

Clark Kerr
President.

Berkeley 4, California.

Stanley E. McCaffrey
Vice-President—Executive Assistant

March 25, 1959

Swami Prajnanananda
Ramakrishna Vedanta Math
19B, Raja Rajkrishna Street
Calcutta-6, India.

Dear Swami Prajnanananda:

I am pleased to respond on behalf of President Clark Kerr to your letter to him of February 17, 1959 concerning the 1901 lecture of Swami Abhedananda.

Enclosed with letter you will find a microfilm of the complete text of the speech.

We have all the other material which you desire but, unfortunately, there is some expense involved in making copies. Since we have no budget for this service, the money involved would have to come from your office.

* * * * * *

If you still wish any of his material despite the expense involved, please advise me and I will be glad to arrange it.

I hope the enclosed microfilm will be of use to you.

Thank you for your interest in the University.

Yours sincerely,
(Sd.) Stanley E. McCaffrey.

Enclosure
cc: Miss May Dornin

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Now, let us offer our thanks to the editor of the *Vedanta and the West,* 1946 Vedanta Place, Hollywood, U.S.A., for helping us by sending the copy of the lecture, in printed form. We also express our gratitude to the authorities of the University of California, Berkeley, U.S.A., for helping us by sending the microfilm of the text of the lecture, together with the necessary materials.

However, we are also giving in this preface, the summary of the lecture as noted down in pencil by the Swami from memory. The summary runs as follows:

Before entering into the subject of my discourse of this evening, allow me to thank Prof. Howison, through whose kindness I have been honoured with this privilege of addressing the talented audience that have assembled here tonight.

I have been requested to give the general doctrines of the Vedanta philosophy. I suppose very few of us present here are familiar with the doctrines of this most ancient system of philosophy which have helped mankind in solving the most intricate problems of life and death, and which have led the truth-seeking minds of all ages and climes to the threshold of the abode of the absolute Reality of universe.

A student of Vedanta philosophy, after studying the different philosophical systems of ancient Greece and modern Germany, finds that the ultimate conclusions of the modern philosophers are like the faint echoes of the thundering expressions of what the ancient vedic seers of Truth realized, at least 2000 years before the Christian era. The monistic systems of modern evolutionists like Le Conte, Romanes, and Haeckel find their place in the utterances of the vedic philosophers of ancient India. The first conception of the unity of existence that was ever expressed before the world, is to be found in the Rig Veda, the most ancient scripture of the world: *ekam sad vipra vahudha vadanti.*

The truth-seeking minds of the vedic philosophers did not stop at their researches until they could unify the diverse phenomena of the universe into absolute oneness. After discovering the one ultimate source and goal of the universe they tried to explain through logic and science the process by which the eternal one appears as manifold when looked through the limitations of time, space and causation. In their attempt they discovered the law of evolution which governs the cosmic phenomena. The philosophers who came later, developed from these conclusions different systems of philosophy of which *Sankhya* system of Kapila and the Vedanta philosophy stand most important. Kapila is called the father of evolution theory in India. He was the first who gave the most logical and scientific explanation of the process of cosmic evolution. Kapila said that the eternal energy is called *Prakriti.* Prof. Huxley admits this fact when he says that the doctrine of evolution was known to the Hindu sages long before Paul of Tarsus was born.

Well has it been said by Sir Monier M. Williams that the Hindus were Spinozites before Spinoza was born.

It will be interesting to mention that the theory of special creation out of nothing was refuted by an ancient sage as early as 1500 years before Christ, and he was Kapila, the most scientific philosopher. Kapila said: *'katham asatat sad jayate ?*,—'how from a non-entity entity comes out ? It is not possible. Existence always exists, it never becomes a non-existence'. So, it is true that Vedanta philosophy did not teach the theory of special creation, rather it condemns and refutes this absurd theory.

The fundamental principle of Vedanta is oneness. There is one Existence, one Life, one Spirit, one Being in the universe. The idea of separateness is unreal, Vedanta does not teach, as some people think, that the phenomenal world is a mere illusion, but it teaches that the underlying reality of the universe is the absolute Being which is one and one without the second—*'ekamevadvitiyam'*. What is regarded as illusion or delusion in Vedanta is not the phenomenal, but the attribution of true substantiality or essentiality to the phenomenal without the recognition of the underlying unity. It is generally known as nescience (*ajnana*) that hides the glory of the absolute Being. The absolute Being is called by various names. It is Brahman in Vedanta. The same absolute Being was called by Plato as the *Good*. It is the *Substantia* of Spinoza, *Ding-an-Sich* of Kant, the *Unknown and Unknowable* of Herbert Spencer. Some call it *Noumenon*. Schopenhauer calls it the *Will*. Emerson calls it *Oversoul*. But Vedanta differs from these systems by unifying the subject and object in Brahman.

The thing-in-itself is a pure assumption of Kant, a superfluity, not in any way justified by Kant's own data. Hence it is that the successors of Kant were forced to reject the Kantian thing-in-itself and set up pure rationalism as opposed transcendentalism. The chief defect of the Kantian system is the unnatural separation of the thing-in-itself completely from the plane of experience.

But Vedanta philosophy brings the thing-in-itself within the plane of experience and recognizes it in the conception of entity, *sat* (Existence) which has all other things as attributes or relations. The same Brahman is *sat* from the objective point of view, and *chit* or pure intelligence from the subjective standpoint. It is the infinite source of knowledge ; it is the eternal knower of the universe. The same Brahman, when qualified by cosmic self-consciousness, omniscience and omnipotence, appears as the ruler of the universe. When qualified by the individual consciousness and imperfect knowledge, it constitutes the individual soul, and when qualified by total absence of self-consciousness, it forms the object or what we call 'matter'.

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Thus Vedanta philosophy recognizes three entities in the universe, God, soul and matter. The God of Vedanta philosophy is not an extra-cosmic something, but it is the inner and underlying reality of the cosmic world, it forms the background of the world, and it exists both inside and outside of the world. Vedanta philosophy gives also a rational foundation to religion which harmonizes with the modern conclusions of science and philosophy. It teaches that the soul is immortal and divine, and the knowledge of the soul brings emancipation to man. Vedanta philosophy teaches that emancipation of the soul (i.e. individual soul) is freedom from the bondages of selfishness and other imperfections. The ethics of Vedanta philosophy is entirely based upon the attainment to Godconsciousness which means the recognition of oneness of the individual soul with the absolute Brahman".

It had been our long cherished wish to publish this memorable lecture, and we are now presenting it to our readers of the Orient and Occident, in printed form. Though the lecture is short, yet it covers the whole range of the central idea of the Vedanta philosophy of India. In this connection it may be mentioned that, while editing, we have made a few changes possible.

SWAMI PRAJNANANANDA

VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY

PROFESSOR HOWISON, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

Before discussing the subject of this evening, allow me to thank Professor Howison, through whose kindness I have been honoured with this privilege of addressing the talented audience that has assembled here tonight.

I have been requested to give an outline of Vedanta philosophy, which is the most ancient of all the philosophical systems of India. I suppose there are a very few amongst those present, who are familiar with this ancient philosophy that has helped mankind in solving the most difficult problems of life and death, and has led the truth-seeking minds of all ages and of all climes to the threshold of that abode of eternal Truth which is the end and aim of our life.

The student of Vedanta philosophy, after studying the ancient philosophical systems of Greece and the modern philosophies of Germany, finds that the ultimate conclusions of the modern philosophers are like faint echoes of the thundering expressions of what the ancient vedic seers of Truth realized, at least two thousand years before the Christian era. The monistic systems of Professor Le Conte, of John Fiske, of Hegel, and other philosophers of Western countries and modern times, find their prototype in the utterances of those ancient philosophers of India. The first conception of this idea of monism that was ever expressed before the world we find in the Rig Veda, the most ancient of all scriptures of the world: 'That which exists is One : men call it by various names'.[1] That One is not far from us. It is in us and outside of us.

Truth-seeking minds of these ancient philosophers did not stop at their researches until they could unify the diverse phenomena of this universe into that absolute oneness, and when they discovered the one source and goal of the phenomenal universe, they tried to explain the process by which this One appears as manifold. In their attempts they developed

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[1] *Ekam sad vipra vahudha vadanti.*— Rig Veda.

different systems of philosophy, of which the *Sankhya* system of Kapila and this Vedanta philosophy stand most prominent. The later philosophers took up the conclusions arrived at by the great thinkers of ancient times and developed systems of philosophy, and through logic and science explained the phenomena and mystery of the universe.

They discovered the doctrine, the law of evolution, that involve the phenomena of the world. It was Kapila who was recognized as the father of the theory of evolution in ancient India. He lived about fourteen hundred years before the birth of Christ. It was he who expounded the doctrine of evolution most scientifically and most logically. This fact was admitted by Professor [Thomas] Huxley when he said that this doctrine was known to the Hindu sages long before Paul of Tarsus was born. Well has it been said by Sir Monier Williams that the Hindus were Spinozites more than two thousand years before the existence of Spinoza; Darwinians many centuries before Darwin; and Spencerites many centuries before the doctrine of evolution had been accepted by the scientists of our time and before any word like evolution existed in any language of the world.

Standing on that firm rock of evolution, the ancient thinkers of India explained the cosmic process by which the phenomenal universe appears to our senses, by which we come to perceive the objects of sense. The Hindu philosophers, especially the philosophers of the vedantic school, do not believe in the theory of a special creation of the universe by some extra-cosmic being. In one of the writings of the ancient philosophers, we read that a great vedantic sage was teaching his own son, and he asked this question: 'My beloved son, some[2] tell us that this world was created out of nothing, but my dear child, how can something come out of nothing?'

This idea of the impossibility of something coming out of nothing, we find in Herbert Spencer's philosophy and almost all the scientists of modern times accept it as a fact; but this was first taught in India about two thousand years before the Christian era. So the fundamental principle of the Vedanta philosophy is oneness, and that oneness is on the highest spiritual plane.

[2] By 'some' who dwell outside the universe.

There is one Life which exists, one Spirit, one Truth, one Reality. Some people think that the Vedanta philosophy teaches that this world is an illusion, but Vedanta philosophy does not teach the phenomenal world is such What is regarded as illusion in Vedanta philosophy, is the attribution of substantia and sentience to the phenomena, without recognizing the underlying unity, and that unity of Being, or Existence, or Light, or Spirit, is called by various names.

In Vedanta, it is called Brahman, which means literally a vast expanse—infinite expanse. It was called by Plato the *Good,* by Spinoza the *Substantia,* by Spencer the *Unknown and Unknowable,* by Kant the *Transcendental Thing-in-itself.* Schopenhauer called it *Sufficient Reason,* and Emerson the *Oversoul.* But Vedanta philosophy differs from these system of Western philosophy, by unifying the subject and the object in Brahman or the absolute Reality.

When we study the Kantian system, we find the mention of that *Thing-in-itself,* but if we study a little more critically we find that it is only an assumption on the part of Kant—that this *Thing-in-itself* is a pure assumption of Kant, a superfluity that cannot be supported by any data. In fact, Kant believed in that transcendental *Thing-in-itself* which cannot be brought into the realm of experience, and the great defect of Kant's system lies in that unnatural separation of the *Thing-in-itself* from the plane of experience.

But Vedanta philosophy, accepting the transcendental *Thing in-itself* as Reality, brings it into the realm of experience, and connects it with everything that can be perceived by the senses of human beings. The one Brahman, when appears as pure existence of all things that exist in the universe, is called *sat,* pure existence. The same Brahman appears as pure intelligence, when it becomes the subject or knower of the object. It is then *chit.* The same Brahman or absolute Truth. when qualified by the cosmic self-consciousness, omniscience, and omnipotence, appears as the ruler of the universe—the *antaryamin,* the inner ruler of the universe.

He is called *Isvara,* which means the ruler and preserver of the universe. There is no such title as the Creator of the universe in Vedanta, because a creator is impossible when we admit the doctrine of evolution. When we see that all the

various manifestations of the universe are nothing but the expressions or the result of the evolution of one eternal Energy, called in Sanskrit *Prakriti* and in Latin *Procreatrix,* we do not need any being whom we can call the Creator of the universe.

But there is room for a personal God. There is room also for an impersonal One, and also for the absolute Truth, the absolute Reality, the absolute One, which is the highest ideal of all the philosophies of the world. When the same Brahman is qualified with limited self-consciousness and partial knowledge, it becomes the soul or appears as the individual soul of man ; and when the same Brahman is qualified by the absence of self-consciousness it appears as matter. So the nature of these three things is discussed in the Vedanta philosophy—the nature of God, of the soul, and of the material universe. But all these three are different expressions of one.

The dualistic thinkers believe in a personal God who is outside of this universe, and who is outside of us, but they are afraid to discuss the nature of that personal God. What kind of personality does that personal God have ? If you ask this question of the dualistic believers, they shrink from answering. They say: 'We do not know'.

But Vedanta philosophy is not afraid of discussing the nature of God. Most of the conceptions of God which we find as common amongst the masses, as taught in the different schools and temples, are anthropomorphic conceptions. We project our own thought and ideas, magnify them, and create our own ideals according to our thoughts, and then we worship them. As, in ancient time the Jews believed in a Jehovah, who was cruel, and who had some qualities, which perhaps we would not like to give him. But all this can be explained clearly by this anthropomorphic conception of God.

So all the ideas of personal God are more or less anthropomorphic. We are human beings. We like to think of the Creator of the universe as a human being. He is sitting somewhere, as we sit. He has two hands as we have, though he may not have two hands in reality. We find a beautiful description of that impersonal Being, appearing as personal to the devotee in one of the ancient writings of the Vedas: 'He has infinite heads, and infinite number of eyes, an infinite number of hands. He works through all hands of all living creatures. He thinks

through all brains of all living creatures and at the same time he is beyond all thought. He is beyond all work, yet the whole universe is his body. The sum total of our minds is his mind'. The sum total of the intelligence that is manifested in this universe is the intelligence of God. We live and move and have our being in God. He is immanent and resident in nature.

Last Friday evening when I was listening to Professor Howison's remarks on John Fiske's *Through Nature to God,* I was surprised when he said that God cannot be immanent and resident in Nature; the indwelling God would make Him responsible for all the evil deeds of human beings. Of course, he used different language. I cannot recall his words.

That difficulty does not arise in Vedanta philosophy, although it believes that God is dwelling in each of our souls. He is dwelling within us, yet remains unaffected by our deeds, good or evil. On one side, Vedanta philosophy gives expression to the highest ideal of all philosophy, and on the other, it gives a foundation to a system of religion which is the most rationalistic of all systems, and harmonizes with the ultimate conclusions of modern science and philosophy.

Vedanta philosophy says that this Absolute cannot be worshipped, but when that Being is qualified with the eternal Energy, when He appears as the omniscient and omnipotent Being and ruler of the universe, He can be worshipped as *Isvara.* He can be loved, and He loves human beings. But we do not understand the meaning of the word 'love'. It is used very frequently, and has a very deep meaning.

We must not forget the expression: 'God is love', and when we think of love, we should remember that it is divine. It is not like the love which we see manifested in our ordinary everyday life. It is something deeper—something higher, and in that sense the term can be applied to the word love which can be used for God. Vedanta says, love means expression of oneness. And wherever there is love, there is unity. Love means the attraction between soul and soul. The same attraction is manifested in the physical world in the form of gravitation or chemical affinity or molecular attraction. When it is manifested on the soul plane, or two souls are attracted, it is called love and is divine.

In describing the nature of the individual soul, Vedanta

philosophy teaches that the soul is immortal and divine. It is birthless and deathless; it has no beginning, it has no end. It is eternal. Ordinarily we think that the souls of human beings were created at a certain period by some being, and those souls will continue to exist until eternity. But there is a fallacy in that statement which we do not consider ordinary.

We must remember that which has birth, must die. If the souls were created, they cannot be eternal and immortal, because birth is followed by death and death by birth. There is no absolute destruction or annihilation of anything. By studying modern science we have learned that even matter is indestructible, force is indestructible, and if there be such a thing as the source of consciousness, how can that be destructible? If matter has no beginning, if force has no beginning, how can the souls have beginning? These souls existed before these bodies were born, and will exist after the dissolution of the bodies. Death means only change of form.

As we throw away old garments and put on new ones, so the soul, after throwing away the old garment of body when it has fulfilled its purpose, puts on a new one[3] and fulfils other purposes and desires that are still unfulfilled. The doctrine of evolution when pushed a little farther, gives foundation to the doctrine of reincarnation.

Of course Western philosophers do not admit the continuity and identity of that germ of life, which is going through the different stages of evolution. The moment they admit it, they would accept the doctrine of reincarnation. The doctrine of reincarnation is supported by the Vedanta philosophy. As the soul is indestructible and as all the desires cannot be fulfilled during three scores of years, what would become of those desires still unfulfilled? They cannot be crushed out and destroyed. They need future manifestation for their fulfilment. So the souls will reappear and take other forms and they take these forms in harmony with their thoughts.

We mould our own future, and we create our own destiny, by the fruits of our works. We are responsible for all we have today and all we shall have in the future. No one else is

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[3] In the *Bhagavat Gita* (II. 22), it is said:
Vasansi jirnani yatha vihaya navani grihnati naro 'parani
Tatha sharirani vihaya jirnanyanyani sanjati navani dehi

responsible. Vedanta does not say that the soul is born a sinner, but on the contrary it teaches that the soul is a child of immortal bliss. One of the most ancient seers of truth in India, proclaimed, in a trumpet voice, before the world: 'Oh ye children of immortal bliss, listen to me. I have discovered the eternal Truth, and by knowing that alone, one may cross the ocean of life'.[4]

What a sweet and heart-consoling expression like children of immortal bliss is! We are all children of God. There is no such thing as devil or Satan who is tempting us all the time. What we ordinarily call sin, according to Vedanta, is nothing but selfishness and that is the result of the ignorance of our true divine nature. The moment we realize that divinity in full within us, that very moment we are divine and free from all sins.

Vedanta does not require any mediator for the absolution of sins. Vedanta philosophy teaches that the highest ideal of our life is to fulfil the purpose of life. There is also a purpose behind the process of evolution. We have come into existence, not as a mere freak of nature, not accidentally, but are bound by certain laws and are governed by the law of causation. We are the result of our past, and our future will be the result of our present.

Parents are not responsible for our faults. We should not blame our ancestors. Parents are nothing but the principal channels, through which the soul finds proper environments for manifestation of the powers, latent within it. So Vedanta philosophy does not blame the parents. It does neither blame God, nor Satan. It believes that each one of us is responsible.

You can undo what you have done today, if you know that you are the doer. You can make your future better, by living the right kind of life. There comes the necessity of religion. Religion does not mean, according to Vedanta, the belief in a certain dogma or a creed, or in following the doctrines of a certain denomination or church, but it is the science of the soul.

That which teaches us what we are, who we are, what we were before, what we shall be in the future, and what our relation is to the universe and to that supreme Being which is

[4] *Shrinvantu visve amritasya putra, aye dhamani divyani tasthuh.*— Svetasvatara-Up., II. 5.

absolute eternal, is called 'religion'. Morality and ethics have their foundation on religion. We find, in Western philosophy, a great discussion about the true basis of morality, but we find the answer very clear and simple in Vedanta. For instance, we often hear the answer that Jesus the Christ taught the highest ethical law: 'Love thy neighbour as thyself'. The question is generally asked: 'Why should we love our neighbour as ourselves? What for? Why should we not kill him?' From the utilitarian standpoint we ought to kill him for our benefit, if we can get any good out of it. But morality which is based upon utilitarian principles, cannot explain this difficulty. The answer to the question we find in the Vedas, as Professor Paul Deussen of Kiel University has said in his *Elements of Metaphysics*: 'Why should we love our neighbours as ourselves? The answer is *'tat tvam asi'*—That thou art! Because we are one with our neighbour in Spirit.

By hurting our neighbours, we hurt ourselves. By injuring them, we injure ourselves. That is the law. Therefore we should not hurt our neighbours. By loving them, we better ourselves, we unfold our higher nature, and live on a higher plane. We should love our neighbours not for their good deeds, not for their meritorious acts, not for their beauty, but for their souls—for that oneness in Spirit, which cannot be separated by anything of this phenomenal universe. There we find the foundation of ethics which cannot be shaken by agnostic or materialistic thinkers of the East or of the West.

Vedanta philosophy teaches that the highest ideal of life is attainment of freedom and emancipation from the bondages that have kept us down on this animal plane, the plane of sense, and that freedom or emancipation comes when we realize Divinity within us, when we feel that we are one with God, that God is the prime mover of the universe, and that we are nothing but instrument in the hands of that almighty power or will, which is working in nature. The moment we feel that, we cannot do anything wrong. How can you do anything wrong when you know that your will is not separate from the universal will? It is impossible. But the moment you forget that oneness, the moment you think of yourself as separate from the universal, you are ready to do any wicked thing, for your own

selfish purpose. But when that selfishness disappears, you reach perfection, and that perfection is the goal of evolution.

Evolution ceases when perfection is reached. I mean, the evolution of that particular individual ceases when that individual reaches perfection, but it will continue to operate in relation to others who have not reached that state of perfection. What do we mean by perfection? It means the attainment of Godconsciousness or perfect freedom. When we are not bound by anything that is within the realm of time, space, and causation, we are free.

In reality, we are always free, but we do not know it. If we are not free in reality, if that freedom does not exist in each soul potentially, we cannot reach freedom by any means. Apparently we are bound. We are bound by our own desires just as the silkworm makes the cocoon out of its own thread, and later on thinks itself bound. And we may try to explain the cause of that cocoon, existing outside of itself. Of course, it will be a mistake, but when the silkworm gets the power of cutting that cocoon, it comes out as a beautiful butterfly, and is free to go anywhere.

So the human soul is bound at present by the desires, by the tendencies, by the different ideas, imperfections, and all kinds of selfishness, but when that soul realizes Divinity within itself, it becomes free. It attains to Godconsciousness and afterwards becomes perfect in itself. That emancipated soul is called by different names, such as Christ or Buddha.

The word 'Christ' means a state. It does not mean any particular individual. The real name of the person was Jesus. He attained to that state which is called Christ—the state of realization of Truth. So the title 'Buddha' means enlightenment. Shakymuni Gautama attained to that oneness and became Buddha. So each one of us will become Christ, will become Buddha, when we reach that attainment of Godconsciousness. Then we shall be able to say boldly before the world as Jesus the Christ said: "I and my Father are one'.

How many of you have the courage to say that boldly: 'I and my Father are one?' Who can say it? He alone can say it who has realized that oneness. The Hindu philosopher will say: 'I am He. I am that absolute Being, who is in the sun, the moon, and the stars, who is the infinite source of

knowledge, existence, and the ultimate goal of the universe'. Vedanta philosophy teaches that that state is the ideal. We must have it. We must struggle to attain it in this life, and, therefore, we should live the life which is in harmony with the ideal and purpose of evolution, and thus we shall be able to attain it very quickly.

Vedanta philosophy is not separate from science, philosophy, logic or religion. There is one peculiarity of Vedanta philosophy that it takes in all that has been, all the truths that have been discovered by the different philosophers or thinkers of the world, and by the different scientists of different countries. It tells us that which is illogical, unscientific, or unphilosophical, cannot be religion.

Religion must not be separated from philosophy, science, or logic. The goal of science is to find out truth, and the goal of philosophy is also to discover truth. By logic we try to express what we realize, so that we may not make mistakes in our expressions. Religion also deals with absolute Truth, and we must not forget that Truth is one. By knowing that Truth, one attains to freedom as Jesus the Christ said: 'Ye shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free'. That is the only way of attaining freedom.

Vedanta philosophy can be developed into dualistic, qualified nondualistic, and absolutely nondualistic systems. So those who believe in a personal God, are not discouraged by Vedanta philosophers. They say it (dualism) is one of the stages in the process of spiritual evolution. There is growth in spirituality and that growth is admitted in Vedanta philosophy.

A child, in the spiritual life, cannot understand the highest ideal of nondualism. He will have to go through different stages. First he will think of God, as extracosmic. Then he will gradually come into a conception of God who is immanent and resident in nature or intracosmic. And when he can rise a little higher, he will realize that God is absolute Being, the Reality, the Soul of all souls.

There has never been religious persecution in India, on account of the belief in any certain doctrine. The Hindus would not molest anyone, on account of his belief, nor persecute him, because he does not believe as they do. They

accept all these different systems and creeds as different paths that lead to the same goal.

As one coat cannot fit all bodies, each one will have a coat which fits his or her body. If I go to the market and say: 'Now my friend, I have a coat and you will have to put it on, and if it does not fit, you will have to go without', then I must be a fool. So Vedanta philosophy recognizes that each individual must have his own ideals and beliefs, but all these ideals and beliefs have one goal and that goal is the attainment of Godconsciousness, of perfection or freedom or emancipation of the soul. Therefore the Vedanta philosopher never persecutes.

Thousands of Mohammedans came to India and persecuted the Hindus by holding the sword in one hand and the *Koran* in the other, just as the early Christians did, by holding a gun in one hand and the Bible in the other. But still the Hindus did not take revenge upon them. They said they (Mohammedans and Christians) were working out their own salvation in that way. Of course they resisted, but non-resistance is the ideal. Who can do it? Not the man who is struggling for bread and butter, or for name and fame and who is the slave of ambition, but he who has risen above all these things, can do it.

Vedanta philosophy teaches that all these different religions are like so many roads, which lead to the same goal, as there are many roads by which you can come to San Francisco. One can come from the north, another from the south, and so forth. So we may attain to the state, that highest ideal of life, by different paths, and all the different paths are but methods to the attainment of Godconsciousness.

Each method is called a *yoga* (*yuj*—to join, to join the *jivatman* with the *Paramatman*). There is one, *raja yoga,* the method of concentration and meditation, one *bhakti yoga,* the method of devotion and worship, one *jnana yoga,* of discrimination and knowledge, and there is *karma yoga,* the method of work.

By doing work in a right way, by understanding the secret of work, we can attain to that goal very easily. The secret of work lies in working for work's sake, without thinking of results. Those who have read the *Bhagavad Gita,* which has

been translated by many of the Oriental scholars, under different names, such as Sir Edwin Arnold's *Song Celestial*, will understand what I mean by the secret of work. The *Gita* states: 'To work you have the right, but not to the fruits thereof'.[5]

It is a very deep problem, but I cannot dwell long on it tonight, as our time will not permit us to discuss deeply. By making all our works of worship, we can make our life much better than it is at present. And in that way one can attain to the goal by the method for which he is best fitted.

One, who is of a meditative nature, should practise concentration and meditation. Concentration and meditation upon what? Upon that Spirit, that divine nature, which is dwelling in us. We must try to make our minds introspective, and think of what is going on within. We are constantly trying to know things outside of us and we neglect that which is nearest and dearest to us, and that which is within us.

Therefore Vedanta philosophy says: 'If you wish to know Truth, do not seek it outside. Search within, there alone you will find Truth.' It has been expressed beautifully by one of the vedic sages, who is known as a seer of Truth: 'That eternal Being, that absolute Truth, is smaller than the smallest, is larger than the largest. It dwells in each atom as well as in the largest solar system. It dwells in the cave of our hearts. Whoever realizes it in the cave of his heart, obtains unbounded peace and eternal happiness, in this life'.[6]

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[5] *Karmanyevadhikaraste ma phaleshu kadachana*
—Bhagavad Gita, II. 47.

[6] *Anoraniyan mahato mahiyan*
atmasya jantornihitam guhayam.
Tamakratuh pashyati vitashoko
dhatu-prasadan mahimanamatmanah.
—Katha-Upanishad, II, 20.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF PANCHADASI

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PREFACE

An Introduction to the Philosophy of Panchadasi is an offer of ours that contains the philosophical thoughts of *Panchadasi,* delivered at the Christo-Theosophical Society at Bloomsbury Square on the 27th October, 1896. Swami Vivekananda was present on the occasion and was highly pleased at the crown success of his beloved spiritual brother. It is the maiden speech of Swami Abhedananda before the learned Western audience. Below are quoted certain authentic records of this lecture from the *Life of Swami Vivekananda* (Vol. II):

"One of the events which satisfied the Swami (Vivekananda) immensely, was the success of the maiden speech of the Swami Abhedananda, whom he had designated to speak in his stead at a club in Bloomsbury Square, on October 27. The new monk gave an excellent address on the general character of the Vedanta teaching; and it was noticed that he possessed spiritual fervour and possibilities of making a good speaker. A description of this occasion, written by Mr. Eric Hammond, reads:

'Some disappointment awaited those that had gathered that afternoon. It was announced that Swamiji did not intend to speak, and Swami Abhedananda would address them instead.

'An overwhelming joy was noticeable in the Swami (Vivekananda) in his scholar's success. Joy compelled him to put at least some of itself into words that rang with delight unalloyed. It was the joy of a spiritual father over the achievement of a well-beloved son, a successful and brilliant student. The Master was more than content to have effaced himself in order that his Brother's opportunity should be altogether unhindered. The whole impression had in it a glowing beauty quite indescribable. . It was as though the Master thought and knew his thought to be true: *'Even if I perish on this plane, my message will be sounded through these dear lips and the world will hear it** *. He (Vivekananda) remarked that this was the first appearance of his dear Brother and pupil, as an English-speaking lecturer before an English audience, and he pulsated with pure pleasure at the applause that followed the remark.

His selflessness throughout the episode burnt itself into one's deepest memory.' "

The present book is an attempt to throw light upon the Vidyaranya or Vivarana school of Advaita Vedanta. It is the first lecture of Swami Abhedananda before the Western audience and as such the method employed in it is not marked by that peculiar novelty which characterises his later lectures and addresses. Yet the fact is to be noticed that the maiden speech also exhibits remarkable lucidity of expression and directness of appeal.

The philosophy of *Panchadasi* is a unique contribution to the domain of Indian thought. Swami Abhedananda's treatment of the subject is thoroughly subjective. He has revealed here the central idea of *Panchadasi* philosophy faithfully and thereby has sought to awaken an interest of the reader in it. His method is essentially logical rather than historical. The historical background has been furnished for the sake of readers's convenience.

First of all we like to mention here the varying opinions with regard to time and historicity of Vidyaranya. It is quite clear that Muni Vidyaranya belongs to the Vivarana school of thought and he wrote many learned books on Vedanta, such as *Vivarana-prameya-samgraha, Panchadasi, Drikdrisya-viveka* and others. But there is a dispute among scholars whether Vidyaranya was the self-same person as Sayana, the commentator of the Vedas, or they were totally two different persons. Dr. S. N. Dasgupta is of opinion that Vidyaranya, the author of *Panchadasi,* and Sayana, the author of *Sarvadarsana-samgraha* are identically the same. He says in his *A History of Indian Philosophy* (Vol. II, p. 215): "Vidyaranya is reputed to be the same as Madhava, brother of Sayana, the great vedic commentator." Dr. Dasgupta accredited Vidyaranya with the authorship of many more books on philosophy, such as, *Vivaranaprameya-samgraha, Jivanmukti-viveka* and others. He admits: "In addition to the *Sarvadarsana-samgraha* Madhava wrote three works on the Sankara Vedanta, *viz. Vivaranaprameya-samgraha,* and *Panchadasi,* and also *Jivanmukti-viveka.*" (Cf. H.I.P., Vol. II, p. 214). Dr. Radhakrishnan is also inclined to indentify Vidyaranya with Madhava-Sayana and he says: "Vidyaranya (fourteen century), generally identified with

Madhava, wrote *Vivaranaprameya-samgraha* as the gloss on Prakasatman's work. While his *Panchadasi* is classic of later Advaita, his *Jivanmukti-viveka* is also of considerable value" (Vide *Indian Philosophy,* Vol. II, p. 551). Pandit Rajendranath Ghose (afterwards Swami Chidghanananda) also admits this view and mentions in his Bengali edition of *Advaitasiddhi* (Vol. I) that Vidyaranya was no other person than Madhavacharya who wrote not only the *Panchadasi, Sarvadarsana-samgraha,* and *Vivaranaprameya-samgraha,* but also *Anubhutiprakasa, Jivanmukti-viveka,* the glossary on *Aparokshanubhuti* and 108 *Upanishads,* the short commentary on *Srautasamhita, Aitareya, Taittiriya* and *Chhandogya Upanishads.* He wrote also *Brihadaranyaka-vartikasara, Sankara-vijaya, Jaiminiyamalavistara, Madhaviya-dhatu-vritti, Parasara-madhava* and *Kalamadhava,* etc. But Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan expresses his view with regard to it thus: "But Vidyaranya,** was only 'an insignificant ascetic who presided over the Sringeri Matha from C. 1377 to 1386 A.D. The works that are definitely attributed to Vidyaranya are only the *Panchadasi* and the *Vivaranaprameya-samgraha'*" (Vide *The Philosophy of Advaita,* p. 2).

As regards the time of Vidyaranya, Dr. Mahadevan says that Vidyaranya lived probably in the fourteenth century A.D. and he was the preceptor of Harihara I, the emperor of Vijayanagar and of Bukka. Swami Abhedananda mentions: "Madhava was at first the Prime Minister of the King Bukka of South India and he flourished some four hundred years after Sankaracharya. Afterwards he renounced his ministership, property, and worldly position and entered the order *of Sannyasin.*" Mr. M. A. Doriswami Iyangar says in his article on *The Madhava-Vidyaranya Theory* (Cf. *Indian Historical Quarterly,* Vol. XII) that Vidyaranya was an insignificant ascetic and the president of the Sringeri Math. Mr. N. Venkataramanayya proves in his *Vijayanagar, Origin of the City and the Empire* (Ch. II, p. 49ff) that Madhava and Vidyaranya were not identical. Because 'the identity-theory seems to be more probable than the opposite theory' (Cf. *The Philosophy of Advaita,* p. 3). So he infers that Vidyaranya lived in the time of Harihara I, the king of Vijayanagar, and Harihara I was really the builder of Vijayanagar kingdom, the name of which was given after

the name of Vidyaranya. But Mr. R. Rama Rao in his suggestive article on *Vidyaranya and Madhavacharya* (Cf. *Indian Historical Quarterly,* Vol. VI, p. 701) holds a quite different view. He says that 'King Bukka I is referred to as the patron while the inscriptions of Vidyaranya are all of the reign of Harihara II (1377-1404)'. But Dr. Mahadevan contends: 'The evidence of the copper-plate grant is corroborated by a few incriptions of the Tulava period which declare that the city of Vidyanagara was built by King Harihara I and named Vidyanagara in the name of Vidyaranya Sripada. Two inscriptions dated respectively 1538 and 1559 A.D. state that Harihara Raya built Vidyanagara in the name of Vidyaranya' (Vide *The Philosophy of Advaita,* p. 4).

As regards the teacher or preceptor of Vidyaranya there is also a dispute among scholars. Some say that the teacher of Vidyaranya was Sankarananda ; according to some, Bharati-Tirtha, while others hold that Vidyananda was the teacher of Vidyaranya. But Dr. Dasgupta is of opinion that Bharati-Tirtha, Vidyananda and Sankarananda, these three savants were the teachers of Vidyaranya. Appaya-Dikshit, the author of *Siddhantalesa-samgraha* differs from it. He holds that Bharati Tirtha and Vidyaranya refer to the same man. He calls the *Vivaranaprameya-samgraha* as the *Vivaranopanyasa,* as he admits with the words: 'विवरणोपन्यासे भारतीतीर्थवचनम्' and 'इति श्रीविवरणोपन्यासे प्रथमवर्णकं समाप्तम्' in his celebrated work *Siddhantalesa-samgraha.* Dr. Mahadevan also agrees with Appaya Dikshit and says: "From the evidence afforded by the *Siddhantalesa* of Appaya Dikshit**, we are led to the conclusion that Bharatitirtha was the author of the three works and that the name Vidyaranya was an appellation which was common to both Madhava and Bharatitirtha" (Cf. *The Philosophy of Advaita,* p. 7). Thus it follows from the foregoing lines that the title of 'Vidyaranya' was common both to Madhava and Bharati Tirtha. Vidyaranya was not the name of any individual, and Madhavacharya-Vidyaranya and Bharati-Tirtha-Vidyaranya were quite different persons. Appaya-Dikshit says that Bharati-Tirtha-Vidyaranya was the author of *Vivaranopanyasa* or *Vivaranaprameya-samgraha.* According to Dr. Mahadevan, Bharati-Tirtha-Vidyaranya was senior to

Madhavacharya-Vidyaranya though they were contemporaries. But Swami Abhedananda disagrees with this view and holds that Vidyaranya was the disciple or pupil of the *Sannyasin* Bharati-Tirtha.

SWAMI PRAJNANANANDA

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF PANCHADASI

Ladies and gentlemen, the subject of my discourse, I am afraid, is one which may not be interesting to you on account of its being very dry and metaphysical. It is a discourse on the Vedanta philosophy of the Hindus and its teachings as explained in *Panchadasi.*

Before I proceed with my subject I shall tell you what the meaning of the word 'Vedanta' is and how it became the name of a certain school of philosophy in India.

'Vedanta' is a Sanskrit compound word of *veda* and *anta.* The word 'Veda' comes from the Sanskrit root *vid i.e.* to know. So Veda means literally the 'act of knowing' or knowledge. Knowledge is a general term. There may be the knowledge of external things and of things internal ; there may be the knowledge of natural things and of things supernatural ; there may be knowledge of relative things and of things beyond all sorts of relation, or, in other words, things which we cannot perceive, cannot sense, cannot feel, cannot think of or imagine. The word *anta* means 'end,' or the latter portion of the Vedas. Therefore, 'Vedanta' means that portion of knowledge by which we can understand the true nature of those things which are international or mental, which are supernatural or above the gross material side of nature and of things which are above all relations i.e. the Absolute, the universal Soul.

The Absolute is called in Vedanta Brahman. *Jnana* is another word for knowledge. The term which the Vedantists use for the knowledge of the Absolute is *Brahmajnana.* So, Vedanta means *Brahmajnana* or *Atmajnana.*

Such being the scriptural or literal meaning of the word Vedanta, the scriptural literature of the Hindus which deals with the *Brahmajnana,* is also called Vedanta. The most ancient part of this scriptural literature which the Hindus believe as revealed, is the *Upanishad.*

There is another book *Bhagavad Gita* which contains the doctrines of Vedanta as taught by Sri Krishna to Arjuna before the commencement of the great battle of *dharmakshetra* Kuru-

kshetra. It is considered by the Vedantists as an authority. These *Upanishads* and *Bhagavad Gita* form the real scriptural foundations of the Vedanta philosophy. Upon these foundations is built the huge superstructure of Vedanta by different sages and philosophers who flourished both before and after Sakyasimha, the great founder of the Buddhist faith.

The scattered flowers of the vedantic truth that are to be found here and there in the mass of the simplest form of the *Upanishads* were collected and placed each in its proper place by Badarayana, so as to form a beautiful bouquet that may please the scrutinizing and truth-seeking eyes of all philosophers of all ages and climes. He put these grand philosophical tenets in short pithy sentences called *Vedanta-sutras* or aphorisms of Badarayana. These *Upanishads, Gita* and the *Sutras* of Badarayana form the three *Prasthanas* or steps to the realization of the background underlying all phenomena. These three being the basic literature of the vedantic school, volumes after volumes of commenteries and annotations were written on them, in prose and in verse by Sankaracharya and his disciples and other Advaitists who flourished later. *Panchadasi* is one of these works on the Vedanta philosophy written in verse by Madhavacharya (Sayana), the great commentator of the vedic literature. Few countries have ever produced such a volumious writer as Madhava. Madhava was at first the prime minister of the King Bukka of South India and he flourished some 400 years after Sankaracharya (eight or ninth century A. D.). Afterwards he renounced his ministership, property, and worldly position and entered the order of *Sannyasin*. He was initiated into that order by a *Sannyasin* named Bharati Tirtha and, thenceforth, was called Vidyaranya.

The first six chapters of *Panchadasi* was written by Bharati-Tirtha, but his sudden and unexpected death left the work to be completed by his disciple who wrote the remaining nine chapters. The word *Panchadasi* comes from the Sanskrit *'Panchadasa'* which means fifteen and the book is called *Panchadasi* on account of its having fifteen chapters. The *Panchadasi* contains altogether 1530 *slokas* or verses and is divided into three books, each containing five chapters.

In the first chapter the true nature of the unconditioned Brahman is explained. We can never define this unconditioned

Brahman, because every thought of the human mind or seasoning faculty will be under some condition or relation while Brahman transcends them all. Brahman is beyond space and time, beyond thought and beyond all human expressions. It is not to be the object of our consciousness. Our mind cannot approach it. It is beyond all human expressions. It is indescribable and unspeakable. Human mind cannot, however, rest satisfied unless it reaches that state where all human search after truth ceases. It is a state where all desires for transitory and worldy things vanish, where peace and happiness reign through all eternity and where all qualities of ego and non-ego end, and the whole universe merges into one ocean of universal consciousness. After realizing that superconscious state of perfect bliss and unity the vedantic sages declare in a trumpet voice before the world:

वेदाहमेतं पुरुषं महान्तं आदित्यवण तमसः परस्तात्।
तमेव विदित्वातिमृत्युमेति, नान्यः पन्था विद्यते अयनाय ॥

'I have reached that one conscious Being, effulgent with divine light and beyond the limits of darkness. Knowing Him alone one attains that state which is beyond the reach of death. There is no alternative course to it.'

These ancient sages began to coin different words to give a clear idea what they realized in the superconscious state. Most of these words are of negative categories (*neti-mulakam*). Its attributes are all in the negative form. It is without colour, without form, without smell, etc. Very few words in the affirmative have been accepted as correct to represent the Absolute or Brahman. Words are relative and they carry with them a conditional sense. But Brahman is unconditional. So, we must be cautious while using the words for describing the unconditioned. Words should then be used not in their relative sense, but in their absolute sense. Suppose, if we use existence, intelligence and bliss to describe Brahman, we must take their meanings not as used ordinarily, but in their absolute sense or in the language of *Panchadasi* not in their *vachyartha* but in their *lakshyartha*. Therefore Brahman is described in *Panchadasi* as *sat-chit-ananda,* pure existence-consciousness-bliss. It is also established in this chapter that the soul of man is in reality a part and parcel of the Brahman, conditioned by the illusive

nature of *maya* which makes it appear different from the Brahman, individualizes it and forces it to think, feel, perceive, sense, and do all sorts of work.

What is this *maya?* It is a name given by the Vedantists to that eternal energy whose manifestations are the phenomena and the universe. This *maya* acting upon the ocean of Brahman, produces waves which we call the organic and inorganic phenomena of nature. She evolves and manifests herself as atoms and molecules. She attracts them, combines them so as to produce all the elements and constructs out of them myriads of suns, moons, stars and solar systems. Even the greatest minds stand stupefied in dumb astonishment when they try to think of that supreme power whose inkling has evolved this gigantic manifestation. *Maya* creates division—division between the individual self and the Brahman. The projection or the world-appearance is due to only *maya* or nescience. This *maya* or *Prakriti* has three *gunas* or qualities, *sattva, rajas* and *tamas.* The broad and general sense of the word *maya,* as expressed in *Panchadasi,* is *Prakriti* and the word *maya* has been used in a little restricted sense.

Panchadasi divides *Prakriti* into *maya* and *avidya*:

तमोरजः-सत्वगुणा प्रकृतिर्द्विविधा च सा ।
सत्वशुद्धयविशुद्धिभ्यां मायाविद्ये च ते मते ॥ I.15-16.

When *sattava guna* or the power by which we can know things as they are, is not overcome by *rajas* (activity) and *tamas* (ignorance), and on the other hand, *sattva* prevails our *rajas* and *tamas,* then only *Prakriti* is called *maya.* When *sattva guna* is overcome by *rajas* and *tamas,* the *Prakriti* is called *avidya.* The *sattva* is described as a pure reflecting substance that has the power of catching the image of Brahman and reflecting its rays as a mirror reflects and casts the rays of the same on all sides.

This *maya* together with the image of Brahman reflected therein is Isvara or the creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe. Isvara of Vedanta is the same God as different nations worship and pray to in different names. He is all-pervading, all-powerful, all-knowing and all-merciful.

The image or reflection of Brahman in *avidya* is the *jiva* or the conditioned Brahman in man. This *jiva* because of his

impure *sattva* has got partial knowledge and with it he tries to gain fuller knowledge. In Vedanta, therefore, *jiva* is called *prajna* or partial knower while *Isvara* is all-knowing. This *jiva* or individual soul gets the name *prajna* when he assumes *avidya* as his *karana-sharira* or causal body. *Panchadasi* teaches that there are three bodies of every man: (1) the *sthula-sharira,* the gross material body; (2) the *sukshma-sharira,* the subtle body and (3) the *karana-sharira,* the casual body. The last one is the cause of the other two bodies, or, in other words, it contains the seeds of the subtle and the gross bodies.

मायाविम्बो वशीकृत्य तां स्यात् सर्वज्ञ ईश्वरः ।
अविद्यावशगस्तन्यस्तद्वैचित्र्यादुनेकधा ॥

The *jiva* or the individual soul with his *sukshama-sharira* subtle body is called *Taijasa*: 'प्राज्ञस्तत्राभिमानेनैतजसत्वं प्रतिपद्यते ।' and 'साकारणशरीरं स्यात् प्राज्ञस्तत्राभिमानवान् ॥' The subtle body contains the *antahkarana* (अन्तःकरण) the internal organ or the mind in its different manifestations, the five *jnanendriyas* or instruments of knowledge: the senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching, five *karmendriyas* or instruments of action: power of seizing, moving, speaking, excreting and generating, and the five *pranas.* The *prana* is the life-sustaining power or the vital energy in us. Although it is one, it has five different names on account of the five different functions it performs. While working in the upper part its name is *prana,* and that which moves the lower part is *apana.* When it performs digestive function it is *samana,* and when it is the cause of bringing down food from the alimentary canal to the stomach it is *udana.* Again, it is *vyana* when it works through the canals of the body.

When the *jiva* identifies himself with the gross body, he is called *visva.* This gross body contains the instruments through which those senses or *indriyas* and *pranas* work on the material plane.

The gross body dies as the physical instruments, but the *jiva* or inner man can never die or lose his powers, impressions and thoughts. The *jiva* or the inner man goes to heaven or hell, or to any other planet. He assumes different bodies, and wherever he goes, he carries with him his subtle body, which

is the seed of his gross body. All these divisions, differentiations and limitations, says *Panchadasi,* are imposed on the *Atman.* They are false like *maya ;* they have no independent status. They cannot bring any change in the unchangeable, just as the apparent redness of a crystal cannot affect its genuine whiteness and transparency when a red object is placed near it. The qualities of the changeable are often attributed to the unchangeable. This process is called the superimposition. The superimposition or *adhyasa* is caused by *avidya.* The *jiva* conditioned by *avidya* and entangled in the meshes of the three bodies, thinks himself as actor (*karta*) and enjoyer (*bhokta*). As long as these two ideas of being actor (*kartritva*) and enjoyer (*bhoktritva*) will remain in the *jiva,* he will have to go on with his work and enjoy the fruits coming therefrom. Even after the death of the body he still retains the ideas of doer (*kartritva*) and enjoyer (*bhoktritva*). These two ideas will bring forth desires as their offspring and as long as these desires will remain, they will create new bodies. So *Panchadasi* says: 'When one can transcend the sense of self, as well as bring under control the desires, this can be defined as *shokapanodana* (शोकापनोदन). And the pleasure and satisfaction one derives from it may be defined as *tripti* (तृप्ति) and *harsa* (हर्ष).

In Sanskrit the desires are called desires or *vasanas.* The desires or *vasanas* for work and enjoyment are the causes of our birth and re-births. If these desires remain in us, we shall be born again and again. As these desires or *vasanas* are the roots of all our works or *karmas,* good or bad, *jiva* cannot escape from reaping what he has sown. So, he enjoys pleasure and pain which are the results of his works, good or bad. Thus fettered by the trammels of *karma, jiva* moves on from one body to another enjoying or suffering the good or bad results of his own deeds.

Is there no end to this process of births and re-births? Can we not be free from the inevitable law of *karma* ? So, the author of *Panchadasi* himself raises these questions:

नद्यां कीटा इवावर्तादावर्तान्तरमाशुते ।
व्रजन्तो जन्मनो जन्म लभन्ते नैव निर्वृतिम् ॥
सत् कर्म परिपाकात् ते करूणा निधिनोद्धृता ।
प्राप्य तीरतरूच्छायां विश्राम्यन्ति यथासुखम् ॥

As a small insect falling into the current of a river passes from one whirlpool to another and does not find a resting place, so the individual soul passes from one birth to another without finding rest or peace. But if any kind-hearted man seeing the miserable plight of the rapid current and places the insect under the shade of a tree on the bank, it escapes the ever-running current of the water. Similarly, the *jiva* can escape the continuous recurring births and deaths, if any God-realized man shows him the path to freedom and peace. Following the advice of the realized man (तत्त्वदर्शी) the *jiva* can be liberated from the pangs and cares of the deceitful world.

Then comes the spiritual practice or *sadhana*. Nowhere we can find in world's history, except in India, that the highest metaphysical conception has formed the basis of a religion. The religion of Vedanta is not merely theoretical, but also practical. It is the realization of the universal soul in the individual self. It is being and becoming one with that eternal existence.

The union with the supreme pure consciousness forms the keynote of the vedantic religion. Vedanta proclaims that the oneness with Brahman is the ultimate end of human life. It is the be-all and end-all of our individual existence. It is the final goal of all searches after Truth. What becomes after regaining the state of oneness is described in the following lines:

भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिश्छिद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः ।
क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि तस्मिन् दृष्टे परावरे ॥

When man reaches that state of oneness, all knots of desires are torn asunder, all doubts and questions are solved for ever, and all works with their fruits are transcended.

But how to attain such a state of oneness or freedom ? To this Vedanta answers that by right knowledge of Brahman or *Brahmajnana* we can obtain oneness with the Brahman, and consequently the absolute freedom. And as before day-light the darkness of night disappears, so the darkness of false knowledge (*mithya-pratyaya*) vanishes before the light of *jnana* or right knowledge.

Vedanta says that this world is the manifested form of *maya*. These phenomena are nothing but the apparent waves in the ocean of Brahman. We live and move and have our being in Brahman. These names and forms (*nama-rupa*) are the *maya* or nescience. They are the cause of creation: 'नामरुपाद्भवस्यैव सृष्टित्वात् सृष्टितः पुरा।' Really Brahman appears as different only for name and form, otherwise it is pure and one without the second—'एकमेवाद्वितीयम्।' *Panchadasi* also says: 'नामरूपोपाधिभेदं विना नैव सतो भिदा।' But, truly speaking, Brahman is never affected by time and space. It is unchangeable amidst the changeful and deceitful world. *Panchadasi* also mentions:

प्रवहत्यपि नीरेऽव स्थिरा प्रौढ़ा शिला यथा।
नामरूपान्यथात्वेऽपि कूटस्थं ब्रह्म नान्यथा॥

As a rushing stream cannot dislodge a huge stone, likewise Brahman remains unaffected amidst the changes of names and forms (*nama-rupa*). Name and form have their ground upon Brahman. Without the support of Brahman they cannot exist. *Panchadasi* describes this as:

निश्चिद्रे दर्पणे भाति वस्तुगर्भं वृहद्वियत्।
सच्चिद्घने तथा नानाजगद्गर्भमिदं वियत॥

As in a mirror one can see the reflected images of every object, likewise everything having a name and a form is revealed by Brahman.

In truth, every particle of matter in the universe is Brahman conditioned by *nama* and *rupa* i.e. name and form. This vision of Brahman is called in Vedanta *samyag-darsana* or direct and right knowledge. This *samyag-darsana* is acquired by *vichara* or proper analysis of the true nature of things and by realizing Brahman which is *sat-chit-ananda* or existence-intelligence-bliss. To describe the necessity of *vichara, Panchadasi* says:

ब्रह्म यद्यपि शास्त्रेषु प्रत्यक्त्वेण वर्णितम्।
महावाक्यै स्तुथाप्येतत् दुर्बोधमविचारिणः॥

Although the individual soul has been described as Brahman in the *mahavakyas* or the great vedic words, yet it is

very difficult to understand for them who do not practise *vichara* or the proper analysis of spirit and matter—*jada* and *chaitanya.*

What these *mahavakyas* are and what do they mean ? The *mahavakyas* are the great words which contain the fundamental ideas of Vedanta. *Panchadasi* also deals with these *mahavakyas* and explains them in an explicit way. They are four in number:

(1) *Tattvam-asi* (तत्त्वमसि), *Tat* means 'that' *i.e.* Brahman and the individual self is denoted by *tvam, i.e.* 'thou.' So, *Tat-tvam-asi* means 'That Thou art' or the self is Brahman.

(2) *Aham Brahmasmi* (अहं ब्रह्मास्मि) *i.e.* I am Brahman.

(3) *Ayamatma Brahman* (अयं आत्मा ब्रह्म) *i.e.,* this *Atman* or the individual soul is Brahman.

(4) *Prajnanam Brahman* (प्रज्ञानं ब्रह्म) *i.e.,* the pure consciousness is Brahman.

Panchadasi says:

येनेक्षते शृणोतीदं जिघ्रति व्याकरोति च ।
स्वाद्वस्वादु विजानाति तत् प्रज्ञानमुदीरितम् ॥
चतुर्मुखेन्द्रदेवेषु मनुष्याश्वगवादिषु ।
चैतन्यमेकं ब्रह्मातः प्रज्ञानं ब्रह्ममय्यपि ॥
परिपूर्णः परात्मास्मिन् देहे विद्याधिकारिणि ।
बुद्धेः साक्षितया स्थित्वा स्फुरन्नहमितीर्यते ॥
स्वतः पूर्णः परात्मात्र ब्रह्मशब्देन वर्णितः ।
अस्मीत्यैक्यपरामर्शस्तेन ब्रह्म भवाम्यहम् ॥
एकमेवाद्वितीयं सत् नामरूपविवर्जितम् ।
सृष्टेः पुराधुनाप्यस्य तादृक्त्वं तदितीर्यते ॥
श्रोतुर्देहेन्द्रियातीतं वस्त्वत्रं त्वंपदेरितम् ।
एकता गृह्यतेऽसीति तदैक्यमनुभूयताम् ॥
स्वप्रकाशापरोक्षत्वमयमित्युक्तितो मतम् ।
अहंकारादिदेहान्तात् प्रत्यगात्मेति गीयते ॥
दृश्यमानस्य सर्वस्य जगतस्तत्त्वमीर्यते ।
ब्रह्मशब्देन तद् ब्रह्म स्वप्रकाशात्मरूपकम् ॥

—Ch. V., 1-8

The consciousness existing in connection with our intelligence is the source of our speech, perception, and desires, etc. It can be defined as the *prajnana.* The great soul is existing in the gross material bodies of different animals as the ruler of their hearts. Therefore, the great soul is existing within me; also the *prajnana* and supreme consciousness are existent within me. So, we can deduce that the supreme pure consciousness and *prajnana* together are Brahman. The supreme consciousness being guided by the phenomenal emanation is existing within gross body as witness of everything. As it is guided by the phenomenal emanation being present within the gross body, so we can define it as self. The word Brahman means the ever-present prime soul. The word *asmi* (अस्मि means our individual consciousness and reflected consciousness. Therefore, self means individual consciousness. By that we can easily deduce that one who transcends the phenomenal emanation, is Brahman. Before emanation *i.e.* projection, the supreme soul (*Atman*) alone existed. It is also existing in the same state now. So, we can define it as *tat* (तत्). We can define our reflected consciousness as *tam* (तम्). Therefore, *tat* (तत्) and *tam* (तम्) have no difference between them. We ought to know this. The reflected consciousness which is self-luminous can be defined as *ayam* (अयम्). It is also known as self, because desires are guiding it. Therefore, we can deduce that this reflected consciousness is known as self and *ayam* (अयम्). Brahman is the source i.e. ground of everything. It is self-luminous. Therefore, we can deduce that no difference exists between self and the supreme self, the Brahman.

The *mahavakyas* expresesd in the form of *sutras* or aphorisms contain the central truths of Vedanta philosophy. *Panchadasi* again says:

देहाद्यात्मत्वविभ्रान्तौ जाग्रतां न हठात् पुमान्।
ब्रह्मात्मत्वेन विज्ञातुं क्षमते मन्दधीत्वतः॥

As long as there will remain in us देहात्म-भ्रान्ति *i.e.,* as long as we shall mistake the body for the self, it will be impossible for us to realize the true nature of the self as Brahman. The mistake or false knowledge we can get rid of by *vichara* or

discrimination only. Thus according to the teachings of *Panchadasi* we learn that *vichara* is the first means which helps the acquirement of *samyag-darsana*. The *Panchadasi* mentions:

सदा बिचारयेत्तस्माज्जगज्जीवपरात्मनः ।
जीवभावजगद्भाववाधे[1] स्वात्मैवशिष्यते ॥

It has already been said that by logical discourse or ratiocination (*vichara*) we can get the right knowledge (of the *Atman*) that dispels the darkness of delusion. Therefore, we should determine by ratiocination the nature of the world (*jagat*), the individual petty self (*jiva*) and the highest Self (*Paramatman*). Because knowledge derived from *vichara,* if it once becomes permanent, nothing can hinder it. It destroys all delusions. With its help only one attains to God-realization even in this life and gets over the fruits of the actions of former life. So the *vichara* like the thrashing of corns must be continued till the grain of right knowledge appears. Again *Panchadasi* states:

अनेकजन्मभजनात् स्वबिचारं चिक्तीर्षति ।
विचारेण विनष्ठायां मायायां शिष्यते स्वयम् ॥

'A man follows the path of ratiocination and true knowledge in the world, after spending many past lives in prayer (*upasana*). By ratiocination, first of all, the nescience is cancelled and then the knowledge of the pure Brahman is regained'. The false imposition of duality and sorrow upon the non-dual Brahman is called bondage, and the right knowledge of the Brahman is known as salvation or realization. The *Panchadasi* mentions further that bondage is due to the want of right knowledge and it can be cancelled only

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[1] The word *vadha* means 'the falsity of everything knowing their destructibility' and not 'the absence of knowledge' or 'forgetting them altogether'—'नाप्रतीतिस्तयोर्वाधः किन्तु मिथ्यात्वनिश्चयः ।' If it be so, then men would attain salvation in deep sleep or swoon— 'नो चेत् सुषुप्तिमूर्च्छादौ मुच्येत यत्नतो जन ॥' But in deep sleep and swoon the false knowledge or nescience is not corrected.

by *vichara.* Therefore, everyone should determine who is the *jiva* and who is the *Paramatman* (Brahman):

अद्वयानन्दरुपस्य सद्वयत्वञ्च दुःखिता ।
वन्धः प्रोक्तः स्वरुपेण स्थितिमुक्तिरितीयते ॥
अविचारकृतो वन्धो विचारेण निवर्तते ।
तस्माज्जीव परात्मानौ सर्वदैव विचारयेत् ॥

But, for those who are not so intellectually advanced as to be able to practise this kind of *vichara, Panchadasi* says:

यो विचारं न लभ्यते ब्रह्मोपसीति सोऽनिशम् ।

'He who is not able to make *vichara,* must meditate upon Brahman within.' The process of meditation is described as:

आप्तोपदेशं विश्वस्य श्रद्धालुरविचारयन् ।
चिन्तयेत् प्रत्ययैरन्यैरनन्तरितवृत्तिभिः ॥

'Believing in the words of the enlightened the faithful disciple should try to abstract his mind from external objects and concentrate upon the self without being disturbed by any other thought. This kind of meditation will make his false knowledge of the soul vanish by and by.' And when by constant meditation such false impressions as 'my Self is the body,' 'I am born with the body' and 'shall die with it' will disappear, the indivisible *Atman* will be perceived in its fulness.

Whosoever will realize it, will remain eternally free even in this life. He will be one with Brahman. He will come no more under the bondage of *maya* or delusion. Then he will act as witness (*sakshi*) or seer of his mind, body and whole universe. So *Panchadasi* says:

विद्यायां सच्चिदानन्दा अखण्डैकरसात्मताम् ।
प्राप्य भान्ति न भेदेन भेदकोपाधिवर्जनात् ॥

* * *

निरुपाधिब्रह्मतत्त्वे भासमाने स्वयंप्रभे ।
अद्वैते त्रिपुटी नास्ति सुमानन्दोऽयमुच्यते ॥

After becoming perfect in meditation one attains to the *Brahma-vidya.* After the perfection in the Brahman knowledge, one can realize the supreme soul. At that time the realized man perceives everything what is in reality. Owing to nescience one perceives the difference between him and Brahman. But after attaining to right knowledge, no distinction is perceived by the realized soul. After one succeeds in dispelling the sense of difference, one realizes the self-revealing light of Brahman. At that time *triputi i.e.,* subject, object and relation, is vanished. That supreme state can be defined as the *bhumananda* or the highest pleasure and eternal bliss. The fortunate man who attains to this superconscious state, is called a *Jivanmukta* i.e., one who is liberated in one's lifetime. *Panchadasi* describes the mental state of such a *Jivanmukta* as,

कृतकृत्यया तृप्तः प्राप्तप्राप्यतया पुनः ।
तृप्यन्नेवं स्वमनसा मन्यतेऽसौ निरन्तरम् ॥
धन्योऽहं धन्योऽहं नित्यं स्वात्मानमञ्जसा वेद्मि ।
धन्योऽहं धन्योऽहं ब्रह्मानन्दो विभाति मे स्पष्टम् ॥
धन्योऽहं धन्योऽहं दुःखं सांसारिकं न वीक्षेऽद्य ।

धन्योऽहं धन्योऽहं स्वस्याज्ञानं पलायितं क्वापि ॥
धन्योऽहं धन्योऽहं कर्तव्यं मे न विद्यते किञ्चित् ।
धन्योऽहं धन्योऽहं प्राप्तव्यं सर्वमद्यसम्पन्नम् ॥
धन्योऽहं धन्योऽहं तृप्तेर्मे कोपमा भवेल्लोके ।
धन्योऽहं धन्योऽहं धन्यो धन्यः पुनः पुनः ॥

That is, the *Jivanmukta* thinks and says: "I have known the supreme *Atman,* therefore I am happy, I am enjoying highest bliss, therefore I am happy, I am free from the worldly bonds, I am also free from the chains of delusion, therefore, I am happy. I have no obligation to anyone, I have attained that highest object, for which I was practising so long, therefore I am happy. I am enjoying the sublime bliss, therefore I am the happiest of the happy".

THOUGHTS ON SANKHYA BUDDHISM AND VEDANTA

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Chapter X: Lamaism in Tibet

Appendix I: Ralph Waldo Emerson's 'Brahm'

Appendix II: True Nature of the Atman

PREFACE

Thoughts on Sankhya Buddhism and Vedanta is a new unpublished book, and the chapters of this book were delivered in lecture forms before the talented audiences in America. In the first chapter, the learned Swami has given an introduction of philosophies of India. In the second chapter, he has efficiently dealt with the *Sankhya* philosophy of Kapila. The Swami has said that Kapila was the father of the doctrine of evolution, because he was first among the Indian philosophers, who gave the logical arguments for the support of the doctrine of evolution. The Swami has explained here in a lucid way the general principles of the *Sankhya,* as expounded by Kapila.

In the third chapter, the Swami has compared the personalities of both Buddha and Kapila, before explaining the general tenets of philosophy of Buddhism and *Sankhya.* In the chapter four, the Swami has described about the Buddhist Councils, along with the central thoughts of Buddhism. Immediately after the *parinirvana* of Goutama Buddha in 543 B.C., five hundred *Arhats* gathered at Rajagriha at the request of venerable Mahakasyapa and Ananda, the most favourite disciple of Buddha and repeated the stories and parables of the *Suttapitaka,* and this was the First Buddhist Council. Then one hundred years after the *parinirvana* of the Lord, the Second Buddhist Council was held at Vaisali. The Third Council was held during the reign of the Emperor Asoka in Pataliputra in about 242 B.C., when the sayings or teachings of the three *Pitakas* were settled and written, and the Fourth Council was held during the reign of the Emperor Kaniska who lived in the 4th century after the *parinirvana* of Buddha. Swami Abhedananda has mentioned in brief the historical happenings of the four Councils, and has given the philosophical thoughts, contained in the four main schools, practically evolved after the Fourth Council.

In the chapter five, the Swami has elucidated the main seculative thoughts of Buddhism and Vedanta in a compara-

tive way and has shown also the differences of them, when necessary. In the sixth chapter, the Swami explained about the ethics of Hinduism and Buddhism. He has said that Buddhism is a child of Hinduism, as Buddhism is contained of the fundamental principles of ethical ideas of Hinduism. The grandest of the ethical law, that is taught by the Vedas, is the law of universal love, and this universal love and compassion towards the living beings of the universe were also preached by Buddha. So Hinduism and Buddhism are the liberal and universal systems of religion or religious faiths which have adopted the elements of ethics for observing the strict moral values and spiritual ideals in human life.

In the seventh chapter, Swami Abhedananda has dealt with the problem of international ethics. This lecture was delivered in the thirtyfirst Annual Convention of the Free Religious Association of America, held on Friday, May 27th, 1898 in the Steinert Hall, Boston, before a large gathering. In this lecture, the Swami has proved that unity in variety is the best principle of ethics, as this principle is based on spiritual laws of the world. The moment we realize that we are one in spirit with the Father in Heaven, we become kind to all, we love all living creatures, and attain to freedom and peace, which are the end and aim of all religions and of all nations. In the eighth chapter, the Swami has described about the spread of Buddhism in the countries like China, Japan and Korea, and has given historical records of the temples and monasteries of China. He has also mentioned about the religious sects of the Chinese country. In the ninth chapter, the Swami has elaborately dealt with Shintoism in Japan. The Swami has said that there are three religions in Japan, and they are Shintoism, native to their own soil, Confucianism, introduced from China, and Buddhism, which came from Korea in 552 A.D. Shintoism was of Chinese origin, and was adopted in Japan about the middle of the 7th century A.D. In the tenth chapter, the Swami has dealt with the history and mystery of Lamaism in Tibet. There is also Bon religion in Tibet, and it was introduced before the spread of Buddhism in Tibet. Now the word 'Lama' is a Tibetan term, meaning the "Superior One", and the religion of the Lamas are known as Lamaism. The Swami says that the Lamas do not call their special form of Buddhism by the name

of 'Lamaism', but they say, 'The Religion', or 'Buddha's Religion', and there is no Tibetan counterpart for the English term of Lamaism. The Lamaism or the Religion of the Lamas may be divided into three main heads, primitive, mediaeval and modern. In fact, Lamaism evolved from the Mahayana Buddhism, and afterwards took some new shapes with special creeds and rituals.

The Appendices are also added with the illustrious lectures, "Ralph Waldo Emerson's Poem 'Brahm" and "True Nature of the Atman" The first appendix was written and delivered in New York on April 4, 1921, by Swami Abhedananda, in commemoration of the famous poem 'Brahm' (Brahman), by Emerson.

SWAMI PRAJNANANANDA

Chapter I

HINDU PHILOSOPHY OF INDIA

Well has it been said by Victor Cousin, the eminent French philosopher: "The history of Indian philosophy is the abridged history of the philosophy of the world". Indeed from the vedic period down to the present-day India has produced a great variety of philosophical systems some of which are atheistic, agnostic, nihilistic, materialistic, while others are pluralistic, dualistic, or monotheistic, qualified non-dualistic, idealistic, realistic, spiritualistic, non-dualistic or monastic systems of thought such are common in Europe and America at the present time. I agree with Prof. Max Muller when he says, "India has produced a nation of philosophers". In fact, the natural tendency of the Hindu mind from the very beginning was to search after the unchangeable Reality of the universe, to trace the source of phenomena, to understand the purpose of evolution as well as of earthly existence, and above all to know what relation the individual soul bears to the universal Being.

Animated by an intense longing and guided by unswerving love for Truth, the Hindu philosophers discovered many of the natural and spiritual laws and rationally explained them by following strictly the rules of inductive and deductive logic. They understood the process of cosmic evolution from a homogeneous mass into the variety of phenomena, and rejected the theory of a special creation of the world out of nothing, by the whim of an extra-cosmic personal God, in a definite period of time as we find in the Hebrew scriptures. Prof. Huxley admits this when he says: "To say nothing of Hindu sages to whom evolution was a familiar notion ages before Paul of Tarsus was born".[1] And Sir Monier Monier Williams in his *Brahminism and Hinduism* declares: "Indeed, if I may be allowed the anachronism, the Hindus were Spinozites more than two thousand years before the existence of Spinoza ; and Darwinians many centuries before Darwin ; and evolutionists many cen-

[1] Cf. *Science and Hebrew Tradition*, p. 150.

turies before the doctrine of evolution had been accepted by the scientists in general of our time, and before any word like 'evolution' existed in any language of the world". This statement is absolutely correct. If we study the philosophical systems of the great thinkers and seers of Truth of ancient India, we shall find the most wonderful discoveries that have ever been recorded in the whole history of philosophy.

In their attempts to solve the mysteries of the phenomenal world the Hindu philosophers developed six principal systems of philosophy each having numerous branches of its own. The *Vaisheshika* philosophy of Kanada traces the origin of the universe to the combination of atoms and molecules. It maintains that these atoms and molecules were not created by God, but were co-eternal with Him. The power which combines two atoms and makes aggregates of atoms, comes from God who is personal, who possesses knowledge, desire and will, and who is the Lord and Governor of all phenomena. According to this system of philosophy, ether, time, space, *Atman* or Self, and mind or *manas* are eternal substances of nature. Mind or *manas* is described as infinitely small like an atom (*anu*), but it is distinct from *Atman* or Self which is vast (*vibhu*).

Next to the *Vaisheshika* is the *Nyaya* philosophy of Gautama. Its object is the same as other Hindu systems, namely the true knowledge of nature, soul and God, and the attainment of ultimate freedom (*moksha*). Gautama is called the Aristotle of India. Speaking of Gautama's Logic Mr. John Davies says: "The right methods of reasoning have been discussed with as much subtlety as by any of the western logicians".[2]

Then comes the *Sankhya* system of Kapila who lived about 700 B.C. He is called the father of the evolution theory in India. His system is more like the philosophy of Herbert Spencer. He rejected the atomic theory of Kanada by tracing the origin of atoms to one eternal Cosmic Energy, which he called *Prakriti* (Latin *Procreatrix,* the creative energy). Kapila defined atoms as force-centres which correspond to the Ions and Electrons of modern science. It was Kapila who for the first time explained Creation as the result of attraction and

[2] Cf. *Hindu Philosophy.*

repulsion, which literally means love and hatred of atoms as the Greek philosopher Empedocles puts it.

The *Sankhya* philosophy of Kapila, in short, is devoted entirely to the systematic, logical and scientific explanation of the process of Cosmic evolution from that primordial *Prakriti*, or eternal energy. There is no ancient philosophy in the world which was not indebted to the *Sankhya* system of Kapila. The idea of evolution which the ancient Greeks and neo-Platonists had, can be traced back to the influence of this *Sankhya* school of thought. Prof. E. W. Hopkins says: "Plato is full of Sankhyan thought, worked out by him, but taken from Pythagoras. Before the sixth century B.C. all the religions—philosophical ideas of Pythagoras are correct in India (L. Schroeder, Pythagoras). If there were but one or two cases they might be set aside as accidental coincidences, but such coincidences are too numerous to be the result of chance.[3] In his *Hindu Philosophy,* John Davies speaks of Kapila's system as the first recorded system of philosophy in the world, and calls it "the earliest attempts on record to give an answer, from reason alone, to the mysterious questions which arise in every thoughtful mind about the origin of the world, the nature and relations of man and his future destiny". Furthermore Mr. Davies says, in reference to the German philosophy of Schopenhauer and of Hartmann that it is "a reproduction of the philosophic system of Kapila in the materialistic part, presented in the more elaborate form, but on the same fundamental lines. In this respect, the human intellect has gone over the same ground that it occupied more than two thousand years ago ; but on a more important question it has taken a step in retreat. Kapila recognized fully the existence of a soul in man, forming indeed his proper nature, the absolute of Fichte, distinct from matter and mind, but our latest philosophy both here and in Germany, can see in man only a highly developed organization.[4]

Kapila denied the existence of a Creator, but admitted the existence of the individual soul, as an eternal, infinite and immortal entity. His philosophy teaches the plurality of *Purusha* soul. The different schools of Buddhistic and Jain philosophy are based upon this *Sankhya* system of Kapila.

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[3] Cf. *Religions of India*. pp. 559-560.
[4] Cf. *Preface to Hindu Philosophy*.

Next in order comes the Yoga philosophy of Patanjali. Patanjali accepts the theory of evolution as explained by Kapila, and maintains that the whole phenomenal universe is the result of evolution of *Prakriti,* the eternal energy. Kapila, believes in the existence of countless *Purushas* or individual souls, each of which is by nature eternal, infinite and immortal. But Yoga philosophy of Patanjali differs from the *Sankhya* by admitting the existence of a cosmic *Purusha* (personal God), who is formless, infinite, omniscient and untouched by affliction, *karma,* and desires, but He is not the Creator of the universe. Patanjali takes the process of cosmology of *Sankhya,* and explains most elaborately the various powers of the *chitta* or mind-substance. But both Kapila and Patanjali maintain that the mind substance is material, and it is the product of the insentient (*jada*) *Prakriti.* On this point they anticipated the conclusions of the materialstic philosophers of modern Europe and America, but they admitted that the *chitta* or mind-substance is distinct from the *Purusha* or true Self, which is the source of consciousness and intelligence.

Yoga philosophy devotes itself to the higher psychology of the human mind, and explains the science of concentration and meditation, the science of breath, clairvoyance, clairaudience, telepathy, and various other psychic powers (*vibhuti*), and shows the way by which one can attain to Godconsciousness (*samadhi*) in the life. There is no system of psychological philosophy in the world so complete as that of Patanjali. The modern psychology of Europe and America, stirctly speaking, is not true psychology, or psychology in its truest sense, as it does not admit the existence of *psyche* or the soul. Schopenhauer says: "The study of psychology is vain, for there is no *psyche*". And so the Western psychology teaches the physiological psychology which means the Somatology.[5]

Then comes the *Purva-Mimansa.* It is an orthodox school of philosophy of Jaimini, and it examines the various injunctions of the ritualistic portion of the Vedas (*karmakanda*), and points out that the highest duty of man is to follow those injunctions as stricly as possible, for they are direct Revelations. This

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[5] Cf. Abhedananda: *True Psychology.*

system of philosophy explains the authoritative sources of knowledge, the relation between word and thought, and how this world is the manifestation of the Word (Greek—Logos). It reminds us of the first verse of the Gospel of John: "In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and the Word was God". The *Purva-Mimansa* (*purva* means prior and *mimansa* means investigation) may be called the philosophy of *karma* or ritualistic work, for it describes the true nature of duty and of daily works, sacrificial, ritualistic, ceremonial, and devotional. Referring to the logic of this philosophy, Prof. Colebrook says: "Each case is examined and determined upon general principles, and from the cases decided, the principles may be collected. A well-ordered arrangement of them would constitute the philosophy of laws, and this is in truth what has been attempted in the *Mimansa*".

Lastly comes the *Uttara-Mimansa* or the system of Vedanta. This is the most popular philosophy of India today. Since the decline of the Buddhist philosophy in India, Vedanta has become most prominent and most powerful. Among the six schools of philosophy which I have briefly described above, the Vedanta philosophy has reached the highest pinnacle of philosophic thought which the human mind can possibly attain. A careful study of these different systems shows that they contain all the highest truths which were known to the ancient Greek philosophers of the Pythagorian and Eleatic Schools. Prof. E. W. Hopkins, in his *Religions of India,* says: "Both Thales and Parmenides were indeed anticipated by Hindu sages, and the Eleatic school seems to be but a reflection of the *Upanishads.* The doctrines of Anaximander and Heraclitus were perhaps not known first in Greece".

Frederic Schlegel writes: "The divine origin of man as thought by Vedanta, is continually inculcated, to stimulate his efforts to return, to animate him in the struggle, and to incite him to consider a reunion and reincorporation with Divinity as the Divinity is the one primary object of every action and reaction. Even the loftiest philosophy of the Europeans, the idealism of reason as it is set forth by the Greek philosophers, appears in comparison with the abundant light and vigour of Oriental idealism like a feeble Promethean spark in the full flood of heavenly

glory of the noonday sun, faltering and feeble and ever ready to be extinguished".[6]

What is Vedanta?

The popular belief is that by 'Vedanta philosophy' is meant a *Philosophy of the Upanishads* confined exclusively to the Vedas, or the sacred scriptures of the Hindus in India. But, in truth, the term 'Veda' in the present case is used to signify not any particular book, but to 'knowledge', being derived from the Sanskrit root verb *vid*—to know; while the English word 'end' is derived from Sanskrit *anta*. Vedanta, therefore, implies literally 'end of knowledge', and the philosophy is called 'Vedanta', because it explains what that 'end' is, and how it can be attained. All relative knowledge ends in the realization of the unity of the individual soul with the ultimate Truth of the universe, which is the infinite ocean of absolute knowledge and bliss. It is called the universal spirit or Brahman. As rivers running from various sources ultimately end in the ocean, so the rivers of relative knowledge starting from various view-points and flowing through different stages of the phenomena, ultimately end in the infinite ocean of absolute existence and infinite knowledge—*satyam, jnanam anantam Brahman* or the ultimate Reality of the universe. It is the absolute Substance which is beyond the adjuncts of subject and object, which is the infinite source of knowledge, consciousness and blissfulness, and which is one without the second. It is the same as the 'God' of Plato, the 'Substantia' of Spinoza, the 'Ding-an-sich' or the transcendental Thing-in-itself of Kant, the 'Over-soul' of Emerson, and the 'Unknowable' of Herbert Spencer. It is the Noumenon which pervades the phenomena of the universe.

The system of Vedanta is more critical than the Kantian system, because it shows the phenomenal nature of the Kantian ego, of his forms of intuition, and also of his categories of thought. In fact, Vedanta is more sublime than the philosophy of Kant, because it recognizes and proves the identity of the objective reality of the universe with the subjective reality of

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[6] Cf *Indian Language, Literature and Philosophy*, p. 471.

the ego. Kant did not realize that the Thing-in-itself (Ding-an-sich) of the objective world and the Ding-an-sich of the subjective world are one and the same. In no other philosophy has this oneness been so clearly explained and so strongly emphasized, as it is in Vedanta. Max Müller also admits: "This constituted the unique character of Vedanta, and is unique, compared with every other philosophy of the world which has not been influenced by it, directly or indirectly".[7] In Europe, there have been many idealistic philosophies which have denied the existence of the external world, but not one of them ventured to deny the apparent reality of the ego, of the senses of the mind, and also of their inherent forms. In this respect, Vedanta holds a unique position among the philosophies of the world. After lifting the Self or *Atman,* the true nature of the ego (*jivatman*) unites it with the essence of Divinity (Brahman) which is absolutely pure, perfect, immortal, unchangeable, and one. No philosopher and not even Plato, Spinoza, Kant, Hegel, or Shopenhauer have reached that height of philosophical thought of Vedanta. Prof. Max Müller declares: "None of our philosophers not excepting Heraclitus, Plato, Kant or Hegel, has ventured to erect such a spire, never frightened by storms or lightnings. Stone follows on stone in regular succession after once the first step has been made, after once it has been clearly seen that in the beginning there can have been but one, as there will be but One in the end, whether we call it *Atman* or Brahman".[8]

Although monistic Vedanta has united heaven and earth, God and man, and Brahman and *Atman,* still it has destroyed nothing in the phenomenal world. Starting from the ultimate conclusions of ancient and modern sciences it says that the absolute Truth is one and not many, yet there can be varieties of expression and manifold manifestations of the one Truth. Furthermore, it maintains that the aim of the higher philosophy is not merely to ascertain the established conjunctions of events which constitute the order of the universe, or to record the phenomena which it exhibits to our observation and refer them to the general laws, but also to lead the human mind from the realm of the knowable to that which is beyond the knowable.

[7] Cf. Max Müller: *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy,* p. 223.
[8] Cf. Ibid., p. 239.

We are now living in the realm of the knowable, but that which teaches simply the laws which govern the knowable phenomena, is not the highest kind of philosophy. We must know the laws of the knowable, yet at the same time we should aspire to go beyond the knowable, and plunge into the realm of the Infinite. If any philosophy can help us in this attempt, then it must be higher than the ordinary system which keeps us within the limits of time, space, and causality of the knowable phenomena. The monistic (*Advaita*) Vedanta philosophy guides us above all knowable objects of perception, and directs our soul toward the eternal absolute Being, where we find the solution of all problems and answers to all questions. Its attempt is to trace the origin of all phenomena, objective and subjective—physical and mental, not by any unscientific method, but by the most rigorous processes of logic and reason, starting from the ultimate generalizations of the various branches of science.

Now, comes the true philosophy. True philosophy must construct a theory which will be the simplest in its nature and yet at the same time will explain all the vital problems which the science of the phenomenal knowable can never explain and which will harmonize with highest form of the universal religion without destroying the loftiest aspirations of the human soul. True philosophy in the widest sense, must perform three great functions. (1) First, it must co-ordinate the ultimate results arrived at by special branches of knowledge which call sciences, and taking up those conclusions, it must form the widest generalizations possible. When it does this it is called the Phenomenology. Herbert Spencer's philosophy does this function most wonderfully, but it leaves out the vital problems which perplex the minds of the greatest philosophers as unsolvable mystries. (2) Secondly, True philosophy must investigate the realm of knowledge, and trace its source. And a philosophy which does this is called the Epistemology or Science of Knowledge. The philosophies of Kant, Hegel, Fichte, and others have performed this function. George Croom Robertson says: "Epistemology is just philosophy, because it deals with things, deals with being; it deals with things going beyond bare experience, but it treats of them in relation to the fact of knowing. Thus an Epistemologist cannot help being an Onto-

logist, because his theory of knowledge must treat about things also as being. He must also be a metaphysician, because he is concerned with the whole range of things beyond the physical: he must be a philosopher in being other and more than a man of science, or concerned with things in a way to which science is not".[9] (3) The third function which True philosophy performs, is that it leads our minds into the realm of the Absolute or the Unknown, and then solves the problems or mysteries of life and death. It explains the origin of the universe as well as of individual existence and the purpose of evolution. On the plane of relativity the perfect solution of these vital problems can never be found. Furthermore, when this phase of true philosophy directs our minds towards the Infinite, it helps us in becoming free from all limitations of ignorance and selfishness. These limitations are the greatest bondages that we are now suffering from, and by performing this function, true philosophy lays the foundation of the highest form of monistic religion. No philosophy in the world performs these three functions so satisfactorily as the Vedanta philosophy does. Hence we may say that Vedanta is the most complete system, and it can be said to be the true philosophy.

Again philosophy and religion must always be in perfect harmony. Ernest Haeckel, in his *Riddle of the Universe,* has tried to give a foundation to monistic religion, but his monism is one-sided, because he says that the ultimate substance of the universe is unintelligent and unconscious. His insentient substance may be compared with Kapila's *Prakriti* which is eternal but unintelligent. According to Vedanta, however, the final substance of the universe is the Brahman which is *sat-chit-ananda* or the source of absolute existence-intelligence-bliss. It teaches that that which is the substance of our souls, must possess intelligence, consciousness and blissfulness. Thus Vedanta lays the true foundation of a universal religion which is monistic or non-dualistic (Advaitam).

Religion of Vedanta :

The monistic religion of Vedanta does not admit the Sankhyan theory of plurality of the *Purusha* or individual

[9] Cf. *Elements of General Philosophy*

souls, which are eternal and infinite by nature, but, on the contrary, by following the strict rules of logic, it establishes that the Infinite must be one and not many. From one, many have come into existence, and the individual souls are but so many images or reflections of the absolute Brahman. From this absolute Brahman the phenomenal universe rises and in the end returns into the Brahman, and this view is maintained by the monistic religion of Vedanta.

The monistic religion of Vedanta admits that Brahman has two aspects: the one is without any attribute, indeterminate (*nirguna*) and the other is with attribute, determinate (*saguna*) who is called *Ishvara* or the Ruler of the universe. He is the personal God, who is the First-Born Lord of the universe, who starts the evolution of *Prakriti,* that forms His body. The God of Vedanta is both the efficient and the material causes of all phenomena. He loves all living creatures who live and move and have their being in Him and can be loved and be worshipped in return. In Vedanta, *Prakriti* of the *Sankhya* philosophy is called *maya,* which is divine energy of the absolute Brahman. But *maya,* according to Advaita Vedanta, is changeful and delusive (*mithya*). But, in Tantra, *Prakriti* of the *Sankhya* is real and *chaitanyamayi.* Some scholars wrongly translate *maya* as illusion, but *maya* does not mean illusion, as it is that power which produces time, space and causation, (*kala, desa* and *nimitta*). *Maya* also creates the phenomenal appearances which exist on the relative plane. Thus we see that the system of Vedanta is both philosophy and religion. Of the tree of knowledge, true philosophy is the flower and religion is the fruit, so they must go together. Religion is nothing but the practical side of philosophy, and philosophy is the theoretical side of religion. Prof. Hamilton says: "Where philosophy ends religion begins".

In India, a true philosopher is not a mere speculator, but a spiritual man. He does not believe in certain theories which cannot be carried into practice in everyday life, but what he believes, he lives upto this, and, therefore, practical philosophy still exists among the Hindus in India. The followers of Vedanta live spiritual lives, and strive to attain Godconsciousness. In India, if anyone writes volumes on philosophy and lives an ordinary worldly life, he is not considered as a true philosopher.

But, in the West, a man may become a philosopher by simply sitting in his library and writing some books, although his everyday life may be far from spiritual thinking.

The philosophy and religion of Vedanta embrace all the sciences, philosophies, and religions of the world, by accepting their ultimate conclusions, and classify them according to their order of merit, and, consequently, the universality of Vedanta is unique and unparalleled. The religion of Vedanta teaches: "that which exists, is one, men call it by various names", and it has also been said in the Rig Veda: *"ekam sad vipra vahudha vadanti"*. So no other philosophy or religion is based upon this fundamental truth of the unity of existence under a variety of names and forms as Vedanta is, and, therefore, it offers an adequate foundation of all the different phases of dualistic, qualified non-dualistic and non-dualistic or monistic systems of religious thought. Thus it establishes a universal religion which embraces all the special religions of the world.

It has many phases. The dualistic phase of Vedanta includes the fundamental principles of all the dualistic or monotheistic systems, such as Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and all other systems that advocate the worship of the personal God, under any name or form or devotion to any divine Ideal. The qualified non-dualistic phase of Vedanta embraces all the systems which teach the immanency and transcendency of God. It includes all such ideas as "God dwells in us as well as in the universe". "The kingdom of Heaven is within you"; "We live and move and have our being in God"; "He is the Soul of our souls and the Life of our lives"; "We are parts of one stupendous whole"; "We are the sons of God, the children of immortal Bliss", etc.

The non-dualistic or monistic phase of Vedanta is the most sublime of all. The all-embracing idea of non-dualistic Vedanta is contained in a line of the *Isha Upanishad*: *"isha vasyamidam sarvam, yat-kimcha jagatyam jagat"*. Very few thinkers can appreciate the grandeur of spiritual oneness. Herein lies the solution of the deepest problems of science, philosophy and metaphysics and the final goal of all religions. It alone explains how it is possible for one to say: "I and my Father are one"; "I am He", "That thou art", or "Anal haq" as a Mohammedan Sufi says.

The system of Vedanta harmonizes itself with the religious ideals of the human mind, and shows the various paths by which a man may attain to Godconsciousness, which means emancipation from the bondages of ignorance, selfishness and all other imperfections, and eventually become as perfect as the Father in Heaven is perfect. Its notable feature is that does not prescribe to all one special path by which to reach the ultimate goal of all religions. On the contrary, it recognizes the varying tendencies of different minds, and guides each along the way best suited to it. It classifies human tendencies into four grand divisions, which together with their subdivisions, cover almost all classes of people; and then it sets forth the methods which may be helpful to every one, and each of these methods is called in Sanskrit 'Yoga'.

Different Kinds of Yoga :

Now, what do we mean by 'Yoga'? The word 'Yoga' connects the idea of 'union'. First is Karma Yoga or the path of work. It is for the active man, i.e. for those who like to work, and are always ready to do something for the help of others. In short, it is for the busy and every-day working man or woman. Karma Yoga reveals the secret of work, and opens the way to complete self-mastery.

The next method is Bhakti Yoga. It is for them who are devotional and emotional in nature. It teaches how ordinary emotions can bring forth spiritual unfoldment of the highest kind, and lead to the realization of the ultimate ideal of all religions. In a word, it is the path of devotion and love.

The third is Raja Yoga or the path of concentration and meditation. The field of Raja Yoga is very vast. It covers the whole psychic plane, and describes the processes, by which the psychic powers are developed, such as, thought-reading, clairvoyance, clairaudience, the evolving of finer perceptions, the communication with departed spirits, the going out of the body, and the curing of diseases through mental power. The performance of all such acts as are ordinarily called miracles, which are not, in truth, helpful to attaining Godconsciousness. These are rather the obstacles to the path of spiritual illumination; although all these psychic powers were displayed by Jesus of

Nazareth and his followers, and which have also been manifested by the Yogis of India from time immemorial. These psychic powers are described in Raja Yoga. In fact, these marvellous powers are achieved by the practice of *pranayama,* or the control of breath, by the awakening of the 'Serpent Power' or *kundalini.* The *kundalini* or *kula-kundalini* is the coiling unmanifested energy, which is called in the Tantra philosophy Sakti or Kali. The psychic powers (*vibhutis*) or the powers of the mind are manifested automatically by the awakening of the *kundalini.* The principal aim of Raja Yoga is quite different, as it leads the seeker after Truth through the path of concentration and meditation to the highest state of superconsciousness, where individual soul communes with the universal Soul or Spirit, and realizes the undifferentiated unity of both on the spiritual divine intuition.

Jnana Yoga is the fourth method. It is the path of right knowledge and discrimination. This is for those who are intellectual and discriminative and of a philosophical nature He who travels through this path of wisdom, burns the vast forest of the trees of phenomenal names and forms (*nama-rupa*), by starting in it the fire of right knowledge. Because all these names and forms are produced by *maya,* the inscrutable power of Brahman. It is inseparable from Brahman, as the power of burning is inseparable from fire.[10] Jnana Yogi, in his search after the absolute Truth, should reject all names and forms by saying 'not this' 'not this' (*neti, neti*), until he realizes the one nameless, formless, and absolute Being of the universe, where the subject and the object,—the knower, knowledge and its object, are transcended.

[10] At the outset it appears that the Swami's conclusion, regarding *maya* as the inscrutable power of the Brahman, echoes the conclusion of the Tantra philosophy. Because Tantra says that Sakti is inseparable from Siva, or Kali is non-different from Mahakala, as Sakti or Kali is the counterpart of Siva or Mahakala. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa has also said that Sakti and Saktiman are inseparable. He has given an example of the moving snake and the motionless snake, which are one and the same. Similarly he has given another example of the salt-doll which lost its existence in the ocean, when it went to measure the depth of the ocean. Here the salt-doll is nescience or *maya* and the ocean is the Brahman, and Sri Ramakrishna says that when *maya* approches the all-consciousness Brahman, it entirely loses its existence into the ocean of the Brahman, and then there remains only the Brahman as one without the second. The Swami's contention is also the same, and in the next line he has sufficiently clarified the matter viewing from the non-dualistic (*Advaita*) standpoint of Vedanta.

Ethics of Vedanta :

Then comes the question of ethics of Vedanta. Standing on the rock of spiritual oneness of the universe, Vedanta explains the basis of ethics. Vedanta says that if we injure, hate, or cheat others, we injure, hate, and cheat ourselves first. For this spiritual oneness we should love our neighbours as ourselves. Because love means the expression of oneness. When we begin to love others, we love our own self, and then we are truly ethical. Then we do not think that we have fulfilled the highest end and aim of life by eating, drinking and be getting children like lower animals, but that the fulfilment of the purpose of life consists in loving others disinterestedly without seeking any return of love, as we love our own self. Animal nature which is extremely selfish, must be conquered by moral nature through unselfish love for the self of others. In fact, moral perfection consists in the destruction of selfishness or ego-centric. Having attained perfect freedom from the limitation of the animal self, the individual soul must strive to gain spiritual perfection which is the ultimate goal of evolution.

Now, what is the purpose of evolution ? Spiritual perfection means the manifestation of the true nature of Spirit or *Atman* which is immortal, free, and divine, and is one with the universal spirit of God. Evolution attains to the highest fulfilment of its purpose, when the *Atman* manifests itself in its pristine purity and surpassing glory. Each individual soul, according to Vedanta, is bound to become perfect in the end. As this perfection cannot be gained in one life, we shall have to admit the truth of the theory of reincarnation. Reincarnation explains the gradual evolution of the soul from the minutest amœba to the highest man, through many lives and various forms, until perfection is reached. The theory of reincarnation is a logical necessity for the completion of the theory of evolution. Evolution explains the process of life, while reincarnation explains the purpose of life. Therefore, they must supplement each other. The vedantic theory of reincarnation rejects the one-birth theory of Christianity, Islam, and other sectarian religions. It is not the same as the theory of metempsychosis or transmigration of soul which was accepted by the Greek philosophers like Pythagoras, Plato, and their

followers. In the Platonic theory, the idea of progress, growth, or gradual evolution of the soul from lower to higher stages of existence is entirely excluded, and the law of *karma* is ignored. The theory of reincarnation, on the contrary, admits the gradual evolution of each soul which is potentially divine, and which rises higher in the process of the latent powers, passing through various births and rebirths, reaping the results of its own actions and being governed by the law of *karma.*

The law of *karma* includes the laws of causation, of action and reaction, of compensation, and of retribution. Through this law of *karma,* Vedanta explains rationally the inequalities and deversities of nature which the theory of heredity has failed to explain. The doctrine of *karma* denies the Christian dogma that God punishes the wicked with eternal damnation, and rewards the virtuous with celestial felicity. It is a dogma which makes God partial and unjust. In the doctrine of *karma* there is no room for a Satan, the creator of evil.

According to Vedanta, all evil proceeds from ignorance which is the mother of all sins and wickedness. God never punishes the wicked, nor rewards the virtuous, but the wicked punish themselves and the virtuous reward themselves by their own thoughts and deeds. The law of *karma,* eternal as it is, predestines nothing and non-one ; but, on the contrary, making every soul a free agent for action, shows the way out of the world of misery through unselfish thoughts and good deeds.

Now, it can be asked who creates our destiny ? Really we create our own destiny, mould our future, and determine our character by our own thoughts and deeds. So we cannot blame God or Satan for our own miseries and sufferings, for which we ourselves are responsible ; because what we deserve, we have got, now and what we shall make, we shall receive in future. Our present was determined by our past and our future will be determined by our present. And this is the eternal law. Thus I have described in brief my convictions after a life-long study of almost all the sciences and philosophies of the East and the West and all the scriptures of the civilized world.

In conclusion, I would echo Prof. Max Müller's words: "Vedanta is the most sublime of all philosophies and the most comforting of all religions. For all practical purposes, the

Vedantists would hold that the whole phenomenal world, both in its subjective and objective character, would be accepted as real. It is as real as anything can be to the ordinary mind; it is not mere emptiness, as the Buddhists maintain. And thus Vedanta philosophy leaves to every man a wide sphere of real usefulness, and places him under a law as strict and binding as anything can be in this transitory life; it leaves him a deity to worship as omnipotent and majestic as the deities of any other religion. It has room for almost every religion, nay, it embraces them all".[11]

[11] Cf. *Three Lectures on Vedanta Philosophy.*

CHAPTER II

THE SANKHYA PHILOSOPHY OF KAPILA

(Delivered on Tuesday, January 15th, 1901)

The philosophy of Raja Yoga is based upon the *Sankhya* system of philosophy of Kapila. It is called the *Sankhya* system, because it describes twenty-five categories or principles of the whole universe. The word 'Sankhya' comes from the Sanskrit word, which means 'number', and sometimes it is called the 'philosophy of numbers'. But there is a meaning to this word, and it means right discrimination between the true nature of things and the apparent nature as well as discrimination between the natural and the spiritual, and hence it is called the *Sankhya* system i.e. the system which describes the proper discrimination and right knowledge of things. It gives the names of twentyfive principles of the universe, and describes the methods, by which we can know and analyse these principles and their nature. This system of philosophy was discussed in ancient times in India, and it was systematically thought out by Kapila.

Kapila is known as the father of the doctrine of evolution, because he is first who gave the logical arguments for the support of the doctrine. It is believed that Kapila lived long before the Greek philosophers Plato and Pythagoras were born. Some of the Oriental scholars are of opinion that the Greek philosophy drew a great deal from the philosophy of Kapila, and Kapila's psychology as well as the principle of cosmology are most ancient ones in the world. Though the idea of evolution existed long before Kapila and also before Plato and Pythagoras, yet Kapila was the first who taught by observation and experiment how to solve the mystries of this universe. He scientifically studied the process of evolution of things, and tried to trace the real cause of the phenomenal universe. It was well-known in India that these material objects were made up of atoms and molecules: the difference which dwells in these atoms and molecules, is known as the system of *sankhya* or number. Kapila was a great supporter of the atomic theory

but was not satisfied with the dead and unconscious atoms, though he described the atoms to be the cause of the phenomenal universe. He said that mere dead matters (atoms) cannot be the cause of everything in the universe, and so he studied in his own way of tracing the cause of atoms, and he thought that atoms were not the primary cause of the universe, but there must be some cause behind the atoms, out of which the atoms are produced. So he studied the process of evolution in a scientific way, and discovered the real cause of the phenomenal universe, some of the laws which harmonize with those of the modern science. By scientific investigation, Kapila came to the conclusion that something can never come out of nothing. And so, though he discovered that *Prakriti* is the cause of evolution, yet he found that *Purusha,* the shinning intelligence is really the cause behind the dead and inert *Prakriti,* and finally concluded that the unintelligent *Prakriti,* coming in contact with the intelligent *Purusha,* becomes the cause of evolution of the phenomenal universe. In Herbert Spencer's philosophy, you will also discover this fundamental principle of evolution.

In fact, Kapila discovered that when the unintelligent inert (*jada*) i.e. unconscious *Prakriti* comes in contact with the intelligent conscious *Purusha,* evolution of the phenomenal universe begins. He said that *Prakriti* and *Purusha* are conjoined together like lame and blind (*pangu-andhavat*) men, and when the insentient *Prakriti* comes in contact with the sentient *Purusha,* the universe evolves. The insentient *Prakriti* itself is inactive, and so action or vibration of evolution begins in *Prakriti,* when it is associated with the intelligent *Purusha.* It is true that in the Rig Veda and *Upanishad* (vide *Taittiriya Upanishad*), the gradual process of evolution of the phenomenal universe has been described, but Kapila's method of investigation into the theory of evolution is more systematic and scientific.

Another important or essential point, which was arrived at by Kapila, is that cause lies in the effect, and effect also lies in the cause, and the manifestation of the subtle and material forms (effect) existed in the potential form in the cause. Therefore Kapila arrived at the conclusion that destruction of a thing in the sense of annihilation is impossible, as destruction

of a thing means reversal to the causal state. We say that effect is destroyed, when it goes back to its causal state (*nasha karana layah*). So anything in this universe is not destroyed, but matter and force which constitute the form, appear in another form. When the gross body is destroyed, it is not annihilated, but it goes back to its causal elements or causal state. Kapila discovered that the laws of nature are uniform throughout and if we study one thing of the universe, we are able to discover everything in this universe. In fact, Kapila came to the conclusion that evolution means the unfolding of the cause or *Prakriti*.

Now the word *Prakriti* is sometimes translated in English as Nature. But we use the word Nature in a variety of senses. Modern scientists may call it the eternal energy which is beginningless, endless, and eternal. The modern scientists have come to the conclusion that everything of the universe has come out from a primordial substance, and the forces are correlated to one another. By 'energy' they mean 'the potential state of all things' and potential means latent. A tree is potential or latent in a seed form. When we are handling a seed, we are handling the potential tree. The tree exists in the seed in a causal form, and all the peculiarities which will come out and make up any particular tree, are there already in the seed. If we call the seed cause, the cause will mean the unmanifested form of the tree, and when the seed is manifested in the form of a tree, we call it the effect. Therefore nothing comes from outside. Environments may bring out a certain thing, but the tree is already there in the seed, otherwise any seed may produce all kinds of tree, and, therefore, there would not be anything to control the nature and kind of the tree. As for example, an elm would produce a fig, or a fig seed would produce a mango, and there would be a great want of regularity.

It has been said before that according to Kapila, an effect lies in the cause, and so there ought to be no difficulty in understanding the nature of the manifold universe. We see today with our senses the outcome or effect of an unmanifested cause, known as *Prakriti* or eternal Energy. The eternal Energy would be the sum-total of all the conditions, and everything that exists in the universe exists, in latent state. So if we try to trace the cause of the universe, we will have to conceive of that substance which includes everything, for nothing will come from outside

of that substance. Everything of the universe comes out from *Prakriti* in the form of a gradual process, and it has already been said that *Prakriti* is eternal, beginningless, and endless. But it has no self-consciousness. It becomes one of the conditions of self-consciousness, when it comes in contact with the sentient and intelligent *Purusha*. If we can imagine that this whole universe is an ocean of ether and the vibration of ether produces waves, which are called the objects of senses, so we will find that everything which our senses perceive as odours, sounds, etc. all are the expressions of the waves of the etherial motion or vibration. Again if we can imagine that the etherial motion existed at a certain time in a motionless state, where there was no vibration, then all the phenomenal appearances will vanish in a moment and the whole universe would go back to its primordial state, and that would be called an 'involution'. Involution is quite opposite to evolution. But it should be remembered that evolution (*sristi*) and involution (*nasha* or *pralaya*) are no other than the manifested (*vyakta*) and unmanifested (*avyakta*) forms of the same *Prakriti*.

Kapila said that the process of evolution and involution exists throughout eternity, and there is no beginning and no end of that state or condition. All thoughts come out of that state. The moment you ask that question: "where is the beginning?", you are in that state of vibration, and your thought is included in that state. That is, it includes mind and ego and all other objects of sense powers, and everything which we can think of. All things are included in that one substance of *Purusha-Prakriti* combined. All these different forces are latent, and when they are called into action, there is manifestation. When the *Prakriti* is disturbed, then it begins to be set into motion, and produces a state which possesses all the potentialities of self-consciousness. That is, it (*Prakriti*) is illumined by a spiritual light, and when it is illumined by a spiritual light of the *Purusha*, it becomes conscious, and that state is described as *Mahat*, the first state before the evolution of the phenomenal objects. To make it more explicit, it can be said that the moment the *Prakriti* is illumined by the spiritual light of the *Purusha*, it is possessed of self-consciousness, and then begins the evolution. Kapila said that *Prakriti* is the combination of the three qualities, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, and

when these qualities remain in a balancing state, the *Prakriti* remains in its own form, and there begins no evolution or creation; but as soon as that balance is disturbed (*gunakshobha*), evolution begins and the subtle and material things begin to manifest.

It has been said before that *Prakriti* creates everything of the universe through the process of evolution, when it comes in contact with the *Purusha,* but the moment that illuminated intelligent *Purusha* becomes conscious of itself, the subjectivity begins. That is, there must be a subject and an object. The moment the *Purusha* begins to be conscious of it, there comes the division between the subject and the object. But that subject and object are the combination of the spiritual life. If you study your own nature, you will find that there is something which is constantly changing, and something that does not change. In fact, our consciousness has been manifested as or related to the subject and the object which are changing, but the light of consciousness or the consciousness which underlies them and forms the background of them, is constant and not changing. That is, the primordial substance which forms the background of the universe, is not subject to change. But the relational knowledge or phenomenal consciousness is always changing. Now, when we say 'I', we mean not only that light of shining self-consciousness, but also the mind and the thinking principle. So we think generally of the mind of the sense powers, and of the physical forms which are known as the son or daughter of Mr. or Mrs. or So and so. Now, when you think of the body, you become one or identified with the body. If there be any heat or cold, you identify yourself with those feelings of heat or cold. You also always identify yourselves with hunger or thirst, pain or pleasure, etc., and you feel them, and take upon yourself all those changes, and, consequently, you cannot separate those changes from yourself.

So there are two things, the one is unchangeable Self, and the other is subject to changes. Kapila analyzed it scientifically, and discovered the secret that there is an unchangeable something behind the changing things, and it is the source of all changes, and that unchangeable something is the *Purusha*. He said that the *Purusha* contacts the *Prakriti,* the pure consciousness of the *Purusha* is transformed into *buddhitattva* or

the state of mind. Here you will find a little difference between the system of Kapila and that of the modern scientists, because the scientists of modern times do not differentiate between the unchangeable one and the changeable something. The atoms are on the subject side, and on the other side would be the mind as well as the power of hearing, seeing, smelling, etc. Kapila also analyzed the method of perception (*pratyaksha-jnana*). As for example, he said that we see some colours and the things and there must also be something which produces the sight. We are possessed of five senses, and we cannot perceive more objects than our five senses allow. We feel, see, hear, smell, and touch. As there are five senses for perception, so whatever we would perceive with any of these senses, would be the combination of these five. We can see hundreds of colours, but the sense of colour is in itself. It is called in Sanskrit the *tanmatra*. It is not differentiated and is not seen with our eyes. We also find that there may be great varieties of sound, but the essence of sound is one. We may have a high or low pitch of the sound of a flute or piano or any other instrument, but all these do not exist in the essence of sound, and that must be considered by itself. The sense of sight and the sense of colour and that which produces colour have also produced the power of seeing the colour, and it is some relation to the organ of the sight. In this way, we see the relation between the external objects and the subjective state and also the condition of the object through which sense objects are perceived or sensed. The power of seeing, the object of sight and the organ of vision, are only the different states of that something which possesses the sense of colour, or sight, or potentiality of perception, and the potentiality of perception exists in that primordial substance, known as the *Prakriti*. So the whole universe can be summed up in this way, and the manifestation of substance and the study of the universe become very simple.

There are twentyfour states of evolution. It has been said that there is a primordial state of evolution i.e. the state where the primordial substance is illumined by the spiritual light. Then comes the bifurcation of the subject and the object; then comes the essence of things; then come the mind, the sense organs, and the organs of action, such as moving power and power of speech, and, last of all come the gross forms of different

things. But these twentyfour states or principles (*tattvas*) are changeable, and that which knows these twentyfour states or principles, is unchangeable, and that is called the *Purusha,* or the real Self. That is the source of consciousness as well as the source of all intelligence. We cannot think of its beginning, nor its end. It is not affected by any of the changes or conditions of the different stages of evolution, but it is above all these changes, and so it cannot die, and cannot be born, but it is free and above all relativity. It may be called immortal, and it gives the life to that which evolutes. It is the source of activity, but it is not our soul. Our body may move, but how can we say that our soul is moving? If we go from here to any other city, do we think that our soul is moving with us? If that spirit moves with us, where is the seat of that spirit? Is it confined like an atom in our body, or is it out of all the conditions of space and time?

These questions do not bother many minds, but these are the problems of the philosophers. The philosophers try to trace relation between the soul and the external object and its condition. But the *Sankhya* system says that the *Purusha* has no relation to space. It is absolute, and yet it is many. Because each individual has a true spirit which is beyond space, time, and changes of body and mind. It is beyond thought and word. In truth, the word *Purusha* cannot be translated into English with its equivalent term. The word 'soul' does not convey the proper meaning of the *Purusha.* There is no other way of expressing the idea. The ego is subject to evolution, but that which is the Soul of souls, is the *Purusha,* who is not subject to evolution or it can be said that evolution cannot touch the *Purusha.* These two eternal things are admitted by the *Sankhya.* These two are separate, and that which is subject to evolution, produces all these changes and varieties of phenomena so long the *Purusha* or knower does not realize the nature of the *Prakriti.*

How long does this world exist in relation to you ? This question disturbed the minds of the Hindu philosophers in ancient times. The answer was that as long as we are thinking of the world, so long this question exists. This answer may appear mysterious to us. But if we think of the answer for some time, we will see that it is true. As long as we are looking at the world, it exists for us. But if we go beyond thought, then

the world will not exist in relation to us. There is a beautiful illustration given in the *Sankhya* philosophy. The eternal Energy (*Prakriti*) is compared to a dancing girl in a theatre, and the observer is the *Purusha*. The girl dances as long as the observer is there, but the moment the observer ceases to look at her and understands the dance perfectly, it fails to amuse him. Similarly at the opera, if there were no observer, of what use would it be? As long as the audience is there, there will be dancing and all performances. There would not be any manifestation, if the people did not go to see it. Such is the case with the evolution or manifestation of the universe. This evolution is for the pleasure of the *Prakriti* and also for let the *Prakriti* know what powers she possesses.

In studying this universe, we are astonished to see how many things are there. If everything exists in a primordial state, we would not know that there could be such variety of colour, or so many beautiful flowers, and at the same time, we know nothing of ourselves, and we do not know how we have got this body. We do not think of it; we do not know what this thought is, or where it came from. We are working constantly to get something, but we do not know what that thing is. This is the result of the charm and fascination of the powers of the *Prakriti*. *Prakriti* is fascinated and charmed, when it is reflected by the *Purusha*.

As long as that state continues, so long the world exists, and we will be bound to see and talk about these things. But the moment we go beyond thought, all pain vanishes, and all suffering ceases, and we enjoy a state which cannot be described by anything of the world, because anything of the world cannot reach it, and we are in a state of perfect peace and rest. By knowing ourselves, we will know the nature of that which deluded ourselves for a long time. That which made us unhappy, does not belong to us, and we say: "Now we are above feeling, and anything cannot delude us". In fact, all feelings exist in relation to us, but when we feel that we are above feeling and emotion, nothing can affect us.

The power of seeing may exist in relation to me, but I am not the power of seeing. I never had any eyesight, and never have had, but, for the time being, I have come in contact with the instrument which is the power of eyesight. If it changes,

I call myself blind, because something has happened in the instrument, and I think that I am blind. If the body grows, I say that I am stout, and if I do not grow stout, I say that I am thin, but the knower is beyond all space relations. Such is the difference, when we have the perception of our true nature. We have hypnotized ourselves, taking upon our shoulders all the changes and thinking that they are our properties. All sufferings proceed from this lack of discrimination and right knowledge. To know ourselves and our true nature as well as the true nature of that which is changing, is the right knowledge, and this right knowledge destroys all suffering, misery, and sorrow.

The *Sankhya* philosophy tries to show to the world that everything that exists in the world, produces some kind of suffering and sorrow. We cannot have absolute happiness in this world of change. This is only the transitory relation to certain things which produces a favourable condition in our mind. The same thing will produce a different feeling in some other person. The heat, which is very desirable in winter, is unbearable in the summer. We cannot expect a constant pleasure in an external gross object, and if we expect that, we will delude ourselves. We may go on and on, and that expectation will not be realized. The philosopher knows this, so he stops all such foolish expectations. He goes to the extreme, and expects that which he is sure to get. The philosopher goes below the surface of things, and sees the true nature of things, and does not delude himself. But an ordinary man will have to go through all these experiences and different states of evolution. By gaining all these experiences, we know that this is a changeable condition.

The ultimate object of this process of evolution is to make the *Purusha* realize his true nature and glory, and this *Purusha* is the real spirit and the true nature of every individual. We should know that all these do not exist in *Purusha,* but exist in *Prakriti,* and when that is done, the *Purusha* or the Soul begins to manifest its true nature and glory, and that is emancipation where all senses cease and all sense objects are transformed.

The *Sankhya* system does not believe in any God, the Creator. In the *Sankhya,* it is not necessary to think of a

creator, as everything is explained by the process of evolution of one substance, who is going to be the Creator. So this idea of a creator was thrown overboard one thousand years before the birth of Christ. However the *Sankhya,* being a system was based entirely upon the doctrine of evolution, rejected the idea of a creator of the universe. This philosophy again includes all stages of suffering in the *Purusha.*

There are places, where we feel as though we had come to heaven. But all these are included in the different stages of evolution, and so we need not think of any heaven as a place outside the universe. This idea is considered to be a very simple one which comes to ordinary persons who do not understand the real nature of things.

As the *Sankhya* system did not believe in any such creator, it accepted the *Purusha* as an immortal and all-knowing shining principle. Out of this system grew different sects in India. The Jaina is one of them. This philosophy (Jaina) is most intimately connected with the *Sankhya* philosophy. The fundamental principles of the Buddhist philosophy also depend upon the *Sankhya* theory. In fact, all systems of Indian philosophy believe in the dectrine of evolution. Even the Buddhists do not believe in the existence of the phenomenal universe, and still they believe in the doctrine of evolution. All those who believe in God, also believe in the theory of evolution. The word 'creation' which is generally used in the sense of bringing something out of nothing, does not find a place in any of the philosophies of India. We do not find a single exception which conveys this meaning. The Yoga philosophy accepts all these descriptions of the twentyfive categories (*chaturvimshati-tattvas*) of the *Sankhya* system, and at the same time it has a conception of God. The fact is this that Kapila rejected the utility and existence of God, but Patanjali, the propagator of the Yoga system admitted for many reasons the utility and existence of God, the Creator, and he said: "*Purusha-vishesah Isvarah*" i.e. the *Purusha,* described by the *Sankhya,* is known as *Isvara,* the Creator in the Yoga system, and for this reason Patanjali's Yoga system is known as the *Seshvara-Sankhya* i.e. the *Sankhya* philosophy, which admits the existence of God. Patanjali's system of Yoga is a new, or rather an original addition to the domain of Indian philosophy.

CHAPTER III

BUDDHA AND KAPILA

Buddha did not admit any prime principle like the *Prakriti,* which has been admitted by Kapila in the *Sankhya.* Buddha said that what cannot be perceived or inferred, is not existent, and so the manifestation of the universe is mere illusory. But Kapila admitted the phenomenal existence of the universe which goes into its causal state after the liberation of the *Purusha,* and that when the *Purusha* makes himself separate from the contact of the *Prakriti,* the phenomenal universe vanishes. Kapila also admitted the principle like *Purusha* even after his liberation, or separation from the *Prakriti.* But Buddha denied the existence of such a *Purusha* after he attained the liberation or Nirvana. Buddha also denied the *Purusha* who is devoid of any attribute. Kapila, on the other hand, admitted the process of evolution of the universe, which is caused by the contamination of the *Prakriti* with the *Purusha,* and this contamination or connection of the *Prakriti* with the *Purusha* is known as *sannikarsha* or *sannidhya.* Kapila said that the universe that evolves, appears as real, and when it vanishes or is destroyed, it goes to its causal state. But Buddha did neither believe in the real existence and value of the universe and its evolution, nor in the principles like the *Purusha* and the *Prakriti,* as has been said before. He rather substituted the objects of senses for the *Prakriti,* and the sense organs for the *Purusha.* The Buddhist thought or Buddhist philosophy was afterwards constructed upon the edifice of the sayings and teachings of Buddha.

Now, besides the *Purusha* and the *Prakriti,* and also the evolution of the universe from them, all other principal ideas and thoughts are found almost the same in both the *Sankhya* philosophy and the Buddhist philosophy. The *Sankhya* philosophy maintains that since the soul is liberated, the objects of senses and the sense organs are merged into the principles of self-consciousness (*ahamkara*), self-consciousness marges into understanding (*buddhi*), and understanding

merges into the *Prakriti.* Then the soul arrives at the absolute knowledge of "I do not exist, I have nothing, and I am nothing". This knowledge of negation almost corresponds with the absolute knowledge of nothingness or *sunyata,* as forwarded by the Madhyamika Buddhists. So the actual goal in both the systems of thought, *Sankhya* and Buddhist appear to be the same. As for example, the *Sankhya* philosophy says that when the *Prakriti* vanishes away i.e. is detached from the *Purusha,* the soul is liberated. The Madhyamika Buddhists are more scientific here in reducing everything, including the soul or *atta,* to nothingness or void, or *sunyata* (though, we think, Buddha himself did not reduce the soul and also Nirvana to nothingness or *sunyata*), without unnecessarily admitting the existences of the *Purusha* and the *Prakriti* of the *Sankhya,* even after the *Purusha* has arrived at the conviction of "I am nothing, and I have nothing".

Regarding the process of evolution, the *Sankhya* system of Kapila says that the stuff of the *Prakriti* is composed of the three attributes (*gunas*), *sattva, rajas* and *tamas,* and the senses have evolved from the *sattva* quality of the *Prakriti,* and the sense objects, from the *tamas* quality. The Buddhist philosophy, or the systems of thoughts of Buddha also admit the existence and importance of both the sense organs and the sense objects. Now, if we compare both the systems of the *Sankhya* and the Buddhist, then we will find that though Buddha as well as the Buddhist philosophy do not admit the importance of the principles, *Purusha* and *Prakriti,* yet they admit the existence and importance of both the sense organs and the sense objects, which can fill up the place of the *Purusha* and the *Prakriti* of the *Sankhya.* It is needless to mention that according to the *Sankhya,* the quality or attribute of *sattva* does the function of illumination, and that of *tamas* does the function of envelopment, whereas the quality of *rajas* brings balance between the qualities, *sattva* and *tamas.*

Now, let me mention about the process of evolution according to the Buddhist philosophy. The Buddhist philosophy admits six sense organs and six objects of senses. From them sensation or *vedana* evolves, and from the sensation or *vedana* self-consciousness or *vijnana* evolves, and from the self-consciousness or *vijnana* the consciousness of the (extreme) universe or

samjna evolves, and from the consciousness of the universe or *samjna* impression or *samskara* evolves. And *atta* (*Atman*) can be said to be the ideas of myself as well as of the external universe.

Here we can make a two-fold analysis of the universe, one subjective and the other objective. It is said that primitive Buddhism was founded upon an agnostic basis, the evidence of which can be found from the *Sutta-Pitaka,* certainly as regards the external world. Buddha declined to state whether it was infinite or finite, whether it was eternal or non-eternal. Moreover, the status of the *Atman* which has been taught by the *Upanishad* or Vedanta, was altogether denied by Buddha, because Buddha said that the personality (which is equal to *Atman* according to Buddha) is not a unit, but a compound of various factors, such as the material body, consciousness, feeling, ideas, volitions, etc. Now, regarding the subjective and objective classifications, there are two groupings earlier and modern. The later Buddhist philosophers, including Buddhaghosa, preferred to revert to the earlier grouping of the subjective classification, acknowledging also the validity of the objective classification. The subjective classification is consisted of the three categories, the five *skandhas,* the twelve *ayatanas,* and the eighteen *dhatus.* (1) The five *skandhas* constitute the component parts of a personality, although they are not regarded as the ultimate factors in later Buddhism. However, all the ultimate factors are divided or classified into five groups or *skandhas,* and they are *rupa-skandha, vedana-skandha, samjna-skandha, samskara-skandha* and *vijnana-skandha. Rupa* literally means form or shape, and sometimes colour. The Sthaviravadins subdivided matter or form or shape in a more systematic way. The Sarvastivadins accepted the atomic theory and the four ultimate elements, from which eleven fundamental material factors were derived. The Yogacharins, being the idealist or *vijnanavadins,* considered all matter to be the creation of the mind or idea. Nevertheless the *vijnanavadin* Yogacharins followed the main principle of adopting the four elements and the eleven derivatives, as maintained by the Sarvastivadins, but still their eleven factors differed from those of the Sarvastivadins. (2) *Vedana* means sensation or feeling. But this *vedana* is not similar to the awareness of the

Vedantists, rather it is *vijnana* of the Buddhists. Vasubandhu has translated *vedana* as the sense feeling caused by the sense impressions. (3) *Samjna* means perception, and sometimes conception. The Yogacharins and the Sarvastivadins emphasized upon the conceptual aspect of *samjna,* though Mrs. Rhys Davids called it an ideation like *vijnana.* (4) *Samskara* is sometimes translated as conscience or volitional mentation, which means *chetana.* In fact, it is similar to impression of the Vedanta. Vasubandhu said that *samskara* means a creative activity, and it consists of sixfold *chetana* which corresponds to volitional mentation. Some Buddhist philosophers regard *vedana* and *samjna* as the parts of *samskara,* so that from the absolute point of view the five categories were reduced to the following materials, body, mental properties, or concomitants of consciousness, and consciousness. In the Hinayana Abhidharma period, elaborate charts of *samskaras* were compiled. The Sthaviravadins enumerated fifty-two such *samskaras.* The Yogacharins enumerated fifty-one *samskaras,* though they sometimes enumerated them as fifty-two or fifty-three. (5) *Vijnana* means consciousnes or cognition. Sometimes *vijnana* is translated as the various aspects of consciousness. *Vijnana,* in truth, involves both sensatory and ideation aspects of consciousness. The Buddhists generally admit the six-fold *vijnana,* though the Yogacharins and Sthaviravadins add some more from the philosophical speculation. The Buddhist philosophers said that *rupa* is like a plate, *vedana* is like food, contained in the plate, *samjna* is like a sauce, *samskara* is like the cook, and *vijnana* is like the eater or enjoyer. The Buddhists describe also twelve *ayatanas* and eighteen *dhatus.* The twelve *ayatanas* are:

1. Object of sight, 2. Object of hearing, 3. Object of smell, 4. Object of taste, 5. Object of touch, 6. Object of thought.	= sense-objects.	7. Organ of sight, 8. Organ of hearing, 9. Organ of smell, 10. Organ of taste, 11. Organ of touch, 12. Organ of thought.	= sense-organs.

A *dhatu,* like *dharma,* is defined as that which bears its own attributes. Vasubandhu called them genus or species (*vyakti* or *jati*). In fact, there are fifteen sensuous factors,

consisting of the five sense objects, the five sense organs and the five-fold sense perceiving aspects of consciousness.

The Buddhists differ in many respects from the Sankhyan philosophers, but they agree also in many things, as advanced by the *Sankhya*. As for example, the Buddhists agree with Kapila in admitting time or *kala* as a substance, because time or *kala,* according to both, is a mere cognition or knowledge, or form of thought, as Kant believed. Both the Buddhist and the Sankhyan phiosophers do not also admit the existence of God the Creator and also the authority of the Vedas. Now, some are of opinion that the Buddhist philosophy is more or less indebted to the *Sankhya* philosophy for many doctrines and phraseologies of the scriptures. Shakyamuni Gautama was known as Buddha or Bodhisattva being enlightened with Nirvana or salvation, and the term 'Bodhisattva' is connected with the *sattva* quality of the *Sankhya,* and also the term *bodhi* is derived from the *buddhitattva* or *buddhi* of the *Sankhya*. In the *Prajnaparamita,* the word *bodhi* has been used in the feminine gender, coresponding to the gender of the *buddhi,* as has been mentioned by Kapila in the *Sankhya* philosophy. The Buddhists thought themselves to be made up of the *sattva* (shining) quality, and were called the Bodhisattva or intelligent and illuminating substance. The particle *tanmatra* of the *Sankhya* corresponds also to *tathata* of the Buddhists and their *rupa-tathata* has also been used for the Sankhyan *rupa-tanmatra*. Thus we find that the Buddhists incorporated some of the substance or matter as well as terminology of the *Sankhya* philosophy in the later days.

In the fourth century, after the *parinirvana* of the Lord Buddha, Maharaja Kaniska found that the Buddhists were divided into eighteen schools, and those schools were undoubtedly the sub-divisions of the four main schools which will be described in the next chapter. In fact, principal schools and sects evolved or were developed in India, in northern countries like Tibet and Nepal, China, Japan, Korea, and in the southern countries, Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia and other lands. Buddhist literature, mainly written in Pali, Sanskrit (pure and mixed), Tibetan and Chinese, also evolved with the spread of Buddhist faith and religion. When Buddha died, he told his personal attendant and disciple, Ananda, that

the *Dhrama* and *Vinaya* would be the supreme authority in the future. It is said that all the teaching or saying were recorded in the *Suttas* and *Vinaya*. In truth, Buddha's sayings and their commentaries were handed down orally from teachers to disciples, and gradually they were collected and written in the systematic order with the decisions, taken in different Buddhist Councils, though we get some different versions or accounts in the Tibetan and Chinese translations of Vasumitra and others.

The Buddhists were mainly divided into two schools, Hinayana and Mahayana. Buddha said: "Do you think then, O Subhuti, that those who, having success to the higher road, Mahayana (i.e. the unfailing road), leave it, give it up, and consider the lower road (Hinayana), is worth-seeking". Now the question is as to why Hinayana was strongly condemned. It was because that the followers of this road (*yana*) were considered as their sole aim for the control of one *Atta* (*Atman*), the peace of the *Atta* (*Atman*) and also for extinction of one *Atta*. They condemned the practice of all meritorious acts for the control, for the peace, and for the extinction of their own souls. Should that be the be-all and end-all of a higher spiritual Bodhisattva? The aim should be to place his own self in Truth or *tathata*, then to place all sentient beings in Truth or *tathata*, and thus to bring about the extinction of an inconceivable number of sentient beings. Therefore, the Hinayana is narrow, selfish and limited, whereas the Mahayana is broad, catholic and enlightened.

But these two schools are not important for the study of the Buddhist cosmology. Certain branches of the Buddhist thought is to be necessary to survey almost every sect and subsect before the completion of research or cosmological investigation, and for that purpose there arose three other schools: (1) The Ceylonese which was founded on the Pali tradition, and was said to be the earliest Buddhist school, known as the Sthaviravadins or Theravadins. (2) The Sarvastivadins were included in the learned and philosophical school of the Hinayana. The canons of this school were probably written first in Prakrit, and then were transformed into Sanskrit. (3) The Yogacharins were also known as the *vijnanavadins* or *vidyamatrins*. This school was closely connected with the Sarvastivadin school, and its philosophical and other works

were written in Sanskrit. The Chinese and the Japanese schools also adopted the cosmological study or investigation of Buddhism. But the three schools, Sthaviravadin, Sarvastivadin and Yogacharin were greately interested in the Buddhist cosmology. Some scholars including Dr. W. M. McGovern and others are of opinion that for the Sthaviravadin school the standard taken has been the *Abhidharmartha-Samgha,* and by way of commentary and notes. For the Sarvastivadins the standard taken has been the *Abhidharma-kosha,* together with the criticisms of Samghabhadra in his *Nayanusara,* and *Abhidharma-Prakarana.* And for the Yogacharin school the standard taken has been the *Vidyamatrasiddhi* of Dharmapala, etc., together with the classical Chinese commentaries.

The Sakhyan school of Kapila was also interpreted in different ways by Isvarakrishna, Asuri, Panchashikha, Vijnanabhikshu, and others, and for the different interpretations, different schools also evolved in the domain of the Sankhyan thought. But it should be mentioned that in each of the schools, the guiding principles and central philosophy, as contributed by Kapila, were maintained by every *Sankhya* school with some differences.

CHAPTER IV

BUDDHIST COUNCILS AND BUDDHIST THOUGHTS

It has already been said before that immediately after the *parinirvana* of Gautama Buddha in 543 B.C. five-hundred *Arhats* (Elders) gathered at Rajagriha at the request of the venerable Mahakashyapa, the most learned among Buddha's disciples, to chant the metaphysical doctrines, set forth in the *Abhidhamma-pitaka*; Upali the oldest disciple of Buddha, to repeat the laws and rules of discipline of *Vinaya-pitaka*; and Ananda, the most favourite disciple of Buddha, to repeat the stories and parables of the *Sutta-pitaka*. This was the First Buddhist Council. At this first Council the Elders (*theras*) collected the doctrines which were afterwards known as *Theravada*.

One-hundred years after the *parinirvana* of Gautama Buddha the Second Buddhist Council was held at Vaisali. This Council decided some serious quarrels which arose among the *Bhikkhus*, concerning certain monastic rules. But those who did not obey the decision of the Council, convened a separate great meeting (*Mahasangha*) at Vaisali, and came to their own decisions on those points. They were called Mahasanghikas. In course of the next one-hundred years, four other schools arose among the Mahasanghikas. They were called *Ekavyavaharikas, Lokottaravadins, Kukkulikas,* and *Bahusrutiyas*. These again, during the next one-hundred years, gave rise to other schools, *Prajnaptivadins, Chittikas, Aparasailas,* and *Uttarasailas*.

The Third Council was held during the reign of Asoka, the Buddhist Emperor, in Pataliputra (modern Patna) about 242 B.C. to settle the three *Pitakas*, viz., the *Sutta-pitaka* which contains the sayings and doings of Buddha himself; the *Vinaya-pitaka* which contains the rules for the conduct of monks and nuns who had joined the order; and lastly the *Abhidhamma-pitaka* which contains the description of the conditions of life in various worlds, the elements and the causes of existence. About a hundred and fifty years after

this the three *Pitakas* were formally reduced to writing in Pali which was the spoken language of the masses in Magadha during the time of Buddha.

The Fourth Council was held during the reign of the Emperor Kanishka who lived more than five centuries after the Nirvana of Buddha, between 10 and 150 A.D. The place of this meeting was the Kundalavana-Vihara, somewhere in Kashmir.

There evolved four schools of philosophy among the Buddhists, and they were:

(i) Madhyamika, (ii) Yogachara,
(iii) Sautrantika, (iv) Vaibhashika.

(i) The Madhyamika school teaches *sunyavada* or universal voidness or nothingness. It denies the absoulte existence of the external world and of cognition.

(ii) The Yogachara school accepted the teachings of their Guru, and practised Yoga to find out the existence of cognition and ideas as real mental phenomena. They may be classed as Idealists who deny the existence of the external phenomena. But the Madhyamika school accepted the teachings (*achara*), but did not question the authority of their teacher by practising Yoga; therefore their system was neither the best, nor the worst mediocre.

(iii) The Sautrantika school admitted cognition, and said that although the external world cannot be perceived, yet from the testimony of other people the existence of the external world can be inferred.

The Sautrantikas are so called, because some of the disciples of Buddha asked him what was the end (*anta*) of the *Sutra* or Aphorism of the universal *sunyata ;* and Buddha called them Sautrantikas, because they asked the end of the *Sutra.*

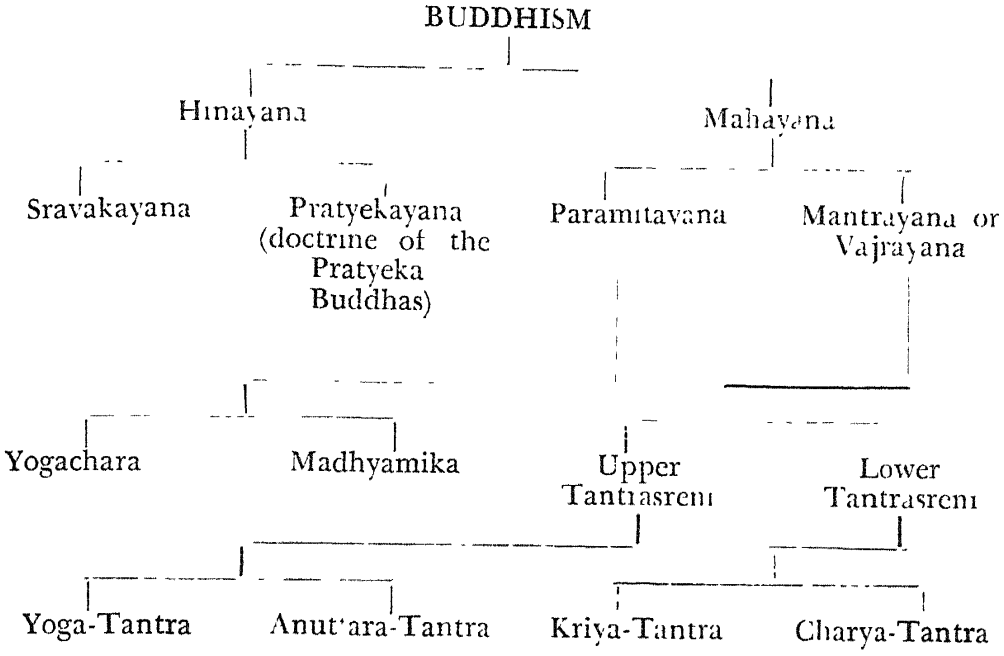
(iv) The Vaibhashikas admit both external world and cognition of mental phenomena as realities. The Vaibhashikas are those who consider the theory of *sunyata* as 'Vibhasha' or 'Viruddhabhasha'. They are regarded as the *Pratyakshavadins* or realists.

Now, Childer's *Pali Dictionary* describes the stages immediately preceding Nirvana, which are these: (1) *Sattapatti* i.e. falling in a stream from which there is absolutely no chance of going back. A man in this stage is bound at no distant date to attain Nirvana. He may be born seven times, but no more and that even, not as inferior animals. (2) *Sakadagami*: In this stage of *Sakadagami,* the disciple is bound to return twice, once on earth, and once in Heaven. (3) *Anagami*: In this stage, the disciple is bound to return once only to Heaven; and (4) *Nirvana*: As a man may be living and yet attain the highest knowledge; then he is said to be in the *Nirvanamarga,* and when he dies, he is said to be, by a bold metaphor, 'extinguished'. There is no speculation in the Hinayana as regards what remains after Nirvana.

The doctrine of the Mahayana goes beyond this. The word 'Nirvana' is not much used, and 'obtaining *bodhi* or knowledge', and 'obtaining omniscience' are the terms used for Nirvana. When a man knows everything, he knows the miseries of the world, and, therefore, cannot enter into the Nirvana without stretching a helping hand to the suffering millions all around him. He is, therefore, said to be 'girt in the strongest armour'. He resolves to remove the sufferings.

The Mahayana doctrine does not altogether ignore the selfish creed of the Hinayana, but it considers that to be an inferior thing. The Sarvajna, the Tathagata, and the Lokanatha, of the Mahayana school, grant individual extinction (*pratyekabodhi*) to innumerable creatures all round him. While securing his own prospect of emancipation, each of them delays for the good of others. There had been in the innumerable *kalpas* many Lokanathas; there are in the infinite space many Sarvajnas, and there will be in the infinite future many Tathagatas, who by their preachings, emancipated, emancipate, and will emancipate, innumerable sentient and suffering beings of the world. But none among these as high as Arya-Avalokitesvara who has vowed not to enter the blissful region, till there is a single sentient being unemancipated.

The following table will give an idea of the gradual development of different schools among the Buddhists:



It is to note that Asanga, the venerable Buddhist philosopher, has described graphically about the distinction between Hinayana and Mahayana in the first book of his *Mahayana-sutralankara*. In the 2nd-3rd century A.D., we find among the Buddhists three *yanas* like Sravakayana, Pratyekayana and Mahayana. From these three *yanas*, there evolved further four schools of philosophy, namely, Sarvastivada or Sautrantika, Vahyarthabhanga or Vaibhasika, Vijnanavada or Yogachara, and Sunyavada or Madhyamika. Advayavajra (12th century A.D.) has described about these four schools in his *Tattvaratnavali*. The Vaibhasika school has explained in its books these two following *yanas*, Pratyeka and Sravaka. Now, the Mahayana was divided again into two, Paramitayana and Mantrayana. Among these two *yanas*, the first has been explained either by the theories of Sautrantika and Yogachara, and the second, Mantrayana, by the theories of Yogachara and Madhyamika.

Again among the two *Paramitas*, Mantrayana or Mantranaya commences with Sunyavada and Vijnanavada, though there is a great controversy among these schools or theories. It will be elaborately explained afterwards that Sunyavada

deals with the doctrine of *sunya* or nothingness, and Advayavajra, the Buddhist philosopher of Bengal has said in his *Mahasukhaprakasha* that from the right knowledge *sunyata* appears as *vija* (seed form), from *vija* develops the idea of *vimbam,* and by the process of *nyasa* and *vinyasa* in *vimbam,* realization or revelation of everything comes.

It has been said before that the third Buddhist Council was held in the seventeenth year of the reign of Asoka in 242 B.C. at Pataliputra, the then capital of Magadha, to settle the three *Pitakas.* That Council lasted for nine months, under the presidency of Tissa, the son of Moggali, and was attended by a thousand elders (*theras*). The canonical works of the Tripitakas viz. *Vinaya* (5 books), *Sutta* (5 collections) and Abhidhamma (7 books) were then completed. The *Sutta* (relating to the doctrines) contains five grounds of collections, called the *Nikayas*: *Digha-nikaya; Majjhima-nikaya; Samyutta-nikaya; Anguttara-nikaya;* and *Khuddaka-nikaya.* The latter contains *Khuddakapatha, Dhammapada, Udana, Itivuttaka, Sutta-Nipata, Vimanavattu, Petavattu, Theragatha, Therigatha, Jataka, Niddesa, Patisambhidamagga, Apadana, Buddhavansa, Charyapitaka.*

The *Vinaya* contains the rules for the discipline of the monks and nuns who had joined the Order. It has three main divisions: (1) *Sattavibhanga* which is sub-divided into *Parajika* and *Pachittiya;* (2) *Khandaka* subdivided into *Mahavagga* and *Cullavagga;* (3) *Parivara.* The Abhidhammas contain *Patthana, Dhammasangani, Dhatukatha, Puggalapannatti, Vibhanga, Yamaka, Kathavattu.* About one hundred and fifty years after this, the three *Pitakas* were formally reduced to writing in Pali, which was the spoken language of the masses in Magadha during the time of Buddha.

It has already been said that the Fourth Buddhist Council was held during the reign of the Emperor Kanishka who ascended the throne about 125 A.D. This assembly of five-hundred monks is said to have been convened by the King on the advice of the venerable monk, Parsvika and to have met at Kundalavana-Vihara in Kashmir under the presidency of Vasumitra about six centuries after the *parinirvana* of Buddha between 120 and 150 A.D. At this Council the final compilation of the very words of Buddha and expurgation of spurious doc-

trines and scriptures as well as preparation of elaborate commentaries on all the books of the three *Pitakas* were completed.

At this Council, Mahayana doctrines of Northern Buddhism were properly established. Kanishka found that the Buddhists were divided into eighteen schools. These eighteen schools were the sub-divisions of the four main schools, which were: (1) *Arya-Sarvasti-vada;* (2) *Arya-Sammatiya;* (3) *Maha-sanghika;* (4) *Arya-Sthavira.* The eighteen sub-schools are:

1. *Arya-Sarvastivada*:

   (1) Mula-sarvastivada.
   (2) Kasyapiya.
   (3) Mahisasaka.
   (4) Dharmagupta.
   (5) Bahusrutiya.
   (6) Tamraspatiya (red robe).
   (7) Vibhajyavadin.

2. *Arya-Sammatiya*:

   (8) Kanru-Kullaka.
   (9) Avantika.
   (10) Vastiputriya.

3. *Maha-Sanghika*:

   (11) Purvasaila.
   (12) Aparasaila.
   (13) Himavata.
   (14) Lokottaravadins.
   (15) Prajnaptivadins.

4. *Arya-Sthavira*:

   (16) Mahavihara.
   (17) Jetavaniya.
   (18) Abhayagirivadins.

After the Second Buddhist Council in about 400 B.C., when the Mahasanghikas separated themselves from the Theravadins, the former were labelled as Mahayanists and the latter as Hina-

yanists. Gradually their doctrines were written down between 100 B.C. and 400 A.D.[1]

To make these divisions of the *Pitakas* more explicit, let me give an authorised list of them, made by the modern scholars, and this repetition, I think, will not disturb the mind of the seekers after knowledge. The Pali Tripitakas were three systematic collections. It has been said before that (1) the *Vinaya-pitaka* is the Book of Discipline, (2) the *Sutta-pitaka* is the popular Book of Discourses, and (3) the *Abhidhamma-pitaka* is the collection of philosophy, based on psychology and ethics of the Buddhists. These *Pitakas* are, in truth, the canonical literature, but these are also non-canonical literature of the Buddhists, and they are *Milinda-panha, Netti-prakarana* as well as Buddhadatta's manuals on *Vinaya and Abhidhamma,* along with their commentaries. Besides, there are *Jatakas* or Birth-Stories of Buddha, chronicles of Ceylon like the *Dipavamsha, Mahavamsha, Chulavamsha,* and later works in Pali, modelled on classical Sanskrit poetry. There are also the grammars, written by Kaccayana and Moggallana, and also the *Rupasiddhi* and the *Saddaniti.* Buddhaghosha's encyclopaedic work, the *Visuddhimagga* is also worth-mentioning. The *Mahavastu* is said to be a book on *Vinaya,* belonging to the Lokottaravadins of the Mahasanghika school. The *Lalitavistara* is also an incomplete biography of Buddha, which is written in mixed Sanskrit. This *Lalitavistara* is considered to be a text of the unorthodox Mahayana school and also forms a part of the *Vaipulya-sutra.* Asvaghosha's *Buddha-charita* and *Saundarananda* as well as Aryasura's *Jatakamala* are to be mentioned in this connection.

The nine texts or *dharmas* are very important *Sutras* of the Mahayanists. The *Astasahasrika-prajnaparamita, Saddharmapundarika, Lankavatara, Suvarna-prabhasa, Gandavyuha, Tathagataguhyaka, Samadhiraja and Dasabhumisvara,* are known as the *Vaipulya-sutras.* Besides them Nagarjuna, Vasubandhu, Asanga and others have written many philosophical works of the Mahayana school. The Tibetan Buddhist literature,

[1] "The Mahayana is so called because it is as spacious as the sky and will proceed by subduing the gods, the men and the demons."

(a) Bodhisattva = Intelligent being.
(b) Mahasattva = Great being.
(c) Sambuddha = Fully enlightened.

Tanjur, consisting of 1,108 texts and the Kanjur, consisting of 3,458 texts are also worth-mentioning.

Like the Mahayana literature, the Mahayana doctrines gradually developed into Madhyamika philosophy or *sunyavada* as one branch, and *vijnanavada* as the second. The oldest record of *sunyavada* we find in the *Astasahsrika-prajnaparamita,* which is attributed to Kasyapa. It was compiled during the Second Buddhist Council at about 400 B.C. It was translated into Chinese in the beginning of the fourth century A.D., and into Tibetan in the ninth century A.D.

When Buddha was sojourning on the Gridhrakuta Mountain, Sariputra Subhuti, Maitrayaniputra and others entered upon a discussion on the principles of the *Prajnaparamita,* and Buddha solved their abstruse questions. These discussions and their solutions make up the subject matter of the *Prajnaparamita* which means absolute knowledge of *Sarva-sunyata* or universal voidness. *'Prajna'* means knowledge and *'paramita'* means absolute.

It is said: "When Bodhisattva Mahasattva, the great intelligent being, who has known universal voidness (*sunyata*), has acquired the *Prajnaparamita,* where there is voidness or nothingness of everything and there remains no name and consciousness of any object, there is said to be *Prajnaparamita.* In that state, one does neither remember, nor expect anything. There is no space on his body, whereon anyone can cause violence and kill him. The weapon, stick, or stone, thrown at him, cannot reach his body". Thus when the *Prajnaparamita* is acquired, one should be indifferent to pleasure and pain, happiness and misery. By reaching the *Yogic samadhi,* one gains also the absolute knowledge of universal voidness (*sunyata*). The *Prajna-paramita* is also called the *Maha-paramita,* the highest knowledge or the *Mahavidya,* the highest science, that is, the knowledge of the *Sarva-sunyata* or universal voidness or nothingness.

The Nirvana of the Madhyamikas consists of this *Prajnaparamita.* The Madhyamika Buddhists say: "All our existences are conditional. My existence depends upon that of others. The cause and effect do exist only in relation to each other. There is no absolute existence of the object of senses, viz: *rupa, rasa, gandha, sabda,* and *sparsa.* And as the objects of sense are not

self-existent, so the sensations like (*vedana*), ideas (*samjna*), and *samskaras.* If the objects have no absolute existence, they may be regarded as non-existent or sunya. Therefore the universe must be void. The knowledge of the universal voidness (*sunyata*) is the only absolute knowledge (*Prajna-paramita*), and voidness (*sunyata*) is the only absolute entity in the whole sphere of thought and existence.

The absolute knowledge (*Prajna-paramita*) and universal voidness (*Sarva-sunyata*) are not again different from each other. It is by the comprehension of this voidness that we attain to Nirvana, the home of peace and blessing. It is said that the Bhagavan says: "O Subhute, all the substances have *sunyata* or voidness for their refuge ; they do not alter that refuge." The *chitta* (mind), which arrives at the comprehension of the *sunyata,* becomes *achitta,* that is, loses its consciousness. Then the *chitta* cannot be said to be either existent or non-existent—*"tatra astita va nastita va na vidyate nopalabhyate".* Thus the whole infinity is resolvable into this absolute entity or *sunyata*[1]. The most powerful exponent of the Madhyamika philosophy was Nagarjuna who lived in about 100 A.D. He wrote *Madhyamika-karika,* which was commented upon by Chandrakirtti.

The *Vijnanavada* was afterwards called the *Yogachara,* because Asanga (400 A.D.), the greatest exponent of this school, wrote the *Yogacharabhumi-shastra,*[2] which teaches that there is no absolute reality in anything, and that everything is only a passing state of consciousness (*Vijnana*) like a dream. According to this philosophy, all sense perceptions (*Khyati-vijnana*) are like the waves in the lake of the mind (*Alaya-vijnana*). Therefore visible phenomena are nothing but the creation of our own mind (*svachitta*). It is only on account of *maya* (illusion)[3] that the phenomena appear as subject and object.

Although this type of idealism existed simultaneously with the *sunyavada* of the Madhyamika school, still its great teacher

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[1] Whether *sunyata* is existent or non-existent, is has been discussed in my lecture: *What is Nirvana ?*

[2] Asanga was also the author of the *Mahayana-sutra, Mahayanasamparigraha-sastra, Mahayanasutralankara,* etc. Vasubandhu, his younger brother, was the commentator of the *Mahayanasutras, Saddharma-pundarika, Prajnaparamita,* etc.

[3] *Maya* can be translated as illusion in the Buddhist philosophies of the Madhyamika school, but in Advaita Vedanta, *maya* is known as delusion, and not as illusion.

Asvaghosha (100 A.D.) developed the *tathata*[4] philosophy from the teachings of *Lankavatara-sutra* which was one of the early works of the *Vijnanavada*. The *tathata* philosophy teaches: "All things in their fundamental nature are not namable or explicable. They cannot be expressed in any form of language. They possess absolute sameness (*samata*). They are objects neither to transformation, nor to destruction. They are nothing but one soul or thatness (*bhuta-tathata*)". This 'thatness' has no attribute and it can only be somehow pointed out in speech as 'thatness'. As soon as you understand that when the totality of existence is spoken of or thought of, there is neither that which speaks nor that which is spoken of, there is neither that which thinks not that which is thought of, this is the stage of 'thatness'.[5]

The 'thatness' or *tathata* of Buddha was regarded by some as the *Atman* or Brahman of Vedanta. In the *Lankavatara-sutra,* we read that Ravana asks the Lord Buddha: "How can you say that your doctrine of *Tathagatagarbha* was not the same as the *Atman* doctrine of the other schools of philosophers, for those heretics also consider the *Atman* as eternal, immute, unqualified, all-pervading and unchanged ?" To this the Lord is found to reply thus: "Our doctrine is not the same as the doctrine of those heretics ; it is in consideration of the fact that the instruction of a philosophy which considered that there was no soul or substance in anything (*Nairatmya*) would frighten the disciples, that I say that all things are in reality the *Tathagatagarbha.* This should not be regarded as *Atman.* Just as a lamp of clay is made into various shapes, so it is the non-essential nature of all phenomena and their freedom from all characteristics (*sarva-vikalpa-lakshanavinivrittam*) that is variously described as the *Garbha* or the *Nairatmya* (essencelessness). This explanation of *Tathagatagarbha* as the ultimate truth and reality is given in order to attract our creed of those heretics who are superstitiously inclined to believe in the *Atman doctrine*".[6]

It is said in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*: *"yasyanubittah pratibuddha atmasmin,"* etc., i.e., "He who has discovered

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[4] *Tathata* means *'thatness'* or 'suchness'.

[5] Cf. Dr. S. N. Dasgupta: *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol I, p. 130.

[6] Ibid. p. 147.

and understood (*pratibuddha*) the *Atman* dwelling in the darkness of this corporiety, he is all-creating, for he is the creator of the universe ; his is the world, he is himself the world".[7] Here the word, used for knowing, is *pratibuddha*. This word which also means 'awaking', and "which the Buddhists are accustomed to use when they describe how Buddha has in a solemn hour under the *Asvattha* tree gained the knowledge of the delivering truth, or is awake to the delivering truth ; the same word from which also the name (Buddha) i.e. 'the knowing', 'the awake' is derived".[8] Dr. Oldenberg further says: "Of all the texts in which the Brahminical speculations as to the delivering power of knowledge are contained, perhaps not even one was known except by heresy to the founder of the Buddhist community of believers. But, for all that, it is certain that Buddhism has acquired as an inheritance from Brahminism, not merely a series of its most important dogmas, but, what is not less significant to the historian, the bent of its religious thought and feeling, which is more easily comprehended than expressed in words".[9] Further he adds: "If in Buddhism the proud attempt be made to conceive a deliverance, in which man himself delivers himself, to create a faith without a god, it is Brahminical speculation which has prepared the way for this thought. It has thrust back the idea of a god step by step ; the forms of the old gods have faded away, and besides this Brahma, which is enthroned in its everlasting quietude, highly exalted above the destinies of the human world, there is left remaining, as the sole really active person in the great work of deliverance, man himself, who possesses inherent in himself the power to turn aside from this world, this hopeless state of sorrow.

"Every people makes for itself gods after its own ideal, and is not less made what it actually is by the reflex influence of what its gods are. A people with a history make themselves gods who shall show their power in their history, who shall fight their battle with them, and join in the administration of their state. The god of Israel is the Holy One, before whose flaming majesty the heart of man bows in prayer as to a father

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[7] Cf. Dr. H. Oldenborg: *Buddha*, p. 51.
[8] Ibid. p. 52.
[9] Ibid., p. 52.

with the confidence of a child ; whose wrath causes men to disappear, whose tender mercy worketh good to children, and children's children even unto the thousandth generation. And the god of the Brahminical thought ? The Great One, before whom all human movement is stilled, where all colours are pale and all sounds expire. No song of praise, and no petition, no hope, no fear, and no love. The gaze of a man is unmoved, is turned upon himself who looks into the depths of his own being, expecting his ego to disclose itself to him as the everlasting One, and the thinker, for whom the veil has risen, discovers as an enigma of deep meaning, the mystery of the Unseen Seer, the Unheard Hearer, to find out whom Brahmans leave goods and chattles, wife and child, and move as mendicants, homeless through the world".[10]

Thus we see that after the death (*parinirvana*) of Buddha and also of his direct disciples, the difficulty of understanding what he meant by Nirvana, was felt more keenly by his later followers than ever before. And it has already been said that there arose four main schools of Buddhistic philosophy. The first was of the extreme nihilists, who interpreted Nirvana as 'the realization of the utter emptiness of the world and of the blissful nothingness and extinction which was considered the highest end aim of life'. While the other three schools believed that Buddha meant by Nirvana the annihilation of self (*atta*) and of the universe, and the permanent abiding of abstract thought in itself. These Buddhists maintained the permanence of abstract thought, but not of any thinker. The idea of ego-entity as permanent, was considered by them to be an illusion. Here we shall not forget that Buddha kept perfect silence about the question whether or not the individual soul was permanent. This reticence created more confusion in the minds of his followers, and gave them ample opportunity to indulge in all kinds of guess-work. The great problem, however, whether Buddha's idea of Nirvana was a positive state has remained undecided to the present day, even among the Buddhists themselves.

The storm of agnosticism and nihilism of the Buddhist philosophers of the fifth and sixth centuries after Christ, swept

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[10] Ibid, pp 52-53.

away from the minds of the people the idea of a supreme Being of the universe, who is the omnipotent Creator and omniscient Ruler of all phenomena as well as the idea of an immortal and indestructible soul-entity which remains after the death of the body, and reincarnates to enjoy or suffer, and reap the fruits of works, and attain in the end a positive state of absolute bliss and happiness.

That storm ultimately produced a tremendous wave of reaction in the ocean of religious thoughts of India, and resulted in the revival of the more rational philosophy and religion of Vedanta, through the wonderful powers of logic and reasoning and ability of Sankaracharya, the greatest exponent and commentator of the Vedanta philosophy, who lived in the seventh century, A.D. Sankaracharya has been recognised in India as the embodiment of divine wisdom and the personification of true philosophy and logic. His reasoning and arguments have been greatly appreciated in the West by such philosophers as Schopenhauer and Deussen and scholars like Max Muller and others. It was he who gave a death blow to Buddhism in India, by pointing out the falacies and errors in the Buddhistic philosophy. Thus he saved India from demoralisation and spiritual degeneration which were brought about by the corrupted agnosticism, atheism, and nihilism of the Buddhistic philosophers of the sixth century after Christ. From that time Buddhism, after reigning in India for nearly 1000 years, slowly disappeared. Practically it was driven out of the land of its birth, and lived outside of India among the people of China, Japan, Tibet, Burma, and Ceylon, where there was neither real and speculative philosophy, nor any religion, based upon the higher principles and logic. But it must be accepted that the Buddhist period was the golden age in India, because, in this period, Fine Arts like sculpture, painting, architecture, and music, as well as intellectual productions and religious missionary work were done with a remarkable success.

CHAPTER V

BUDDHISM AND VEDANTA

(1)

Since the time of the great revival of vedantic thought which began in the seventh century A.D. the religion of the Hindu has been re-established upon the rational and truly philosophical doctrines of Vedanta. Through the teachings of Vedanta, the spiritual aspirations for Divine communion of a permanent and immortal individual soul have once more found their way towards a satisfactory fulfilment. The Godless philosophy and the soulless psychology of Buddhism have been supplanted by that sublime philosophy which standing upon the rock of immutable Truth, declares that the whole phenomenal universe is covered by the all-pervading and omniscient Divinity, which dwells in every being, which is the Soul of our souls and in which we live, through which we exist, and without which there would be and could be nothing. That Divinity is called in Vedanta, Brahman, the essence of all existence, the infinite source of intelligence, the indestructible basis of life and consciousness, and the abode of eternal happiness, where there is neither sorrow, nor suffering, nor death. Buddhism denies the existence of a permanent soul-entity which we designate as doer, agent, thinker, and enjoyer, which is subject to birth and re-birth. According to Buddhistic psychology, there is not any being that is born, and that acts, thinks, enjoys and suffers, but birth, action, thought, enjoyment and suffering take place according to the inscrutable law of Nature. Man's soul consists of sensations, impressions, ideas, memory-forms, thought-forms, and deed-forms which are not permanent. It reminds one of the similar conclusions, arrived at by the nihilistic Scotch philosopher. David Hume, of the eighteenth century.

Buddhism teaches the rebirth of character, thought-forms, and deed-forms according to the law of *karma*, but it denies reincarnation of the soul-entity or the being, who is the thinker

and the actor, which has been so logically established by the Vedanta philosophy. Some Buddhist writers say that when a living being dies and a new being is produced according to the law of *karma,* there remains no permanent soul-entity or ego-entity. They often compare the relation of one life to the next as that of the flame of a lamp to the flame of another, lighted by it. Vedanta refutes this idea of rebirth by saying that if there were no permanent soul-entity, the ever-changing impressions, ideas, etc. would never be held together in such a harmonious way. If there were no actor or sufferer, how could there be a permanent seeker after Nirvana or salvation from suffering, and where will be the identity of the man who suffers with the man who is dead, if there is no soul ?

The nihilistic teachings of Buddhism can be summed up in four lines,

> Misery only doth exist, none miserable.
> No doer is there ; naught save the deed is found.
> Nirvana is, but not the man who seeks it.
> The path exists, but not the traveller on it.

Vedanta, on the contrary, teaches that the soul or ego (*jivatman*) is the doer, actor, thinker, and sufferer, as well as seeker after peace and bliss. It is like the permanent thread which connects the thought-forms, memory-forms, sensations, ideas, and feelings, and harmoniously brings them together, and keeps them in their proper places. It is the same ego that suffers, and seeks also the cessation of sorrow and misery. It is the same individual soul that appears as born, continues to exist after death, and reincarnates in another form. This is the most vital point, in which Vedanta differs from Buddhism. Furthermore, Vedanta teaches that the individual ego, being a reflection or image of the universal Spirit, is eternal, immortal, unchangeable, and divine, nay, is one with Brahman, the supreme Being of the universe. Buddhism denies the reality of the universe, and calls it the result of illusion, while Vedanta teaches that the reality of the universe is that of absolute Brahman, which is the Soul of our souls.

Comparing with Vedanta, Buddhism is pessimistic. It sees evil in everything, and teaches that sooner this evil ceases to

exist, it is better for us all, while Vedanta tells us to see Divinity or the absolute and unchangeable Reality in everything and everywhere. When this realization comes through the knowledge of our Divine nature, the soul attains to Nirvana, because then it rises above all delusions, sorrow, suffering, disease, and death, transcending the law of *karma* and reincarnation, and remains as perfect and one with the divine Being, the Brahman, forever.

(II)

The popular opinion of this country and the popular action of the people are that the prevailing religion in India is Buddhism and the spiritual teachers are the Buddhist priests, and what they teach can be nothing but Buddhism. As an illustration of this mistaken notion, allow me to draw your attention to the statement, made by the reporters of my last Sunday's lecture and published in the daily papers that I was a Buddhist and that the Vedanta Society was devoted to the study of Buddhism, both of which statements were erroneous. Some of the Oriental scholars, after studying about the Buddhistic Christ, have arrived at this conclusion that before the time of the founder of Buddhism, India was submerged in the deep sea of ignorance and superstition, and Buddha, the saviour of India, came as the deliverer, and before his advent India had neither ethics, nor religion, nor science, nor philosophy; and whatever India has gotten today, is the gift of Buddha and his followers.

Such opinions are unfounded and erroneous as the opinions of Christian missionaries who say that India had no science, no philosophy, and no ethics or religion, before the Christian missionaries went to that country, and whatever she has gotten, she has had from the followers of Christianity. Such people often forget that the civilization of India is the most ancient civilization of the world; that the inhabitants of that ancient country were highly civilized, when the other nations of Europe and Asia were barbarous and savage. But they often forget that India had developed a perfect system of ethics long before Moses received the ten commandments on the Mount Sinai. No other country can boast of such perfect systems of thoughts or ideas as India possessed from the vedic period from 2000 B.C. down the

time, and when Buddha appeared in the 6th century B.C., and when he laid down that ancient ethical creed as the foundation of the structure of his great religion which has ever since been known in the civilized world by the name of Buddhism. As in ethics, so in the various schools of philisophy, India from prehistoric ages excelled in philosophy and religion.

Those who heard my lecture on Krishna, the Hindu Christ and his teachings, have already learned that in ancient India, before the beginning of the Christian era, Krishna preached the highest ethical principle of the most scientific and philosophical religion of Vedanta, which existed long before his advent and popularised ethics amongst the masses, and afterward became one of the greatest saviours of mankind. The teachings of Krishna which have been handed down to us in the form of *Bhagavad Gita,* or the *Song Celestial,* as Sir E. Arnold calls it, show how lofty and sublime were the ethical and spiritual ideals of Vedanta, and this religion of Vedanta was at the foundation of the religion of the Hindus at that time, when Buddha appeared in the 6th century B.C.

Born and brought up as as a Hindu, Buddha imbibed the highest ethical and spiritual ideas, and received a very good education in the different branches of science and philosophy which existed at that time in India. As Krishna taught the fundamental ethics of Vedanta and preached charity, truthfulness, benevolence, forbearance, chastity, self-restraint, control of passion, renunciation, and disinterested love for humanity, nay, for all living creatures, so did Buddha preached these same ethical truths amongst his disciples and followers, and he impressed upon the minds of his disciples the beautiful and most impressive stories and parables. It is curious to note that some of these parables and stories that Buddha preached, have a close resemblance to the parables and stories which were afterward preached by Jesus the Christ. The parables of the prodi gal son, the sower, and the marriage feast, were spoken of by Buddha five centuries before they were heard of in Palestine.

According to the ancient laws which existed before the time of Buddha, murder, theft, falsehood, and cruelty were considered as the most heinous crimes. Against these crimes, Buddha prescribed five prohibitary commandments: (a) do not kill any living creature, (b) do not take what is not given unto

you, (c) do not speak falsehood, (d) do not drink intoxicating drinks, (e) do not commit cruelty, etc. He taught his disciples to obey and honour their parents, and to follow an honourable trade and profession, the duties and relations of chindren to parents, to husbands and wives, to friends and companions, to masters and servants, and to teachers and pupils, and these teachings of Buddha were in perfect harmony with the injunctions of the ethics of Vedanta which existed before his appearance.

Buddha taught that hatred is never conquered by hatred, but by love, and this is an eternal law. Let one overcome anger by love, evil by good, avarice by generosity, and lie by truth. Such was the religion of love and benevolence, taught and preached by Buddha nearly five centuries before the Christian era. The religion of Buddha was like the ancient laws of the ascetic life of the Hindus, based upon self-culture and self-restraint. At the time of his departure and death, Buddha recapitulated the entire system of his ethics under the seven heads, which were regarded as noble in the Buddhist religion. (1) First, there are four great meditations, and those meditations are meditation on the body, of sensations, of ideas, and of reason. (2) Second, there are four great struggles to overcome and control the sinful states that have arisen, the struggle to be good and the struggle to increase godliness. (3) Third, there is the four-fold road to saintliness, by which saintly powers can be acquired, and they are right will, right exertion, preparation, and investigation, and these are the methods by which saintly powers can be obtained. (4) Four, the five moral powers. (5) Five, energy, faith, investigation, and wisdom. (6) Six, the seven kinds of wisdom, energy, will, faith, investigation, contemplation, and sincerity. And (7) seven, the noble eightfold path which I will describe.

After investigation we find that these seven jewels of Buddhist law are also included in the eight steps[1] of Raja Yoga, practised by the students of Vedanta, and these eight steps can be shown as more scientific and more easily accomplished than the seven jewels of the Buddhist law. Furthermore, the religion of Buddha is based upon the four noble truths,

[1] *Ashtanga-yoga-marga.*

and these noble truths will lead to Nirvana, the complete cessation of sorrow, suffering, disease, and death. The first noble truth is the existence of sorrow and suffering in this world. Buddha said: "Birth is painful, growth is sorrowful, decay is attended with pain, and death is sorrowful ; sad it is to be joined with that which we do not like ; sadder still is the separation from that which we love ; and saddest in the craving for that which cannot be obtained. The cause of this sorrow was the second noble truth". Buddha said: "The cause of sorrow and suffering is lust and desire ; the surrounding world affects our sensations, and produces a craving desire which clamours for instant satisfaction. The desire for the enjoyment of the self entangles us in a net of sorrow ; pleasures are the bait and the result is pain".

The third noble truth is the cessation of sorrow and suffering, which is called Nirvana. He who has conquered self, has conquered lust and desire. The conquest of self makes one free from lust and desire. The flame of lust ceases to exist and finds no material to feed upon, and that is meant by Nirvana, the extinction of that fire of lust and desire. The fourth noble truth is the eight-fold path which leads to that Nirvana. First is the right comprehension, right resolution, right speech, right acts, (right way of earning a livelihood), right thoughts, and right state of peaceful mind. This is the *dharma,* this is the truth, and this is the religion, according to Buddha.

Buddha preached these four noble truths till his 80th year, when he passed away. Buddha did not preach God, nor did he discuss the nature of the *Atta* or *Atman,* the Soul entity. He did not care for God and His existence. He accepted the ancient law of *karma* and reincarnation which existed in India, and he preached that he who cannot attain to Nirvana in this life, would be subject to future rebirths. But these four noble truths were not introduced by Buddha for the first time, but it can be shown that they existed in India long before his advent. At least two centuries before Buddha, the founder of the *Sankhya* school of philosophy amongst the Hindus, Kapila appeared in India, and inculcated the same truths in the same manner, showing that there is sorrow, suffering, and misery in this world, tracing their causes to lust and desire, and describ-

ing the deliverance from them as the highest ideal of life, and ultimately pointing out the path which leads to that deliverance. Therefore it is justly said by some of the Western schools that Buddhism was nothing but the outgrowth of the thoughts which existed in India centuries before the birth of Buddha.

It has already been said that Kapila denied the existence of a personal God, who can be said to be the Creator and Governor of the universe, and he explained the creation or evoultion through the process of eternal progress. Buddhism is also based upon the theory of evolution, and that theory of evolution has been the foundation of the Vedanta philosophy and the vedantic religion. Buddha was the greatest preacher and reformer of his time. But he rejected the authority of the Vedas, denounced animal sacrifices as well as the worship of God and prayers as useless and unnecessary. He also avoided all metaphysical discussions and philosophical subjects, and instructed his followers to walk in the path of righteousness, gaining control over their passions and desires, and thus becoming free from the law of *karma,* and reaching the ultimate goal of Nirvana, the state of cessation of sorrow, suffering, disease, and death. When Buddha was asked by his disciples: 'What is that state of Nirvana like, whether it is a positive or negative state', he said to them a state, where there is neither earth nor water, neither light nor air, neither the infinity of space nor the infinity of reason, neither absolute quiet nor the co-extinction of perception and non-perception, neither this world nor that, neither the sun nor the moon, neither that state, where there is coming nor going or standing, and neither birth nor non-birth, but it is without sensation, and that is the end of sorrow and suffering, and that is Nirvana.

But ordinary minds cannot grasp what Buddha ment by Nirvana. The vast intellect and the developed understanding of a philosopher failed to comprehend or appreciate its real meaning, and the minds of his disciples, even those who were most advanced, were staggered and confused many a time in their attempts to grasp a clear conception of what Buddha meant by Nirvana. Some of them thought that it must be a state of absolute negation, whereas others believed it to be a state of total annihilation of the self and of the universe.

After the death of Buddha and his direct disciples, the

difficulty of understanding the true meaning of Nirvana was felt more than ever before, and many did not know what was the meaning of that word, Nirvana. It has been said before that four different schools of philosophy arose at that time amongst the Buddhists. The first was that of absolute annihilism, and the followers of it denied the existence of everything, and they interpreted Nirvana to be the realization of the absolute emptiness or nothingness of the world, which is described as the blissful nothingness and extinction, and is considered to be the highest ideal and aim of life.

The other three schools of the Buddhist philosophy believed that by Nirvana Buddha meant absolute annihilation of the *Atta* or Self as well as of the universe, and is of the permanent abiding by the abstract thought in itself. These Buddhists denied the existence of soul as an entity, and they explained that the soul as an entity is an emotion or a bundle of sensations. But there was such thing as a soul. Here we must not forget that Buddha kept perfect silence about the question, whether or not the individual soul was permanent, and that silence created more confusion in the minds of his disciples and followers, and gave them ample opportunity to indulge in all kinds of guess-work, and even today it is not decided whether or not Buddha meant by Nirvana a positive or a negative state. Amongst the descendents themselves there is a question, whether Buddha meant by Nirvana a state, where one lives eternally, or which is a negation of all existence.

Storms of agnosticism and atheism prevailed in India about six centuries after Christ, and these storms swept away from the minds of the people all ideas of the supreme Being which is called the Creator and Ruler of all phenomena as well as the idea of an internal and indestructible soul entity who is the knower and worker, who is the sufferer and enjoyer, who exists after death and reincarnates to reap the result of his works in future births, and who attains to a positive state of bliss and happiness, and that ultimately produced a tremendous wave in the ocean of religious thoughts of India which eventually resulted in the revival of the more scientific and metaphysical system of Vedanta. People from that time began to feel that they had found something which they could depend upon, and that revival was caused by the most wonderful logical and

rational authoritative Acharya like Sankar, who was the greatest exponent and commentator of the Vedanta philosophy. He lived in the seventh century after Christ, and he is considered in India as the embodiment of divine wisdom, or the wisdom personified, as it were. He was a man of true logic and reason, and his reasoning and arguments have been appreciated and accepted by the modern philosophers like Schopenhauer, Deussen, and others. He has been spoken highly of by the scholars like Max Muller and others. It was he who gave a death-blow to Buddhism, by pointing out errors in the Godless philosophy and the soulless psychology of Buddhism. Sankar said that Vedanta is the sublime philosophy which, standing upon the rock of eternal truth where surges all beginning and end of this phenomenal universe, is the one supreme Being who is the Divinity, in which we live, and without which there would be and could be nothing, and that supreme Being or Deity is called in Vedanta, the Brahman, the essence of all existence, the source of all intelligence, and the indestructible basis of life and consciousness.

From that time of the revival of Vedanta, Buddhism slowly disappeared from the land of its birth, and took refuge in lands of Tibet, China, Japan, Burma and in other places, where they had neither philosophy, nor religion. Through the teachings of Vedanta the spiritual aspirations of the immortal individual souls for the communion with Divinity were once more established, and they found a proper way for a satisfactory solution. It was through the help of Sankaracharya that India was once more saved from the demoralisation and spiritual degradation which were brought about by the corrupted agnosticism, atheism, and dualism of the Buddhist philosophers. Buddhism denied the existence of a soul entity, whom we may designate as the agent of thinker, the actor, the witness, and the enjoyer, which is said to be born and that dies. In fact, the psychology of Buddhism is based upon the idea that the soul of a man consists of sensations, ideas, impressions, thought forms, and deed forms; and there is no actor, no knower, and no being that is born, but still there are actions, thoughts, ideas, impressions of birth and death which take place. This conclusion reminds us of the conclusion arrived at by the sceptical philosopher David Hume in the eighteenth century after Christ.

Buddhism teaches that there is rebirth, but there is no permanent soul entity. In fact, the Buddhists deny the theory of reincarnation of a soul entity which is born, performs works, suffers and enjoys, and dies, and so they say that when a living being dies, another being is produced according to *karma* or deeds of the being who is dead ; and they often compare the relation of one life to the next as the relation of a flame from which another flame is lighted. The relation of a flame to another is just the same as the relation which exists between the dead man and the reborn. It has been said that Buddha denied the doctrine of reincarnation which has been so well established by Vedanta. But Vedanta refutes the Buddhistic idea of rebirth, by pointing out the falacy that if there were no permanent soul entity, there could never be any satisfactory relation between the person who is dead and the person who is born again, and there would be no identity between the person who is enchained in delusion and the person who has reached salvation after removing delusion. How can there be a flame's identity with a living being, when we know that these sensations and ideas, thought forms and deed forms are constantly changing, who would hold them together, if there were no soul entity, and who would keep them in their proper places, if there were no permanent individual ego.

The dualistic teachings of Buddhism can be summed up as stated before: "Misery only doth exist but none miserable, no doer there is, nought save the deed is found, Nirvana is but not the man who seeks it, the path exists but not the traveller on it". The sufferer is not the same person as the sufferer during his life-time. While Vedanta teaches that there is a permanent soul entity which we may call the 'Over Soul', the universal thinker and the enjoyer. And there is an identity, i.e. the person who suffers and the person who seeks peace and happiness are one and the same as the *Atman,* because the *Atman* is like the thread which permanently connects the thought forms, deed forms, and sensations and ideas, and everything. It brings them together in a harmonious way, and keeps them together in their places. It is the immortal individual soul which suffers today, and which will cease from suffering tomorrow. It is the same individual which appears as born today, which continues to exist after death, and which attains

to Nirvana, according to Vedanta, by rising above he plane of suffering, disease and death, by transcending the law of *karma* and reincarnation, and by entering into the abode of Brahman, the eternal source of happiness. Furthermore, Vedanta teaches that each individual soul entity is the reflection of that one supreme universal Spirit ; and it is immortal, indestructible and everlasting. This is one of the most vital points, where Vedanta differs from Buddhism. Buddhism denies the existence of a soul entity, while Vedanta admits the existence of the soul which is permanent. Buddha denies the reality of the universe, and calls it the result of emotion or sensation, while Vedanta teaches that the reality of the universe is the one eternal and absolute Being who is the Soul of our souls. In this sense Buddhism is pessimistic, as it sees evil and suffering in everything, and tells us that sooner the suffering ceases, the better it is for us all ; while Vedanta teaches that the whole universe is pervaded by the almighty Being, and tells us to realize this Being in everything, and not to see evil in everything, and this is another point in which Vedanta differs from Buddhism Vedanta teaches to see God in all living creatures, and this realization leads the individual soul to the attainment of perfection or Godconsciousness. This attainment of absolute bliss and happiness lasts forever, and it lifts the individual soul above the mundane existence, and makes it commune with the supreme Spirit forever.

Vedanta admits the existence of a personal God, who is known as the cosmic ego, or the all-pervading deity, or the First-born Lord of the universe. Although He is called phenomenal, still we may worship Him, may pray to Him, and may love Him. He responds to our sincere prayers, love and devotion. He is as real as the personal God of any other religion. The dualistic Vedanta teaches that each individual soul is the child of immortality, immortal bliss, and everlasting truth. The qualified non-dualistic Vedanta teaches that each individual soul has emanated from that supreme Being, as a spark emanates from a huge bonfire, and that each individual soul is a part and parcel of God who is the one stupendous whole, and that each individual soul is one with God on the highest plane, and is divine, perfect, immortal, and everlasting.

Although the ethics of Buddhism are the same as the

highest ethics of Vedanta, and, consequently, are identical with the ethics of religion of Vedanta, still in Buddhism, we do not find a satisfactory explanation of that universal ethical law which is expressed by all the spiritual teachers of the world: 'love thy neighbour as thyself'. In Buddhism, we do not find a satisfactory explanation of this ethical law, such as we find in Vedanta. Buddhism denies the existence of a soul entity, while, in Vedanta, we find a most satisfactory explanation which is never given by any one in any other country. Why should we love our neighbour as ourselves is not explained in the Bible, but we get it in Vedanta. Vedanta says that we are one with our neighbour in spirit, and true spirit in you is the true self of your neighbour, and therefore, you should love him as you love your own self.

Thus we see the vast difference exists between the tenets of Buddhism and the teachings of Vedanta. So, those who believe that a student of Vedanta is a Buddhist, or the same as a student of Buddhism, are mistaken. Sometimes Buddhism has become so narrow and limited in its scope that its followers do not accept anything which is not preached by Buddha or his direct disciples. The cause of this faith is that it is built around the personality of Buddha. Although Buddha himself denied the existence of a personal God, still his followers could not deny it, but had to worship Buddha as the celestial Buddha, or the perfect Buddha, or the Buddha of infinite light and wisdom.

So we see that Buddhism, like Christianity, is built around the personality of its teacher. As Christianity is built around the personality of Jesus the Christ, so it is with Buddhism. But Vedanta is not built around the personality of anybody. It had no founder, but it existed from time immemorial, and has been handed down to us just as universal knowledge. So the student of Vedanta is neither a Buddhist, nor a Hindu, nor a Christian, and nor a Mohammedan, but yet he is one with all. He does not belong to any sect or creed, and yet he believes in all the saviours of the world, in all the ethical laws and spiritual teachings that have been given by the different teachers of different times.

Again there is one point, in which the student of Vedanta excels the followers of all the other sectarian religions. As for example, when a student of Vedanta hears of Krishna, he

accepts him as the saviour of mankind, and he accepts his teachings, and life. In truth, he appears as the true follower of Krishna. So when he speaks of Buddha, he is one with the Buddhists for the time being, because he accepts Buddha as the saviour of mankind, and accepts his teachings also. When he speaks of Christ, he accepts Christ and his teachings, and he is also like a follower of Christ, because he has the same love and reverence for Christ as his true follower, without having narrowness, bigotry and fanaticism. No other religion gives such freedom to its devotees and votaries, as does Vedanta acknowledge all the saviours of the world, because it accepts their teachings, and follows their paths, and it is for this reason a student of Vedanta is called a follower of a universal religion which has its scope as wide as the heaven, and so broad in its principles as to accept all the phases of religion that exist in the world.

CHAPTER VI

ETHICS OF HINDUISM AND BUDDHISM

(Delivered in Brooklyn Institute on November 13, 1907)

Hinduism and Buddhism are the two great religious systems of India. They are related to each other in the same manner as Judaism and Christianity are related to each other. As Christianity is an offspring of Judaism, so Buddhism is a child of Hinduism, which is not only older in age, but contains the fundamental principles and ethical ideals of Hinduism. In fact, the ethics of Hinduism became crystalized gems which adorn the huge structure of Buddhism.

Buddhism is a system of pure ethics. It is a religion of humanity and for humanity. In Buddhism, there is no worship of a personal God, and has no fear of eternal punishment. Consequently, there is no need of a belief in the ethical commandments of an extra-cosmic personal Deity who creates something out of nothing and commands His creatures to do this or that, or not to do this or that, as there we find in Judaism and Christianity. Buddha is the founder of Buddhism, who lived in the sixth century B.C. and preached his religion of ethics, but never asked his followers to worship or believe in a personal God. For this reason many people among the Christians say that Buddhism is not a revealed religion. But, according to the Buddhists, the religion of Buddhism and its ethical code are just as much revealed as are in Judaism or Christianity, and they go so far as to say that the ethics of Buddhism are more than revelations, because they stand upon the eternal laws of the moral and spiritual nature, and not upon heresy or traditional dogma. Buddha did not take anything upon faith, but he sought for the rational foundation of ethics and religion, and when he discovered the truth and eternal law, he boldly preached for the good of humanity.

Nearly twentyfive centuries ago Buddha said to his disciples: "Do not believe in what ye have heard. Do not be-

lieve in traditions, because they have been handed down for many generations; do not believe in anything, because it is rumoured and spoken of by many; do not believe merely in anything, because the written statement of some old prophets is produced; do not believe in conjectures; do not believe in that as truth, to which you have become attached by habit: do not believe merely on the authority of your teachers and elders, but after observation and analysis, when it agrees with reason and is conducive to the good and benefit of one and all, then accept it and live up to it".

Thus by following the rationalistic path of knowledge, Buddha rejected the authority of the priests, ancient Hindu sages and of the Vedas, the revealed scriptures of the Hindu people. But he did not reject the Hindu ethics which formed the corner-stone of the Hindu religion or the Sanatana Dharma, known as the eternal moral law. Born and brought up as a Hindu Prince, Buddha naturally studied the Vedas, followed their ethical code, and afterwards emphasized it in his noble teachings. The ethical code of the Hindus was perfected in the vedic period many centuries before the advent of Buddha, nay, centuries before the time of Moses. How deep is the foundation of the ethics of the Vedas we shall be able to know, if we study carefully the duties of every man, as enjoined in those hoary scriptures. According to the Vedas, each man is bound from the time of his birth by four kinds of duties which he ought to fulfil, before he could attain to the highest state of spirituality and perfection. These four kinds of duties were considered as so many debts which each individual must pay.

The first is the debt to all humanity which can be paid off by becoming a good citizen and an useful member of the community, by being charitable to all fellow beings and by doing good works for the good of all. The second debt is to all the Rishis or seers of truth or great sages who have discovered the moral and spiritual laws which govern our lives. It must be paid off by learning those truths, by following the instructions of the sages, and by living up to the highest ideal of spirituality which they had practised.

The third is the debt to the forefathers which must be repaid by being a good and a dutiful son, by leading a married life, and by bringing up children in the path of morality,

religion, and spirituality. The fourth and the last one is the debt to the *devas* or perfected spirits, which must be repaid by worshipping and by devotion and self-sacrifice. In order to fulfil these duties, the individual life of each high caste Hindu was divided into four stages, through which each must pass.

The first is the life of *brahmacharya* or of a student. This is the stage for moral training, secular education, and discipline, which last from childhood to the age of manhood. During these years the young man lives with his Guru or preceptor, studies all the scriptures, sciences, and philosophies, and lives a strict moral and unselfish life, implicitely obeying the teachings of the master. Thus after receiving the highest ideals of life, he will return home at the age between twentyfive and fortyfive, get married, and had a householder's life. Then after performing the duties of a good husband and a true father, he would retire and take up the forest life, or he might go to a solitary place, where he could spend his days in contemplating upon his high ideals, and live a strictly moral life of a celibate. This should be done after attaining to the age of fifty.

Then he would gradually enter into the fourth stage of *sannyasa,* or the life of complete renunciation. In this stage, he should live a pure, chaste and holy life, and be unattached to the pleasure of the changing world. This was the general rule. But there were exceptions in such persons, in whom there was no desire to lead a married life and to enter into the second stage *i.e.* into the householder's life. Such persons could remain *brahmachari* or student as long as they wanted, and then they go to the fourth stage of *sannyasa,* without following the regular course, if they were fit for that life.

The strict life of a student or *brahmachari* is absolutely necessary, because it is preparatory to spiritual life. In this stage, one should learn the ethical teachings and spiritual instructions first and then how to practise them. In this stage, he should learn to subdue his passions, and master his lower nature by the higher, through strict moral discipline. The vedic injunctions for a student are: "say what is true! Do thy duty! Do not neglect the study of the Vedas! After having brought to thy teacher the proper reward, do not cut off the lives of children! Do not swerve from the truth! Do not swerve

from duty! Do not neglect what is useful! Do not neglect greatness! Do not neglect to teach the Vedas ! Do not neglect the works due to the gods and fathers! Let thy mother be to thee like unto a god ! Let thy father be to thee like unto a god ! Whatever actions are blameless, those should be regarded not others. Whatever good works have been performed by us, those should be observed by thee".

Again, in the most ancient vedic writings on the Hindu ethics we read, when a disciple went to his preceptor, and asked what he should do to become moral and righteous, and the sage replied in three Sanskrit words, *damayata, datta, dayaddham.* Each word begins with the letter 'd'. The first is *damayata* which means, subdue yourself, control the passions, conquer the senses, pride, egotism, and selfishness. The second word is *datta* which means, give freely, and be generous to the poor and charitable to the needy. The last is *dayaddham,* which means be kind to all, have pity and compassion for all who deserve, and love them as you love yourself.

The grandest of the ethical law what is taught by the Vedas is the law of universal love: "love all living creatures as thyself"; not merely neighbours, not only fellow members of the society, but also all human beings, without encouraging race prejudice and colour distinction, nay, all the lower animals. if possible. This love should proceed from the bottom of the soul. As we love our own dear selves, so we should love others; because each soul, whether human or animal, being a child of immortal bliss, is our brother, and we should treat each soul as our beloved brother or sister, feel for everybody, help them in their distress, and try to relieve them from pain, suffering and misfortune. Jesus the Christ said: "Love thy neighbour as thyself." But he did not give the reason why should we love our neighbour and not to hate them. The answer we find in the Vedas in the celebrated formula, *tattvamasi* i.e. "thou art that". Because thou art thy neighbour in spirit ; and thou art one with thy neighbour in spirit. So we should love our neighbour not merely for their good qualifications, not for their kindness, and not for their beauty, but because they are one in spirit. This is the grandest of all ethical teachings. Following this idea, Buddha taught his noble truths. He said: "Do not hate those who hate you, but love them, because the eternal

ethical law is the law of mercy for all. Never is wrath stilled by wrath, but by reconciliation, never is hatred conquered by hatred, but by love, and this is an everlasting law. Forsake all evil like envy, jealousy, malice and hatred. Bring forth good, master thy own thought, and restrain thy tongue ; such is the path to perfection." Buddha further taught: "Overcome evil by good, the avaricious by generosity, and the false by truth. Let boundless goodwill prevail among mankind."

Such are the ethical teachings of Hinduism and Buddhism. Overcome evil with good is greater than the Golden Rule. Although, in India, from ancient times, the Golden Rule existed in the form of *"atmaupanyena sarvatra dayam kurvanti sadhavah"*, i.e. the wise men should treat others as they wish others would treat them. Still to overcome evil with good has been considered higher. It reminds me of the teaching of the Chinese sage Lootze: "Recompense evil with good; requite injury with kindness. Do not good, I would be good in order to make them good". Hearing this Confucius, who was teaching the Golden Rule, said: "if you return good for evil, what would you return for good?" Buddha, however, taught like Lootze saying: "Overcome evil with good, and hatred with love.

When Buddha was asked: "What is evil?" He answered: "Killing, my friends, is evil; stealing is evil; yielding to sexual passion is evil; lying is evil; slandering is evil; abuse is evil; gossip is evil; envy is evil; hatred is evil; to cling to false doctrine is evil, and, all these things, my friends, are evil." So Buddha gave five commandments to all:

(1) Do not kill any living being;
(2) Do not take what is not given to you;
(3) Do not speak falsehood;
(4) Do not drink intoxicating drinks;
(5) Do not commit adultery.

Buddha taught his lay disciples to obey and honour his parents, and to follow an honourable trade or profession. The duties and relation of children and parents, husbands and wives, friends and companions, masters and servants, pupils and teachers, laymen and devotees, which were laid down by Buddha, were in perfect harmony with the injunctions of the

ancient ethical teachings of the Vedas. Thus we can understand the ethics of Buddhism.

General people of the West have an idea that Buddha was the only ethical teacher that arose in India. But those who are familiar with Hindu scriptures, will remember that there were many other spiritual teachers among the Hindus who lived both before and after the time of Buddha. Those who have read the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata,* know that Rama, the hero of the *Ramayana,* was the ideal son, ideal father, ideal king, and ideal husband He was like an embodiment of truthfulness. And his wife Sita was the ideal wife and ideal mother. Even today she is held as the ideal of womanhood among the Hindus. Again, the hero of the *Mahabharata,* Krishna was another great saviour among the Hindus. He lived about 800 years before Buddha. His ethical teachings are embodied in the *Bhagavad Gita* or *Song Celestial,* as Sir Edwin Arnold calls it. Here we find the highest ideal of Christian ethics as described from the rationalistic standpoint. It has been said in the *Bhagavad Gita*: "Purity of heart and soul should be practised. Anything that makes one unselfish, any action which makes one forget one's lower self and reminds one of the supreme Spirit and the absolute Reality of the universe, is purifying". Purity in thought, word and deed is one of the ideals of the ethics of Hinduism. Christ taught: "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God".

Next to purity is chastity. Absolute chastity in thought, word, and deed is next to divinity, nay, it leads to divinity. Therefore it should be the ideal. Charity is another virtue. Charity purifies the heart of a man, and embroadens the mind of a man. Charity transforms an individual soul to the cosmic soul. In every religion, we will find this practice of charity, because it is one of the ennobling steps towards the attainment of Godconsciousness. Charity prepares the ground of self-denial, and, therefore, makes to forget the attachment to one's petty self, and by that means it helps man to advance in the spiritual world.

In fact, ethics prepares the ground for the advancement in the spiritual world. It prepares the true basis of morality in man, and makes a man virtuous and loving. So Hinduism and Buddhism are the liberal and universal systems of religion

or religious faiths which have adopted the elements of ethics for observing the strict moral values and spiritual ideals in human life. Because men are morally and virtually the children of Bliss, they have only made themselves entangled with the mess of *maya* for the non-knowledge of their undying glory. So when this chain of *maya* or delusion is replaced by the Brahman-knowledge by the practice of ethics, or by observing the ethical principles and values, they are escaped in this life from the delusive world forever and ever.

CHAPTER VII

INTERNATIONAL ETHICS

The thirty-first Annual Convention of the Free Religious Association of America was held on Friday, May 27th 1898, in Steinert Hall, Boston, with a large attendance. The subject for consideration by the speakers of the morning was 'International Ethics', or 'The Influence of the Free Religious Spirit in the Settlement of International Questions':

Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson, President of the Association, occupied the chair and said in introducing Swami Abhedananda: 'The Parliament of Religions of which Mrs. Chenev spoke afforded this great benefit—that it gave us the beginning of a series of distinguished and able visitors from countries beyond Europe, who have given us themselves as an object-lesson of dignity, thoughtfulness and character that may be developed under remote influences and religions considered as alien. I have the pleasure of introducing to you as the next speaker the last arrived of this series of visitors,—Swami Abhedananda of India'.

I come from a country which has loved and worshipped peace since the prehistoric times. There is no country in the world which has loved peace so much and tried to practise non-resistance of evil so consistently in its everyday life as India did. I come from a land where religion is so tolerant and all-embracing that it teaches that each man and woman must have his or her liberty to think in the way he or she likes. But the result of this love of peace is known to you all. There is no country in the world which has suffered so much from foreign invasions as India has suffered. If we want to love peace, and carry it out into our daily life, we shall have to find necessary environments for the growth of peace in a nation. India did not find such environments. She had been attacked from ancient times, first by the Greeks, then by the Scythians, then by the Mongolians, then by the Tartars, then by the Mohammedans, and lastly by the Christians.

What is India today?[1] Worse than Cuba in some districts. India has no liberty of expressing her political views, no liberty of the press. Overtaxed and oppressed in various ways, she has lost her commerce, her trade, and her arts, and last of all her freedom. India will regain peace, not by bloodshed, but through conflict. By conflict I do not mean the shedding of

[1] This lecture was delivered on May 27th 1898, and at that time India was in bondage.

blood, but that kind of war which is intimately connected with all our life. We are struggling all the time. We are fighting with the obstacles that are trying to prevent us from attaining freedom. We shall have to fight, first of all with our superstition, then with our prejudice, then with our national customs which have been handed down from our forefathers and ancestors; and through this struggle we shall at last attain to freedom. I think the object of the Free Religious Association is the attainment of freedom and the discovery of the way by which that freedom can be obtained. That freedom does not mean one-sided freedom, but means political freedom, social freedom and last of all religious freedom. How did America attain her freedom? What America is today is the result of the Civil War. The war has abolished slavery. The Northerners strove to preserve the union of the states and free the slaves. The Southerners opposed and endeavoured to prevent them from giving freedom to the downtrodden races that lived in America. This attainment of freedom being the goal of humanity, we shall have to attain through conflict. Let us be ready to fight with our superstition, to fight with our ignorance. Let us be ready to fight with the lower nature, and then to raise ourselves on the higher platform. Our lower nature prevents us from reaching that liberation and elevation of the soul which is the end and aim of each individual as well as of each nation. That freedom can only come when we conquer the lower nature which expresses itself as selfishness. Selfishness is the expression of our lower nature, of our animal nature; and we shall have to fight with that animal nature. We shall have to become unselfish in all our acts both social and spiritual. How can we attain to that unselfishness? How can we attain to that freedom? Not by bloodshed, but by understanding the principle of nature. By the principle of nature I mean the great plan, the grand truth which is manifested in every department of nature, and that truth is 'unity in variety'. If we can understand this law and this plan of nature, and if we observe it in our everyday life, then we shall be unselfish, shall be able to recognise the rights of others, shall be friendly to others, and shall help others as we help ourselves. The basis of international ethics does not depend on the statement of

certain dogmas which have been handed down to us through preachers or through books, but on the recognition of unity in variety, the recognition of oneness in Spirit. We are all one in Spirit or *Atman*. Not only are we brothers but are one with others as with ourselves. Brotherhood is the second stage in the perception of this unity, and oneness is the highest. This plan of nature, unity in variety, is manifested physically, mentally and spiritually. As by studying physical nature we come to the conclusion that all the various forces of nature are nothing but the different expressions of one eternal energy—that energy you may call by any name you like; scientists call it energy, but religionists call it the will of God; as by studying biology we come to know that there is one life principle which is manifesting itself in nature from the lowest amoeba upto the highest man, and the difference is not of kind but of degree. As by comparative study of anatomy we come to understand the unity of species, so by studying philosophy, by studying our own inner nature, we come to the conclusion that there is but one mind manifesting itself in the universe. When that mind manifests itself through this body, it becomes my mind; and when it manifests through your body, it becomes your mind.

Similarly, when we study the religions of different nations and of different peoples, we come to the conclusion that there is one universal Spirit (*Atman*) which manifests through various forms. Some call it God, some call it Father in heaven, some call it Allah, and some call it Brahman. The difference is in the name only. As the same substance water is called by various names by various people who inhabit different countries—some call it water, some aqua, some eau, some wasser, some pani, some vari, some jalam and so forth, but the substance is the same; similarly that one spirit, which you may call by any name you like, is manifesting itself in and through us and in and through each individual soul; and each individual soul is nothing but a centre of a circle whose circumference is nowhere but whose centre is everywhere. We are nothing but so many centres. Consequently each centre is connected and related to that infinite circle; and when we recognise that, we cannot be unkind to any living creature and cannot shed the blood of any living creature, but then we realize the spirit which

Christ had, when he said, "Love thy neighbour as thyself". The explanation of that highest ethical law we do not find in the Testaments. By reading the Testaments we do not understand the reason why we shall love our neighbours as ourselves, and not kill them. That explanation was given in the Vedas by the ancient Rishis or seers of Truth, as they are called, who lived in the prehistoric times during the vedic period in India. They understood that and explained that through the eternal law of nature, unity in variety. They said, we should love our neighbours as ourselves, because we are one in Spirit. We are our neighbours. As we love ourselves, we must love our neighbours in the same way, because we are our neighbours.

This grand truth of unity in variety was applied by the sages of India in the religious line of thought. They understood that this unity in variety is also expressed in the spiritual nature. So they did not found their religion on certain dogmas or sayings of certain prophets, but they founded their religion on the spiritual laws of nature on that unity in variety. They said that each individual must have his or her own religion, a religion which suits him or her. Those who try to force one line of thought on all men, women, and children, of all countries and of all nations, do not recognise this law of unity in variety; and, consequently, they act against the law of nature. But those who recognize this law. become conscious of the fact that one spirit is manifesting itself through each individual soul, and therefore they recognise the rights of all. The result of such recognition of the law of unity in variety is that there has been no religious persecution in India. The Hindus have never persecuted any sects or creeds, because they differed from the orthodox ideas, but on the other hand they protected all who took shelter in India. The Parsis, when oppressed by the Mohammedans and driven out of their land, went to India and found shelter. So the Christians found shelter in ancient times. The religion of the Hindus is not built around a particular person like Jesus or Buddha, but it is entirely based on this principle of oneness which was expressed in the Rig Veda, by the well-known passsage: "That which exists is one, men call it by various names". Their religion does not depend upon

any particular book, but on the truth which underlies the sayings of all the great teachers that flourished in different parts of the world at different times. A Christian missionary comes to India and preaches: "Look at the teachings of Jesus—the sermon on the mount,—how ethical, how glorious, how beautiful are they! He is the saviour. If you do not believe in Jesus you will be damned forever." But a Hindu says to the missionary: "Have you read the *Bhagavad Gita* which has been translated into English by Oriental scholars"? Our missionary friend replies: "No". Then our Hindu friend says: "Go and read it; and you will find the same ideas expressed only in different words". But he does not believe in that. He says: "No, your prophets were false prophets, they did not understand the laws of nature, nor religion". He does not believe in anything which did not come through Christ. If they came through Christ, they were all right, because our missionary friends believe in Christ alone, not in any other prophet. The other day, I went to hear Dr. Barrows, who was the Secretary of the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, and who, after travelling for three months in India, returned to America and gave a course of lectures in the Union Theological Seminary. He said that the Hindus have no morality, no ethics, no philosophy, no religion; if they have got anything they have got it from the Christian missionaries. This will give you an idea of the spirit of the Christian missionaries. Their eyes are blind with superstitions and bigotry, consequently they do not see good in others. These missionaries come to teach us what you are trying to forget. They do not know that what Jesus taught the Jews, was known and practised by the Hindus long before his birth. And even today the Hindus are practically better followers of the teachings of Jesus than those who profess Christianity. The ethical and spiritual teachings of Jesus are the same as the ethtical and spiritual teachings of the Hindu prophets. The missionaries do not realize this and so they find fault with the Hindus and deny their prophets. This non-recognition of the rights of others, whether in the religious or in secular domain, this non-recognition of the eternal law of unity in varietv is the cause of all evil, all international conflicts, and all war and persecution—social, political and religious.

So, the moment we come to know this law, the moment we realize that we are all one in spirit with the Father in Heaven, we become kind to all, we love all living creatures and attain to freedom and peace which are end and aim of all religions and all nations.

CHAPTER VIII

BUDDHISM IN CHINA, JAPAN AND KOREA

In 522 A.D. Buddhism was introduced in Japan by a Chinese Buddhist, Shiba-Tatsu by name, who lived in Japan as a naturalised Japanese subject and erected a small temple of Buddha at Saktahara in Yamato. But at this time Buddhist doctrines did not become popular among the Japanese. It is well-known to the historians that in 65 A.D. China sent a mission to India to bring some relics of Buddha and some copies of the Buddhist scriptures. The mission returned to China after two years in 67 A.D. Within three centuries after this, Buddhism was well-established in Korea. The King of Hakusai in Korea sent a golden image of Buddha and some of the sacred scriptures to the Mikado of Japan in 522 A.D. In the following year the Mikado had an image of Buddha carved out of a log of camphor-wood tree that was found ashore near the capital and had it set up in his palace. In 554 A.D. nine Buddhist monks came from Korea to take the place of the seven who were sent before by the King of Hakusai. They belonged to Jo-Jitsu and Sanron sects which are now not recognized in Japan. During the reign of the Mikado Bidatsu Tenno, the king of Hakusai, sent to Japan in 576 A.D. a number of sacred books and more monks and nuns, the teachers belonging to Ritsu and Zen sects among the Buddhists, together with an exorcising monk, an architect and an image-maker. In 584 A.D. two Japanese brought from Korea the images of Shaka (*Sakyamuni*) and Miroka (*Maitreya-Bodhisattva*). The owner of these as well as some of the relics of Buddha's body named Sogono-Iname, the son of Umako erected the first pagoda in Japan and had them enshrined.

Within a short time after this there broke out a pestilence which caused Buddhism to be suppressed for a while. But Umako received special permission from the Mikado to practise privately the sacred rites of this new faith. The next Mikado was cured of his dangerous illness by the Buddhist priests, and for this reason he favoured the spread of Buddhism in Japan.

In the reign of this Mikado great many monks were invited over from Korea to spread the teachings of Buddha. Some of the most celebrated Buddhist temples were found in Japan during this period, such as Tennoji as Ozaka, Udzumasa near the modern Kioto, Asuka-dera, Darumaji, Tayema-dera, Kume-dera, and Tachibanadera in Yamato. Probably (Hinayana) Sho-jo doctrines were preached by these Korean Monks.

In 623 A.D. the Chinese monks came for the first time to Japan. The number of temples and monasteries began to increase steadily. In 625 A.D. Buddhism was taught publicly in Japan. The Mikado Kotoku Tenno was a staunch follower of Buddhism. During his reign (645-654 A.D.) a Japanese monk named Do-sho was sent to China to study under Yuan-chuang (Hiuen Thsang), the great pilgrim who spent many years in India. He is called Gen-jo Sanzo by the Japanese. But Yuan-chuang referred him to the monk Eman of the Zen sect from whom Do-sho received instruction on the practice of meditation. In 658 A.D. two other Japanese monks were sent to China to study under this celebrated pilgrim.

The Mikado Temmu Tenno reigned between 673 and 686 A.D. He endowed the monasteries with lands and made them independent of all government control. He built the temple Yukushi-ji near Nara and ordered by edicts that every house in Japan should have a Buddhist shrine and some sacred scriptures of Buddhism. Cremation was first practised in Japan in 700 A.D. In 710 A.D. was built at Nara the great monastery of Ko-buku-ji.

The Mikado Sho-mu Tenno decreed in 737 A.D., after an epidemic of small-pox which almost depopulated the country, that a large monastery should be established in each province. The seven-storied pagodas each were also built by him in every province. He further gave the order to copy more of the Buddhist scriptures. It was he who founded the great temple at Nara which holds the collosal staute of Dai-nichi Nio-rai.

In 737 A.D. an Indian monk named Baramon (*Brahmin*) So-jo visited Japan landing at the port of Ozaka where he was met by the celebrated priest Gio-gi Bosatsu (*Bodhisattva*). This title was conferred on the priest (Gio-gi) by Sho-mu Tenno. Later on, this title of Bosatsu was abused by the noble men of

Japan, and that abuse was stopped by the edict of the Mikado Iyevasu in the beginning of the 17th century.

In 754 A.D. a Chinese monk named Chieu-Chen (Kan-shin in Japanese) visited Japan and introduced the doctrines of Ritsu sect. It was through his influence the Mikado Sho-mu-Tenno renounced his throne and joined the monastic order. His daughter Ko-Ken Tenno became a nun. Following the example of the Mikado four hundred persons of high rank renounced the world and became monks. His example was also followed by other ruling Mikados who succeeded him.

In 767 A.D. the temple at Nikko was founded by the monk Sho-do. In 805 A.D. the doctrines of the Tendai sect were introduced from China by the monk Den-gio Dai-shi, the first Abbot of Hei-Yei-Zan. In 806 A.D. Kobo Dai-shi returned from China and promulgated the teachings of Yogachara school and founded the sect called Shin-gon. His teacher was the Chinese Kei-Kwa (Hui-Kuo). Three centuries later Rio-nin founded the sect Yu-dzu Nembutsu. In the end of the 12th century the Jo-do sect was established by Ho-nen Sho-nin. There are many sub-sects of the eight principal sects among the Buddhists of Japan. The following table will show these eight with the number of temples or monasteries belonging to each:

	Temples and monasteries
Tendai (3 sub-sections) .	5,088
Shin-gou (2 sub-sections)	13,358
Jo-do (3 sub-sections)	8,478
Rinzai (9 sub-sections)	7,081
Zen So-to (9 sub-sections)	14,021
O-baku	
Shin (10 sub-sections) .. .	18,783
Nichi-ren (7 sub-sections) .	5,085
Ji . .	501
Yu-dzu Nem-butsu	347

The three sub-sects of Teu-dai Shiu are:

(1) Euriaku-ji. The principal deity of this sub-sect is Yakushi Nio-rai (*Bhaishajyaguru*) with whom are associated two *Bodhisattvas* (*Bo-Satsu*) Nikko and Gwakko; Bouten (*Brahma*); Tai-Shaku (*Indra*) the Shi-Tenno (four kings of the *devas*); and the Jiu-ni-Jin-sho (twelve divine leaders). All of these are placed on the altar.

(2) The Midera sub-sect worship Mi-roku Bo-satsu (*Maitreya Bodhisattva*).

(3) The Shin-Sei sub-sect worship Amida Nio-rai (*Amitabha Tathagata*) as their principal Deity.

The Ten-dai sect is named after the mountain Tientai Shan in China, where the founder of this sect Chi-sha Dai-shi, a Chinese monk, first taught his doctrines.

The sacred book of this sect is Ho-ke-kio (*Saddharma-Prajnaparamita-Sutra-sastra*) called Chi-ron and supplemented by Ne-han-gio (*Mahaparinirvana-Sutra*). In the Chi-ron is given the law of meditation by which the aspirant is enabled to recognise the Buddha under all forms he has assumed in order to save mankind. According to this sect the principal means for attaining spiritual insight is meditation and the practice of asceticism (Kwam-mon) which is confined to monks.

The central doctrine of this sect is that Nirvana means the ultimate result of existence It is a state in which the individual remains unaffected by anything external, and consequently, is devoid of feeling, thought or passion. This absolute unconditioned existence is called Mu-i (*Asamskrita*). It is the annihilation of conditions and not of the substance of the individual. To the uninitiated it will be regarded as the absolute non-existence.

This sect reverences Shaka (*Sakyamuni*), Monju (*Manjusri*), Fugen (*Samantabhadra*), ji-zo (*Kshitigarbha*), Fu-do (*Achala*), Kwan-non (*Avalokiteswara*) under his different forms such as the eleven faced, the horse headed, the thousand-handed, the Holy; Dainichi (*Vairochana*), Ashuku (*Akshobhya*), Ho-sho (*Ratnasambhava*). The Ten-dai sect formerly worshipped numerous Shinto gods, such as, Sanno, Tenjin Sama, Inari, Shimmei, Otori, Hachiman and Godzu Tenno. These were explained as the *Avataras* of the Buddhist deities. For instance, Inari was Kwan-non (*Avalokiteswara*).

After thte revolution of 1868 A.D. Buddhism in Japan was separated from Shintoism, which from that year was made the state religion of Japan. Shin-gon-shiu sect derives its name from the Chinese word for *mantra* in Sanskrit. It is identical with Yogachara school which was founded by Riu-ju (*Nagarjuna*) or Riu-mio. He is said also to have taught the doctrine of Dainichi (*Vairochana*). The doctrines of this sect are based

on the three *Sutras*: the Dai-nichi Kio (*Mahavariochana-bhisambodhi-Sutra*), the So-shit-Chi-kio (*Susiddhi-karama-Mahatantra-sadhanopasika-Patra*) and the Kon-go (*Vajrachakra-Sutra*). This sect observes mystic rites with signs (*mudra*), shin-mitsu, go-mitsu (*dharana*) and i-mitsu (*dhyana*). This and Ten-dai sect teach the practice of fasting for purification. Vairochana was the founder of this school. He transmitted the doctrines to Kon-go (*Vajrasattva*) who was succeeded by Riu-mio (*Nagarjuna*). Kobo-Dai-shi introduced this sect into Japan.

According to the teaching of this sect every human being possesses within himself the six elements of the spiritual body (*dharmakaya*) but is unconscious of them until Dai-nichi enters into his heart and enables him to recognise the truth. Through the practice of the above-mentioned mystic rites under the guidance of Ajari one may gain perfect knowledge. The deities of this sect are within the soul. They are states of the mind. Dai-Nichi (*Vairochana*) is explained to be the sum total of all sentient beings.

Zen Shiu is the contemplative school in China. It was founded by the Indian *Dharma* who came to China in 527 A.D. and died there about eight years later. He was the first of the Chinese Patriarchs. The principal teachings of this sect is that truth cannot be expressed by the words of the mouth, that it is only by introspection the meaning of Buddha can be learnt. It is unnecessary to worship him or to study the sacred scriptures, still it allows the study of Dai-hannia-Kio simply as a means of educating the intellect. Its creed is: "Look within and there you will find the Buddha". In most of the temples of this sect Shaka (*Shakya*) is placed upon the altar between Kasho (*Kashlyapa*) and Anan (*Ananda*). The Trinity of this sect is Shaka, Miroku (*Maitreya*) and Amida (*Amitabha*). In Japan this sect has two branches Rin-zai and So-to named after two Chinese monks of the 9th century. The Ohaku sub-sect was founded in Japan by In-gen, the Chinese monk.

Jo-do Shin sect was founded by the Indian monk Me-mio (Asvaghosha). It was introduced in China by Bodairushi (*Bodhiruchi*) who translated Vasubandhu's *Shastra* and other *Upadesha* into Chinese. The Tendai sect teaches that the study of the whole canon and the practice of asceticism and meditation are the means of attaining salvation. But this sect believes

in the teaching of Riu-ju (Nagarjuna) who taught that it is impossible to attain salvation by individual efforts in this age of the decay of religion, and substituted for this difficult path to Nirvana the simple faith in the all-saving power of Amida (*Amitabha*). This relying upon the strength of another, is called Ta-riki. Their *mantra* is "Ta-riki chin no ji-riki" "self-effort depending on the effort of another", Jo-do means (*Sukhavati*) where all mankind will eventually go before attaining to perfect Buddhaship.

In the temple of this sect Amida is chiefly worshipped. Sometimes the Shinto deities Inar and Benteu are worshipped. Chion-In at Kioto and Zo-jo-ji at Tokio are the principal seats of the two chief divisions of this sect. Nichi-reu-shiu is purely a Japanese sect. The principal belief of this sect is that all living creatures, plants and even this earth will eventually attain to Buddhahood. But man must work out his own salvation by practising according to the teachings of Buddha and by constant prayer and not by the grace of *Amitabha* as taught by the Jodo and Shin sects. There are two forms of teachings of this sect; the one symbolic for the lay people, the other the pure truth for the advanced students. This sect worships Shakya and believes that 3,000 years after the year of the birth of Shakya there will come Miroku (*Maitreya*) who will convert all those who have not yet attained to Buddhahood. The lotus is the emblem of Shaka. Niche-reu was the founder of this sect.

Shin-shin sect has much similarity with the Jo-do sect in their worship of Amida (*Amitabha*) and in the use of the *Sukhavativyuha-Sutra* (smaller) as the basis of its doctrine. It differs from the Jo-do sect on the most important point of the doctrine. Jo-do teaches that salvation can be gained by simply repeating the invocation to Amida, while this sect teaches that salvation is to be attained by faith in the power and willingness of Amida to save mankind, and that the invocation is to be used like an act of thanks-giving. Through faith alone one is taken after death under Amida's protection. While Jo-do sect believes Amida will come to meet the soul after death and take it to paradise.

This sect is called the Protestantism of Japan, as the priests are allowed to marry. It is popularly known in Japan as the

sect of Nishi Hon-gwanji at Kioto. This sect has the richest temples and does the missionary work in China and Korea and maintains a high standard of education among the neophytes. This sect believes that salvation or Nirvana means happiness and is the state of Buddha. It teaches the doctrine of "Help from Amida."

CHAPTER IX

THE SHINTOISM IN JAPAN

The history of the Japanese people is the history of their religions, and to understand this more clearly let us first consider the geographical and ethnological conditions which have fostered and developed them.

Japan is called the land of the sun's origin or Dai Nippon. It is not a very large country, but consists of a group of islands about 150,000 square miles in area, the population being a little over fortyone millions of people. In size it may be compared to Great Britain and Ireland. The population includes about 20,000 savages, called Ainos, who dwell in the northern islands ; with the exception of these aborigines the inhabitants have one language, though ethonologically speaking, the Japanese are a composite race having in their veins the blood of the Ainos, that of the Malayans, Mongolians, Koreans, and also of other non-Aryan tribes of Asia.

There are three religions in Japan: (1) Shintoism, native to their own soil ; (2) Confucianism, which was introduced from China about the close of the 3rd century A.D. and (3) Buddhism, which came through Korea in 552 A.D. Of these three, Confucianism is not a religion. Strictly speaking, it is a system of ethics meant for regulating the political, social and domestic life as well as the conduct of the people, and is based upon the ancestor-worship. Therefore, we can say that Shintoism and Buddhism are the prevailing religions. These two religions have existed together in absolute peace and harmony for the last twelve centuries, moulding the character of the people, and making the great Japanese nation of today. No one who is not familiar with the history of Japan, can realize how much good has been done by Buddhism in that country, and how it has been the chief factor in civilizing the extremely superstitious descendants of the phallus-worshippers, the tree-worshippers, the serpent-worshippers, ghost-worshippers, and the ancestor-worshippers. All these various forms were classed together under one name, 'Kami-no-michi,' that is, 'the way of the gods',

and that was afterwards called Shinto. The word 'Shinto' is not a very ancient term. It was really of Chinese origin, and was adopted in Japan about the middle of the 7th century A.D., so as to distinguish the native religion or 'way' from the foreign religion of Buddhism, and that was called 'Butsudo' or the way of Buddha

Before the advent of Buddhism in Japan, the people of Japan had no idea of heaven or hell, or of one supreme Being. The Japanese mythology did not develop and idea of an elysium or a Tartaru, nor of the god or the devil. The followers of Shinto or of the 'way of the gods' believe that the spirits of the dead continue to live in the world after their bodies have melted into earth, lingering somewhere, hovering either over the graves, or in the mourning-house called the 'Miya' or in the ancestral temple, or in the ghost-house called 'Miya', or perhaps moving in the winds, or in the waters, or dwelling in the upper world. By death they acquire the mysterious powers becoming the gods or 'Kami'. They believe that all the human beings will become the gods after their death, the wicked will become the wicked gods, and the good and the virtuous men and women will become the good gods. These celestial beings were the original inhabitants of this earth, and the Japanese people trace their descent from them.

Now we understand the meaning of the claim of the Japanese that they are the descendants of the gods. The gods simply mean the spirits i e. the spirits of their ancestors. All these Kami need the propitiation and are in some way able to share the pleasures and the pains of the living. They need food and drink and light. They can bestow benefits upon the people if they are pleased or displeased and they can injure the living. For its peace and repose, each Kami depends upon the nourishment, reverence, and devotion, and also upon the offerings made by its living kindred, and when these are not made or given they are incensed. If the funeral rites are not properly performed, according to the Novito Shinto rituals, if the food, drink and light be not regularly given by the living members, the spirits will suffer from hunger, thirst, and cold, and becoming angry, will bring misfortune to the offender. This was the principal belief upon which the whole structure of Shintoism was built. We find in it, as in ancestor-worship

of all climes and ages, the same five principles. First, that the spirits continue to live after the death of the body, hovering over the graves or in their former homes, or in the Miya, and that they share in the life of the living. Secondly, that the spirits after death acquire the mysterious and supernatural powers, and become the gods, each retaining its peculiar characteristics, tendencies, and qualities which each possessed in its life-time. Thirdly, that the happiness of the living depends upon the goodwill and pleasure of the departed, and their pleasure and goodwill, in turn, are dependent upon the reverence, devotion, and offerings, made by the living. Fourthly, that all the good and the evil events of nature, whether plague or pestilence, earthquake or flood, plentiful harvest or good rain, caused by the powers of the spirits of the dead. Fifthly, that all human actions, good or evil, are controlled by the spirits. From these we can judge that in ancient times, their religion was nothing but a perpetual fear of the dead. This fear was so great that if any person died in the dwelling-house, that house was immediately deserted or burnt. If an emperor died in a capital, his successor would make another place, the centre of his government. If any member of the family had misfortune or serious disease, they were terribly frightened and tried to propitiate the offended spirit by the prayers, and by making the offerings of various kinds, sometimes sacrificing the living animals which were used by the person during his lifetime. For instance, if a person used to ride a horse, the horse was buried next to the master. Other animals were sacrificed, and the human sacrifices were not uncommon at that time. The servants used to be buried alive near the graves, so that their spirits could go and attend upon the spirits of their masters. As these could bestow the benefits, good fortune, and good luck when they were pleased, the living tried their best to propitiate them.

In ancient Japan, it was customary to build the mourning-houses or Miya outside the dwelling-houses, where dying persons were kept for a few days before death, and where funeral rites were performed before the interment of the body. It is horrible to think of a person mortally ill-kept in a lonely place, or in a small hut made of wood with roof thatched with straw, until death relieved him. Gradually this mourning-

house has become transformed into the Shinto temple, but even today it retains the original simplicity and shape of a primitive hut.

This was the first phase of Shintoism in ancient Japan. Gradually, through the Chinese influence, the spirit-tablets and the cult of the ancestor-worship were introduced about the latter part of the 3rd century A.D., and were established in the Japanese home. Since that time every Shinto household in an inner chamber has a little model of a Shinto temple or Miya, placed on a shelf, attached to the wall about six feet from the floor. This is the house of the august ones or the great spirits, and the self is called 'Mitama San-no-Tana', that is, the shelf of the august spirits In the shrine, there are thin tablets of white wood upon which the names of the departed ones are inscribed, and are called spirit sticks. They are the substitutes of the dead ones. These mortuary tablets suggest the miniature tomb-stones because of their shapes, and in a household the number of these spirit sticks will not exceed five or six, including those of the spirits of the grand parents and the parents who are recently dead. The names of the remoter ancestors are inscribed upon the scrolls which are kept in the shrine. The daily duty of the elders of the household, whether men or women, is to pray before that shrine and to offer some of the family cooking, some water and a light. However simple this form of the worship may be, it must never be neglected. It must always be observed everyday, once at least, sometimes twice, and the general belief is that these spirits dwell in the letters of the tablets from which place they watch everything that is going on in the household, and share the pleasure and the pains of the living. Sometimes, in cases of distress, these spirits appear in the materialized forms to console and comfort the members of the family. The purport of the daily prayer is this: "Oh, august one, for the aid received by night and day, accept our reverential gratitude". This is the household religion of Shintoists in Japan. Even today you will find that, and in the case of the members who are both Shinto and Buddhist, have two Miyas, the one shrine for Shinto gods, asd the other for the Buddhist.

Besides the 'Kami' or the spirits of the departed ancestors, there are countless other higher spirits who rule over the

world, and dwell everywhere outside in nature. There are the gods of the mountains, the gods of the rivers, the gods of the winds, and the gods of the waters, and they possess the tremendous powers, which when united, are limitless. In time of national peril, when they are invoked together, their power is so great that it can remove danger and destroy the enemy. The recent victories of the Japanese over Russia[1] were not achieved by the living, but by the spirits of the dead which dwell everywhere. Hirata, the great Shinto commentator, writes: "The spirits of the dead dwell in the invisible world all around us; they become the gods of varying character and degrees of influence; some reside in the temples built in their honour, or in the dwelling-houses, their former homes; but they are ever ready to help the living and to render service to their prince, wives and children, friends and relatives, as when in the body".

As a Shinto shrine or the Miya is related to the household, so a Shinto parish temple is related to the community. Every community has such a temple. The Japanese people are divided into clans, and the spirit of the founder of the clan is worshipped in each of these parish temples. This spirit is called the Ujigami ('uji' means clan, and 'gami'—god); and in every village, district and city, there are such places of worship. The worshippers and the priest are descendants of the same clan. The Shinto parish temple is most intimately related to the community as a body as well as to the individual members. If we study the Japanese life, what do we find? We find that when a child is born at the end of thirtyone days in case of a boy, and thirtythree days in case of a girl, the child is brought to the parish temple, the protection of the tutelar god is invoked, and in the presence of this Ujigami, the name of the babe is recorded. Always afterwards the child is brought to the temple on holy days, and is also brought during the time of festivals, and when he grows older, he goes to the temple freely, and plays in the surrounding gardens. When he is married, he takes his wife there, and worships the ancestor of the clan. In short, the Ujigami can bestow all good to the worshippers and the members of that particular

[1] This lecture was delivered during the war between the Japanese and the Russians.

clan. The prayers and the offerings are made for success in the business, for protection from the disease and the illness, for victory in time of war, and for health at the time of the plague, famine, or pestilence. There are about 195,256 Shinto parish temples, or the Ujigami temples, in Japan. Of these, about 304 are for the better classes, 2,828 for the middle classes, and the rest for the lower classes. This is the religion of the community in Shintoism. There is another phase of Shintoism, and that is the national religion. The national god of old Japan was the Mikado. The Mikado or Emperor or Arahito-gami, the deity incarnate, the descendant of the sun goddess (Amaterasu-no-ohogami), was the Lord, and was worshipped by the nation. His palace was the most holy sanctuary. Within it there was a small shrine where only members of the court could worship the ancestors of the imperial dynasty. But there is a public form of this cult, represented in the temple of Ise, the Mecca of Shintoism in Japan, and to this temple every Japanese or somebody representing him must go at least once during his lifetime. To the Japanese it is the holiest spot in the world. But besides this national temple of Ise there is another of similar importance at Kitzuki.

The Japanese mythology existed first in the form of tradition and story, and had neither the scriptures, nor the philosophy nor the cosmogony, nor the cosmology, but these traditions, mythologies and ancient stories were handed down through generations, afterwards being compiled in two books which exist today. The older one of the two is called 'Ko-ji-ki', and was compiled about 712 A.D. The meaning of the word 'Ko-ji-ki' is "records of ancient matters". The other book is called the "Nihongi", or the "the chronicles of Nihon", and was compiled about 720 A.D. Both profess to give the history of the world and the story of creation, the origin of the Japanese nation, and the origin of the gods, etc. They both have been translated into English. It is not necessary to enter into the details of the mythology or the stories, but it may be interesting to know something about the story of creation as given in the Ko-ji-ki.

It is said that in the beginning, everything or all the universe was in chaos, and the earth and the heavens were not separated. The world substance floated in the cosmic mass

like the oil on the water. Somehow motion began in that substance, and the ethereal parts sublimated and formed the heavens, and the grosser residuum formed this earth. There were three Kamis or the celestial spirits, born in the upper world, in the high heavens. It is not known whether they lived or died, but it is said that they hid their bodies, and from the warm mould of this earth there sprouted a germ, and from that germ two Kamis were born, and then they died. Then begins the story of the creation of the habitable earth. These two Kamis are called in the Japanese language, Izanami and Izanagi, that is 'the male who invites and the female who invites'. Commanded by the celestial spirits, they began to consolidate the earth, and gave form to the drifting land. Standing on the floating bridge of heaven, the male Kami plunged his jewelled spear into the unstable waters, and stirred them until they gurgled and congealed, and as he drew it forth, the substance of those waters, trickling from the point of the spear, dropped and formed an island, and ever since the island is called the island of congealed drops. This is now identified with the Island of Swaji, which is situated near the entrance of the inland sea. Then all the rest of the things of the world were created by these two, Izanagi and Izanami. When Izanami, after creating all these things, purified himself by taking a bath in the stream, when out of his body many gods were created, and from his left eye arose the heaven-illuminating sun-goddess, Amaterasu. The worship of this sun-goddess is the central object in Shintoism. From the sun-goddess the Mikado traces his descent through one hundred and twenty Mikados who preceded him. The first Japanese emperor, Jimmu Teno was the fifth in direct descent from the sun-goddess. He lived between the years 600-525 B.C.; and for this reason the Mikado claims to be superior to all other gods, and that all others must obey him—the gods of the mountains, the gods of the rivers, the gods of the waters and the winds, and the thunder and the lightning, and the ancestral gods must obey him. Since that time the people of Japan have revered the spirits of their ancestors and other spirits, but they obey the Mikado. They cannot obey any deity or god, but must obey him; and this is the cornerstone of the national religion. He is considered as the living god on earth.

In Shintoism, there is no moral code or commandment of any kind, because, the Shintoist says that the old Japan was the land of the gods or the holy spirits, and was known as the Mikado's empire and the land of the sun's nest. The people were all gods; they were pure, holy and perfect, and whatever they did, was right. They could not commit any wrong, and, therefore, they did not need any moral code or commandment. The vice did not exist in the country. Because the people of Japan believed that all vice and wrong that exist in the country were brought by the foreigners, and, therefore, it is in the foreign countries which are unholy and impure, and so there is need of the moral code and commandment, but not in Japan.

The purification or the cleanliness of the body is the only virtue, emphasized in Shintoism. So to keep the body clean and pure, this is all that is necessary. The peculiar form of worship that is practised by the followers of Shinto, is to observe first the cleanliness. In the morning, they must bathe or wash hands, and shall rinse out the mouth, and cleanse the body, and then folding the palms they should clap twice reverentially. They must look towards the temple of Ise in the province of Yamato and bowing their heads to the ground, offer their petitions. If a worshipper goes to the temple of Upigami, or to the temple of Ise, the national place of the worship, he will not enter into the shrine, but standing outside the door, he will ring the bell by pulling the rope that is attached to it, and in that way, he calls the attention of the deity inside. Afterwards, he will touch the ground with his forehead, and then offer his petition. It must be in a very few words, because the gods must not be annoyed by greedy petitions of all kinds. 'Give me this, and give me that', because Mikado offers a prayer everyday on behalf of his people, and his petitions are much more effectual than those of his subjects. This is the nature of the Shinto prayer.

The believers in Shinotism pray like this: "From a distance, I reverently worship with awe before Ame no-Mihashira (heaven pillar) and Kuni no-Mi-Hashira (country pillar) to whom is consecrated the palace built with stout pillars at Tatsuta no-Tachinee. I say with awe deign to bless me, by correcting the unwitting faults which, seen and heard

by you, I have committed, by blowing off and clearing away the calamities which the evil gods might inflict, by causing me to live long like the hard and lasting rock, and by repeating to the gods of the heavenly origin and to the gods of the earthly origin the petitions which I present everyday, along with your breath, that they may hear with the sharp earedness of the forth galloping colt".

The Shinto temple must be very simple, without paint, lacquer, gilding, or any ornament. It must be made of that wood, called in Japanese hinoki or sunwood, and the roof to be thatched. No brick, metal, or stone is used in the temple, but it must be simple, and within the shrine there to have some wooden spirit tablets and a mirror. This mirror has a long mythological story, connected with it. The first mirror which came to the Mikado, was given by the Sun-goddess, Amaterasu, and it is said that he has kept it in the temple of Ise. He also received a sword which he keeps with himself. On the days of the big festivals, thousands and thousands of the worshippers come to the temple, and make their offerings. The regardful offerings which are made today, consist of the fruits of the land, the products of the sea, and the fabrics of the loom. Besides the gods of the nature and the departed spirits, one will find that in Shintoism there is a belief in regard to numerous other gods the gods of the household, the gods of the kitchen or the cooking-range or saucepan, the gods of well and the cauldron and also of every utensil that is used for the household purposes. This is undoubtedly a phase of animism but this is a religious faith and reverence.

The religion of Shinto has been in existence in Japan for centuries. We do not know when it first began, as the Japanese people had no history (though which may properly be called the history) before 712 or 720 A.D. Some people say that it existed for centuries before the Christian era, but at any rate it is the indigenous religion, and existed when Buddhism was introduced in the year 552 A.D. At first Buddhism did not flourish, and for two centuries it struggled hard to absorb Shinto. But at last it did succeed in the year 800 A.D. through the wonderful ability and genius of a Buddhist priest, Kobo Daishi, the founder of the Shingon sect. It was

the incarnations of the various Buddhas.[1] You know the Buddhism which was introduced into Japan was the Northern Buddhism, the same which prevailed in China and Tibet. It is a peculiar development of Buddhism and a mixture of the mythology and the worship of various deities. The Buddhism which we find in Ceylon, does not exist in Japan, nor in China, nor in Tibet, and that is called the Southern School. But the Northern School admits the one superior deity, Amitabha, the Buddha of the eternal wisdom, powers, and greatness. But Kobo Daishi tried to mix Buddhism with Shintoism, and from that time there grew up a peculiar dual form of religion, partly Shinto and partly Buddhist, which was called the 'Ryobu Shinto'. The Ryobu Shinto means the two departments or the two religions, Buddhism and Shintoism, gaining the imperial approval; and these two have domiciled in Japan for centuries, living together in peace and harmony, moulding the character of the Japanese nation, and making the people as they are today. In Shintoism, we find that these gods have existed, but Buddhism created a wonderful influence in every possible way. It did not destroy them, but gave the different interpretations of them. These spirits of the dead were the Buddhas and the Pitars, the earth-bound spirits, as they were called by the Buddhists. They could worship these spirits of the ancestors, but that is not the highest. "The influence of Buddhism upon Japan", says Lafcadio Hearn, "was immense, was profound, multiform and incalculable". It became as much an official religion as Shintoism itself, and influenced the lives of the higher as well as that of the poorer classes. It made the monks of the emperors and the nuns and of their daughters. It had a voice in everything, and even the government, and in the management of the affairs. It described the nature of the decree, the conduct of the rulers, and the administration of justice. Everything that has been done for the last 1,200 years, has been accomplished through the influence of Buddhism. In every community, the Buddhist parish priest is a public official as well as the spiritual teacher. We must not forget that it was Buddhism, which, for the first time, brought the public educa-

[1] That is, various imanations of Buddha, those are known as Pratyeka-Buddhas or Bodhisattvas.

tion in Japan. The religion of the great Buddha has brought a more humanizing influence and a gospel of tenderness and love, which did not exist in Shintosim. It has brought the new systems of science and philosophy, and it has shown the most wonderful civilizing power. It has taught the people a new respect for life, and kindness towards all human beings, nay, towards all the living creatures. It has given them the arts and the industries of China and of India. The architecture, painting, sculpture, engraving, printing, and gardening, nay, every art and industry which makes life aesthetic and beautiful, were the result of the introduction of Buddhism.

Buddhism gave to the Japanese people the proper education, the dramas and the higher forms of poetic composition, the fiction and the history. It has given all the best refinements which we find among the Japanese people, and it has made the nation as it is. If Shintosim had not come in touch with this civilizing, humanizing and spiritualizing power of Buddhism, the people of Japan today would be as barbarous as the Sandwich Islanders. Everything that is interesting, attractive and beautiful in Japan is either directly or indirectly connected with the civilizing powers of Buddhism. It has given the Japanese people the majority of the diversions and amusements which they enjoy. Shintosim never produced any of these things. The toleration of Buddhism shown in Japan was so great, that not one single individual was ever persecuted on account of his religious belief. The Shintoists lived and worshipped their gods without molested or persecuted by the Buddhist priests, and Buddhism tolerated the three phases of Shinto religion which I have described, that is, domestic, communal and national, which constitute the vital points of the Shinto cult.

The space will not permit me to describe the horrible and cruel destructions, robbery, murder, slaughter the of innocents, and the brutal and diabolical things that were introduced into Japan by the Jesuit Christians about the middle of the sixteenth century; and how at last, when the schemes of the Christians became so powerful and so harmful to the nation as to threaten and overthrow the empire, the Japanese Emperor was compelled to pass the laws and publish the the edicts in 1603 and 1614, prohibiting all the Christian

missionaries and the priests were driven out of the country, and these edicts not being withdrawn till 1873. In 1871, Shintoism revived once more as a political power, and from that time Shintoism has been separated from Buddhism. Today the Shintoists are trying to bring out that patriotism and national feeling which Shintoism always preached, and which has reached its climax recently in the late war with Russia.[2]

A Japanese scholar has beautifully described the friendly relation that exists between Shintoism and Buddhism. He says the one and the same Japanese is a Shintoist, a Confucianist, and a Buddhist. He says: "Our religion may be compared to a triangle ; Shintoism furnished the object, Confucianism offers the rules of life, and Buddhism shows the way of salvation". Thus it is understood that Shintoism has a close relation with both Confucianism and Buddhism. Though their customs, beliefs and the religious practices are different from one another to same extent, yet they are interlinked with one another in their moral codes, conducts and ideals, living the tie of brotherhood.

[2] During the time of conflict between Russia and Japan.

CHAPTER X

LAMAISM IN TIBET

(Delivered in America in 1911)

People of America have a very vague idea of Tibet. Its geographical position is known only to a few students in schools and colleges. Others regard it as a land of mysteries situated somewhere north of India. The theosophists consider Tibet as the land of their *Mahatmas,* or the socalled superhuman masters who repose in solitude and occasionally perform some petty miracles in the civilized world through the medium of their astral bodies. In 'The Opening of Tibet', Mr. Percival Landor writes: "* * that the Tibetans know nothing about the *Mahatmas* of the Theosophists." The readers of Rudyard Kipling's 'Kim' have often wondered where Tibet is, what kind of creature a Lama might be, and what would be his religion.

Tibet is situated on the north of India, being separated from the latter by nature's huge walls of gigantic range of snow-covered mountains known as the Himalayas, meaning the abode of snow. This range is about 2000 miles in length, and about 500 miles in width, with ice-covered peaks rising in height from 16,000 ft. to 29,002 feet above the sea-level. On the north of this great wall, there is a large plateau covered with mountains, lakes, valleys, rivers and deserts, with scenery which in richness of beauty and grandeur surpasses the famous mountain resorts of the Alps in Switzerland. This plateau is called Tibet. It is bounded on the East by China, on the North by Mongolia and the West by Turkistan and the Kailas mountains. The capital of this beautiful country is Lhasa, which is the seat of its temporal and spiritual government. The whole country is governed by the great Buddhist Pope called 'Dalai Lama', who is not only the earthly Lord, but the incarnation of the celestial *Bodhisattva* called *Avalokitesvara* which literally means, "The Lord who looks down from high". Therefore, the Dalai Lama is regarded as the vicegerent of Lord Buddha on earth. Politically, however, Tibet had been a protected state of China since

the seventeenth century, but the present political relations between the two countries has converted Tibet into a dependency of China. There is an imperial resident of China in Lhasa who is at the head of the Tibetan Army. He inspects the frontier lines and supervises the military stores and forces in the different states into which the country is divided. The Amban or the imperial resident is also the medium of all communications between the Tibetan Government and China. The population of Tibet is probably not more than that of London. It may be between four and five millions, and almost all of the inhabitants may be classed as Lamaists, although in eastern Tibet there is a considerable proportion of the adherents of the ancient Bon religion, who still patronize the religion of the Lamas. This Bon religion prevailed in Tibet before the introduction of Buddhism in 640 A.D.[1]

The founder of this Bon religion of Tibet was Senrab Mi-Vo who was born in Shan Shun in western Tibet. He belonged to the royal race of Mu. He learnt various languages, arts, sciences, and medicine. It is said that he had 336 wives and numerous children. After enjoying all the pleasures of the world at the age of 31 he renounced all and took to the life of an ascetic and within a few years acquired many of the super-natural powers. He propitiated the Bon god called Sen-lha-O-kar (the Bon-god with white radiance) and accepted him as his tutelary deity. The Emperor of China, Kongtse, was converted by him into this Bon religion. For 25 years he preached this religion in China. Bon pronounced as 'Pon' which literally means fetichism or is a form of Shamanism. The modern Bon-po priests say that it is the same as *Dharma*.

In Tibet, he taught his disciples how to invoke the Bon-gods, the white devil dance, the exhortation of the goddess of luck, the offering of drink to spirits, the manner of disposing of the dead, the charms, and how to avert evil omens. He cured leprosy and other incurable diseases. This Bon religion had spread in Tibet, China, Mongolia, Turkistan and other adjacent countries before Buddhism was introduced into them. Senrab died when he was 92 years old. In pre-Buddhist age Bon became the common religion of China. It is said that Senrab was born again in Shan Tung in China as Lao-tze the greatest Chinese

[1] During the time of this lecture in 1911.

philosopher and the founder of Tao-ism which still prevails in China.

BON RELIGION:

The highest aim of a Bon devotee is to attain to the position of the eternal Truth called 'Gyun Drun' (*Sanatana*), and at the same time to retain his personality with a view to work for the good and welfare of all living beings of the world. Whoever endeavours to gain that supreme position must perform two kinds of good works on this earth, viz: those of ordinary usefulness. In these two, there said to exist two kinds of hindrances, one is the obstruction caused by evil spirits, and the other is the obstruction to virtue by poison or moral corruption (Dug). Poison (Dug) consists of attachment to worldly objects. But anger, stupidity or darkness, pride or vain glory, envy and jealousy are called the obstructive influences or poisonous agents in the way to celestial bliss or entrance to heaven and ultimately to salvation.

Those means which effect the deliverance of the *sattva* by showing it the five wisdoms, and lead it unerringly through the thirteen stages of celestial progress that it may attain the state of unchanging usefulness, are called the means of the greatest usefulness. The means (*upaya*) and religious ceremonies which are observed by the Bon devotees resemble to a great extent, those rites and practices which are performed by the Tantric sects of the Buddhists in Tibet, but the incantations, charms, and exorcisms used by them are different and numerous. The basic charms are: (1) *a sum hum ram dsa sad sa le san ne ya svaha;* (2) *ayam ram kham brum hdu*; and (3) *vasvo thun ne lo yo-thium spuns so thad-do then hri.* The recitation of these three charms gives one freedom from all kinds of dangers and injuries arising from malignant stars and evil spirits. They can lead to salvation and put an end to miseries and sufferings of earthly life.

There are many other charms and powerful *mantras* used by a Bon priest to gain control over evil spirits, *nagas,* demons, demigods, ghosts, hobgoblins and to overcome diseases. The principle Bon deity is called 'Lha-Chenpo mig dgu-pa', the great god (*mahadeva*) who has nine eyes. He is called the lord,

the king, the majesty and the supreme pride of the world. Bon deities are of two kinds: (1) wrathful spirits, and (2) mild and peaceful gods. In Bon pantheon the goddesses take precedence over the gods. The chief goddess called 'Gzi-brjid-mthah yasma' is the primeval energy. She is represented with white complexion, and with white candles or torches in both the hands, each placed upon a silver mirror. She sits crosslegged on a throne borne by four lions. She seems to be the consort of 'Lha-Chenpo' (*mahadeva*) who is also of a white complexion and holds a silver book in his hand and sits on the back of a bull. There are goddesses of speech, merits and compassion, and of intellect too, all sitting on lion-thrones; the corresponding gods of speech etc. are all seated on bulls. Thus, there are five gods and goddesses in the Bon pantheon.

From the Chinese history of the 6th century A.D. we gather that prehistoric Tibetans were repacious and reputed cannibals, without a written language, and were the followers of this Bon religion which resembles the Taoism of China, especially in the worship of dragons or *nagas,* and includes animism, fetishism, devil-worship, devil-dancing etc. It is said that Bon-pa or the followers of Bon were used to make human and other bloody sacrifices to propitiate the demons and had no other higher ideals of religion. Some of the old forms of Bon-worship still survive in Lamaism, although in their more humane forms. For instance, instead of human sacrifice the Tibetan Lamas, under the influence of Buddhism, now sacrifice dough image of more or less elaborate kinds in a human form in order to propitiate the devils whom they fear. This sacrifice has become an essential part of the Lamaist daily service. Devil-dancing, which is a remnant of the Bon religion, is still practised all over Tibet, especially on the beginning of the new year. Vestiges of ancient cannibalism are to be found even now, in the Tibetan practice of eating a portion of the skin or flesh of a dead Lama, and in using trumpets made of his thigh bones and his skull for dinking purposes. In fact, the Tibetans themselves claim their descent from man-eating ancestors. This will give the readers an idea of the Bon religion which existed in Tibet before the introduction of Buddhism in 640 A.D. Now let us see how and by whom Buddhism was introduced into Tibet.

About 250 B.C., during the reign of the Buddhist Emperor Asoka, who may be called the Constantine of the Buddhist, Buddhism became the state religion of India. His edicts inscribed on rocks and stone pillars are today the most authentic records of the historical facts, that he sent missionaries all over the civilized world, from Siberia to Ceylon, and from China to Egypt (for then, with the exception of Greece, Europe was not civilized), to preach the gospel of Buddha. At that time some Buddhist books were taken to the Emperor of China, but Buddhism did not begin to spread rapidly in China until 61 A.D., when the Chinese Emperor Ming Ti adopted it and sent for more books and missionaries from India. Rev. A. H. Francke has said that the Buddhist missionaries were sent to Nepal, and to the countries north of India, Kashmir, western Tibet (Ladakh), Bactria, Yarkland, Afghanistan, etc., after the third Buddhist Council (272-231 B.C.) held by King Asoka at Pataliputra (modern Patna). The Aryan tribes of Mons and Dards were the first converts into this great religion. They were the first colonizers in the desert of Tibet. "Among the ruins of the settlements of the ancient Mons of Zangskar, I discovered imposing remains of ancient Buddhist art, and more and more the conviction grew upon me that the settlement of the ancient Mons in Zangskar and Ladakh must have had some connection with pre-Lamaist Buddhism." "The strongest proof of the colonization of western Tibet by ancient Indians are inscriptions in *Brahmi* characters of about 200 B.C.[2]

In the 4th century A.D. Buddhism became the state religion of China. It was introduced into central Tibet about 400 A.D. But it was not generally accepted till the time of the marriage of the first historical Tibetan King, Sron Tsang Gam-po about 641 A.D. Sron Tsang Gam-po was the son of a warlike king who established his authority over the wild clans of central Tibet. After his father's death he ascended the throne and harassed the western borders of China by constant attacks and invasions. The Chinese emperor, Taitsung, of Tang dynasty, was at last obliged to come to terms with this Tibetan king, by giving him his daughter to marry in 641 A.D. The name of this princess was Wencheng. Two years afterwards Gam-po married the

[2] *A History of Western Tibet*, p. 120.

daughter of Amsuvarman, the Buddhist king of Nepal in India. Her name was Brikuti. Both of these wives of the Tibetan monarch, being born and brought up in the Buddhist faith, eventually succeeded in converting their barbarous husband into Buddhism. The Tibetan King was so deeply impressed by the sublime teachings of Buddha that he sent his messenger Thonmi Sambhota to India to study Buddhism and bring him the sacred books of this wonderful religion. The messenger Sambhota lived in India a number of years, studied Sanskrit and Hindu philosophy under two Brahmin scholars as well as Buddha's teachings and his philosophy under Buddhist scholars and then returned to Tibet with several Buddhist scriptures. The socalled Tibetan alphabet which is nothing but the Tibetanized reproduction of the North Indian alphabet (Magadhi or Nagari) used in Magadha (modern Bihar) during 7th and 8th centuries A.D. By the order of this king of Tibet, the scholar Sambhota introduced the Tibetan language to writing and composed a grammar for that purpose.

It is said that the Tibetans derived their alphabet as well as their literature from India. The form of Nagari used in Magadha during the seventh and eighth centuries A.D. bears a striking resemblance to the Tibetan alphabet. Nagari has undergone considerable changes, but the Tibetan characters were preserved by stereotyped wooden blocks which is being in use since the 9th century A.D. The Tibetans also translated all the Indian and Nepalese Sanskrit works which they could get hold of. It is mentioned in the historical and legendary works of Tibet, that most of the Lamas who now appear there as incarnate beings, formerly belonged to India, and particularly to Bengal.

Thus this first Buddhist Tibetan king, Sron Tsang Gam-po, who introduced the written language of the country that exists to-day, became the first patron of learning and civilization, and with the aid of his two wives sowed the seed of Buddhism and its civilizing power on Tibetan soil. He built the temple of Buddha at Lhasa which now exists. For these reasons this great and the most popular king was afterwards canonised by the Lama priests as the incarnation of the celestial *Bodhisattava Avalokita,* "the looking down Lord", and his two wives were also canonised as the incarnations of *Avalokita's* consort, *Tara,*

the savioress or goddess of mercy. The Chinese Princess Wencheng was deified as white *Tara,* and the Indian Princess Brikuti as green *Tara* ; and later on they found their places in the Lamaistic pantheon. Their divine nature was confirmed by the evidence that they bore no children to the king.

Here it may be asked what kind of Buddhism was introduced in Tibet in the 7th century A.D. During the ten centuries following its birth, the pure and rationalistic ethical religion of Buddha had undergone various changes ; and after coming in contact with the existing forms of sectarian cults with their numerous symbols, rituals, ceremonies and the worship of mythological and nature-gods and goddesses the primitive Buddhism had incorporated them all within its folds, and ultimately it had developed into a system comprising of a mixture of pure Buddhism with all the phases of the superstitious practices of the aboriginal tribes of India and of other adjacent countries. Various Buddhist councils were held in India at different times, to protect the earliest form of Buddhism as it was preached by Buddha, and to keep it separate from the theistic form with the worship of mythological and nature-gods and goddesses which was growing rapidly and gaining popularity in northern India. One of the councils, which was held at Jalandhar in north-western India about the end of the 1st century A.D. under the auspices of the Scythian king Kaniska who established a permanent schism between the primitive and the developed or mixed form of Buddhism. Today, the primitive Buddhism is to be found to a certain extent in Ceylon, Burma and Siam, and therefore, it is called by European scholars 'Southern Buddhism', while the developed form of Buddhism is called 'Northern', because it is the prevailing religion of Tibet, China, Japan, Korea, Mongolia and other countries in Central Asia. Among the Buddhists the southern or the primitive form of Buddhism is known as 'Hinayana' or the 'Small vehicle' because it confines its salvation to a selected few monks and nuns of the highest order, while the northern or developed form of Buddhism is called 'Mahayana' or the 'Great vehicle', because it extends salvation to all classes of people.

We find that in the eleventh chapter of the *Astasahasrika-prajnaparamita* the doctrines of Hinayana are strongly

condemned because the followers of this road consider as their sole aim, the control of one *Atman,* the peace and extinction (Nirvana) of their own *Atta* or *Atman* and practise virtuous deeds for the good of one *Atman* and for the Nirvana of one *Atman.* But Mahayana school stretches a helping hand to the suffering millions all around him. Hinayana seeks salvation (Nirvana) of one, while Mahayana leads all souls to the attainment of *Bodhi* and Omniscience. The Hinayana left out is narrow and selfish, while the Mahayana is broad and catholic.

It is the easier and speedier way of attaining to Buddhahood and the surest conveyance for crossing the ocean of life to reach Nirvana, the goal of Buddhism. The doctrines and principles of these two, however, were at first practically the same. This developed form of Buddhism or Mahayana prevailed in northern India from the 1st century A.D. Its chief expounder and developer was Nagarjuna, who flourished about the latter end of 1st century A.D., and it was he who developed and established the theistic side of Buddhism its objective symbolism, and made salvation or the mystical state of Nirvana accessible to all. The followers of the Mahayana sect or theistic Buddhism idealised Buddha and his attributes created metaphysical Buddhas and celestial *Bodhisattvas* or potential Buddhas, who are always willing to help mankind and to save the people, eventually introducing into their faith as objects of worship numberless minor devas of the ancient vedic religion as also innumerable demons of the aboriginal cults both of which were condemned by Buddha himself. Buddha did not teach the worship of a personal God, but within a short time after his death He was deified as the Lord of the Universe, ever existent and without beginning, dwelling in the Heaven called *Tushita* that is ever-joyful from eternity. He was called *Amitabha,* the Buddha of boundless light and wisdom. The worship of Buddha's own image was introduced in various forms and different epochs of his life were idealised into various celestial or potential Buddhas. It was believed that human Buddhas were nothing but the material reflexes of the celestial ones. The chief of these celestial *Bodhisattvas* was *Avalokita,* The looking down Lord. This gave foundation to the mythology and the pantheon of Lamaism.

Again about 500 A.D. the Raja Yoga practices of Patanjali

were grafted on to the theistic Mahayana doctrines by Asanga a Buddhist monk of Gandhara or Peshawar. Furthermore, about the end of the 6th century, the worship of *Siva* and *Sakti* (*Durga*) the male and female principles of nature, which were personified by the Tantric Hindus under different names, was incorporated into the Mahayana Buddhism. These introductions and developments turned the simple primitive Buddhism of four noble truths into a huge mixture of metaphysics, Raja Yoga, image-worship, nature-worship and demon-worship. It differed from the Hinayana or small vehicle in the same way as modern catholicism differs from the simplest form of religion that was preached by Jesus the Christ.[3]

Mahayana Buddhism had to struggle hard for nearly a century against the superstitions of the ancient Bon religion till the reign of another powerful king, This-rong Deutsan, who lived in the middle of the 8th century A.D. and extended his territory as far as Changan, the capital of China. Before his time the whole of Tibet could hardly be called a Buddhist country. He sent to India for the celebrated Buddhist priest Santirakshita to establish Buddhist order in Tibet. In the middle of the 8th century A.D. the Budhist sage Santirakshita was invited by the Tibetan monarch from Nalanda of Magadha to conduct the work of Buddhist propaganda in Tibet and also to supervise the translation of Buddhist Sanskrit works in Tibetan language. He was better known in Tibet by the title of *Acharya Bodhisattva* on account of his holy character and saintly virtues, and was the son of the King of Zahor (Modern Jessore in East Bengal). He was ordained in the order of *Bhikshu* by Jnanagarbha and became a professor of the sacred literature in the University of Nalanda. He belonged to the Madhyamika Yogachara school. At his suggestion the king of Tibet invited the Tantric adept of Udyana (Modern Kabul) named Padmasambhava for the purpose of suppressing by his mystic incartations the numerous evil spirits those, according

[3] Archdeacon Ferrar in his lecture on the *'Development of Christian Art'* states that for three centuries there were no pictures of Christ, but only symbols, such as the fish, the lamb, the dove. The Catacombs of St. Callistus contained the first picture of Christ, the date being 313 A.D. Not even a cross existed in the early Catacombs, and still less a Crucifix. The 8th century saw the first picture of the dead Christ. In 586 A.D. Rabulas depicted the Crucifixion in a Syriac Gospel.—*Buddhism of Tibet,* p. 12.

to the popular belief, then infected Tibet. Padmasambhava used to wear the mitre-shaped crown which survives in the Pad-shwa i.e. *Padma's* cap, now generally worn by the head Lamas of the oldest of the Red-cap sects.

It is stated that Tantric Buddhism was introduced for enabling royal personages and the lay classes, both men and women, to enter Nirvana by a direct but more difficult and dangerous path without renouncing the world than the round about one of monastic indiscipline. Rai Bahadur S. C. Das written: "In Tantric religion services one class of priests wears flowing locks, ornamental caps and in the case of women tiaras and jewellery".[3]

Responding to the invitation of the Tibetan King and the Buddhist High priest Santirakshita, who was also the spiritual teacher of the king of Magadha, his eminent co-adjutor the great Indian *Guru* Padmasambhava, came to Tibet in 744 A.D. The Tibetan monarch received him with esteem honour and appointed him the High priest of Tibet. It was he who introduced that system of Buddhism which was afterwards known as Lamaism in Tibet.

This *Guru* Padmasambhava, or the Lotus-born One, or *Guru* Rin-po-che (the precious Guru) as the Tibetans call him, was the founder of the Tantric liturgy of Lamaism and is now deified and worshipped by the Lamas as Buddha himself. Various legends are connected with the life and works of this great founder. He came to deliver Tibet from the hands of the malignant devils as well as from the superstitions and ignorance of the country. Many are the stories telling how he miraculously vanquished the chief devils of the land, made them obey his commands, and bade them always remain faithful defenders of his religion. But in return he guaranteed that they would be duly worshipped and fed by the Lamas. So the offerings to devils have ever since become a part of the daily worship in Lamaism.

The saint Padmasambhava was a native of Udyana, in the north-west of Kashmir. Marco Polo says: "Kashmir is a province inhabited by people who are Buddhists. They have an astonishing acquaintance with the devilries of enchanment, in

[3] Cf. *Journey to Lhasa and Central Tibet.*

so much as they can make their idols speak. They can also by their sorceries bring on changes of weather, and produce darkness, and do a number of things so extraordinary that no one without seeing them would believe them."[4] It is said that Padmasambhava had twentyfive disciples each possessing some grotesque magical powers: (1) could mount the sun beams, (2) could change his head into that of a horse (3) could revive the slain, (4) could travel invisible as the wind; (5) could make water run upwards; (6) could catch flying birds, and so on. Under the patronage of the King This-rong-Deutsan, Padmasambhava built in 749 A.D. at Sam-Yas the first Buddhist monastery in Tibet, and made Santirakshita the first abbot of the monastery who held his position for thirteen years and who is now entitled *Acharya Bodhisattva,* that is, the great teacher, the reflection of the Celestial Buddha.

About the middle of the 9th century the grandson of This-rong-Deutsan, King Ralpachan by name, employed many Indian Buddhist scholars to translate the Buddhist scriptures with their commentaries. It was he who endowed most of the monasteries with state lands and introduced the Chinese system of chronology in keeping the annals of his country. Lan Darma the younger brother of King Ralpachan, seeing his devotion to Buddhism, had him murdered about 899 A.D., then ascended the throne and immediately began to persecute the Lamas, by desecrating the temples and monasteries, burning books, treating the Lamas in the most inhuman manner and by forcing them to become butchers. He continued his persecution for nearly three years when he was shot with an arrow by a Lama, Pal Dorje by name.

After Santirakshita and Padmasambhava came to Tibet nearly seventyfive Buddhist scholars from Bengal and a few from Nepal and Kashmir to propagate Buddhist doctrines and to translate the Sanskrit works on Buddhism into Tibetan. The names of some of these scholars were: Dharmakirti, Vimalamitra, Buddhaguhya, Santigarbha, Visuddhisingha Kamalasila, Kusara, Sankara-Brahman, Silamanju of Nepal, Anantavarman, Kalynamitra, Jinamitra, Dharmapala, Prajnapala and others.[5]

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[4] *Marco Polo,* I, p. 155.
[5] *Journal of the Buddhist Text Society of India,* January, 1893.

The word 'Lama' is a Tibetan term meaning the 'superior one'. It is a title given to the head of the monastery, to the abbots and to the high monks. The Lamas do not call their special form of Buddhism by the name of 'Lamaism', but they say 'the religion' or 'Buddha's Religion', and there is no Tibetan counterpart for the English term Lamaism. Thus established, and lavishly endowed and patronized by the Tibetan King This-rong-Deutsan and his two successors, Lamaism made steady progress in Tibet.

We may divide the eras of Lamaism into three parts: (1) Primitive or Augustine Lamaism. It was a developed form of Mahayana Buddhism, mixed with the demon-worship of the Bon religion. (2) Mediaeval Lamaism from 1038 A.D. when it was reformed by the great Indian Buddhist monk, the illustrious noble lord Atisha. And, (3) Modern Lamaism, from the 17th century onwards. Atisha was about 60 years old when he visited Tibet. Seeing the corruptions in the religion, he immediately started a reform and became the founder of the reformed sect called in Tibetan 'Kadampa' which, after three centuries and a half, became known as Ge-lug-pa or 'the virtuous order'. This has become the most powerful sect of Lamaism and is today the established church of the country. The reform by Atisha divided Lamaism into various sects, and these have their head-quarters in different parts of the country and each of these sects has developed to strong hierarchy since the beginning of the 12th century A.D.

In the year 1206 A.D., Tibet was conquered by the great Mongol emperor Jenghiz Khan who afterwards figures in Indian history as the great Mongol invader and plunderer. His successor Kublai Khan became the emperor of China. He was a very enlightened ruler and his conversion to Buddhism was miraculous. He invited to his court the most powerful Lamaist hierarchy from Tibet, as also the representatives of Christian and of other faiths. He demanded from the Christian missionaries, who had been sent by the Pope of Rome, the performance of some miracle which would prove the superiority of the Christian religion. When the missionaries failed, the Buddhist Lama caused the emperor's wine-cup to rise miraculously to his lips. Thus convinced the emperor adopted Buddhism and became the Charlemagne of that faith, and created the first

Buddhist Pope, in Tibetan 'Pags-Pa' meaning Highness, or sublimity. He made Lama of Sakya or the Sakya Pandita as the head of the Lamaist and conferred upon him temporary power as the Sakya Pope or the tributary ruler of Tibet, and bestowed upon him the honour to crown the Chinese emperors. Kublai Khan promoted the cause of Lamaism, and built monasteries in Mongolia and a large one in Peking. Lamaism flourished very storngly under the successors of the Sakya Pope, the first of whom was his own nephew Lodoi Gyal-tsan, and the supremacy of the sect of the Sakya Pope was maintained for some time. Some of the other rival sects of Lamaism, however, were raised to equal rank with it by the later Chinese emperors of the Ming dynasty. Thus a great strife for political supremacy existed among different sects of Lamaism until 1640 A.D. when another Mongol prince, Gusri Khan, conquered Tibet and made a present of it to Nag-wan, the fifth Grand Lama or Pope. In 1650 A.D. this Lama was confirmed in his sovereignty by the Chinese emperor and was given a new Mongol title, 'Dalai', meaning 'vast as the ocean', but the Tibetans called him 'Gyalwa Rinpoche' i.e. 'the great gem of Majesty'. Thus acquiring the temporal power he became the first priest king of Tibet, brought other sects under his rule and became the head of all the sects and monasteries in the country. In 1645 A.D. he built his palace on Potala, a hill near Lhasa, the capital of Tibet. All the Lamas believe that he was the incarnation of the celestial *Bodhisattva Avalokita.* His successors also are being recognised to be of divine descent i.e. the veritable *Avalokita*-in-flesh. The present Dalai Lama named Tuhstan[6] is the thirteenth successor of the first Pope Dalai Lama, or the thirteenth reincarnate Lama, or the same reflex of the celestial *Bodhisattva.* The Tibetan Lamas believe that the same Dalai Lama reincarnates again and again, and after giving up their old bodies, they take up a new one, remembering every event of the life of the departed Dalai Lama.

This idea must not be confused with the theory of rebirth which is the result of *karma,* because the latter is never confined to one channel. The present Lama ascended his throne in 1876, and in his 18th year he is now about 53 years (1911).

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[6] During the time of this lecture in 1911 A.D.

There are other monasteries which have their grand Lamas with titles, but they are like governors under the Dalai Lama of Lhasa. The Tashi Lumpo grand Lamas are considered to be holier than those of Lhasa, as they are not so contaminated with temporal government and world politics.

The size of some of the Tibetan monasteries is immense, containing from 3,000 to 10,000 monks, and it is said that there are over 3,000 monasteries in Tibet. Besides, there are temples. shrines, cathedrals, and other places of worship. There is a colossal temple like the cathedral of St. Peter in Rome, in the centre of the city of Lhasa. It is called in Tibetan 'Jo-wo kan' . 'the Lord's house'. All the main roads of Tibet meet at this common centre. It is the first and the oldest Buddhist temple in Tibet, founded in the 7th century by the first Tibetan king, Sron-Tsan Gam-po. The main building is three stories high and roofed with golden plates. The walls are covered with pictures and frescoes depicting the principal events of the life of Buddha. Upon the main altar, is the image of Sakya Muni or Gautama Buddha. Before the entrance to the left, is the throne of the Dalai Lama, richly decorated ; next to it is the throne of the Tashi grand Lama, beside which are the seats of abbots and other Lamas. There are numerous statues of saints, gods and goddesses upon smaller altars in the chapels. Upon these altars are lamps, incensories etc. In the Lamaistic form of worship, there is a great resemblance to that of the church of Rome. The pompous services are conducted by celibrated and tonsured Lamaist monks, dressed in gorgeous vestments. There are candles, incense, bells, rosaries, mitres, capes, pastoral crooks, worship of relics, confession, litanies, vespers, chants, holy water and the rest of the paraphernalia. In fact, most of the symbolism, rituals and ceremonials of the Romanist church are but reproductions of what we find in Lamaism in Tibet. There are seven different stages of the Lamaist form of worship: (1) The invocation of the Lord ; (2) Inviting the deity to be seated ; (3) Presentation of offerings, sacred cake, rice, water, flowers, incense, lamps and music ; (4) Hymns in praise ; (5) Repetition of the *mantra* or the sacred formula like *'Om Mani Padme Hum'*, salutation to the jewel of the Lotus ; (6) Prayers for benefits present and to come ; and lastly, (7) Benediction. This is the general outline of the daily service in the

temples, chapels, and monasteries. On special occasions, like the birthday anniversary of Buddha, more elaborate services are held. There is a kind of eucharist among the Lamaist rites. This sacrament, or consecrated wine and bread, is celebrated once a week in large temples, and draws numerous people. It is considered to be a service for obtaining long life and its benefits are sought for in cases of severe illness, or when death is imminent. The chief god addressed at this time is *Buddha Amitayus* or the 'God of Infinite life'. This *Amitayus* is a reflex of *Amitabha* or Buddha, the infinite Light.

The Lamaist monks and nuns live a very pure and chaste life, study the sacred books of Buddhism, and teach their disciples. They are supported by lay followers of Lamaism. During the last few centuries Lamaism has spread all through Central Asia, part of Siberia and the northernmost states of India. There are thousands of followers of Lamaism in Russia on the banks of the Volga, and they are known as Kirghis and Kalmuka.

Thus we see how Lamaism gradually developed from primitive Buddhism and how it grew into a great power in course of a few centuries. Being protected by the natural walls of mountains, rivers and deserts, and zealously guarded by the priests, the seed of the Mahayana Buddhism which was sown in the soil of Tibet, has now grown into the huge tree of Lamaism, with innumerable branches, giving shelter to millions of souls who enjoy peace and happiness, comfort and consolation in time of distress, and do not covet the riches of other nations. The aggressive European travellers and Christian missionaries have been trying their best to bring discord and misery, quarrel and fighting among those simple, peace-loving and contented people of Tibet. Greed for wealth and for territorial possession at last forced the British Government in India to send an expedition to Tibet under Col. Younghusband. The pioneers of English civilization invaded the country and under the name of civilization brought havoc, destruction, theft, robbery, immorality, drunkenness as they have done in India, and more lately in China. The old brutal law of 'might is right' is still the motive power of the socalled civilized nations. Think of the difference between the followers of

Christ and those of the illustrious saviour Buddha who have spread blessings, peace, goodwill, morality and righteousness under the name civilization and religion, in whatever part of the world they went.

APPENDIX I

RALPH WALDO EMERSON'S POEM, 'BRAHM'

(Delivered in New York in April 4, 1921)

Ladies and Gentlemen, many of you are familiar with Ralph Waldo Emerson's poem on "Brahm" (Brahman). Ralph Waldo Emerson is called the Concord Sage. He was a poet and the greatest philosopher America has produced. He lived in Concord, Massachusetts. He was a voracious reader. He studied all philosophies, ancient and modern. He studied all the scriptures as far as he could reach, and he tried to observe all the truths that he could gather from various sources. A great many things that you find in his essays and in his poems are the products of his vast knowledge and also the result of what he experienced and realized in his own soul. He was born in 1803, and passed away in 1882.

He wrote this poem, "Brahm", after an incident which, perhaps, may be interesting to you to know. Ralph Waldo Emerson went to visit Carlyle in England, and Carlyle, in his course of conversation, showed him a book entitled *The Bhagavad Gita,* and English translation of the *Bhagavad Gita,* which he had with him. It was a translation that was made by Charles Wilkins, published in London in 1785. This was the first English translation of the *Bhagavad Gita.* It was translated afterwards in all the other languages of the civilized world, and it was published in New York in 1867. Carlyle said to Emerson: "This is a most inspiring book; it has brought comfort and consolation in my life—I hope it will do the same to you. Read it". Emerson read it, and he incorporated the ideas that he gathered from this wonderful book, the *Bhagavad Gita,* into this poem, which is called "Brahm".

It is a short poem of four verses. The first verse begins thus:

> If the red slayer think he slays,
> Or if the slain think he is slain,
> They know not well the subtle ways
> I keep, and pass, and turn again.

The second verse reads:

Far or forgot to me is near,
Shadow and sunlight are the same.
The vanished gods to be appear
And one to me are shame and fame.

The third verse:

They reckon ill who leave me out,
When me they fly, I am the wings:
I am the doubter and the doubt
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.

And fourth:

The strong Gods pine for my abode
And pine in vain the sacred Seven:
But thou, meek lover of the good!
Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.

These four verses make this poem complete. When I was lecturing, a few years ago, in the New England states, in course of one of my lectures I explained the meaning of this first verse. One of the direct followers and personal friends of Ralph Waldo Emerson, who was afterwards made the president of the Emerson Club in Boston, happened to be at that meeting when I lectured at Greenacre in Maine. After the lecture was over, I met Mr. Malloy—that was his name—and he said: "How do you explain that passage, that verse, 'If the red slayer think he slays, or that slain think he is slain, they know not well the subtle ways, I keep, and pass, and turn again'. I do not understand this. What does it mean?" I said, it is a free translation of a Sanskrit passage which we have in the Vedas and also in the *Bhagavad Gita*. He was quite interested. That is the same idea, only it is a free rendering of two or three verses which we read in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

The first verse refers to a verse in the *Bhagavad Gita*, chapter 2, verse 19: *'Ya enam vetti hantaram"*, etc. If the slayer think he slays, or if the slain think he is slain, both of them do not know that the soul of man can neither slay nor be slain. That is the literal meaning of that verse.

Then the other part, the last two lines of the first verse:

They know not well the subtle ways
I keep, and pass, and turn again.

This refers to the idea of the immortality of the soul and its rebirth. The subtle ways are unknown to ordinary mortals. The soul comes into existence on this plane, keeps, pásses out, and comes back again. This is the idea taught in the *Bhagavad Gita* as the idea of reincarnation. Emerson believed in reincarnation. If we read his essays, in his essay on *Experience,* he mentions that in a very clear way:

> "We wake and find ourselves on a stair ; there are stairs below us which we seem to have ascended ; there are stairs above us, many a one, which go upward and out of sight".

That stairs refers to the stairs in the process of evolution. We have already passed many of the stairs which we have ascended. Now we are on a certain rung of the leader of evolution and we are going onward. So, he did not believe in the idea of one birth, that is, this is the first and the last birth that we have, but, on the contrary, he believed in the pre-existence of the soul and its return after the death of the body. In the *Bhagavad Gita,* we read, in the second chapter, in the *sloka* 22:

> "As we throw away our old worn-out garments and put on new ones, so the individual souls, after throwing out the garment of the gross physical body, puts on another to satisfy its desires, to gain further experiences."

The very title of this poem is rather mysterious. Few people know that it means "Brahm". In his essay on *Immortality,* Emerson quotes from one of these *Upanishads,* a portion of the Vedas. that is the earliest treatise on the Vedanta philosophy. He takes the translation of the *Katha Upanishad* into his essay and incorporates it. It is entitled, *The Secret of Death.* It was afterwards translated by Sir Edwin Arnold under that title, *The Secret of Death.* It begins with the story that a young man who was a seeker after truth was sent to the abode of death, and he asked questions about what happens after death. "Oh Lord", he says, "when a man dies, some people think that he is gone forever, he is destroyed, annihilated ; others say that he lives and continues to exist. Which of these is true ? Please remove my doubt". The ruler of death, whose name is Yama

(just like Pluto in Greek) explains what happens to the person who dies, how he passes through different stages. It is a most interesting story, full of inspiration and highest truth that was revealed through the ancient seer through this conversation. In his essay on *Immortality,* Ralph Waldo Emerson quotes this whole story, giving an abstract, and he says (this is the direct quotation from his essay on *Immortality*) "Brahm, the Supreme, —whoever knows him obtains whatever he wishes". That is a translation from this same *Upanishad* of the original text. Then he continues:

"The soul is not born ; it does not die. It was not produced from anyone, nor was any produced from it. Unborn, eternal, it is not slain though the body is slain. Subtler than what is subtle, greater than what is great ; sitting, it goes afar ; sleeping, it goes everywhere. Thinking the soul as unbodily among bodies, firm among fleeting things, the wise man casts off all grief. The soul cannot be obtained by knowledge, nor by understanding, nor by manifold sciences. It can be obtained by the soul by which it is desired. It reveals its own truths".

So, now you get the idea of what the Brahman is. The Brahman is the Absolute, the eternal reality, unchangeable, infinite Spirit, immovable. It is the source of all. In the *Bhagavad Gita,* we find that description in the 13th chapter, about the Brahman, verses from 12 to 15. I will read to you so that you will understand what it means:

> "I shall describe that which has to be known : knowing which one attains to immortality, the beginningless supreme Brahm. It is called neither being nor non-being. With hands and feet everywhere, with eyes and heads and mouths everywhere, with ears everywhere in the universe, —That exists pervading all.
>
> Shining by the functions of all the senses, yet without the senses ; Absolute, yet sustaining all ; devoid of *Gunas,* yet their experiencer.
>
> Without and within all beings ; the unmoving and also the moving ; because subtle, it is incomprehensible ; and it is far and near."

That "far and near" he gives here in this second verse:

Far or forgot to be is near,
Shadow and sunlight are the same.

Here you find another idea. "Shadow and sunlight are the same," he gets from the *Katha Upanishad,* or the *Secret of Death*:

> "In the cave of the hearts of men there are two dwellings in the ether or space of the heart. The one is the self-effulgent sun; the other is its reflection, its shadow, its imagine; but they are both one and the same".

Again, in chapter 7 of the *Bhagavad Gita,* verse 8, we find that the Infinite Brahman is in the moon and in the sun. It is also in the shadow of all living things.

The vanished gods to me appear
And one to me are shame and fame.

Here we find the idea of oneness, equality among all beings. All the opposites of nature are pervaded by the absolute Spirit or the Brahman. There is neither shame nor fame in the spirit, but it is a kind of delusion.

In chapter 12, verse 19, of the *Bhagavad Gita,* we read:

> "He who is the same in censure or in praise, and he who is satisfied under all conditions, is the beloved of the Father".

So shame and fame, we must not consider as affecting our spiritual nature. The Spirit is beyond and above all the conditions of the mind and body.

They reckon ill who leave me out;
When me they fly, I am the wings.

If anyone tries to do any work without giving credit to the real doer, but tries to get the credit for himself or for herself, is living the Brahman out, he or she is running away from the Brahman; but in the act of running away from the Brahman, the wings are the Brahman. That is, the motion itself is the Brahman. You cannot get away from it. The moment you try to get away from the Truth, you are using the power of the Brahman. It is not your power. When you do a thing, think that you are the doer and think you ought to receive the benefit of it, you are self-deluded. You have not done anything. But who are you? You are part of the Brahman, clothed with

the subtle instrument of mind and intellect and with the gross instrument of the physical body. The very power that moves your body is not yours. It is the power of the Brahman. The very power that makes you think is not yours. Therefore it is said in the *Bhagavad Gita* that it is only those who are self-deluded and ignorant who consider themselves as doers, but it is the power of Brahman that is moving the universe. Those who do not see that power, those who do not understand the source, become egotistic and consider themselves as great and wonderful. But those who understand the truth regard that they are like instruments through which the divine Will is flowing and manifesting its work. This idea you will find very beautifully described in the 18th chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*:

> "The infinite Brahman dwells in all hearts, and human beings are moving about like a potter's wheel propelled from within by the power of Brahman".

There we get a beautiful idea that we are absolutely an instrument. We have no will of our own as separated from the will of the infinite Brahman or the universal Will.

Then he says: "I am the doubter and the doubt."

Here you will notice that the subject and the object and their relation are one and the same : that is, the same Brahman appears as the subject and appears as the object and appears as the relation. The knower, the thing or object known, and knowledge are one in the Absolute. In the Absolute, what you are experiencing now, does not exist in that way, but they all become one. The lover, the beloved and love itself all merge into oneness. You cannot grasp that idea now, but you realize that there is only one Being which appears as subject and object. The Brahman is like the universal Being, and that Being may be regarded as the magnet. The whole universe may be regarded as a magnet. Its one end is positive, or the mind, or the subject ; the other end is the negative, the object, or matter. But the central point, where this positive and negative meet, is neither positive nor negative, but neutral. That is the Absolute. When the Absolute manifests itself through the relations, or relativity of time and space, it appears as subject, as mind and matter, as lover and the beloved. But in reality they are all one. This idea Emerson grasped very

clearly, because he expressed that beautifully in his essay on *The Over-Soul.*

By the way, I shall explain the meaning of the word, "Over-soul". The 'Over-soul' is the translation of the Sanskrit word *Paramatman. Para* means 'over', and *Atman,* 'soul'.

In that essay he says:

> "The act of seeing and the thing seen, the seer and the spectacle, the subject and the object are one."

That idea he gets from the study of the *Bhagavad Gita* and from the *Upanishads.* In the fourth chapter, we read, describing the sacrifice:

> "The fire is Brahman, the act of pouring the oblation is Brahman, the oblation itself is Brahman, the sacrifice is Brahman, the very thought that rests in the mind of the sacrificer is Brahman. He who realizes this goes to Brahman".

That is a beautiful idea that the action performed by the actor and the result are one and the same, only different in manifestation. If we try to understand that very clearly, we will have to consider that thought is the beginning of any action of the physical body; that is, thought manifests itself in the form of physical action. What is thought? It is nothing but the product of thinking, and thinking power is the self-conscious activity of the Spirit. So, you see, the self-conscious activity of the Spirit appears as thought and appears as external froms, and then we give names to all the objects of the world. You have an idea, by reading *Genesis,* that they were created by God who created everything out of nothing. But He did not create everything out of nothing, but from his own mind. If you try to understand the mythical story given in *Genesis,* you ought to study the Vedanta philosophy, and you will learn something. The very thought of light that appeared in the cosmic mind, produced light. Now, the form of this table is the projection of the thought form which arose in the carpenter's mind. The carpenter created this form or protected this form out of it, and by manipulating the material wood, he got that form, just as an artist paints on a piece of canvas and creates the form or projects his thoughts upon the canvas. In the same way, the creator, or the First-Born Lord, who is the first manifestation of the Brahman, projects out of his cosmic mind all the sun,

moon and stars, all the planets, and the planetary system. So we are nothing but the results of thought forms that arise in the cosmic mind. There is the pattern, the pattern of a horse, the pattern of a cow, of a camel, of a tree, and the pattern of a perfect man in the cosmic mind in the form of ideas. There comes the Platonic idea, the eternal idea. There comes also the Logos here. The fourth Gospel begins with that Logos, that "in the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God and the Word was God". That word was the outward expression of thought. Thought manifested in word. Before the manifested word came into existence there was the unmanifested word or the thought, and that thought was determined in the cosmic mind. Therefore when we study this Emerson's poem, if we do not study carefully we would not be able to understand what he meant by it. It is the deepest philosophy, the highest truth, that any human being can think of, can conceive of:

"I am the doubter and the doubt."

There is a saying in the *Gita,* which we learn in our childhood:

"I am the serpent that bites and I am the poison, and I am again the healer that cures the effect of the poison."

It is very difficult to understand how it is possible, because the dualistic minds of Christendom are trained in a different way. They think that these are the creatures, and God is away from us, away from the world. But God is right here, in and through us, working through us. He is not far away. He is not sitting above the clouds, commanding from there. That is an old mythical idea. It is a mythology. Emerson did not believe that. Emerson believed that God is dwelling in every individual; in fact, every soul is the tabernacle, the temple of Brahman, or the infinite absolute Spirit:

"And I the hymn the Brahmin sings."

This we get from the 10th chapter, verse 22, "I am the hymn of Sama Veda". Here I will explain to you what Sama Veda is. There are four Vedas of the ancient Hindus. In fact, the one Veda is divided into four parts, which they name by different names. There are hymns. The most ancient of these hymns are recorded in the Veda called Rig Veda. 'Rig' means hymn, and 'Veda' means knowledge. Knowledge that came to

them through revelation in the forms of these hymns. And when these hymns were put into music they used to chant and sing them at the time of their ritual and ceremonial services and in sacrifice, and so forth. And that particular hymn, when put into music, is called Sama Veda. And all these hymns are set into music, from which the post-vedic classical music evolved. You must remember that the seven notes of the octave also originated in India, and afterwards the Greeks got it. You give credit to the Greeks, but they do not deserve it. They got it from India. The Chinese had only five notes. The highest form of music which is in perfect harmony with nature or human thought and the expression of the soul, was realized in India long before it was known in any other country. You are familiar with Wagnerian music. Wagner studied the Sanskrit science of music which was translated into Latin, and there he got the idea of 'motives', and he put those motives in his music, and that is why it is so difficult for untrained minds and untrained ears to grasp the truth of Wagnerian music. At first, when Wagner brought out this music, nobody cared for it. He went to Schopenhauer with the greatest disappointment, but Schopenhauer urged him to continue, that it was the highest music. He was also another student of the Vedas. He was the pioneer in Germany, as Ralph Waldo Emerson was the pioneer of the Vedanta teaching in America. Sama Veda is still sung and chanted in India by the priests and the scholars. They are more like Gregorian chant. So he refers to that: "I am the hymn that the Brahmin sings", which has been described in the Sama Veda:

> The strong gods pine for my abode
> And pine in vain the sacred Seven.

This idea we find in the 10th chapter, verse 2:

"The *devas,* the bright gods do not know this Absolute."

And also in the 11th chapter, verse 52, we read:

> "Even the *devas* (bright spirits) are panting to see this divine manifestation."

Arjuna prays to the Lord to show him that form which mortal eyes could stand, and then he comes down again to this plane of sense consciousness. And then he says that even the *devas,* bright gods, are panting to see, struggling to see that manifestation which he saw at that moment. Here the verse is

very beautiful. You might like me to read the verse. Chapter 11, verse 52 reads.

> "The Blessed Lord said: Very hard indeed it is to see this form of mine which thou hast seen. Even the *devas,* the bright gods, ever long to be hold this form. Neither by the Vedas, nor by austerity, nor by gifts, nor by sacrifice can I be seen as thou has seen Me".

It cannot be seen by practising austerity or by reading the scriptures. How then can it be seen ? He says:

> "But by single devotion I may in this Form be known, O Arjuna, and seen in reality, and also entered into."

Therefore love and devotion are the easiest ways, by which one attain to God-realization. Just as Emerson said in his essay on *Immortality*:

> "The soul cannot be gained by knowledge, not by manifold sciences. It can be obtained by the soul, by which it is desired. It reveals its own truth."

Emerson translated it by putting this word 'desire', but we should say, 'by one who loves it', and that is the real meaning. One may desire, but may not have a longing strong enough to get. This truth or eternal Spirit cannot be obtained by understanding, neither by reading the scriptures, nor by reading the commentaries, nor by intellectual effort, and nor by manifold science, but he who longs for it and loves it, attains to it, and to him the Spirit reveals its own nature, to none else, to none else. That is a beautiful idea.

So, "The strong gods pant for my abode."

The abode of the Infinite is the Brahman. The sacred Seven are the seven Rishis who are described in the 10th chapter. These seven Rishis were the first teachers of mankind, and they emanted from the mind of the Creator. They are described in all the scriptures as seven. In the Zend Avesta, the Zoroastrian scripture, seven are described as the seven archangles. They are the seven Rishis described in the *Bhagavad Gita.* It is the spiritual hierarchy. All spiritual knowledge came from the Supreme. Vedas also came from the Supreme. Just as we breathe out the air from our lungs freely, without any effort, so all the knowledge about the supreme Spirit that human minds have received, came out from the infinite Brahman like

his own breath, without any effort. And that is the revelation. It can come at any time within our souls. In fact, that wind of revelation is constantly blowing around us, but we do not catch it. Our minds are too pre-occupied with the things of this material world. Therefore, we cannot get any revelation or Divine flash, but when we shut away all this distraction and go into the innermost self, close the door of the senses and enter into the innermost Being through prayerful attitude and perfect devotion and love, we get a glimpse of that inspiration. There we also hear the voice of the Lord which speaks in the divine silence.

> "But thou, meek lover of the good,
> Find me, and turn thy back on heaven."

Here we get another idea which is very beautiful. You know, heaven is not the highest. That idea you find in the Vedas and the *Bhagavad Gita*. Sri Krishna says in the *Bhagavad Gita* that people go to heaven to enjoy only the celestial pleasure, and there they remain for a long period, but at the expiration of that period they come down to the plane of mortals, and enjoy joy and sorrow of the phenomenal world.

> "All the heavens from the highest heaven of the Creator down to the lower realms. . . . . are subject to rebirth and change, but the abode of the Absolute is beyond heaven."

So if you aspire for that heaven, you will not be happy. Only those who understand the transitoriness of the phenomenal nature of all heaven, can aspire for the unchangeable eternal truth which is beyond all heaven. And he places Arjuna as one of those, and, therefore, he says:

> But thou, meek lover of the good,
> Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.

Do not care for it any more. There are many heavens, according to the *Bhagavad Gita*. And why should there not be many heavens? Do you think that the Christian heaven includes all ideas of human mind ? No, it is only playing on the harp. That is one thing and people may not like to do it. Some may rather get tired of it. Some hope for the Mohammedan heaven, where there are houris and wine. I think that in the land of prohibition it would be very desirable to go to Mohammedan heaven, where houris are pouring wine

into the cups of the pious souls who are sitting under shade of the trees, where rivers of milk and money are flowing at their feet. That is more attractive. Then there are other heavens. Think of musicians. They would not care to go to listen to playing on the harp, especially modern musicians. They would rather like jaz music, and that would be their ideal. Then there are the painters' heaven, the heaven of the artists, the heaven of the poets, and the heaven of the dancers. But I do not know if the modern dancers should be allowed there. They have very little clothes, you know. So, there may be many heavens. In fact, all the heavens are creations of the human mind. All that we hold dear to our hearts and wish to enjoy for a long period without any cessation or break, we regard that as heaven, and with that idea we pass out of the body, and, naturally, we are drawn to it. Because thoughts are realities or things. For instance, when you pass out of the body, if you have a desire to drink a cup of coffee, the very thought of a cup of coffee will bring unto you the cup of coffee, and the very thought of drinking will produce that delicious taste and enjoyment. There you do not have to light the gas stove and brew the coffee and then wash the pot. All this trouble you do not have in heaven. The very thought of a cup of coffee will bring the coffee and you will enjoy it. So thoughts are things and realities as I have said before. Now can you imagine the state ? Yes, you ought to imagine, because in a dream you may have all the pleasures. When you do not have physical body, you do not have to go through all this drudgery and trouble and physical action. But you must remember that you are the creator, and you can create everything by your imagination. And, so you must not think yourself as a slave to the Creator and also to creation, but you are part of the Creator. And that is one of the grand ideas we learn from the scriptures that we never be despondent, never feel discouraged, and never feel that we are going to eternal damnation after death. There are some people who have become so degenerate in their thoughts that they are born in sin and iniquity, and they cannot think that they are divine. They are rather frightened to think it. They say: "How dare you say such a thing?" We are gods, or we are divine ! It is an absolute blasphemy." Think of the degeneration that has been caused by long standing superstition that we are born sinners,

we have inherited sin from the first man, and we are suffering and bound to remain as a sinner all through eternity. This very thought is a blasphemy. A child of God must have his birthright of divine manifestation, instead of suffering eternally for the sin that was committed by the first man or his grand parents or some ancestor. All sins are nothing but errors or mistakes, and the moment the light of knowledge dawns, the sins vanish. Sins are burnt up by Divine flash of the supreme Light ! As a spark of fire will burn up a hugh mountain of cotton wool in a moment, so the sins of hundreds of generations, which may appear like a mountain, will be burnt up in no time by the fire of Divine knowledge. Therefore, we must search for that Divine knowledge.

That is the inspiration that inspired Emerson, and therefore, he tried to express it so wonderfully and so beautifully. There it gives you a chance to think that you are the creator of your own destiny, that by your own thoughts and deeds you can be better than you are today ; and you are not slave, you are not bound hand and foot by the decree of destiny that you are to suffer and just wait for somebody to help you, and to give you salvation. No, you are the saviour of yourself. And that idea is given here too:

> You must raise yourself by yourself, because your own self is your best friend and your own self can be your worst enemy.

And, therefore, if you aspire for the highest, you will attain to the highest. And if we think that we are sinners, we will become more sinful, and we will suffer, and will be degenerate. And there runs a proverb: "What thou thinkest, thou shalt become".

Emerson studied the *Bhagavad Gita* and also the other scriptures. When I was with Mr. Malloy, as I spoke to you at the beginning of my talk, who was the late president of the Emerson Club at Boston, he took me to Emerson's home, and there I saw his valuable library. It was kept by his sister, just as it was in his lifetime. I saw that he had a volume of the Laws of Manu (*Manu-Samhita*). Manu was the law-giver of ancient India. They are most wonderful laws. You will find

the laws of Moses are just like imitations. Moses lived about fourteen hundred years before Christ. Sri Krishna was older than Moses. The *Bhagavad Gita* was older than the time of Moses. And Manu was the first man of this cycle as the first law-giver. He was much older. There you will find that all the best laws that were given to the tribes of Israel by Moses, were anticipated by the great law-giver Manu. Naturally Emerson got inspiration from the law-giver. He had also in his library the *Vishnu-Purana,* which describes the life of Sri Krishna, and he had the *Upanishads,* which were translated into Latin, and afterwards into other languages. I saw all those, and I was very much impressed. I saw a letter which Carlyle wrote to Emerson, and in that letter he mentioned about the teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita,* the *Song Celestial.* Therefore, Ralph Waldo Emerson, understanding the spirit of the *Bhagavad Gita,* made a free rendering of some of the passages, and he immortalized the *Bhagavad Gita* by his poem on "Brahm". The moment you study this, you will be lifted up in a different realm to the oneness of the Spirit.

Emerson says, just like Vedanta says, there is one mind, one Spirit, one Being, one Truth, and one Reality. That one is called by different names. As we read in the Rig Veda, the oldest scripture in the world: "That which exists is One, men call it by various names—*ekam sad-vipra bahudha vadanti*". This is the eternal Truth, and from the Truth we have come into existence, in Truth we live, and into the Truth we return after the death of the body. This is the philosophy of Vedanta, and this was expressed by that beautiful poem on "Brahm" by Ralph Waldo Emerson.

APPENDIX II

TRUE NATURE OF THE ATMAN

After patient research and continuous struggle to know the ultimate Truth, the great monistic sages of India realized that the ego or the individual soul is nothing but a changeful receptacle of a subtler substance, which is unchangeable and eternal. They called it the *Atman* in Sanskrit. There is no word in the English language, which conveys the meaning of this *Atman*. It is much finer than ego or the living soul of the individual. *Atman* is the unconditioned reality in man, and the living soul or the individual ego is the subtle covering of it, like the globe that covers the light of a lamp. That *Atman* is not a part of the universal ego, but it is one with the unconditioned Reality of the universe, which is called in Vedanta the Brahman or the all-pervading Spirit. Sometimes it is called *Paramatman,* which was translated by Ralph Waldo Emerson as Over-Soul. It is finer than the cosmic Ego or God. It is sexless, neither masculine nor feminine. It is sometimes translated by the Oriental scholars as the Self. But 'Self' is a confusing word. Some people mistake it for the Anglo-Saxon self, which acts and progresses, and which is another name for the ego.

According to the non-dualistic on monistic conception of the true nature of man, the *Atman* or Self, or the spiritual essence of man, is the same as the Brahman, the spiritual essence of the universe. The relation of the true nature of man to God is not longer like that of a creature to the Creator, nor like that of a son to his father, nor like that of a part to the whole, but it is absolute loneliness on the highest spiritual plane. The *Atman,* or the divine Spirit of man, is, therefore, the same as the absolute divinity of the cosmos. On that highest spiritual plane there is no distinction, no idea of separation, and no idea of creation or projection. All ideas of separateness as well as all differentiations of phenomenal names and forms merge into the absolute ocean of Reality which is unchangeable, eternal, and one without the second. It transcends the limit

of nescience or *maya,* but it saturates or rather pervades with its essence all things of the universe, as the *Upanishad* says: *"ishavasya-midam sarvam",* etc. The essence of the *Atman* or the Brahman is infinite, as it is not limited by the categories of time, space, and causation. But we generally say or conceive that the external space, nay, every particle of atoms and molecules of the phenomenal world, is covered by the *Atman.* Some say that phenomena are like the waves in the ocean of the infinite Reality, and the individual souls are like so many bubbles in that ocean of the absolute existence. As a bubble rises on the surface of the ocean, takes a form, lives there, comes near other bubbles, lives in a group for some time, moves in the company of others, changes its size, and goes down again, so the individual soul rises in various forms, passes through the different stages of evolution, and lives there for ever and ever, sometimes as manifested and at other times as unmanifested. And the light of intelligence in the soul or ego is due to the reflection of the *Atman* or divine Spirit on the mirror of the heart of the ego or soul. Therefore the soul (ego) is called the image or reflection of the *Atman* or the divine Spirit.

This idea is beautifully expressed in one of the *Upanishads*: "In the cave of our heart have entered the two—the *Atman* or the divine Spirit and the individual ego or soul. Dwelling on the highest summit, or in the ether of the heart, the one witnesses the other, while the soul reaps the fruits or rewards of its own works. The wise men and sages describe the one as the light, and the other as the reflection, image, or shadow". You will notice here what a deep meaning lies at the back of the expression: 'man is the image of God'. The ancient vedic seers used the same expression in a sense which many of the best philosophers of the Western world have failed to grasp or comprehend. Thus the most ancient monistic sages explained the highest relation of the individual soul to the *Atman* or divine Spirit, by calling it the reflection or image of the self-effulgent light of the Absolute. But as a reflection cannot exist independent of the light whose reflection it is, so the soul of man cannot exist independent of the *Atman.* Therefore the true nature of the soul is *Atman,* the divine and real Spirit which cannot be divided into parts, and which is one absolute source of existence, intelligence and bliss.

Starting from the gross form of the body, when a real and earnest seeker after absolute Truth marches onward toward the Absolute, he passes through all the intermediate stages of faiths or *sadhana,* dualistic, qualified non-dualistic and monistic or non-dualistic, until he reaches that state of Divine communion, where he realizes the oneness of the soul with the Brahman. Then he declares: 'I am Brahman, I am He, I am in the sun ; in the moon ; in stars ; I am one with the all-pervading Reality.' But it can be said in this connection that the idea of communion is inadequate and incorrect according to non-dualistic Vedanta, as in the divine realization of the Brahman, there exists no dual principles of the ego and the Brahman, but the ego or individual soul realizes then the only inexpressible existence of the Brahman which shines as one without the second.

THE STEPS TOWARDS PERFECTION

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PREFACE

The *Steps towards Perfection* is a new book, containing three lectures on the ultimate goal of the human life, namely *The Steps towards Perfection, What is Perfection,* and *What is Nirvana.* Swami Abhedananda has shown the seven steps towards the perfection or *mukti* and has said that the seventh step is the path of the spiritual illumination, which is known as the Divine realization or the *Brahmanubhuti.* The other steps *i.e.* first to sixth ones are helpful to the seventh one. In the seventh step, the highest nature of the human being runs with tremendous force like a mighty river running towards the ocean of the Absolute, the course of which nothing can restrain. But the highest step or the ultimate aim of the human life is to attain to the Godconsciousness, and this Godconsciousness can be attained even in this mundane life.

To make it explicit Swami Abhedananda has said in the first lecture that the seven steps are generally conceived for the progress in the path of the Divine illumination, or the God-realization, and they are: (1) the intense longing for the knowledge of the absolute Truth, and the awakening of the soul, (2) the purufication of the mind or heart, (3) the practice of truthfulness, and the disinterested love for humanity, (4) the right discrimination, (5) the dispassion of the will, (6) the spiritual enlightenment, and (7) the spiritual illumination or the attainment of the Godconsciousness. Now, these are the steps, and the seventh one is not really the step, but the highest achievement or the goal. The Swami says that these steps or the grades of the spiritual *sadhana* must sincerely be practised by every seeker of the Divine knowledge, and then he will be able to correct the error of ignorance. The Swami has explained that these grades of *sadhana* really prepare the ground for the dwaning of the spiritual illumination, and so the seekers and lovers of the Brahman-knowledge should practise them.

In the second lecture, *What is Perfection,* Swami Abhedananda has said that it is by comparison we come to know that there are different grades in the physical, intellectual, moral or spiritual planes of human existence. But the moment

we come to know about the different grades, we stop in one particular grade, and try to struggle to step forward towards the next higher grade, and this striving helps men to reach the final grade or goal which consoles them, and confers upon them the permanent peace and happiness.

In the third lecture, *What is Nirvana,* the Swami has discussed about the Buddhistic conception of *mukti,* and has told that it is not the void or non-existent something (*sunya*), but is *suchness* or *thatness* (*tathata*). The conception of Nirvana is not a new one, or not a new product of the Buddhist investigation, but the idea of Nirvana was in existence in the vedic literature. In the *Upanishads,* we find the word 'Brahman-Nirvana' which means the attainment of the knowledge of the absolute Brahman which eternally removes the sorrows and all kinds of desires. Buddha also used the term Nirvana in the same sense. He said that Nirvana can be attained to by the cessation of *tanha* or *trishna* i.e. all desires and sorrows.

SWAMI PRAJNANANANDA

CHAPTER I

THE STEPS TOWARDS PERFECTION

The realization of God is described in Vedanta as the highest ideal of the earthly existence as well as the final goal of all religions, which means the perfection. A Christian, a Mohammedan, a Jew, a Buddhist, or a Hindu equally aims to become someday conscious of the divine Spirit, which is the Lord of the universe, and which is the Soul of our souls. The followers of all the sects and the creeds hold this ideal, although they march along their chosen paths, and fix their mind upon this one destination, the knowledge of God or the realization of the eternal Truth. Their paths may vary, but their goal is one and the same. A Christian, for instance, may follow the path, laid down by Jesus of Nazerath and by His votaries. He may hold the Christ on the cross as the highest ideal. He may repeat His holy name reverentially, and bow down to Him, expecting His divine grace and to be saved from the eternal perdition. He may think that his sins will be washed off by the blood of the Only-Begotten Son of the Heavenly Father, and eventually to enter into the celestial abode, where he hopes to come in direct touch or presence of the almighty Spirit and where he hopes to feel the Divinity within the soul and outside of it. A Mohammedan, on the contrary, may not believe in the worship of Jesus the Christ. He may not care for the path of salvation laid down by the Christians, but still he aspires to know God by following the path of Mohammad, the only prophet of his Lord who is called Allah. A Jew may not worship Christ, and may follow the teachings of Moses, but yet he expects to realize Jahveh in the end. A Buddhist may not believe in any personal God, and may not care to go to Heaven, but he tries to realize the ideal which was realized by Buddha and other saviours. The word 'Buddha' means 'the Enlightened', as he attained to perfection, or communed with the eternal Truth or eternal knowledge. In this manner, we can show that all the religioins of the world hold the ideal of realization above all other ideals. Although the paths, described in these religions, may vary, but

the goal is one and the same. The same ideal may be expressed in different terms. Some may call it 'salvation', others may call it 'perfection', the Buddhists may call it 'Buddhahood' or 'Nirvana', the Christians may call it 'Christhood' or the state of the 'Divine Communion'; but all these names show that their true meaning is the realization of God or the attainment of the Godconsciousness.[1]

This ideal has been held before the masses of people in India by all the great sages, saints, prophets, and philosophers as the highest of all other ideals. In order to attain to this realization of God, kings and princes have renounced their thrones, men and women have sacrificed their wealth, comforts and pleasures, and without a moment's hesitation they have gone through the most severe trials and tribulations, struggles and hardships, so as to satisfy their intense longing for the soul. The materialists and the agnostics, who do not believe in the existence of God, may think it foolish to sacrifice presents to God. They may think that it is waste of time and energy to search after that Being. They may devote their energy to fulfil their worldly desires and ambitions, and they may chase the phantoms of hope with the idea that the attainment of success in business and earthly prosperity is the highest aim of life; but the time is sure to come, when they will wake up from their sleep of self-delusion and will begin to see or realize things as they are in reality.

No soul has ever found peace and absolute happiness by following the path of the changing world. Because earthly prosperity, or success in business may bring momentary comforts in life and may help us in lessening for the time being the burden of the struggle for existence, but they will not help us to permanently solve the problems of life. They will neither be able to solve the problems which disturb the peace of our mind, nor that of the mystery of death. They will not also help us in unfolding our spiritual nature, or will not make us realize who we are in reality, from whence we have come, why we are here, who forced us to be here, where we are going, what is the aim of our life, what will happen to us after a few years beyond the grave, what relation we bear to the universe, and

[1] This idea has been elaborately discussed in the Swami's *'Path of Realization'*.

whether there is anything permanent in the midst of all these changes. These questions arise in almost all minds which have experienced the transitory and ephemeral character of this phenomenal world, but the true solution comes only to those who have attained to spiritual realization. Spiritual realization brings us the solution of all these problems. Scientists can never solve them, and philosophers who have not reached the highest goal, cannot answer to these questions. Each individual soul must solve these problems for himself or herself. In that state of spiritual realization the light of the supreme Being will descend. In that light all darkness will vanish, and then, through the light of the divine wisdom, we will be able to see things as they are in reality, and not as they appear to our senses. Those who have not reached that state of spiritual realization or that light of Divine wisdom, are groping in the darkness of ignorance. Because they are asleep, they do not know what they are doing and are dreaming the dreams of material objects. All these ambitions and earthly desires are like the dreams and the nightmares of the soul, and they are going through them not knowing that the soul-life is eternal. They do not know that they existed before this present mundane life, and that they will continue to exist even when this body is dead and gone. They do not understand what will enrich the soul and what will make it poor. They think that material prosperity and earthly riches will enrich the soul. What matters it to the soul whether we possess earthly riches or go without possessions. The soul is never poor. Did you ever ask whether by material riches, wealth and prosperity your soul will be enriched? Will that soul go beyond the material body, or beyond the grave? No, if you ask that, and if you search after the immortal *Atman,* you would not run after the impermanent wealth and riches.

The accumulation of wealth is the result of a disease of the brain. The millionaires and multimillionaires are suffering from that disease. But they do not know it, for their souls are not awakened. Who can help them unless they help themselves? What gain or loss will it be to the soul, if the whole world praises you, or blames you, or passes unjust opinion upon you? The soul is always unaffected by the praise or censure of people. It is beyond all the material possessions and riches. The wealthiest multimillionaire who owns the riches of a whole

nation or half of the world, does not think for a moment that he will be unable to carry even a pin in the grave. He must be a fool who thinks that by mere possession of all these earthly objects he is superior to his fellow-beings, or that he will be able to carry with him a particle of these objects which do not, in reality, belong to him. What will he carry with him ? He will only carry with him his character or nature. How important it is then to build our character and to mould it in the cast of the divine Ideal, so that in future we will be better and not worse than what we are today.

The divine Ideal is free from all limitations. Wherever there is limitation, there is the imperfect manifestation of the Divinity. Therefore, if we wish to harmonize our character with the divine Ideal, we must remember that Divinity is free from all limitations, while we are crippled by the conditions under which we are living, and our attempt should be to rise above all the limitations which prevent the manifestation of the divine power, so as to realize the emancipation of the soul. Holding that ideal before the mind, we must march onward towards the divine goal.

Each individual soul, being a spark of the huge bonfire of the Divinity, is of a similar nature. If you go to your innermost being, there you will find the shining spark within you. Behind the ego there is a spark, and that spark is immortal and divine. But it is covered up or veiled by your mental conditions like desires, ambition, earthly limitations, physical limitations, sense powers etc. Every individual soul may, therefore, be called potentially divine, and each is struggling to make that potential divinity manifest itself on the plane of the consciousness and to make it an actual reality. We are all struggling to be conscious of our divine nature and so long as there is that struggle to become perfect, there cannot be peace, and there cannot come real happiness But knowingly or unknowingly, each individual soul is striving hard to become perfect and to reach that state where absolute contentment, happiness, peace and blissfulness reign supreme. For that reason we find that men and women of the world are now not contented. They are not happy, and are running after something, but they do not know what that thing is. They are trying to be perfect, but they do not know what will make them perfect.

The absolute peace, contentment, happiness, and wisdom are the conditions of the spiritual realization. As the splendour or the most glorious colouring of the dawn heralds the immediate rising of the sun above the horizon, so all these saintly qualities like purity, contentment, chastity, tranquillity, disinterested love for all, non-attachment to material things, and perfect wisdom are the signs which herald the rising of the divine sun upon the horizon of the individual soul. Then, in that light of the divine sun, the darkness of night is dispelled. In that divine light, the past and the future will be like the eternal present. In fact, there is no past and future for the soul. If you rise on the soul-plane, then the past and the future will entirely vanish. Then everything that has happened and will happen to you, will be revealed to you. This day and night, and month and year, which we are counting today, do not affect the soul. The moment you close your eyes, all this calculation of time will vanish, and all these space relations will not exist.

In that highest state, there is no sorrow, no pain and no sufferings of birth or death, but absolute peace and happiness remain in the soul. In that state of realization, all knots of the manifold desires are torn asunder, all desires are fulfilled, all doubts cease forever, all the questionings of the mind are answered, all crookedness of the heart is straightened; and the individual soul, transcending all limitations, soars high in the infinite space, and everlastingly enjoys the absolute freedom and bliss. The souls which have reached the spiritual realization, are conscious of God the Absolute, and lose the sense of 'I, me and mine'. That to which we cling now, this sense of 'I' as an individual, son or daughter of Mr. So and so, will not exist. It will die, but by the death of this limited 'I' or petty self we shall lose our identity or consciousness. Because, this is only a false consciousness of the soul. It is like the state of an actor. When the actor is on the stage and thinks of himself as impersonating some other being, he holds that idea of 'I, me and mine'. For the time being that may be true so long as he is on the stage; but outside of that stage, he is no longer the same being. So we are impersonating ourselves as somebody, but we are not so. In reality, this sense of 'I, me and mine' does not affect us, i.e. this sense of I, me and mine does affect the innermost immortal *Atman*. We may now claim that these things

belong to us and these relations are ours. But who are our relations? In reality, we are the children of God, and they are also the children of God. Therefore, why should we claim them as ours? But we claim them simply on account of some earthly relation, or blood relation. But blood relation or any kind of relation does not produce any effect upon the soul, as all the souls are the children of God, the immortal Bliss.

In that state of God-realization, the individual soul, tracing the source of the individual will to the divine will, resigns itself and lets the divine will work through the individual will, making of it God's instrument. Self-resignation comes to the soul who has realized the eternal Truth. And in that self-realization he does not lose anything but gains infinite power. Then he is infinitely stronger in his will than he was before. In that state of revelation the divine inspiration comes to the soul. The knowledge of the higher truths then comes. This state is called by different names, as some call it communion of the individual soul with the heavenly Father. The Christian mystics of the middle ages and the Mohammedan Sufis of Arabia and Persia describe it as a state of ecstacy, while the Buddhists call it Nirvana, or the attainment of the perfect emancipation, or the freedom of the soul and the cessation of all sorrow, misery, and suffering, which come from birth and death. In the science of Yoga, it is called *samadhi* or the Godconsciousness, or the superconsciousness. Now the names may vary, but the meaning is the same, and the ideal or realization of God is the same.

Now, the question arises, can this realization be attained? And if it be attained, then what are the steps of attaining that state? In answering the first question, Vedanta says that realization can be attained in perfect silence. That may ordinarily sound strange, but it is the most difficult thing to accomplish. It is not merely the external silence, but the silence or the tranquil state of the mind. It is that state in which the inner nature is not disturbed by any of the passions, desires, or by ambitions like anger, hatred, jealousy, envy, and attachment to material things. In that state perfect realization of the Absolute will dawn. Eckert, the great German Christian mystic, said: "There must be perfect stillness in the soul before God whispers His word into it: before the light of Godconsciousness enters

the soul and transforms it into God. When all passions are stilled and when all earthly desires are silenced, then the voice of the Lord can be heard in the soul." So how can we expect to commune with the Lord, when our minds are busy with a thousand and one things of this world? The secret chamber of the soul of a man or a woman of the world is packed up from the floor to the ceiling with worldly thoughts and ideas, with worldly desires and passions of the flesh, and there is not an inch of space left vacant. And still we wonder why God does not come to us and why do we not commune with the Lord? How can we expect to invite the Divine guest in that crowded room, where there is no inch of space to receive Him? Even if God the Beloved comes into such a crowded room, He would not find a place, and would be turned away.

Really there is no room for God in us. We never think for a moment, where shall we receive Him if He comes to us. Have we cleansed our inner chamber and made it vacant to receive Him? But we do not think of that. Our eyes are closed and so we cannot see things and cannot understand the conditions. A seeker of the highest truth or divine realization should, therefore, first of all cleanse the sacred chamber of his soul, and should remove all those things that have taken possession of the space. He should cleanse the floor by his tears of repentance for the wrongs committed during ignorance. He should purify the atmosphere by introducing the vibrations of the holy thoughts and the pure ideas, and should employ the guard of the right discrimination to keep a constant watch, and prevent the impure thoughts and the unholy ideas from crossing the threshold of that sacred chamber.

He should next practise dispassion. He should not allow his mind to be attracted by the enchanting pleasures of senses *i.e.* by the attractions of the deceitful world; and with child-like simplicity he should send the prayers of invitation to the Lord, asking Him to come and occupy the empty space of the inner chamber of the soul. Nature abhors a vacuum. If the inner chamber of our soul be freed from all worldly thoughts and desires, it will be taken possession of by the divine Spirit. The divine Spirit will come then, but it cannot come when there is no space left for Him to occupy. Sending the prayers of invitation to the Lord, we should wait in silence

concentrating our minds upon Him, and expecting to see Him at every moment, with a longing as strong as it is in the heart of a lover who expects to see his beloved and who has been away from him for a long time. With that intense longing, we must wait and expect to receive Him, whenever He comes. As the tremendous longing of a lover makes him impatient and forces all the energy of his mind and heart to flow through one channel towards his beloved, so a true lover of God must have his mind and energy concentrated and one-pointed, and then let it flow towards the divine Ideal.

With that intense longing the soul will transcend all limitations, and will be able to commune with the Lord. The stronger the longing, the quicker is the realization. We must have intense longing first, but that longing will not come to the soul which has not been awakened. The awakening of the soul is the first step in the path of realization. The soul must be awakened from the sleep of self-delusion. We are now sleeping the sleep of self-delusion So we must wake up, and see things as they are not, or as they appear to be. This awakening of the soul is called in Sanskrit *pratibha* which is the first step in the path of realization. But when the soul is awakened, it begins to see how far the animal nature leads us, and what is the next step, where we are going, what we are doing, and what this all means. Then the soul tries to live a moral, ethical, and righteous life. Then it tries to correct its faults and errors, and purify its inner nature.

The purification of the heart is the next step. It is called in Sanskrit *shodhana,* or the state of a neophyte. The awakened soul becomes a neophyte when he purifies his heart. The purification of the heart (*chittasuddhi*) is possible when we have controlled our animal propensities and when we keep them down, rise above them, and conquer them.

Some steps are absolutely necessary to attain to the purification of the heart. The practice of self-control means the control of the mind. The mind must be brought under control. We are the ruler of the mind; the mind is not our ruler, but we have allowed it to become our ruler and to enslave us. We must turn the tide and make it stay where it belongs We are the master, but we have lost our mastery over our mind and senses. We have weakened ourselves. So, how can we

expect to have that realization when we are so weak? We cannot control our own mind and senses. But we should remember that they are our slaves, and we are the masters. So, if we control our mind first, then the senses will be controlled automatically.

Then comes the practice of truthfulness, because the eternal Truth cannot be attained by falsehood. We must be true to ourselves first, then shall be true to our neighbours, true to all humanity, and true to God. Are we true to ourselves? No. Are we true to our real nature? No. So we must be true to ourselves first, and then truth is the second thing.

Disinterested love for humanity is another unselfish work. Why should we remain selfish and what for? This petty self is not much, the higher self is above it. So sacrifice it upon the altar of the humanity and be Christ-like. And that is the ideal. If we can practise these four things during lifetime, we can purify ourselves, and make ourselves ready to receive the highest truths.

The right discrimination is the fourth step in the path of realization. The right discrimination between the spirit and the matter, between the eternal and the non-eternal, is essential. We generally mistake the real for the unreal, the spirit for the matter and the matter for the spirit. We do not know the difference between the two. But right discrimination will make us see the difference that exists between the real and the unreal. How far extends the realm of matter and where is the realm of the spirit, everything is mixed up now. The right discrimination will make all these things straight; and then that which does not belong to us will not produce any bondage in us.

The dispassion of the will is the fifth step. Everything that does not belong to us, must not affect us. If the matter is not our being, it ought not affect us. If the senses are not parts of our true being, they must not produce any change in us. If we are the parts of the Divinity and if we are unborn children of the immortal Bliss, then why should we allow ourselves to be dragged on the sense-plane by these limitations and little attractions? Be godly, and think that God is never attracted by these little sense-desires. We should remember

that we are the children of God, and so why should we be attracted by these little sense attraction and limitation? We must be worthy of our heavenly Father. We must not allow ourselves to be overcome by any kind of attraction. The attachment to earthly things cannot exist in the soul. So we transcend them and be divine.

Then comes the sixth step, the step of the spiritual enlightenment. In that state the light of the divine sun begins to shine upon the soul. Then we understand that we are not of this world, or this phenomenal world is not our real home. The earthly relations belong to the earth. So, we should be above and beyond this earth. This earthly body does not even belong to us. This body is only a shell or a garment of the soul. We shall be able to throw it aside and shall rise above it. We shall be freed from it, and shall go out of it by our will-power. Then we shall know that the soul existed long before this material body was born. Then we shall be able to say: "Before Abraham was, I am". This is the expression of the eternal Truth; and when we will be able to realize that, we will know that death cannot attack us and birth cannot touch us, but we are free from birth and death.

The next step is the spiritual illumination, and that is the seventh step in the path of divine realization. In this state, the highest nature of our being runs with tremendous force like a mighty river running towards the ocean of the Absolute. Nothing can restrain its course. It flows towards the Absolute, and communes with the Absolute. All earthly fetters fall away and desires of this world no longer rise at that time. Peace and omniscience begin to shine within the soul. Nothing remains at that time unknown, as the past, the present and the future and everything are clear like bright daylight. Then we will be able to say where all those departed souls belong, what they are doing, and where they are going. We will see many heavens and transcend them all. We will be able to enter those heavenly regions, but then the pleasures of heaven will not attract us. We will see how transitory they are. We will not care for them. God is not attracted by heavenly pleasures. But the mortals who are craving for pleasures, are rather adicted to them. But, rising above all the celestial pleasures, we will be divine. That is the last step. Then we

will be conscious of our divine nature. Then all divine qualities will flow through us. That state is called the eighth step, or the state of the superconsciousness or the Godconsciousness.

The Godconsciousness can be attained in this life, and not after the grave. Our body will remain silent for the time being. We shall rise above all these conditions, and will be able to come back after attaining the realization. Then we will be entirely a different being. Our whole nature will be changed at that time. We will be able to say to our friends and relatives that they are not our real friends and relatives, just as Christ said to His mother: "Who is my mother ? Who is my brother ? These are all my mothers and brothers", but they are our earthly friends, and relatives, having blood relation and the relation of the society. Then we will be able to say the same, because then we will not see the blood relation but the spiritual relation. We will see that each soul is a child of God, and our whole being will be a blessing to the humanity. He who has reached that state, is a blessing to the humanity. The world would not exist if such blessings would not come to us often. Such souls do exist even now. Even in this age of materialism and commercialism, there are the souls who have reached such a state of realization. When that state of realization is reached, nothing is left unaccomplished. All desires are fulfilled, all ambition is satisfied, the aspirations of the soul are completed. The soul becomes divine and it remains divine forever and ever it is the real state of perfection.

CHAPTER II

WHAT IS PERFECTION

It has been asked again and again: "Can a man become perfect in this life and is it possible for one to attain perfection on realization of the Absolute, while living on this earth or phenomenal universe?" Questions of this kind rise constantly in the minds of all the seekers of truth as well as in the souls of those who are beginning to wake up from the profound sleep of ignorance and self-delusion. Such questions presuppose the idea of knowledge of the imperfection as well as that of the perfection. Those who do not have any definite idea or knowledge of what perfection or imperfection is, do not ask such questions, because all our knowledge is based upon comparison. When we compare one object or idea with another, we find that one possesses certain powers, while the other does not; and then we classify them, differentiate them, and place them under different heads, and call one the better, greater or higher than the other. When we mix in society and study the character of different individuals we find that some manifest certain powers, moral or spiritual or physical, and then we classify them according to the manifestation of the powers which they possess.

It is by comparison also we come to know that there are different grades in the physical, intellectual and ethical or moral plains of the human existence. There are innumerable grades, and we cannot count them very easily. These shades of difference we find everywhere. The moment we find that there are different planes of existence, that very moment our mind do not want to stop in one particular state, but want to find something which is greater and more advanced than the one we already understand. As long as we do not compare in this way, so long we delude ourselves by thinking that the present state of our existence is the highest. We think that the present state of our existence or development is the highest, just as a traveller deludes himself by thinking that the first peak of a range of the mountains is the highest. When the

traveller reaches the high range of the mountains, he first of all sees one mountain, and thinks that this is the highest peak; but when he climbs to the top, he finds that there is another and thinks that it must be the highest. Again by climbing the mountain he finds that there is still a higher one, and so on. Therefore, as he climbs up and up, he finds that the impression which he had at first was not correct, but it was incorrect and delusive. Then he begins to doubt, and it creates a tendency in his mind to question; and as he climbs to other heights, he questions within himself: "Is this the highest, or is there another than this?" This questioning makes him climb one range after another, and at last he reaches the top where he does not find anything higher or greater, or from which he cannot get beyond, and consequently stops. Now this idea or decision, or conclusion, arises from the knowledge of comparison.

In the same manner, the individual soul, passing from the animal to the spiritual plane, goes through different grades, and at each grade or stage he mistakes it for the highest. But by the gradual experience as well as by the knowledge of comparison, he comes to understand that his impressions and ideas were not perfect. Then he begins to doubt his present condition, and, as I have said before, he asks: "Is this the perfect state?" He seeks something higher and more advanced. This doubt and search after the highest lies at the base of that question: "Can a man reach perfection in this life? Can a man realize the *Atman* in this very life?" Of course, that question has not led the individual soul beyond the present as well as beyond the state where the individual soul rests in peace and happiness. When that high state is reached, all doubts and questions cease forever. Then the soul which has reached the highest or the perfected state, does not ask: "Can a man reach perfection?" Because, then he becomes one with perfection, and then realizes the nature of perfection in his own soul and feels what perfection is.

In fact, he who is imperfect, seeks perfection, but when he reaches that state beyond which no human soul can possibly go and beyond which nothing can be seen as higher or greater, then all these questions cease, or are solved forever. But ordinarily we use the word 'perfection' in a very vague and

indefinite sense. We hear the people say that it is impossible to be perfect in this mundane life. But if we ask them what they mean by perfection, they betray ignorance, and give answers which are mixed with doubt. They do not even know what they mean by imperfection. So, every person has a standard of perfection. Some think that the physical health is the standard of perfection, and others think or believe in the possession of the psychical powers. Some have an ethical standard, and others, a spiritual standard. Those who believe in the miracles, think that a man is perfect who can show the supernatural powers; but those who are intellectuals, do not believe in any supernatural power. Some think that he is perfect who has controlled his senses, has subjugated his mind, and is above the animal plane, manifesting divine nature in this life. Thus we find that there are various kinds of standard or state of perfection. If we read the Bible, we find in the book of the Genesis that Noah was a just man, and he was perfect in his generation, because he walked with God. Here justice and walking with God are the standard of perfection. In the Genesis, 17th Chap. v, 1st, we read: "And when Abraham was ninty and nine years old, the Lord God appeared to him and said, 'I am the almighty God, walk with me and be perfect' ". Here also we find that walking with God is the same as perfection. In Deut, Chap. 18, v. 13, we read: "Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God". In these passages, we understand that he shall be perfect who obeys the commands and shall not commit any such abomination as making the son or daughter pass through fire, or using divination, or becoming a charmer or a witch or a necromancer or a wizard. In Psalms 37, v. 37, we read: "Mark the perfect man, for the end of that man is peace". In the Ezekiel, we read: "The Lord God sent his word and said, "Thou wast perfect in thy ways, by the multitude of thy merchendies, and I will cast there as profane out of the mountain of God". Here the absence of violence is described as the standard of perfection. In the New Testament, in Mathew, Chap. 5th v. 48, we read: 'And ye shall be perfect, as your Father in Heaven is perfect", etc. Now, by the word 'perfect' Jesus meant 'those who love their enemies, who bless them that curse, who do good to those who hate them, and who pray for those who despitefully use them and

persecute them'. Jesus the Christ said to that young man who came to him for receiving instruction: "If thou shalt be perfect, go and sell what thou hast and give to the poor and come and follow me". Here renunciation has been described as the means to perfection. In the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gita,* we also read such lines, where standards of perfection or Divine realization have been beautifully described. Now all these create a great confusion in the minds of the inquisitive readers for understanding what should be the real standard of perfection.

The Christians believe that Noah was perfect, and Abraham also was perfect, but Jesus the Christ was more perfect. They compare one perfect man with another and think that there are degrees in perfection. They do not realize that the state of perfection must be one, and any state outside of that be called imperfection. That state of perfection cannot be many, and must be one. If Abraham, Noah, and Jesus were perfect, then we should understand that each of them attained to the same state, otherwise we will have to use this word in a different sense, and in any case we will create confusion. The followers of Jesus the Christ believe that he alone was the first and last perfected being that ever appeared upon this earth. But do they understand why they believe in this way? Perhaps they do. Because it is said that Jesus the Christ was the only Begotten Son of God, and they believe and consequently that think God Himself is perfect, so His only Begotten Son cannot be otherwise, and, therefore, he must be perfect too. But this idea does not explain clearly the meaning of perfection, nor does it bring any help to the minds of ordinary mortals, for attaining that perfection which was reached by Jesus the Christ; on the contrary, it tells us that it is impossible for any human being to attain to the state that was reached or attained by the only Begotten Son of God, and we cannot be expected to be perfect. I have heard many say: "How can you expect to be perfect like the Son of God? It is blasphemy to think of such a thing". But those who are struggling to attain perfection, will not be satisfied by any such explanation, because the attainment of perfection has been the goal of all religions. By studying all systems of religion we find that the ideal of each one of them is the attain-

ment of perfection, and the standard or the state of that perfection cannot be limited by nationality, creed or sex, but the state of perfection must be universal, and the standard must be the same, and at the same time it is to be applied to all those spiritual leaders of the world who are worshipped by their followers as perfect. It should not be a state of perfection for one or two divine personages, but it must be the goal of all religions. It cannot be limited by any denomination, creed, or dogma. The moment we limit the state of perfection by any particular scripture or dogma or creed, we limit God, and it is no longer perfect and so it must not be based on any of these.

The laws of nature are always perfect, and there is no exception of it. The imperfect laws are those which have exceptions. The law of gravitation is perfect, and all the laws that are perfect must govern every object from minutest to the highest that exist on this plane where that law operates itself. The law of gravitation acts in the same way amongst the molecules and the atoms, and also in the largest solar system The forces of nature are perfect; they do not need any addition or subtraction. Wherever the electricity is manifested, it shows all the powers it can possibly possess, but the manifestation may be more or less perfect according to the conditions where it takes place. Under certain conditions the electricity produces the heat, and, in other cases, it produces the motion; but we should know that heat, light and motion are different only in degree, and not in kind.

The moral and spiritual laws that exist in the individual souls, or in the universe, are just as perfect as in the physical forces. The moral and physical perfection means the proper expression of those forces which lie dormant in the souls of the individuals. The moral and physical forces are trying to manifest perfectly every moment, but those manifestations vary according to the conditions. If the conditions be unfavourable, the manifestations will not be perfect. When certain forces overcome other forces, then the latter become dormant for a time. In evolution, when the animal forces manifest, the moral and spiritual nature is subdued. It is for this reason we do not find the expression of the moral and spiritual powers in the lower animals, or in those persons who live on the animal

plane. Man alone is the animal through whom the moral and spiritual forces are found properly expressed. In man alone there is possibility of the perfect expression of the moral and the spiritual forces that lie dormant in the soul of an animal, and that possibility becomes actual as the lower nature is subdued. Those who have succeeded in conquering the animal propensities, are known as spiritual and divine.

There are different grades between the animal and the spiritual planes. Some may have more control over the animal nature than others, and another may have still more, etc. But we should remember that the perfect spirituality is only possible when animal nature is completely controlled. One who is still strongly attached to the animal and the sense pleasures, may not like this idea, get frightened, and think that they are unsuccessful in life. Such persons do not care for perfection; they do not seek for it. They rather like to remain on the lower plane, enjoy and love it, and prefer to stay there, because the sense objects are so fascinating and attractive that they cannot get away from that attraction. They like that kind of spirituality which does not interfere with their animal tendencies. So they like to be spiritual for five minutes in the twentyfour hours and spend the rest of the time in all kinds of pleasure and passion. But this cannot be done by the spiritual persons. Some of them take up spirituality and religion as a passing fad, and like it for sometime just for the pleasure it brings. But, at the same time, we find even such people who use to delude themselves by thinking that they are exceedingly spiritual and who cannot listen to any spiritual instructions. They are so vain and self-conceited, but every individual is bound to struggle for perfection sooner or later, and no one can remain satisfied with the present condition.

The moment we realize our present life and compare it with the higher states of existence, we begin to question and search for something higher. Do you think that those who live as animals, will succeed in attaining to the spiritual perfection without controlling the animal nature? No, it is impossible. Such persons will have to come again and again to this world and struggle hard to be free from that attraction which keeps them down on the plane of animals. The other

day somebody asked me: "If perfection be the highest ideal of all, why should there be so few who have attained to perfection?" Because, the majority do not care for it and whatever they want, they get. They like the pleasures of the senses, and they get them. But those who struggle for the highest and do not care for the pleasures which satisfy the ordinary person, obtain perfection. It is said in the *Bhagavad Gita*: "Amongst thousands, there are a few who care and struggle for perfection, and amongst thousands of those who do care and struggle, but a very few attain to it". Now, with the rest the struggle is not strong enough to overcome the obstacles which are standing in the way of the spiritual perfection; but it is sure that every individual soul will have to seek perfection sooner or later.

Through the process of evolution each individual soul is marching towards that state which is perfect and beyond which no one can go. The tendency of nature is to march forward and to reach the perfection. The purpose of evolution is to manifest all the latent powers as perfectly as possible. If we study the evolution of the physical form we find that the human being reaches its highest perfection, because there cannot be anything higher than the human form on this plane of existence. Do not evolution bring out animal forms? Yes but evolution is going on in a different direction. After fulfilling the purpose of reaching the perfection in human form, it is going on in the moral and the spiritual planes. We can no longer evolve from one form into another but can evolve onward higher and higher in the various planes of the mental and the spiritual existences. Having learned that the human form is the perfection of all the animal forms, shall we not be justified if we say that the end of evolution is perfection? The purpose of evolution is solved when perfection is reached, and the laws as well as the forces of nature are manifesting with equal purpose on the different planes of existence. Can we not infer that the evolution of intellect will stop when it reaches perfection and will fulfil its purpose. So with the spiritual evolution.

The intellectual perfection means a perfect intellect, and that makes us understand things as they are and without mistakes. We do not mistake the unreal for the real. We

understand that what is spiritual, is spirit, and so we do not take for granted that this body is the soul. Even the evolutionists do not understand whether it is possible for a soul to exist when the physical form is dead.

Therefore perfection is that state where the individual soul manifests its true nature and when it is immortal, perfectly free and divine, and becomes one with the universal Spirit. This struggle stops when perfection is attained. And it should be remembered that there is no difference between the state of perfection and that of the Divine realization as they are one and the same. Vedanta says that the realization of the absolute Brahman brings unto a man the state of perfection. Now, if (not 'if', but everyone will attain to perfection sooner or later) every individual attains to that state of perfection, then this world will be turned into a Heaven. Whoever has attained to that state, is no longer subject to the laws of the moral, mental and physical states. Such souls have perfect control over the body and the mind and also over all other planes of existence. Such souls do not care for anything in the world. They are not attracted by any object of senses. because they know their true nature, and so they are not deluded by such ephemeral things.

Each individual is bound to come to that state of perfection by the process of evolution ; but it takes a long time for the soul to rise through the human, moral and spiritual planes, and that process of evolution works very slowly where the animal forces are overpoweringly strong ; and then it takes several births. We may live a hundred years, but a hundred years, when compared to the eternity, are nothing. Do you think that a hundred years produces no results ? No, we carry all the impressions and continue to struggle in the same way and go on and on until we reach that state of perfection.

Some of the modern evolutionists think that there is no need of this struggle. They do not understand the purpose of evolution which is the means to the attainment of perfection. A man should use the path by which that period of time can be shortened, and this evolution can be quickened by one particular life. This also tells us how we can avoid many of the pitfalls which lie in the way, and those byways that make our journey long, tiresome and fatiguing. All the great

prophets, such as Buddha, Krishna, Christ, Chaitanya, Ramakrishna and others who lived in different countries in different times, have helped the world by giving their practical spiritual experiences, by showing the paths they followed, and by pointing out the byways that exist in those paths leading to the realization of truth. Those who have followed their examples can escape these dangers very easily

Those great ones attained in one span of life a great deal, and attained as much as might have taken hundreds of births and thousands of centuries, if they would proceed through the ordinary processes of evolution. They worked and lived for no other purpose than the attainment of the spiritual perfection. They devoted their life, not for gaining name, fame or wealth, but kept the ideal of the spiritual perfection before their eyes. They renounced wealth and all the enjoyments that could be attained in this life They did not care for the pleasures that could be obtained. They had no love for heaven and no fear of hell and they succeeded in overcoming all the obstacles and attaining to that state in this life. Those who follow their examples, should be recognised as great and noble ones. These great ones have become ideals, by following which other persons who will come later, will reach the perfect life

Another point we will have to consider very carefully in connection with this subject. We ordinarily use the word 'perfection' in the sense of 'something which is complete in itself'. We say that a portion of an apple is not a perfect apple, but when it is complete in itself, we call it perfect. From this standpoint, Paul said in First Cor. Chap 13, v. 10: "And when that which is perfect comes, the part is done away" When that is perfect and complete, the knowledge of parts vanishes. The moment we are conscious of the whole, we do not think of the parts, and think that perfect whole is a being in which include all that exists, all that can exist, all that will exist, and all that has existed. It includes everything of the universe. It is the one infinite ocean of existence It is indivisible. And the moment this realization of oneness dawns upon a man, that very moment he rises above all the parts Then we go below the surface of the phenomenal appearances, when all the variety merges into unity ; and then we become conscious of that whole in perfection.

The attainment of perfection, therefore, depends upon the realization of the universal oneness. That being is perfect which is indivisible and is full with all the parts. And that does not mean that the whole is the sum-total of all the parts, or all the parts are absorbed in the whole maintaining their separate unmanifested forms, but the whole shines without any parts and without any grades It is one without the second. Have we ever seen that being which is indivisible? If not, we cannot reach the perfection. When we see the sun, the moon and the stars, we see only the parts and not the whole In truth, this universe is not many but one. But we do not see that oneness, because we are deceived by the enchanting appearances of the deceitful world. The moment we take away the names and forms (*nama-rupa*) of everything and go below the appearances, we find unity. There is the standard of perfection He who has realized this unity in variety, has reached the perfection.

Some people say that if we realize that unity, then what is to become of their individuality? Shall we lose it? No, we cannot lose our individuality. The very nature of our individuality is one, and behind each soul dwells the universal Being, and that universal Being is our true individuality. The suns, moons, and stars are like so many bubbles in the undivided ocean of reality. Did Jesus lose his individuality when he said: "I and my Father are one?" No, he became conscious of his infinite individuality which is ever immortal and divine. What have we gained by becoming conscious of our limited personality? Nothing, rather we have lost that which we ought to possess. So when we give up this attachment of limited individuality for gaining the true individuality, we come to that state which is beyond all that can be limited by parts. We are selfish as long as we are limited or confined by parts and also are conscious of parts; but the moment we are conscious of the undivided whole, our selfishness vanishes. Then this petty self expands and grows larger and covers the universe, and everything merges into the one and undivided ocean of the Reality which is beyond all the states or the grades. In that state, we never lose our individuality. We cannot also lose our consciousness which is manifesting all the time. The limitations are the bondage. So, when the limitations are taken away, we

are conscious of our true being. Such a conscious soul attains the perfection, and whatever he does, he does not for the selfish motives but for the whole, for the humanity, and for the whole universe. Then his work becomes a free offering. Then he does every work as worship. Though he has a thought of lower ideals, but being in tune with the infinite forces and the divine will of the almighty Being, he lives and dies for others and his whole life becomes an offering on the altar of sacrifice.

In fact, they are perfect who, having controlled their senses and mind, come to this world to rescue those who are struggling in the ocean of life and death They are perfect who do good to others without seeking anything in return Just as the spring showers, brings new bunds and new leaves upon the branches of the weather-beaten trees without seeking return, so the same with those who live and die for others without seeking return. The perfect souls live on this earth like God in human forms.

CHAPTER III

WHAT IS NIRVANA

The individual life in this earth is like a ceaseless struggle for existence. From the minutest animalcule up to the highest man, wherever there is manifestation of life, is to be found this tremendous struggle for life, or the fight for existence. In that constant battle of life thousands and thousands of living creatures are crushed out of existence, first to make room for the stronger, and the stronger for the still stronger, and so on. The weak are born as it were, to suffer or perish and to make room for the strong. Every moment there exists this strong fight or struggle for life. Each individual is threatened with defeat and destruction We are pressed by some unknown power into this vast battlefield of the world. We are first to fight against these obstacles, and then to continue that fight till the last breath leaves our bodies.

Such is the world in which we are living, but at the same time we expect to be happy by gaining a victory over the weaker ones. We expect that it will bring an end to that fight and bring peace to our souls, but, in the next moment, when we encounter with new enemies stronger and better equipped, our hearts tremble as they come from all sides to attack, defy and destroy us. So, how can we expect to get rest under such conditions ? Where is the hope of those who expect to gain peace and happiness amidst this struggle for existence along with its constant accompaniments of diseases and sufferings ? These existed in the past, and will continue in the future. As far back as we can go by turning the pages of history, in every page we read the accounts of the same fight, the same suffering and misery, and the same disease and death.

When we remember the indestructible nature of the germs of life, we understand that every germ of life has many times appeared and manifested itself on this material plane, and has had to struggle and meet the results of its own acts. Now, the wheel of evolution moves with a tremendous speed towards the invisible goal, conquering all the troubles and turmoils, and

never stops at any station for comfort or rest. Cycle after cycle that wheel of evolution starts to carry the souls of the individual soldiers to the battlefield of this world, giving everyone an opportunity for the struggle or the fight. Such is the conception of the world and the struggle for existence among the best thinkers of India.

Long before the birth of Buddha, six centuries before Christ, the philosophers and the seers of truth recognized the nature of this wheel of evolution, having understood this ceaseless fight or struggle which defeated their energy and life, and tried to find a way out of it. Again and again they asked the question: "Is there a way out of this struggle for existence?" "Will it not be possible for an individual soul struggling in this gigantic wheel of evolution to stop?" "Will there ever be a time when the individual souls will gain permanent peace and happiness? And how can we get out of this constant change and also of this wheel of birth and death?" The questions were asked again and again, and the answers to them came like the revelations to the minds of those who were engaged in the search and solution of these problems. They understood the power which moves this wheel of evolution. They realized the real cause of this struggle for existence and came to know why there should be such suffering, disease and sorrow. They discovered a remedy and tried their best to give that remedy to the world. They described that state where there were no sorrow, no suffering, no pain, and no death, and they called that state the Nirvana which is the state of cessation of all sorrows and sufferings.

The general belief in the Western countries is that this word 'Nirvana' was used exclusively by Buddha and his followers. Some go so far as to say that it was Buddha who introduced it in India, but, on the other hand, we find frequent use of this word or expression in the ancient literature of India. The nature of Nirvana is explained and discussed by the vedic philosophers who flourished long before the birth of Buddha. It was also explained by the seers of Truth. Buddha took up this word and gave it only a new interpretation. He did not originate this ideal of Nirvana, nor did introduce it into India for the first time. Those who have read the *Lalitavistara* and the *Light of Asia* by Sir Edwin Arnold, will remember how

deeply Buddha was impressed by the sight of the disease and death which follow the footsteps of every mortal in the career of his earthly existence. Born and brought up within the precincts of a royal palace and living from his childhood the life of an Eastern Prince, Buddha was confined within the palace walls, being attended by all the luxuries and comforts. He had no idea of the struggle that went on constantly outside the palace walls, nor did he realize that individual life was such a ceaseless struggle for existence. He did not also understand that the struggle for existence was accompanied by sorrow and misery. He looked at life from the standpoint of an optimist, but when he came face to face with the sufferings of humanity, his heart overflowed in tears of blood, his mind became restless and unhappy, and he determined to find out the source of that struggle for existence. He discovered the cause of sorrow and suffering and struggled to find out a method by which he could remedy the sufferings of humanity. And these attempts ended in his great renunciation.

Gautama Buddha renounced the comforts and luxuries of life, not for any selfish motive, but for his tremendous love for humanity at large. How could a great soul like that of Buddha care for the pleasure and comforts of a palace, when millions and millions were suffering before his eyes and were groaning under the burden of sorrow? How could he enjoy the delicious dishes that were presented to him when he knew that thousands were dying of hunger! How could he sleep comfortably on a soft bed when he found that the beds of the poor classes were the hard ground with stones for pillows! Do we feel in the same way? No, we cannot even imagine it. Do the needs of the poverty-stricken masses touch our hearts? No, very seldom do we think that the comforts which we have in our lives, are at the expense of the suffering masses; on the other hand, our thoughts and ideas are centred in ourselves; we are happy when we get the comforts of this body, or when we have family and children and claim to call them our own. Think of the difference that exists between these feelings and those of Buddha, the Enlightened.

Buddha spent the best part of his life in finding out the remedy for the suffering, disease and death, and he did finally give that remedy to all classes of people, so that everyone

could enjoy that state where there was no sorrow, no suffering and no death, but where there was tranquil peace and rest. That state of peace and rest as well as the cessation of suffering and sorrow was meant by the word 'Nirvana'. This word was used by Buddha in this sense, and he did not mean by it the annihilation of the *Átta* or *Atman*. He meant by the word 'Nirvana' the cessation of the *tanha* or *trishna*, which means the desire. Really the word 'Nirvana' connotes the idea of *suchness* or *thatness* (*tathata*), and, therefore, it is a positive state of perfection, and not the negative one as the void or the nothingness.

Buddha's whole religion depends upon the four noble truths which lead to the path of Nirvana. Among the four noble truths: (1) The first is the existence of sorrow and suffering in this world. Buddha said: "Birth is sorrowful, enemies are sorrowful, death is sorrowful; and it is to be joined with that which we do not like: and sadder still is the separation from that which we love. Painful is the grieving for that which cannot be obtained". (2) The second noble truth is the cause of suffering. Buddha said: "The cause of suffering is the lust. The surrounding objects affect our sensations and cause a craving which clamours for more, and is not satisfied; and that attempt to live a life for the enjoyment of sense pleasures, results in bitter pain. (3) The third noble truth is the cessation of sorrow. He who conquers the self, is free from sorrow and lust: and who does not conquer the flame of desire, is subject to sorrow and lust. (4) The fourth noble path is to extinguish the flames of fire for desires, sorrow and suffering. The desire is compared by Buddha to a flame of fire, and when that flame is extinguished, Nirvana is reached. The literal meaning of Nirvana is 'flowing out' or extinction: hence the extinction of the flame of desire, *tanha* or *trishna*, is the meaning of the word Nirvana, according to Buddha.

Again, these four noble truths are to be accompanied by the eightfold paths: the right comprehension, the right resolution, the right spirit, the right acts, the right state of the peaceful mind, etc. These are the fundamental principles of the religion of Buddha. It has already been said that he did not mean by Nirvana the extinction of the soul entity, but he meant by it the cessation of sorrow and suffering. The general

belief in the Western countries is that this word 'Nirvana' always means the annihilation of the soul. This idea even existed among some of the extremely annihilistic Buddhist philosophers of later days, but Buddha never meant that. Buddha's ideal was not the annihilation of the thought of the self. We read in one of Buddha's sayings an answer to the question: "In what does Nirvana consist?" He said: "When the fire of lust is extinguished, that is Nirvana; when the fire of hatred and jealousy are extinguished, that is Nirvana; when the false belief and the passions are extinguished, that is Nirvana". So, according to Buddha, this Nirvana could be accomplished by anyone, and when it is accomplished, the individual soul continues to exist impersonally without having any longing or particular incarnation or form; the individual soul continues to exist in a pure form of character without having any craving or longing for anything.

This idea already existed, but was very difficult for the followers of Buddha to understand, and so many of them did not grasp its real meaning. Really Buddha said that Nirvana is to be attained by one who has comprehended that which is eternal, birthless and deathless, that which is without beginning and end, and that which is fearless, birthless and deathless. It is something and this something is not an entity, nor a personal deity; and it has no particular locality and no celestial abode. He said to his disciples: "There is a state where there is neither earth, nor water, nor air; neither the sun, nor the moon; neither coming, nor going, nor standing; but it is without wideness, without sensation and without position; and there is no sorrow or suffering; and that is Nirvana".

But how many have truly grasped the meaning of these words of Buddha? The Western philosophers failed to grasp and comprehend what Buddha meant by such a statement. It has already been said that many of his disciples could not understand it. Some thought that it was a state of the absolute negation, and others thought that it was a state of the absolute annihilation of everything that existed in the universe. Some thought that it was the absolute voidness, and others thought that it was the absolute non-existence. After the death of Buddha and his direct disciples, the difficulty of this understanding was felt more keenly than before. Then arose different

schools of philosophy amongst the Buddhists The first of these schools was of the extreme conception or belief They understood the absolute extinction of everything that was in the world and in the end of this life The other schools of philosophy maintained the annihilation of the self and the universe. These Buddhists maintained the permanence of the abstract thought without any thinker.

Here we should not forget that Buddha kept perfect silence about the questions of the permanence of the individual soul, i.e whether the *atta* or the soul was permanent or not, he did not answer. When he was asked about God, he kept silence, and did not answer This reticence created a great confusion in the minds of his followers and disciples, and it was the cause of all the guess-work of all the followers those came later They did not understand the meaning of it, but took a certain conception of Nirvana according to their own powers of comprehension. So when there was so much dispute amongst the followers of Buddha, why should we wonder ,when we see that the majority of the Western minds cannot truly understand the meaning of Nirvana ?

Whether Buddha meant a positive or negative state, is still unsettled and undecided amongst many of the followers of Buddha. The Northern school of the Buddhists of Tibet believed in the positive state whereas some of the Southern schools believed in the negative state These arguments of the followers, who lived five or six centuries after Buddha, produced a confusion, and that was the cause of all the doubts and false conceptions that grew around the lake of truth covering its surface and making it invisible for the time being. That have enabled the seekers after truth to discover where that lake was and to grasp the true meaning of Nirvana This resulted in the revival of the vedantic conception of Nirvana The Buddhist conception, as has been stated before, was something positive, as was conceived by the sages and the vedantic philosophers who lived in ancient times

In Vedanta, Nirvana means that blissful state of supreme peace where there is no sorrow, no suffering, no pain, no disease, and and no death, and where the individual soul regains the consciousness of his infinite and immortal nature and becomes free from the bondages of ignorance, lust and selfish-

ness. That state is the highest ideal of all the individuals. We are all seeking after that blissful state, consciously or unconsciously. We are moving onward towards that realization, and nothing can satisfy us till we have gained it. We may have wealth, property, position, name and fame, and comforts of life, still there is something for which they are longing They are not happy and cannot be happy, and it is impossible to be so. All religions try to describe that supreme state. It is rather the goal of all religions, and it is also the ideal of all scriptures. Again, this state of Nirvana is not the same as the Christian Paradise, but it is much higher than that, because in that state of Nirvana the individual soul becomes one with the universal Spirit The universal Spirit is called the Brahman in Vedanta. That is the eternal abode of the absolute Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss, and that is the infinite source of wisdom or knowledge.

When the soul realizes the oneness with the absolute Brahman, it becomes conscious of the unity with the Brahman, when Vedanta also says: *brahmavid brahmaiva bhavati.* The individual soul then loses its entire existence into the ocean of the Brahman. This state is also known as the state of Nirvana which is free from the bindings of sorrow, suffering, disease, and death. Buddha meant the same state as was expressed in Vedanta, *i.e.* that which Buddha called the absolute thought, was the same as the Brahman of the Vedanta philosophers, though some of the Buddha's followers interpreted it differently. As for example, Buddha said that when the flame of lust and fire of desire are extinguished, Nirvana is attained. And Vedanta teaches that when the light of the eternal wisdom dawns upon the soul, it dispels the darkness of ignorance or *maya* and that very .moment the clinging to the material body and its pleasure ceases forever, and the individual soul becomes no longer subject to the movements of the wheel of evolution. Therefore Nirvana means the realization of the oneness with the supreme Spirit,[1] and that Spirit is an immediate awareness of the absolute Brahman as described in Vedanta. Therefore how can there be any more sorrow in one who sees Divinity everywhere, rather wherever he casts his eyes, he sees the manifestation of the divine Absolute.

[1] But some of the Buddhist schools do not admit this theory.

In fact, the idea of Nirvana excludes the wrong idea of the extinction or annihilation of the soul entity, or the absorption of the soul into some other substances. These questions do not rise in the Vedanta philosophy.[2] The soul cannot be annihilated or cannot be reduced to non-existence, because the absolute Truth is indestructible ; it is immortal ; and so, how can it be annihilated ? Similarly there cannot be any question of absorption of the idividual soul into any other substance, because it has never been separated from the Brahman which is one without the second. The status of Nirvana is the same. Therefore, we should attain to Nirvana. And it should be remembered that we should not have to search for this Nirvana in the mountains or caves, but would search for it in our heart and realize it with its fulness.

This Nirvana is to be accomplished in this life. It can be accomplished in the twinkling of an eye if we have that self-confidence, absolute faith and sincerity. The moment an individual soul realizes his divine nature and his oneness with the supreme Being, that very moment he becomes free from all bondages and does not have to wait until the Day of Judgment.

When the divine realization or Nirvana comes, even the soul of the greatest sinner will be purified by the fire of the divine Light, and instantly that soul will be transformed or rather be transfigured into pure consciousness (*shuddha chaitanya*)

Now, the happiness, which comes in the state of Nirvana, cannot be compared with any other happiness. It is much higher, much deeper, and more greater than the happiness of any other realm of existence. He who attains to Nirvana, transcends all realms and rises above all the relative planes. He is free from all kinds of desire, passion and lust. It is said in one of the *Upanishads*: "He whose ideal is the realization of the *Atman,* or of the divine nature, his desires are fulfilled, and he is free from birth and death". Such a soul is not subject to the law of reincarnation any more, but he is above and beyond the wheel of evolution, and he enters into the domain of Nirvana and enjoys the eternal peace forever and ever.

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[1] In the non-dualistic school of Vedanta.